



SOLIDARITY

Bulletin

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ORGANISE! - Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation, PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ

BLAIR & PRESCOTT GO TO WAR -

CLASS WAR

DIRECT ACTION GETS RESULTS

 The occupation of Richardson's Fertiliser plant has ended in a victory for the workers.

The issue of pensions is still unresolved but we must be clear that this is a victory for workers who took their struggle into their own hands and occupied the Richardson's plant in Belfast. It is a victory for direct action.

Workers ended their occupation with an agreement on significantly improved redundancy terms.

The announcement that Richardson's was to go into liquidation with the closure of its plants in Belfast, Cork and Arklow, was made last month.

On top of 206 jobs lost in Belfast alone workers were further angered at the refusal of the Irish Government (51% shareholder) and British multinational ICI (49% shareholder) not to pay redundancy in accordance with standing agreements.

They also discovered that they would not receive their full pension entitlements from the company pension scheme under the liquidation plans.

Protests were held outside the offices of Irish Enterprise Minister Mary Harney.



Fire-fighters are taking on both the New Labour Government and local employers in what is undoubtedly a political as well as an economic confrontation.

Lets be clear, this fight is not just about Fire-fighters pay. 'Tory' Blair and 'two jags' Prescott are deliberately attacking these workers in a bid to make them

'Blair's Miners'. The hope is that any other potential for workplace resistance will be crushed with the crushing of the Fire-fighters.

New Labour are out to prove they will not be weak in dealing with the unions and, like every other serving government, are there to serve the bosses interests

not the workers. This is about smashing organised workers who can't agree that New Labour Britain has heralded a classless society.

To prove them wrong New Labour is using tried and tested means to put workers down. Threats, slander, misinformation and lies abound.

Government and media have launched into this battle ruthlessly. Their ruthlessness is a stark reminder of the class war raging in the heart of society.

This battle, and its outcome, will have a long-lasting impact on the labour movement. It is a battle which must be won.

SUPPORT OUR FIRE-FIGHTERS

We Will Not Be Slaves

Jim Quinn, chair Northern Ireland Region FBU, addressing Belfast Trades Council Meeting



In the midst of deliberate provocation of fire-fighters and the preparation for a particularly acute battle in the class war by the New Labour Government public support remains solid for the fire-fighters. Their resolve has, if anything, strengthened in opposition to the Governments agenda of 'modernisation' (which amounts to nothing but cut backs, attacks on jobs and an assault on terms and conditions), lies and media manipulation.

In Belfast meetings are taking place to better co-ordinate and build support among the general public and most importantly across the labour movement. At the first such meeting on Thursday the 21st of November in Transport House, organised by the Belfast Trades Union Council, Jim Quinn, chair Northern Ireland region FBU, reflected the defiance of the workers.

"Its time for backbone not back down", he stated in what he has correctly pointed out is a struggle about the rights and conditions of all workers.

At the meeting, addressed by two local FBU representatives, shop stewards and activists from numerous Trades Unions and leftwing organisations united in support of the fire-fighters. Material was distributed by the ton to help build support for the dispute. Leaflets stating the fire-fighters case, posters, whistles and stickers were taken to help with the struggle.

Solidarity was also expressed for the workers involved in the then ongoing occupation of Richardson's Fertilisers plant in Belfast, a number of whom had attended to show support for the fire-fighters.

Another meeting was organised then and there, for Tuesday 26th of November, in the Unemployed Resource Centre, which will have taken place by the time this bulletin is at the printers.

Solidarity action will be continue and will be intensified through out this dispute which sees the Government attack on the fire-fighters as an attempt for the New Labour Government to prove beyond doubt its capitalist credentials. As Jim Quinn pointed out the fire-fighters have become **"Blair's miners"**.

Defending the use of industrial action by fire-fighters, which they are clear has been forced upon them by the actions of Government, he stated;

"Without the right to withdraw our labour we are just slaves. We will not be slaves".

This should be the start of a unified and broader struggle among, initially, public sector workers struggling against this Governments 'modernisation' agenda, attacks on terms and conditions across the board, ongoing privatisation and cut backs across the sector. Workers must go on the offensive and take on the bosses, and our Local and National Governments which are implementing the bosses agenda. As Jim said of the fire-fighters this is about all workers;

"We have set the tone for change & its time for workers to set the agenda. Because we are all worth it".

FIRE-FIGHTERS HARDSHIP FUND

Members of Organise! - Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation Belfast Local have attended the picket line at Central Fire Station in Belfast and are still taking part in street collections for the fire fighters hardship fund.

It is regrettable that these days strike pay is never enough to sustain workers in struggle, it is also even more important to support this fund given the nature of the show down the Labour government are engaging in. Blair's statement at a meeting of the CBI on Monday morning was a declaration of war on the FBU. Sequestration of FBU funds is highly likely to become a weapon aimed at undermining the workers resolve in this battle against the Government.

It is urgent that WE ALL do what we can to SUPPORT THE HARDSHIP FUND.

Financial support can be lodged directly into the fund. The fund is operated on a regional basis, all money raised in solidarity with the fire fighters across Ireland stays with the Northern Ireland region of the FBU and will be distributed to the membership directly by their elected officials on the basis of need.

Account details:

Northern Bank Sort Code: 95-03-61
Account Number: 11242822

Please forward all lodgement slips to Stephen C. Boyd, The Fire Brigades Union, 11 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT28 1XJ.

The importance of this dispute, and the impact its outcome will have on the labour movement, cannot be underestimated. Solidarity is strength.

Support the Fire Fighters.

DIRECT ACTION GETS RESULTS

(from front page)

Workers at the Belfast factory occupied the plant for several weeks. According to one former Richardson's workers we spoke to Mary Harney told workers representatives that while the laid off workers may have the moral right that she had the law on her side. Needless to say the meeting got the workers nowhere. Harney scuttled off out the back door leaving the workers delegation to let the people outside know what a shower of shit the Irish Government are when it comes to the plight of those dumped on the dole.

The use of direct action by the workers forced the liquidator to acknowledge the agreements workers had in Belfast. Agreements which had been in place for 20 years.

The Irish Government and ICI are still refusing to honour the workers pensions. Union officials are, according to Eamonn McDade, Industrial Officer SIPTU, "hopeful that that will be resolved further down the line."

The ex-Richardson's workers in Belfast took matters in to their own hands with the use of direct action. They effectively held the liquidator to ransom to ensure they got what they were owed, while the occupation lasted the machinery and fertiliser still on sight and in the hands of the occupiers spoke a language that these bastards have to understand.

If any movement is likely on the payment of pensions direct action, against ICI and the Irish Government, is the tactic most likely to succeed.

AS THE OCCUPATION ENDS NIR FREIGHT EMPLOYEES FACE END OF THE LINE

As the Richardson's occupation ends the impact of the closure continues to be felt.

Other workers are facing an uncertain future as the axe falls on NIR's Adelaide Freight depot.

Five men are to lose their jobs at the Freight Yard as part of major cut backs in the Iarnrod Eireann Freight operation. Adelaide Freight is operated by Irish Rail, with track, management, staff and facilities provided by NIR/Translink. Its closure comes in the wake of CIE agreement with the southern Minister for Transport to "withdraw from unprofitable rail freight operations". The Richardson's closure sees the loss of around 70% of the depots work.

Translink management are prepared to offer redeployment - but on worse terms and conditions. The majority of the men are demanding redundancy settlements but management have made it clear that they will have a fight on their hands. On top of facing an uncertain future these men have also been lied too. Told that if redeployment is offered they must accept it when, legally, they do not have to accept worse terms and conditions.

These men have been employed to work as general operatives in the freight depot with 9 to 5 hours. These are the hours these men have worked their lives, and the lives of their families, around for years. Any redeployment will mean moving the men on to shift work.

Irish Rail are offering workers the choice between redeployment and voluntary redundancy, workers in the north are demanding the same choice.

AIMS & PRINCIPLES

Organise! – Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation

1) Organise! – Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation is a working class organisation.

2) Organise! – ASF seeks to secure for all workers a full and equal share of the wealth and social benefits created by the combined labour of our class.

3) We aim to create a free and classless society. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery and to replace them with workers control of industry and society, ensuring production and distribution for need not profit.

4) To achieve this revolutionary change in society, and to better organise ourselves in our struggle against the bosses, we are striving towards the creation of a new independent workers organisation – the Anarcho-Syndicalist Union.

5) The Anarcho-Syndicalist union is one controlled by the workers themselves. Organising industrially we shall cut across the barriers of trades sectionalism. Such a union will unite, not divide, workers. Any and all delegates will be directly elected, mandated and subject to immediate recall by that membership.

6) Such unions will build effective class organisation in order not only to win improvements within Capitalism but ultimately to win the class war with its overthrow through the Social General Strike. The Social General Strike is the means by which workers shall take control of our land, factories and workplaces, it is the start of a truly social revolutionary transformation of society.

7) Organise! – ASF rejects parliamentary democracy as at best a distraction and a sham. We are not in the business of building, nor do we support, any political parties. The interests of the working class cannot be pursued in the halls of political power and intrigue, our real strength lies in our communities and, even more so, at the point of production.

8) Organise! – ASF recognises the appalling effects of Capitalism on the natural environment, and believe this to be the normal result of a system which treats both workers and the planet as something to be exploited and disposed of at will. We believe that access to a sustainable lifestyle is not a luxury for the wealthy, but something urgent and important that must be extended to the mass of working people. Sustainable communities cannot arise as a result of reforming Capitalism, nor can they be imposed by the state. With this in mind, one of the functions of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Union must be to demand rational and sustainable practices.

9) We take an active part within the existing labour movement, agitating in defence of pay and working conditions, while helping to build a spirit of confidence amongst our fellow workers in order that we may, together, go on the offensive against the bosses.

10) The class struggle is world-wide and must recognise no artificial borders or boundaries. Party political interests, nationalism's, racism, homophobia and sexism divide our class and turn us against one another – to the benefit of the boss. We must fight all attempts by the state and capitalism to divide our class and we must not tolerate divisions based on bigotry and ignorance which stand against equality and the right of people to control their own lives. We must organise along class lines if we are to secure a better future for ourselves, our fellow workers and society as a whole. Our class exists the world over and we have a common struggle the world over. We are therefore internationalists, opposing all political and geographic borders and instead organise with other workers towards world-wide workers unity in face of global capital and government oppression.

11) We reject the notion, propagated by government, the employers and the trades union bureaucracy, of 'social partnership' between workers, bosses and government. The bosses are not our partners.

12) We reject the notions of various 'left-wing' parties, the would be 'vanguards' of the working class, that the state can be 'conquered' and used against the bosses. Government, no matter on whose behalf, has always rested on domination and exploitation, it is an inherently repressive institution and as such beyond reform. The basic function of the state – that is the courts and prisons, the army and police, civil service and other state institutions – is to defend the interests of the bosses. Government is a top down institution which puts power into the hands of the few. All efforts at creating a 'Workers state' have only led to further oppression of the workers themselves as those in power consolidated and strengthened their positions.

13) At present the we are a propaganda group, it is the role of Organise! – ASF to support workers in struggle and to expose the weakness of traditional trades unionism. We aim to highlight attacks being directed against our class and promote, organise and support resistance to any such attacks by use of direct action. Direct action is any form of struggle under the direct control of those involved without reliance on politicians, trades union bureaucrats or any other would be leaders acting on 'our behalf'. Ultimately we work towards the creation of an Anarcho-Syndicalist Union Federation in Ireland.

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR

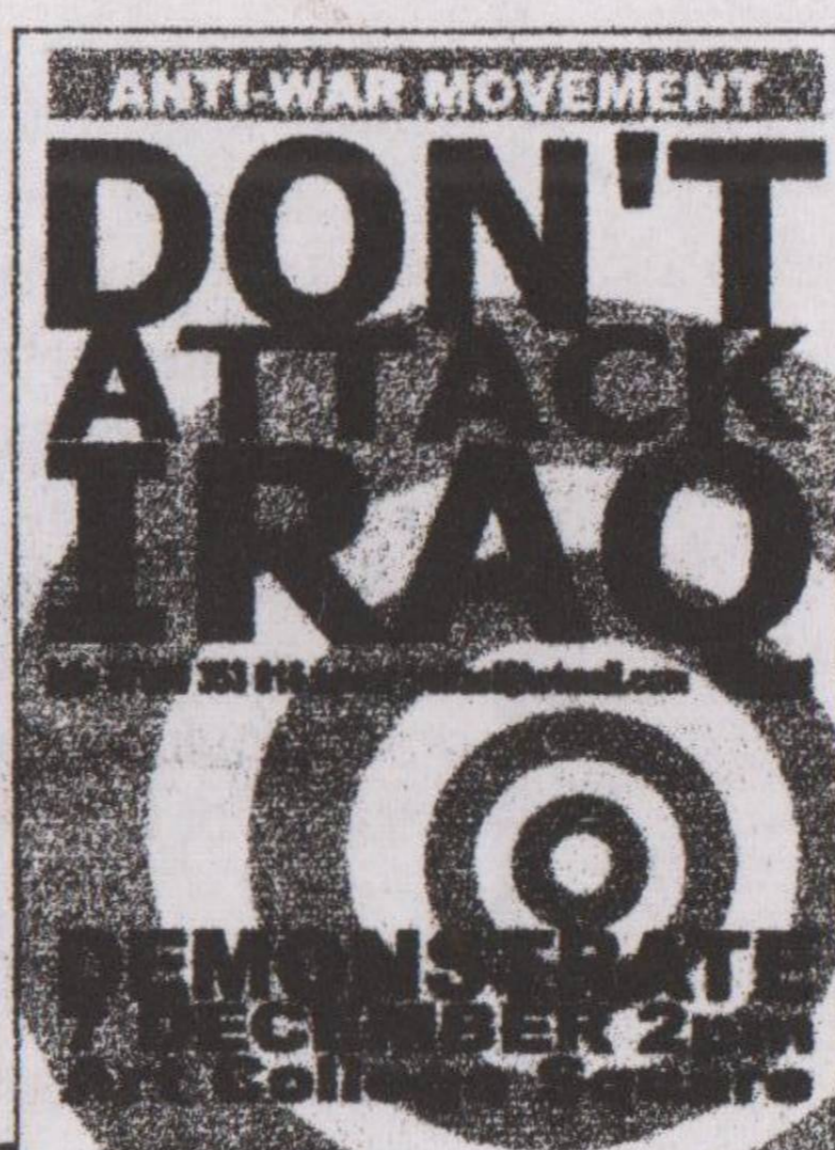
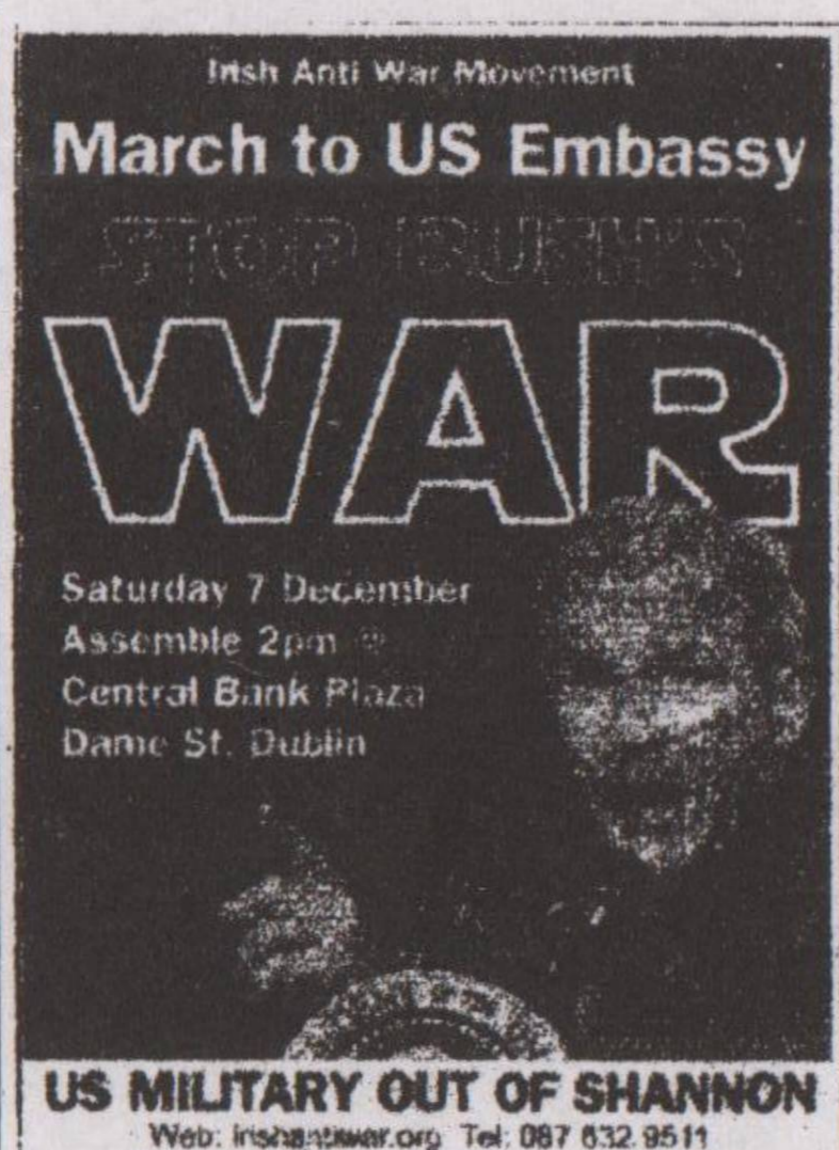
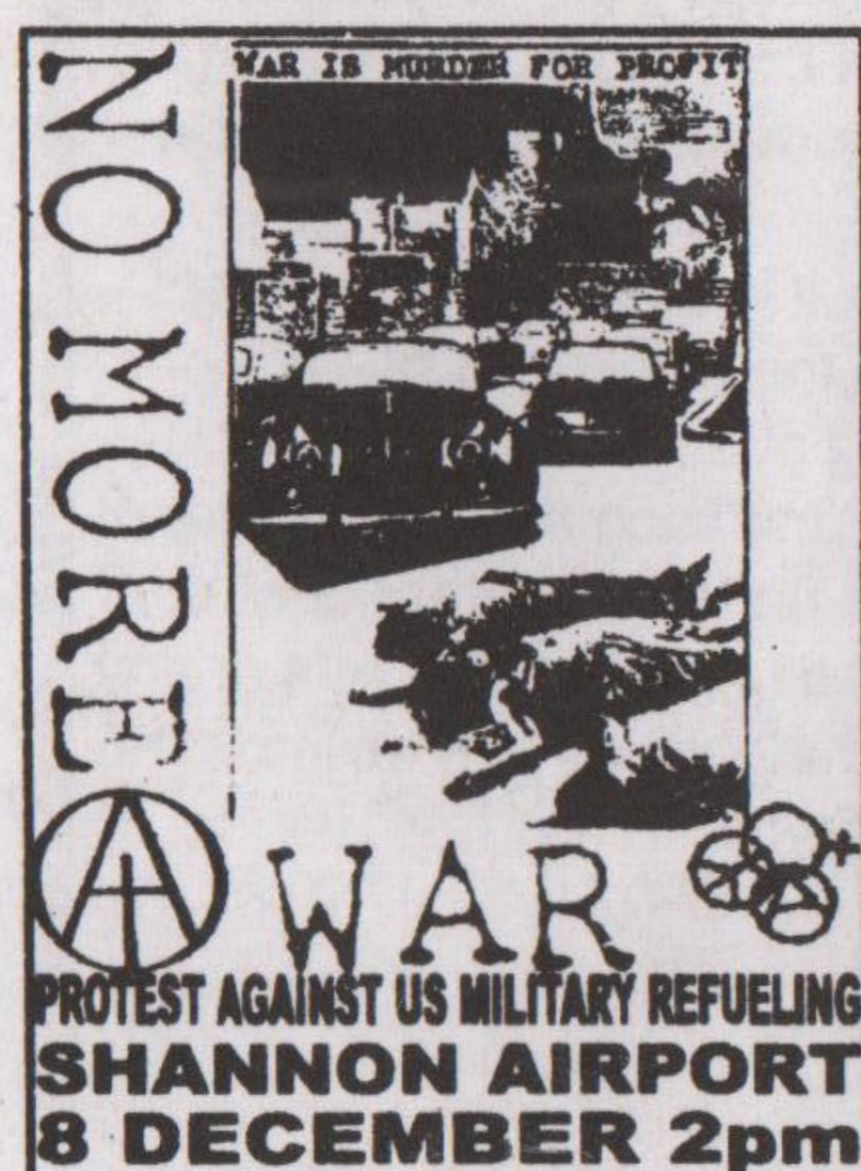
The Western war machine, driven by Bush and Blair, is gearing up for another war against a third-world regime with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of innocent Iraqis facing imminent, violent death. The coming war may well only last a few weeks as another country is obliterated by the awesome might of the US military. Although the war is being driven by the US and British governments, it relies upon the assistance of governments all over the world, who will supply troops, air bases, logistical support and funding to the war effort. The Irish government has played their part by allowing the US military to use Irish airports for refuelling on their way to the gulf. In particular Shannon airport has been extensively used by US military flights.

If we want to avoid the mass slaughter that the war will bring, the time to act is now! Although kicking the US troops out of Shannon is not going to stop the war, it will have some effect. The US would have to transfer their flights to other bases which would be more expensive and would allow them to transport less military equipment on each transatlantic flight. What's more, if a mass popular movement could force the Irish government to stop the US military from using our airports, the morale effect on the rest of the world would be tremendous. If Ireland can kick the US troops out, then anything is possible!

There have been three major protests at Shannon airport in the last year, each of these has succeeded in disrupting to some extent the operation of the airport and drawn a lot of public attention to Ireland's complicity in this war. The Shannon protests are not simply another march, they provide a space for people to use a diversity of tactics against the war. Some people come to Shannon to register their morale opposition to the military use of the airport in a symbolic way, while others come determined to physically disrupt the operation of the airport. We are open to all tactics and are committed to giving people an open, democratic choice as to how to voice their own opposition. Nobody is pressured to take any action that they are not comfortable with and there has always been a large contingent who have protested, peacefully and legally with almost no risk of arrest or confrontation with the police. However we also respect people's rights to take the protest further and to engage in mass, non-violent direct action, in an attempt to disrupt the operation of the airport. Unity in diversity is our strength. So join us on the next protest in Shannon and let the government hear your anger at Irish complicity in the coming slaughter.

The Grassroots Gathering, an island-wide network of grassroots activists, has called a protest at Shannon airport for Sunday December 8th, beginning at 2pm. For transport details contact: 0775998798 and leave a message.

We are also encouraging people to take part in the IAWM marches in Belfast and Dublin on Saturday December 7th. Belfast march assembles Art College Square 2pm, Dublin march assembles Central Bank Plaza 2pm.



Clare Co. Councillors Speak Out Against "ANARCHISTS"

"Shannon could be exposed as a terrorist target because of the antics of an individual who put details of a protest march against US aircraft re-fuelling at the airport on the internet"

So reads the front page of this week's edition of the Clare Champion. According to the newspaper article, "this terrorist claim was levelled at the monthly meeting of Clare County Council this Monday which saw the use of Shannon by US military planes defended by councillors"

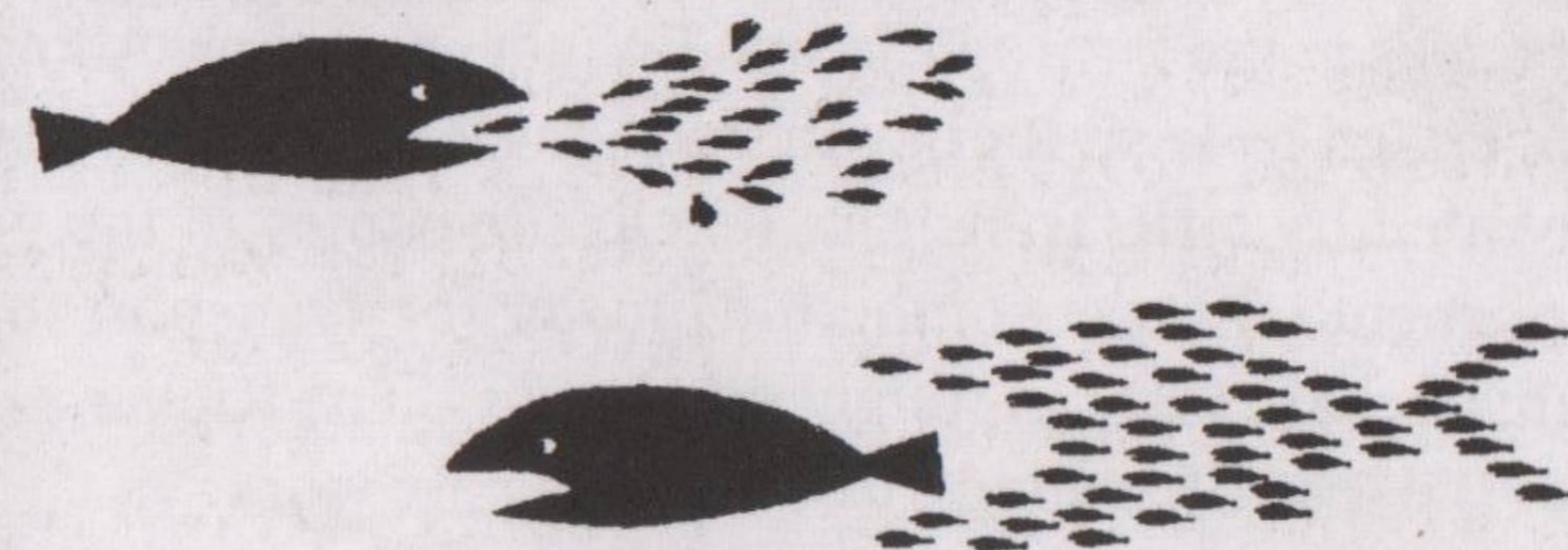
Of course, the fact that US planes continue to re-fuel at the airport and flout our supposed neutrality would have nothing to do with a possible terrorist attack on Shannon.

We were then treated to a comment from Pat McMahon, Fianna Fail representative:

"I defend the right of people to demonstrate but a small minority of them are anarchists...I repeat...a minority of them are anarchists"

Yes Pat, anarchists, not terrorists. Maybe if our highly-creative local officials could stop inventing new methods of disregarding all environmental and social issues involved in the re-zoning of land in return for a fistful of Euros they may find time to look up these two terms, so often confused by politicians. I can almost smell the fear&

Hope to see you all on December 8th, Good luck, Bono (not the famous one, fortunately)



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