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Workers Solidarity Movement

Ireland

Andrew Flood

March 25, 2005

The Workers Solidarity Movement is the Irish anarchist communist organisation who members are involved in anarkismo.net. It has been active on a wide range of issues in Ireland for over 20 years.

The Workers Solidarity Movement was founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1984 following discussions by a number of local anarchist groups on the need for a national anarchist organisation. At that time with unemployment and inequality on the rise, there seemed every reason to argue for anarchism and for a revolutionary change in Irish society. This has not changed.

Like most socialists we share a fundamental belief that capitalism is the problem. We believe that as a system it must be ended, that the wealth of society should be commonly owned and that its resources should be used to serve the needs of humanity as a whole and not those of a small greedy minority. But, just as importantly, we see this struggle against capitalism as also being a struggle for freedom. We believe that socialism and freedom must go together, that we cannot have one without the other. As Mikhail Bakunin,

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Retrieved on 8th August 2021 from www.anarkismo.net

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the Russian anarchist said, “Socialism without freedom is tyranny and brutality”.

Anarchism has always stood for individual freedom. But it also stands for democracy. We believe in democratising the workplace and in workers taking control of all industry. We believe that this is the only real alternative to capitalism with its on going reliance on hierarchy and oppression and its depletion of the world’s resources.

In the years since our formation, we’ve been involved in a wide range of struggles — our members are involved in their trade unions; we’ve fought for abortion rights and against the presence of the British state in Northern Ireland, and against the growth of racism in southern Ireland; we’ve also been involved in campaigns in support of workers from countries as far apart as Nepal, Peru and South Africa. Alongside this, we have produced over eighty issues of our paper Workers Solidarity, and a wide range of pamphlets.

As anarchists we see ourselves as part of a long tradition that has fought against all forms of authoritarianism and exploitation, a tradition that strongly influenced one of the most successful and far reaching revolutions in this century — in Spain in 1936 — 37. The value of this tradition cannot be underestimated today. With the fall of the Soviet Union there is renewed interest in our ideas and in the tradition of libertarian socialism generally. We hope to encourage this interest with Red & Black Revolution. We believe that anarchists and libertarian socialists should debate and discuss their ideas, that they should popularise their history and struggle, and help point to a new way forward.

Our newspaper Workers Solidarity is now a free news-sheet and appears 6 times a year. With a print-run of 6,000, this means a huge increase in the number of people here in Ireland receiving information about anarchism and struggle for change. We have simplified the process for joining the WSM. Although the basics still hold — you have to agree with the WSM’s democratically decided policies

and you have to agree to work for these — joining is a lot more straight forward. If you want details on this just write or email us.

In recent years the WSM has been very active in opposing the war and in particular in helping to organise direct actions at Shannon. We also fought the introduction of bin charges in Dublin, our Cork members were also involved in the campaign there and were also been active in the Old Head of Kinsale struggle.

In terms of helping to build a broad libertarian movement in Ireland we have continued to work in the Grassroots Gathering. We also initiated campaigns against both Nice referenda, in the second over 50,000 libertarian leaflets were distributed.

We were involved in the organisation of a number of Reclaim the Streets including the one that saw the Gardai riot on Dame street. We helped defeat the 2002 March 6th anti abortion referendum and were very involved in bringing Women on Waves to Ireland before that referendum.

We played a significant role in organising against the EU summits part of the Dublin Grassroots network.

To get regular updates about what we are up to subscribe to our mailing list Ainriail.

The WSM currently has three branches in Ireland, two in Dublin and one in Cork.

If you are interested in finding out more about anarchism or the WSM, contact us.