

The Anarchists Are Coming!



Sunday Independent claims anarchists are 'infiltrating' bin tax campaign

The mouthpiece of millionaire Tony O'Reilly, the Sunday Independent, got terribly excited when it 'discovered' there were anarchists involved in the bin tax campaign. Or, as it oddly put it, anarchists of the Workers Solidarity Movement had "infiltrated the campaign in significant numbers". The Sindo was also outraged that anarchists have also been active in anti-war protests at Shannon and in Reclaim the Streets, in particular the infamous Gardai riot on Dame St on May 6th 2001.

This is just another in a long line of articles that show that the media believe working class people are too thick to organise the likes of the bin tax blockade on their own. Instead it must be all due to some sort of outside influence, the Socialist Party being the first target and now anarchists and soon no doubt Martians. As such it could be simply dismissed as yet more Dublin 4 ravings from people on high salaries who simply don't get it.

We'd like to go beyond this. We'd like to put our hands up and say 'yep we are involved in this campaign and have been from the start of it three years back'. At various points our members have been on the steering committees of 3 of the 4 Dublin campaigns and one of our Cork members was jailed back in May 2001 for his role in the campaign there. Oh, and as well as taking direct action at Shannon and being involved in RTS, we have also helped bring the Women on Waves ship to Ireland, rioted against the IMF in Prague, trespassed at



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the rich man's golf club at the Old Head of Kinsale and taken part in 100 other actions that would hopefully have Tony O'Reilly choking over his coffee.

One of the bin tax protesters on the Late Late put it well when he shouted that Minister Martin Cullen 'didn't understand where we were coming from because you live in another place, you're from Mars'. The media campaign against the bin tax campaigns show that, they too are from that other place. That place is closer than Mars, let's call it Dalkey, Foxrock or any other place where they fork out a million euro for a four bedroom house.

This country is ruled by a very small percentage of the population who are very rich and very powerful. They own or control the places where we work, drink and shop. They own or control the TV stations we watch, the radio we listen to and the newspapers we read. They own the houses we need to live in and the ground that more houses can be built on. They own the banks we have to borrow money from to buy a house or the homes we rent from them. The courts and the Gardai exist to serve them and to keep us down which is why there has been no shortage of cops to intimidate peaceful protests and no shortage of jail space to lock up protesters. It might take years for a Tribunal to

investigate the most outrageous cases of tax evasion by the rich, without anyone going to jail, it only takes hours to jail a bin tax protester.

So when Tony O'Reilly's mouthpiece accuses us of fighting back we say, 'damn right we are'. In 2002 he was the richest man in Ireland with a personal wealth of 1,300 million pounds. So when he accuses us of realising that what is at stake is more than the bin tax we own up as well. What is at stake is a world

where two billion people live on less than a dollar a day while he and his mates whoop it up.

Wouldn't it be great if the Sindo's 'far left scare' backfired. If rather than scaring the tens of thousands involved in the anti bin tax campaign it meant they said 'maybe we should check out this crowd that are giving O'Reilly sleepless nights. Maybe its time to wake up, have a look around and get organised.'



A funny way to 'infiltrate'

Service Charges

Taking from the poor to give to the rich

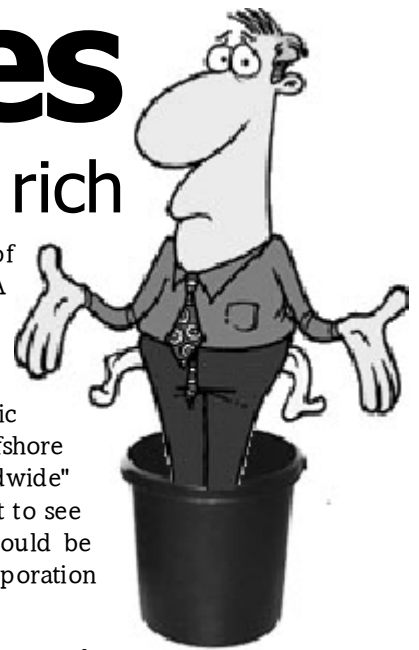
One of the main reasons that we are fighting against the bin tax is because it is another attempt to transfer wealth from workers to the rich. Figures from the Central Statistics Office show that in 1987 wages and salaries amounted to 59% of Gross Domestic Product, while profits and rents taken by capitalists amounted to 41%. By 2001 the proportion going to workers had fallen to 46% while profits and rents rose to 54%. Our 'share' of national wealth had fallen by 30% while that of the bosses had risen by at least 55%. One of the factors behind this transfer of wealth is our increasingly unjust tax system.

CORI's 2003 budget submission pointed out that "Ireland takes a far higher proportion of its taxes from income tax (31.4%) compared to the EU (25.5%)." OECD figures from 2002 revealed that, although Ireland is the lowest taxing EU country, in terms of the proportion of total revenue accounted for by personal income tax (31%), it comes fourth highest in the European Union. The goods and services tax (VAT), at 39% of the total tax take, is also high in comparison with other member states.

The suggestion has been made that the PAYE tax cuts of the last years cancel out the bin tax. Yet these tax cuts were already sold to us as a substitute for wage rises under the various 'National partnership' deals and the tax cuts corporations and the rich were getting at the same time were worth more than the tax cuts given to ordinary workers. In the 2001 and 2002 budgets alone, corporate tax cuts amounted to over 600 million euro.

The Confederation of British Industry says Ireland's taxes on profits, employers' National Insurance contributions, and business

rates accounted for 7.2% of GNP. This is below the USA (7.3%), Germany (10.1%), Netherlands (9.7) and France (14.4%). Lowtax.net which provides an "electronic source of information on offshore and 'low-tax' regimes worldwide" says of Ireland "It is difficult to see what other EU country would be brave enough to take its corporation tax rate down to 12.5%"



Service charges like the bin tax make the situation even less fair. At least income tax is progressive - people pay a certain percentage of their income as tax and the more that people earn, the higher percentage they pay. The bin tax, on the other hand, is a flat fee and everybody pays the same amount. This is a regressive tax as the more that you earn, the smaller the percentage of your income that you pay in tax. A billionaire like Tony O'Reilly pays the same bin tax as a cleaner or a bus driver.

Minister Martin Cullen has indicated that he hopes to get the bin charge up to 700 Euro a year and we know that they hope to get other charges up by a couple of hundred as well. In five or ten years, such local charges could easily total 1000 Euro. Take two households. One has an income of 20,000 the other 200,000. The first would be paying 5% of their income on service charges, the second would be paying 0.5%. The rich will get richer and workers will have to shoulder even more of the costs of public services.

Government announces new 'turd tax'

Minister for the environment Martin Cullen today announced a new tax on visits to the toilet, which has already been dubbed the 'turd tax'. He said, "the government is firmly attached to the 'polluter pays' principle and in this case it



New 'pay as you go' toilet

is very clear who's responsible for the pollution. When we introduced the bin-tax, many people complained that householders were not responsible for the packaging that came with their purchases, nobody can say that about this new 'environmental sewerage charge'."

Minister Cullen emphasised the low level of the charge, "number ones are

a mere 50 cents each, while number twos are a bargain at 2 euros. Dublin residents should be delighted with the sewerage service they are receiving at these low charges."

Fine Gael and the PD's both welcomed the charges, but Minister for Justice McDowell expressed reservations about the proposed enforcement measures "we can't just apply the charge after every flush as some households could only flush after several uses. For the charge to be successful, we are going to have to install CCTV cameras in all Irish toilets."

The Green Party and Labour both came out against the charges, but encouraged citizens to pay and just vote for them at the next election. Green party environment spokesman, Ciaran Cuffe, said that the charges should be volume-

related, rather than the current, "one price per flush" model. "Vegetarians who survive on a diet of lettuce and carrot juice generally produce a low volume of waste, this charge should reward them."

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern warned the public that non-payment would not be tolerated. "We all have to do our bit for the environment, anybody who objects to this charge is just sponging off their neighbours. We will disconnect them from the sewerage system and any protestors will end up in Mounjoy where the normal charge will apply for trips to the toilet."

One unexpected side-effect of the tax is that the Dail has become a very silent place. Politicians across all the parties have realised that they are now liable to be charged every time they open their mouths.

Anarchists, the bin tax & direct action

There are many political groups and individuals involved in the campaign against the bin tax. Many of them see the campaign as little more than a way of getting votes in the local elections of June 2004. Some of them, like the Labour Party, have been particularly cynical about this. While they say that they are against the tax, they have taken no part in the blockades and have even denounced them. Other parties of the left have taken part in the blockades and have even had members sent to jail, but when it comes down to it, they still see the bin tax campaign as a way of raising their profiles in advance of the elections.

This is what makes the anarchists different. The Workers Solidarity Movement, an organisation of Irish anarchists, has been involved in the campaign from the start. Some of our members are key activists in local campaigns who have played a big part in building up the campaign for the last 3 years. However, we do not participate in elections and will never come knocking on your door looking for a vote.

Anarchists seek to build a society where everybody has a say in the decisions that affect them. We get involved in campaigns to help our communities gain confidence in their own abilities to stand up to the state. We don't believe that this can ever be achieved by a political party taking power on our behalf, no matter how well-meaning they are. We think that the experience of organising in a democratic way in our communities and workplaces can empower us all and give us the confidence to stand up for ourselves against whatever government happens to be in power.

An important part of this is the notion of 'direct action'. Direct action means

that we try to bring about change directly through our own actions rather than by asking somebody else to take action on our behalf. During the Iraqi war that meant that, rather than appealing to the government to stop helping the US war machine, we went to Shannon airport and took part in mass trespasses. In the bin tax campaign it meant that we promoted non-payment and blockades as tactics rather than lobbying or voting for politicians.

Anarchists favour direct action for several reasons. For one thing it gets the goods. It is all too easy for the powerful to ignore us when we march or take part in other symbolic protests. In February 100,000 marched against the war and the government didn't change their position one iota. However, when we take action that disrupts business as usual, they have no choice but to sit up and take notice. When we refuse to pay an unjust tax or blockade a depot in protest at non-collection, we demonstrate clearly that we have collective power that can't be ignored. Direct action is empowering, in that it allows us to see that our own actions are making a difference, rather than trusting some elected representative to sort it out on our behalf.

That is why, long after the bin tax campaign has gone, the anarchists will still be around, active in your neighbourhood. We will be looking for opportunities to organise democratically in our communities whenever we think we have a chance of standing up for ourselves together against the unjust laws of the powerful. We are getting stronger, more experienced and more ambitious all the time. We will keep on being a thorn in the side of the powerful. We aren't going away!

Cullen is a liar

Minister for the Environment, Martin Cullen claims that bin charges are necessary to deal with the waste crisis in this country. He keeps repeating that the 'polluter pays' and he wants to save the environment. He is lying through his teeth, like all the other members of the government. They have even paid for an expensive TV ad to blame householders for the pathetic failure of their policies.

The Government's own Environmental Protection Agency surveyed the amount of waste going to landfill in 2001. The E.P.A. found that a total of 8,277,598 tons of waste was accepted at landfills, broken down as follows:

Household (15%)	1,254,859
Commercial	737,193 (9%)
Construction (13%)	1,094,496
Industrial	4,480,754 (54%)
Other	710,296 (9%)

** Figures from the National Waste Database Report 2001-
<http://www.epa.ie>*

Is it any surprise that this Government would try to deny that 85% of the waste going to landfill is created by their cronies in business and construction? In the last two budgets, 634 million Euros was handed to the corporate sector, which would have paid for all the necessary investment in waste management for the whole country, with money left over for vital investment in other neglected areas of the national infrastructure.

What about Cullen's so-called concern for the environment?

- He ignored calls to keep the Irish Glass Bottle Company open and develop a national glass recycling facility. Now, all the glass that householders are carefully separating has to go to Northern Ireland or abroad for recycling, using valuable resources to transport it.
- In 2001, of the total amount of plastic disposed of by households, 99.4% went into landfill because there are no facilities in the country for it to be recycled or reused.

Well, the EU made him do it (or 'a big boy did it and ran away'). The EU Directives that the Government has been using as an excuse do not direct Governments on how to pay for waste management. There is nothing to stop the Government telling the EU that compliant PAYE taxpayers have already paid for services like waste management through central taxation. Of course, they might have some difficulty explaining why they haven't gone after the tax on the Euro 4 billion salted away by millionaire Irish account holders in Isle of Man banks, never mind the Ansbacher millions. But this Government is no more interested in taxation justice than they are in an effective waste management strategy. Martin Cullen, it's time to bin your lies!



The Bin Tax & Privatisation

It is no secret that the government wants to privatise the bin service in Dublin. The service has already been privatised in thirty-seven Local Authorities around the country.

Although some particularly treacherous Trade Union bureaucrats have tried to claim that the tactics of the campaign against the bin tax will lead to privatisation, this is absurd. Firstly, in every single one of the cases where the service has been privatised around the country, the bin tax was imposed before privatisation. Secondly, how the hell is the government going to be able to sell a service that nobody pays for? It is quite clear from the evidence that, once the government crushes resistance to the tax, privatisation is the next step.

Privatisation will be a disaster for workers and communities alike. Communities will see charges rising through the roof. This has already happened in Sligo where the charges are now 540 euros per year, with no waiver system. Workers will see attacks on their pay and conditions, short-term contracts and the gradual replacement of their jobs with 'yellow-pack' jobs. Privatised Oxigen workers have already been forced to strike to even win union recognition - if privatisation is brought in this could soon be the situation for all bin workers.

Opposition to privatisation has always been a major part of the campaign against the bin tax. We have always argued that, if the bin tax is defeated, the council will have



to roll back their plans for privatisation. The campaign has been running for 3 years now, during which time we built up levels of non-payment to levels as high as 80% in working class areas. Then the council introduced their policy of non-collection. The campaign realised that, if they were allowed to get away with it, non-payment would collapse, as people simply can't leave uncollected bins lying about the place for weeks on end. Therefore we mounted blockades on trucks and depots across the city to demand the end to non-collection.

The blockades were extremely effective, especially since they were supported by the workers who generally refused to cross them. However, the state responded with a ridiculous level of repression and has now jailed over 20 residents for taking part

in these protests. This has meant that many people are now too terrified to take part in these blockades. At this stage it is likely that the only people who have the power to stand up to non-collection are the bin workers themselves. If they had the courage to refuse to implement the policy of non-collection, the campaign would be able to build up non-payment figures in a short time and finally defeat this double tax, putting privatisation firmly off the agenda in the process. If, on the other hand, the bin workers do implement non-collection, the campaign will probably be defeated and privatisation will quickly follow. In a couple of years time, council bin workers could find themselves striking for the right to even be in a union, as the Oxigen workers have had to do.

Unfortunately, it is very unlikely that the union leadership will put up anything of a fight. They have become too cosy with the government and IBEC through social partnership and have lost the habit of fighting. The only people who have a realistic chance of fighting privatisation are the bin workers themselves. However, if they wait too long before taking a stand they could find themselves fighting alone.

If they were to take a stand now and refuse to implement non-collection they will find a huge level of support in the communities and they will have the full backing of the anti-bin tax campaign which will fight alongside them against privatisation and against the bin tax.

Anarchist contacts in the bin-tax campaign

Anarchists in the WSM have been part of the campaign since the beginning. At various points our members have been on the steering committees of 3 of the 4 Dublin campaigns and one of our Cork members was jailed back in May 2001 for his role in the campaign there. If you want to get in touch with anarchists active in the bin tax campaign in your area, drop us a line.

Cabra: Dermot 087-6277606 / **Dun Laoghaire:** Conor 087-6591564

Stoneybatter: Alan 087-9558930 / James 01-6337425

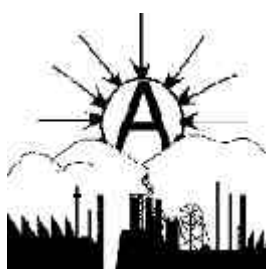
Rest of Dublin/Cork: Chekov 087-7939931

Stand up for yourself - but you can't do it alone

**Workers Solidarity
Movement**

PO box 1528, Dublin 8, 087-7939931

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Get in touch with the anarchists in your area

Cork Against the Bin Tax

Although the government and media have been pretending that the bin-tax is only being opposed in Dublin, the truth is that it has been opposed everywhere that it has been brought in. In their typical, cynical manner, they waited until they had defeated the resistance in most of the country before introducing the tax to Dublin.

However, the campaign is still active in Cork city.

In 2001, several activists from the Householders Against Service Charges (HASC) campaign in Cork, including a member of the WSM, were jailed for taking part in the protests against the tax. In the last few weeks the campaign has kicked off again with well-attended meetings in Mayfield and Ballyphehane. These meetings have demonstrated clearly that a large number of people in Cork are still opposed to the charges and still refusing to pay.

To get in touch with the Cork campaign, email hasc@ireland.com