

For starters (WS40)

Workers Solidarity Movement

1993

WHEN IT WAS learnt that nazi historian and organiser David Irving was to visit Ireland the WSM joined with other anti-fascists in a broad Stop Irving Campaign. Such was the strength of opposition to his proposed visit that all four separate invitations to him were cancelled. We produced a pamphlet, Stop the Nazi, which explained Irving's background as an organiser for fascism and why anarchists would deny him a platform from which to recruit for nazi terror gangs. A few copies are still available for 30p.

During the summer we helped the "Pat the Baker" strikers to organise a support group. This attracted SIPTU members, people in other unions, unemployed and students. Each week this group is leafletting between six and twelve supermarkets urging shoppers to boycott 'Pat the Baker' products. It has also helped raise cash for the strikers and arranged a feeder march to join the 1913 pageant in August.

Also during the summer we debated with representatives of the Anarchist Communist Federation and the Direct Action Movement from Britain at a summer camp hosted by the Belfast and Bangor-based 'Organise!' group. Useful discussions were had on trade union work, nationalism and ways to organise.

While many anarchist organisations and publishing houses do a good job of reprinting the 'classics', there is a shortage of cheap pamphlets addressing current issues. As a small contribution towards redressing the balance we have published Kevin Doyle's Parliament or Democracy. This explains why anarchists don't vote for governments. If democracy really means those affected by decisions having a say in making those decisions, then the choice is Parliament or Democracy.

August marked the anniversary of the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Eighty years ago four hundred employers of the city — led by Irish Independent, Irish Catholic and Dublin United Tramways owner — William Martin Murphy set out to smash the unions. The ITGWU was recruiting the unskilled in their thousands and winning claims through sympathetic strikes and blacking.

It is important to reject the common fallacy that change "just happens". Determined to reclaim our working class history and to mark this historic occasion a commemoration committee was formed. Its brief was to remind people that the improvements we enjoy today were won through struggle and solidarity. Composed of a handful of anarchists and socialists, including members of the Workers Solidarity Movement, it drew up an impressive list of events and won the formal support of several major unions.

These events included three public meetings, publication of a pamphlet (see page 17 for details), a walking tour of sites connected with lockout, an exhibition in an inner city community centre, and a radio show (on local station Anna Livia FM). Some were well organised, some not so well prepared. This reflected the small number of people involved in the organisation of the events, for while there was a lot of verbal support for this initiative there was a shortage of willing workers.

Very noticeable was the almost complete media blackout of the events. Only the pageant was covered. Everything else was ignored. The bosses' media were not in a hurry to give publicity to workers' struggles. No surprise there. Just one further reminder of how the "free press" has the limits of its freedom set by its millionaire owners.

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