



GOOD FRIDAY/BELFAST AGREEMENT ANNIVERSARY

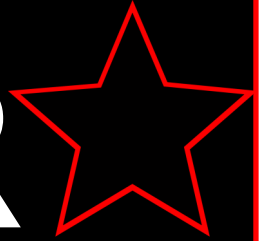


Portadown All out strike



MEANWHILE IN BALLYMENA: COMMUNITIES SAY GET OUT!

BLACK STAR



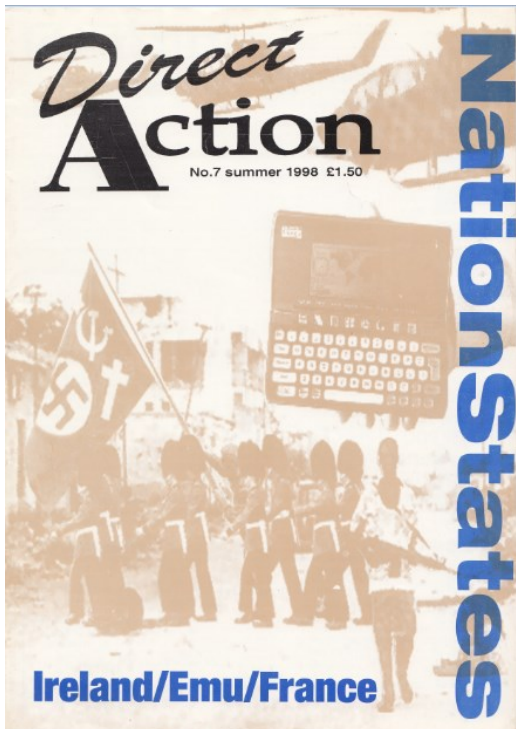
Workers fight on



Education workers across all sectors have given renewed mandates for further action having jumped through the usual hoops set up by the government and obediently followed by the trade union leaders. It is clear that workers are in no mood to compromise against bullish bosses, scumbag governments (or governments in waiting), and timorous unions, particularly in a time of soaring inflation for us and skyrocketing profit margins for them. Utility bills, phone and internet costs, food prices and even pet food have all jumped massively while pay has headed in the opposite direction for over a decade now. Whatever the outcome of this present struggle, a wider fight for grassroots activism, democratic control and workers' autonomy is still to be won.

'Strikes...encourage pupils to follow in these overtly political protests'
Tory MP, Jonathan Gullis condemning teaching strikes

Belfast/Good Friday Agreement anniversary – excerpts from a 1998 interview with Organise!



Direct Action magazine (hereafter DA):

While the politicians are now lining up to pat themselves on the back over the peace talks, what about the general mood among the people of the north — are they optimistic, cynical or confused?

Organise!:

People are generally hopeful that there can be a better future created for themselves, their children and their grandchildren in the north. This was shown in the exceptionally high turnout for the referenda. There is also a certain amount of uncertainty, many are uneasy about various aspects of the Agreement, and there are of course those who are intent on wrecking any possibility of 'stability' (in relation to sectarian politics) in the north. There is also a cynicism about the ability of the sectarian politicians to deliver, about the intentions of gunmen, and those

of government on demilitarization. Different considerations weigh differently for different people.

It must be pointed out that while 71% voted yes for the 'Agreement', there is precious little agreement in our places of work, as the recent wildcat action in NIR (Northern Ireland Railways) in the north and throughout the health board in the south has shown. The result, in terms of the wishes of the majority of people in the north, must be seen as a desire for change.

DA:

How far is it possible for Organise! to have an impact, given that people must be generally cynical about politics, especially in the north?

Organise!:

People may well be cynical of the politicians' ability to deliver some semblance of peace, but it must also be remembered that politics here goes far deeper than casting a vote every few years for many people. The 'constitutional question' is still a big consideration, and a lot of the 'political mindset' is conservative and communal on both sides. It is the sectarian nature of our politics which, more than cynicism, makes our job all the harder.

How far we have an impact cannot be blamed on other people's cynicism, it is more related to our small size and limited resources. We need to start the slow process of building a credible alternative. As this develops, and is seen to be gaining at least some results, then we will start

to make an impact.

DA:

Is 'The Agreement' likely to work? How far do you support it? What would you like to see come out of the current process?

Organise!:

This Summer's 'Marching Season' will be the first big test of the 'Agreement', and one which will make or break it. Whether or not it works depends largely on the political will present to make it work coupled with the degree to which people are prepared to compromise. The 'Agreement' does not go any way towards dealing with sectarianism as this would undermine the respective power bases of the parties who will make up the Assembly. It may well work after a fashion, so long as the 'No' men are further marginalised by events and are not allowed to destabilise the entire process.

The degree of support for the 'Agreement' as a social democratic, or rather a sectarian political initiative has not been uncontroversial for Organise! The 'Agreement' does after all institutionalise sectarianism; it is about choosing the form of government which will have an active role in the oppression of working class people well into the next century. Anarchists from the Workers Solidarity Movement adopted an abstentionist position on the referenda; it is a position which some members of Organise! support. Other members of Organise!, like many working class people, voted yes to the 'Agreement', not because they in any way support sectarianism, or want anything to do with choosing the form of government which oppresses us, but because of a simple desire to see the guns removed from the sectarian politics in the north.

Portadown Kingspan strike

Kingspan is an Irish company that started business in County Cavan in the 1960s, which is the official sponsor of Ulster Rugby and whose ground at Ravenhill now bears the company's name. Some 200 workers at the Portadown plant have been on all-out strike since 20 March in opposition to a below inflation pay cut from a company that made pre-tax profits of £657 million last year. Kingspan's response was to fly in scab labour from their plants in Williton in Somerset and Rokietnica in Poland, though placing the English in the Four Star Seagoe Hotel and the Poles in a hostel in Portadown. It's understood that the Polish workers were not even told of the dispute and strikers, some of whom are locally-based Poles themselves, have signs in Polish appealing for solidarity and asking people not to cross their pickets lines.

It's not the first time Kingspan have hit the headlines in recent years. A strike by workers which lasted several months back

in 2010 at their base plant in Kingscourt, County Cavan in support of workers facing redundancies and wage cuts led eventually to some success. Ten years later, in 2020, it was revealed at the Grenfell Inquiry that Kingspan had knowingly supplied flammable cladding materials to the building in which 72 people lost their lives in the devastating 2017 fire.

Organise! extend our support and solidarity to the Kingspan strikers in Portadown and call on others to do likewise. The company is also bringing in supplies during the cover of dark meaning twenty-four hour pickets have had to be arranged by the workers. Meanwhile, Kingspan go on raking in the profits from their global organisation, founded and still part-owned by the billionaire tycoon, Eugene Murtagh, whose personal wealth is thought to be around the two billion mark.

MEANWHILE... IN BALLYMENA GANGSTERS TOLD TO FUCK OFF OUT IT!

News coverage recently of the Westwinds community in Ards out on their streets to tell the local drugs lords that they'd had enough reminded me of similar scenes here in the Ballykeel estate last year. Local residents walked through the estate and held a packed public meeting to tell feuding gangsters to get out after the murder of local man, Victor Hamilton.

Everybody knows that the south-east Antrim UDA was trying to push into Ballymena last year in a series of highly publicised attacks. Something similar is now happening in Ards

and north Down but working class communities there have exactly the same response as the folk of the Braid and that's to tell them to fuck away aff back tae Carrick, better still, fuck off altogether and get off the backs of people trying to get on with their lives. Paramilitary parasites like the SE Antrim UDA and their kind wrap themselves in their flags and beat their drums whilst living off the misery of the communities they intimidate. People had three decades of that shite and don't want one more day of it here or anywhere else.



Émile Pouget (1860-1931), was an outstanding anarcho-syndicalist militant who was arrested in 1883 as a young unemployed activist whilst trying to prevent the arrest of Louise Michel, who carried a black flag representing anarchy for the first time in a protest. He became a prolific anarcho-syndicalist propagandist and leading writer for *La Pèrè Peinard*, probably most famous for his book on sabotage. He was a central part of the revolutionary syndicalist CGT before it adopted reformism prior to the First World War, and he continued to use his pen in the service of anarchism and workers' control until his death, aged 71.

Prisoners, prisons, and protests



From the case of Gabriel Pombo da Silva, the Spanish militant who has spent some thirty years in prison to the Italian, Alfredo Cospito, still on hunger strike against his incarceration under the Italian super-max prison regime known as 41-Bis, and the dozens of trade union activists jailed in Myanmar, prison struggles remain at the heart of anti-authoritarian campaigns and protests across the globe. Anarchists in Ireland north and south extend our solidarity to all our jailed.

Get Involved: Help Build A Working Class Alternative.



Organise! is an anarcho-syndicalist group in Ireland which is affiliated to the International Worker's Association as 'friends of' section. We take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, and particularly the history and tradition of struggle epitomised by the IWA - the anarcho-syndicalist international. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985. We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier...



Northern Anarcho-Syndicalist News from Organise!

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at <https://organiseanarchistsireland.com> and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com

