



# PROFITS FOR THEM CRISIS FOR US



An image from the 29th March General Strike in Spain called by the CNT, CGT and SO anarcho-sindicalist unions

We have been repeatedly told that we are in an economic downturn, a recession, that we are all being hit hard by the current crisis. We all, of course, have to put up with job losses, worse terms and conditions, a lack of funds for education, healthcare, benefits and services. Austerity is the price that we have to bear in order to turn the economy around. It is simply an economic reality that we are powerless to change.

This is the line we are fed by government, media and bosses alike as we face further hardship and destitution. As unnecessary deaths take place in our run down hospitals.

So fighting back, opposing cuts, the general strikes and protests that have

taken place across the globe and the actions of those involved in initiatives such as the Occupy movement are all pretty much pointless.

Or are they? While the economic crisis continues for the vast majority of us capitalism continues work extremely well for the rich and powerful.

Back in June 2010 the New York Post reported that an "unusual outcome of the high jobless rate" was that "corporate profits are at an all time high". We don't know what school the reporters went to but this is not unusual at all. Job losses are the result of companies looking to cut costs, higher unemployment also serves to drive down the wages of those of us 'lucky' enough to still have jobs. Far from being

unusual increased profit fits perfectly with a 'crisis' that is actually of benefit to the bosses.

This was not an anomaly, or an 'unusual' result of recession. Corporate profits during the 'recession' have soared. The Economist has recently reported that:

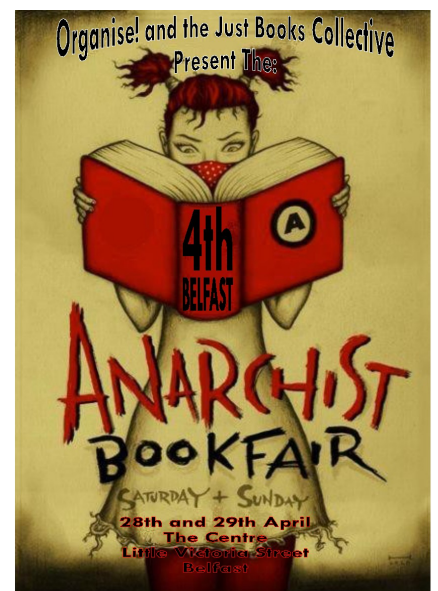
"The past four years have been bad for workers and savers but good for the corporate sector. Profit margins in America are higher than at any time in the past 65 years".

US corporate profits are at an all time high while in general corporate profits have increased because of "cutting costs, laying off workers and wringing more productivity - defined as the amount of output that comes from an hour of work - from remaining staff."

So the wealthy are still getting wealthier proving that we are not all in this together. Capitalism is not in crisis for the rich and powerful. The talk of 'recession' is being used as a cover to increase profit while a brutal attack is carried out on the working class and the poor the world over. The crisis of capitalism is that it is based on the robbery of wealth created by the majority of the planets population. While we face growing hardship, insecurity, poverty and death the profits are being raked in.

Capitalism is not in crisis - it is crisis. Isn't it time we put an end to it?

*Jason Brannigan*



# A 'Big Society' Needs a Big Surveillance State



As if it were needed, the ConDem government provide us with another example of the meaninglessness of the UK's 'representative democracy'. In this instance they've dredged up Labour's 2009 effort to significantly increase state surveillance over the internet – which the Tories and Lib Dems vigorously opposed as 'Big Brothresque' and 'authoritarian'.

So much for principles of 'small state' or 'liberalism', eh? The same arguments are trotted out: national security, paedophiles, terrorists, criminals, etc. The implication being that, if you're not a criminal, terrorist, or paedophile then you can have no objection. 'What have you got to hide?'

Of course, the pressure to implement this legislation comes from the unelected, unseen, and unaccountable security services; GCHQ, MI5, police, and civil service mandarins with a direct line to the cabinet. It makes no difference which shade of shit gets their grubby mitts on power, these shadowy background figures remain in place, as do their interests in intrusive surveillance and social snooping.

The current proposal will allow security agencies to track, in real-time, communications made via e-mail or online phone conversation. The government line is that this will not include the content of these communications, though critics argue that this 'safeguard' would be impossible to implement. Internet Service Providers are concerned that if they are obliged to collect this kind of information for UK (PLC), then they could be expected to do the same for overtly autocratic regimes such as Syria, Iran, or North Korea. The essential point is that these surveillance tools will be used in the same ways by whoever has them. Any threat to state security can be presented as terrorism, a 'national threat', and quelled accordingly. This means a serious problem for 'legitimate' activists, who are likely to be targeted. Add to this the inevitable 'function creep' and the state's overwhelming propensity for general incompetence, and we have a very dangerous situation indeed.

Universities provide an example of this system in microcosm - they can restrict access and track activity over their networks, and illustrate the high likelihood of 'false positives'. Napier University Edinburgh blocks content from the Anarchist Teapot website (veggie catering collective) on grounds of terrorism – the most serious threat they present is a particularly spicy lentil burger. A student at Nottingham's Trent University was expelled after accessing Al Qaeda material for study purposes – but as his skin-colour was brown, he was held to be suspect. State internet surveillance means its entire populace becomes suspect.

This legislation ought to be an obvious deal-breaker for the coalition – allegedly, Tory backbenchers dislike the encroachment of state powers, Lib Dems oppose attacks on civil liberties. But, once again, there is a mismatch between the exercising of power and proclaimed principles.

*Len Tillbërger*

## Up Against The Wall

A few years back I heard someone in Derry criticising the so-called Bogside Artists (responsible for the 'muriels' around the area) for creating what were effectively 'Mass Cards' for the republican movement. Interesting then in light of this that an actual 'Mass Card' of a kind is to go up on the iconic Free Derry Wall in memoriam to 'republican anarchist' John McGuffin. The plan by WSM members in Derry is to paint the wall with an anarchist flag to mark the anniversary of McGuffin's death in 2002.

Perhaps McGuffin himself would have approved but then he was also a bit of an iconoclast, so who knows. The more serious point is whether a monument that is today used for everything from electioneering slogans to advertising local businesses has any relevance for the working class communities in the city. This is obviously quite apart from the fact that it is yet another

## General Strike In Spain



On March 29th Spain was hit with a massive general strike that shut down shopping centres, roads and transportation hubs. Barricades of burning tyres were erected in Barcelona, hundreds of airline flights were cancelled, and an estimated 91% of all workers stayed home or took to the streets, according to El País. Spain's general strike was initially called for by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT union. Joined by the CGT and SO unions the general strike became an overwhelming success as the call to strike was taken up by the indignados whose encampments across Spain in May, 2011, inspired the Occupy movement.

From early morning thousands of pickets gathered and roads were blocked in some cities by burning tyres or dustbins. In Madrid a "bicipicker" blocked the M30 motorway and a march blocked major roads in the centre of Madrid.

The strike was very strong in transport and industry. Local assemblies which formed out of the 15-M movement were involved in the strike, joining picket lines and closing shops and supermarkets.

The main unions, the UGT and Comisiones Obreras have said that they will wait a month before organising more strikes, to see if the government withdraws the reforms, although they have already made it clear that they have no intention of changing anything. With everybody so clearly up for the fight at the moment, a month is a lifetime.

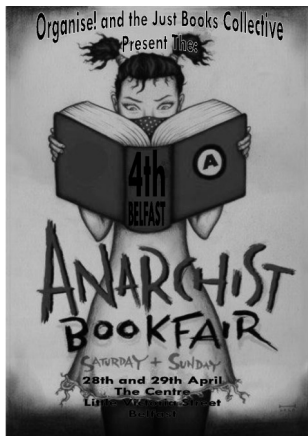
The general strike was marked by high levels of police violence and aggression dozens of people were detained or injured, some very seriously.

As Roar Magazine put it: This is a fight to the finish between the old world and the new: "with financial markets pushing the people to the brink of despair, popular support for radical action is rapidly being ramped up. Now that the indignados are preparing for a spring of discontent, culminating into a global day of action on May 12, a powerful sign is being given to those in power: **as their system crumbles, our movement grows ever stronger.**"

wall in a city of walls that represent nothing but division and the history of division that has fuck all to say or to add to society here.

At some point or another over the years almost every single political grouping has called for Free Derry wall to be demolished. Few, of course, would admit this nowadays and it has become perhaps the quintessential and pre-eminent nationalist memorial in the North to be preserved and celebrated. Which all begs the question, why would any self-respecting anarchist want to appropriate it? Is it unreasonable to ask if this will not simply damage anarchism in Northern Ireland, associating it with one particular side of the sectarian divide? Does 'Workers Solidarity' translate in Derry into solidarity with the republican and nationalist tradition here?

*Mairtin O' Cathain*



# Fourth Belfast Anarchist Bookfair

This year's Belfast Anarchist Bookfair takes place on

Saturday 28th of April in The Centre, Little Victoria Street, from 12 noon until 5pm.

Stalls are confirmed so far from the Anti-Fracking Campaign, Just Books Collective, Organise!, Anarchist Federation, the Independent Workers' Union, the Creative Workers' Co-op, na Croisbhealaid Café, International Brigades Commemoration Committee, Anarchist Studies Network, Warzone, North Belfast Housing Co-

operative, Anarchists For Choice...

There will be two talks/discussions taking place. The first at 12.30pm on radical co-operatives, collectives and 'free space' will be led off by a panel of people involved in a range of collectives, occupations and co-operatives followed by discussion. The second talk, at 2pm, on a woman's right to chose will be followed by discussion to coordinate opposition to the Belfast leg of the 'Pro-life' all Ireland walk for life on the 7th of July this year.

Just Books and Organise! will also be launching a number of pamphlets on the day. There is a centenary collection of

articles by US anarchist Voltarine de Cleyre, *Firestorm*, and pamphlet by Jason Brannigan on Anarchism and Direct Action, a reprint of Emile Pouget's *Direct Action*, a pamphlet by Organise! and the launch of the second edition of Mairtin O'Cathain's *Wee Black Book of Belfast Anarchism*. The events of the day will be followed by a social in the Centre from 7pm. On Sunday the 29th we will be meeting up for an anarchist picnic - details to be announced at the bookfair.

For more info contact: [justbooks@rocketmail.com](mailto:justbooks@rocketmail.com)

## Patronising Prick 2012 Contender Leads UUP



A strong early entry is in from the new leader of the UUP, Mike Nesbitt, for patronising prick of the year.

Former UTV host Mike has claimed he would "actually like to live in an area of social deprivation for a day because I think it's important to get a feel for what it's like". Not much better than a sideways glance at the proles from out your chauffeur driven car to and fro Stormont.

But sure Mike was educated at Campbell College and Oxford and has no notion of what it is like to live in "an area of social deprivation". He has no notion of what it is like to struggle to find money to feed families, pay bills, to face job losses and benefit cuts.

## Campaign Against Household Tax



Over the past few months the Campaign against the Household Tax in the south has grown from strength to strength. Campaign meetings have been packed. 500 attended a meeting in Cork while 700 met in Waterford a week later. Across Dublin dozens of meetings have been held in parish halls and community centres, all with the clear message of "Don't Register, Don't Pay".

Support for the campaign has remained extremely strong in spite of the fact that government politicians have tried to bully people through threats and with the state distributing a leaflet to every house in the country. The extent of support for the campaign was revealed on February 21st last when the government released figures showing that less than 10% of people had registered for the tax. With over 1.5 million people refusing to pay, it is clear the tax is becoming unworkable.

The strength of the campaign so far has

been its strong community base and it now has hundreds of active branches from Cork to Donegal.

If you live in the south and haven't joined the campaign, contact it on 1890 98 98 00 or check out the campaign website at [www.nohouseholdtax.org](http://www.nohouseholdtax.org) to out what is happening in your local area.

## Primark Workers Strike Update

At the eleventh hour the anticipated strike at Primark on the 16th and 17th of March was called off by the Trade Union USDAW.

On the day before the strike management made an offer which shop stewards agreed to put to the membership while the strike action was suspended. The offer itself represents something of a victory as management had, up until then, steadfastly refused to consider the workers demands. While it has meant an increase in workers hourly rate of pay from £6.84 to £7.14 an hour it was tied into the scrapping of the Christmas bonus.

The deal was accepted by 95% of the membership of USDAW at Primark.



# Fight the Cuts



Friday 6th April saw over 50 people turn out for a lunchtime protest at the headquarters of the Health and Social Care Board in Linenhall Street, Belfast. The protest was called by the Stop the Cuts Campaign in response to NI Assembly cuts to our health services. Cuts that have resulted in unnecessary deaths in our hospitals.

The Campaign squarely lay the blame for "making savage cuts in our health service which are contributing to unnecessary tragic deaths" on the Assembly. They also called for "an immediate cessation of all cuts in the health service and for the re-opening of the accident and emergency unit at Belfast City Hospital as well as restoring opening hours at the Lagan Valley Hospital in Lisburn."

Speaking at the picket, campaign

spokesperson, and Socialist Party member, Pat Lawlor pointed out that:

"The decision to close A&E at the City Hospital and cut hours at Lagan Valley A&E has led to what we warned would be tragic consequences. The overcrowding, understaffing and unacceptable waiting times at the Royal Victoria Hospital A&E are a direct result of the cuts the Assembly Executive is jointly responsible for. Unless the cuts are halted immediately and reversed, there will be more tragic deaths in our hospitals."

Other speakers included Maria Morgan, President of NIPSA, Chris Bailie Workers Party and Jason Brannigan from Organise! Jason pointed out that these cuts are the latest in an ongoing attack on working class people going back to the Thatcher years. The latest stage of this attack on working class people is using the 'debt crisis' as a cover.

Joining others in calling for people to get actively involved in the campaign against cuts he pointed out that we cannot rely on the leadership of the Trades Unions and that "we have to build this struggle ourselves as working class people and step up to the plate".

Since the closure of Belfast City Hospital A&E on 1st November last year the amount of people waiting more than 12 hours has risen by over 80% in the Royal!

Since 2010 the Belfast Trust has axed 1,855 jobs including 620 nurses, 185 cleaners,, 325 technical staff and 285 clerical staff.

The Assembly are implementing £823 million of cuts to the health system here. If these cuts are not defeated there will be more unnecessary deaths in our hospitals. These cuts and all cuts must be opposed, fought and defeated. It is time to fight back.



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Libertarian communist online  
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Shell to Sea

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pipeline offshore from County Mayo

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