



PALESTINE - ISRAEL
BATTLE OF STATES



POTENTIAL
TRANSLINK ACTION
STRIKE BREWING?



LIMERICK BUS
DRIVERS
GO WILDCAT



MEANWHILE
IN BALLYMENA

BLACK STAR



The battle for the Lough

August and September brought international headlines on the state of Lough Neagh because of an unusually large and destructive blue-green algae bloom across one of Europe’s largest inland lakes. The news featured pictures of the cyanobacterial sludge and the ‘wake’ protest and interviewed aggrieved anglers and cold water swimmers. Some blamed ministers, the absence of Stormont, farming run-off, industrial pollution, climate change and dredging. Two campaign groups have emerged vying for attention, Save Our Shores and Love Our Lough comprising various individuals and organisations. Meanwhile, workers on the Lough from the long-standing Fishermen’s Co-operative and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)-run fish farm, have not had their voices heard. The focus on the Lough as a place of leisure rather than work is a problem, and while it should be available to both, the absence of those who make their livelihood from it and the fact that it is they who should be in the driving seat of the campaign weakens the overall opportunities to change things.

‘As far as this season goes, it has been sheer destruction and I have no doubt it is because of the algae’

Lough Neagh fisherman

Translink Strike?

Okay, so we've been here before - last year in fact, and of course, fuck all happened. Statements of defiance were predictably followed by 'gestures of goodwill' and the GMB and UNITE called off strikes and settled for undisclosed concessions. Might this year be different, not fucking likely, I hear you say, even though (perhaps especially) because SIPTU has now joined the fray as well. However, Translink has said to the unions that they can't table a pay offer because the Department for Infrastructure (or rather a civil service boss called Denis McMahon), hasn't given them the money and therefore the unions have written to McMahon saying that they are willing to ballot for strike action unless it is sorted out. The GMB seem to be taking the lead again like last year, with their official Peter Macklin, briefing the press and both Unite and SIPTU very much in the background at the minute. Don't hold your breath, folks.



MEANWHILE...IN BALLYMENA

Wee shindig last month here in Ballymena. It was organised in the oul' Ecos Centre (now a business hub - environment out, entrepreneurialism in), and was by some mob I'd never heard of before - the Mid and East Antrim Labour Market Partnership. Bit of digging around online revealed that these Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) were set up last year by the Department of Communities across all the council areas in the North. A mixture of the usual 'stakeholders', employers, politicians, professional community activists and recruitment agencies, but no trade unions obviously, come together to find how best to exploit our labour. Lions and the coliseum come to mind. No doubt these LMPs will become more of a feature over the next wee while and are worth watching, folks. They derive their legitimacy from the councils which sponsor and support them and drive an economic agenda free of any preconditions, oversight or in-built protection for workers.

200 workers take wildcat action



Limerick Bus Éireann drivers protest new rosters



All bus services out of Limerick city bus station were cancelled at the start of this month as a group of drivers went wildcat. They were protesting new bus rosters imposed on them by Bus Éireann bosses and snail's pace action from their union bosses, the National Bus & Rail Union whose official persuaded the workers to return to work after two days of action.

FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE – CORK CLIMATE PROTEST

On Friday the 16th of September a School Strike for Climate was staged by students in Cork. Brought into widespread publicity by Greta Thunberg, School Strike for Climate (also known as Fridays For Future and various other names) aims to organise students to skip their Friday classes and protest the destruction of our planet. On the day, a hundred people, most of them in their teens, gathered on a cold and wet Cork day and marched along St. Patrick's Street and back down Oliver Plunkett chanting slogans for climate justice and people power. The march ended, as all these things do, with speeches. Most were fairly decent, if a little too long for the weather. But why, when we had just been chanting "The People have the Power!" do we "pray" that politicians start paying attention to us and do something about climate change? They're the ones that made this a problem in the first place! We cannot look to a Capitalist state to fix problems caused by Capitalism, and we certainly can't expect them to help us, the working class, deal with its consequences.

When the shit hits the fan and Cork City, or any city in the world, starts to flood who is going to be there handing out food to the hungry and tents to the houseless? It won't be the state; it won't be the politicians or the landlords who will have fucked off to higher ground because they could afford it. It will be the people; it will be neighbors and caring people from all around who will come to give aid to those who need it when they need it the most. After days, or weeks, sure, the state will show up. The military and police will come to "restore order" while the people who did what needed to be done during that *anarchy* will be forgotten.

Let's hope that the young people who put this protest together begin to recognize where climate change is, not where it will end.

WC





War without end?

Events in Palestine-Israel have overtaken this edition of *Black Star* and no doubt will have further developments to come. Obviously as anti-militarists, most anarchists want an end to this war and do not take the position that one set of nationalists are better than another and more deserving of respect and support. That is not to say this is a symmetrical conflict, there is a clear disparity between the two forces arrayed against each other in which Israel has the upper hand and the greater support from mainly western states,

with Hamas relying on the support of both states like Iran and their non-state (or semi-state) actors, like Hezbollah. The brutality exacted on both sides is hardly surprising given the long contest for territory between Israelis and Palestinians and as usual, Israeli's right to 'self-defence' is about to express itself in an offensive, which has already begun, that promises to decimate the open-air prison that is Gaza. In the middle, as always, are the majority of ordinary working class people, trying to work, trying to survive and look after their families. We stand with the workers on both sides trying to escape the growing entropy of this nightmarish zero-sum conflict. No war but the class war!

LANES, LIES AND LIABILITIES

The start of this month saw the final implementation of the Windsor Framework, the fudge agreed between the UK and the EU about the east-west trade fiction caused by Brexit. It was hoped at the time that this would ensure the DUP might stop their boycott of Stormont but that, of course, has not happened. The introduction of green lanes for products coming from Britain into Northern Ireland and red lanes for those heading over the border has been added to by labels on some products declaring they are 'Not for EU'. Of course, the Framework is bollocks, a piece of political chicanery dreamt up by morons convinced that unionist opinion here can be convinced the North's status is constitutionally exactly the same by the addition of a customs shed, a few tins of paint and some food labelling...and a document that says 'Windsor' on it. The DUP, Jim Allister, Jamie Bryson, and Steven Nolan are not convinced, though NIC-ICTU declared their support for the Framework almost as soon as the ink dried on the signatures of Sunak and Von der Leyen. That's in spite of the fact that a revived Stormont offers little or no chance of any engagement or progress on the pay claims (many of them, ironically, about pay parity with workers in Britain), driving the current wave of strikes in education and health. As a Unison rep recently admitted on television, the return of 'government' didn't guarantee anything for workers other than a new set of 'tough choices'. In addition, the last few days of late October have witnessed fucking Joe Kennedy smiling like a Cheshire cat as the sharks of big business gather at Stormont behind closed doors with both Orange and Green politicians (and every other shade of shite in between), to agree how best to exploit our labour in the new set of relationships that optimise the opportunities for them and narrow opportunities for the rest of us. Naturally, as anarchists we stand opposed to all borders, porous or otherwise, whether in the Irish Sea, between North and South, or any other part of the globe. They divide our class, physically and figuratively, and maximise the strength and opportunities for those seeking to keep us apart, feed nationalist mythologies on all sides and increasingly size us up for exploitation.

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...

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



Northern Anarcho-Syndicalist News from Organise!