

# ANARCHIST MANIFESTO IRELAND





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**FIRST COMMUNE**

**IRELAND**

**[marxistanalysis.wordpress.com](http://marxistanalysis.wordpress.com)**



# Contents

REVOLUTION IN TWELVE ACTS .....	1
ON HILL BEAUTIFUL .....	9
TALK.....	17
IDEAS.....	33



# REVOLUTION IN TWELVE ACTS

## ONCE UPON A TIME

\* Once upon a time Lutin the Leprechaun and the rest of our little band here on the banks of the Shannon went happily about building socialism. Nattily dressed in leather aprons and red bonnets and with our hammers clanging merrily, we were busily building the socialist dream. In fact so busy that we forgot to keep watch.

\* But if we weren't watching, the capitalist was. And then one morning, it was a rainy Monday in November, along he came and grabbed us and held us and took us into his great maw.

\* From that day, that very sad day, we found we were no longer building the socialist dream. Instead, year in year out, there we were building the capitalist's paradise.

\* The rich man told us we were happy. But we didn't feel happy. We didn't feel happy at all. So then, secretly,

we met together. Yes, together again, and bit by bit we began to plan the way back.

## **BREAKING FREE**

\* So here we are today – full flood of the last days of capitalism. As usual every weekday morning we drag ourselves out of bed and off to another pointless stress filled day – earning maybe enough to live on and also, of course, – more than enough to keep the bosses in their accustomed luxury.

\* Now as Marx put it, “All philosophers have tried to interpret history. The point is to change it.”

\* So why don't they? And it isn't just the old philosophers who don't do change. Look around you. We have. We've been looking around. And we've been listening to our friends, to communists, to socialists, to anarchists, and we've really tried to find some kind of inspiration, some ideas.

\* But all our friends ever do is sit in their gardens and talk about historical imperatives and Marxist theory or sometimes they go romping off on a parish pump campaign. Yes, they talk about change, but for them it just seems to be a word. Now why don't they ever really try to do something?

\* Personally, I am fed up with circular talk and little fashionable campaigns. So I have gone along and asked my friend Lutin and the others in the collective what they think we can actually do.



\*A quick answer. No problem. It's the system – the capitalist system – get rid of it.

\* A nice quick answer. But! What is capitalism? How does it work? Why does it work? What do we do first? Who does it? Are we getting nowhere? Start again. Keep it simple.

\* Start where there is already something going on. Political activity going somewhere.

\* Start where the system is already under attack. Lutin and I agreed. No priorities, no order – just a round dozen things we can do.

## **TWELVE ACTS**

### **ACT ONE – LEAVING THE EURO**

\* The euro is the establishment's first line of defence, as we have seen, strikingly in the Greek austerity crisis. They use it to cajole, threaten or blackmail countries into obedience.

\* At the time of writing no country has yet left the euro. However, with a bit of organisation, no real problem here. Temporary freeze put on international payments. Strict limits on taking currency abroad. Bank notes ready printed in a new currency.

\* On short notice a changeover date is set, new notes issued and exchanged, on a one for one basis. Old coins allowed to circulate while replacements are minted.

## **ACT TWO – LEAVING THE EU**

\* The EU is the multinationals' ideal world. Constantly manipulated by them to their self-interest; constantly smoothing the way for them and channelling through their profits.

\* Fortunately, the anti-EU bandwagon is on the roll. A strange lot of bedfellows admittedly, a mixture of the right and left, some of them indeed rather dangerous. Interesting times – ride the tiger.

## **ACT THREE – REGULATION OF MULTINATIONALS**

\* Multi-nationals have great propaganda. They come bearing the gift of jobs and are welcomed with open arms. Scarcely a dissenting voice is heard. Even when they pull out. And they do pull out, leaving behind queues of unemployed. Even then the discontent is muted.

\* Gently, gently at first we go. Talk about “more caring and efficient transnational enterprises.” Bit by bit expose their actual character (to make as much profit as possible in as short a time as possible) and call for direct supervision in each country in order to “protect workers and communities.”

## **ACT FOUR – PLANNED ECONOMY**

\* Here we use public opinion.

\* “Another recession? No thank you. Start making industry and commerce safe. Organise it.” “What we need is an honest management people can trust.”

\* As a first step, an independent representative on every major board – then senior appointments overseen by a professional committee.

\* All production and development in the public interest – why not?

## **ACT FIVE – DISCREDITING OBSCENE SALARIES**

\* There already exists a popular groundswell critical of excessive salaries in private companies on which we can build. Already people are taking the first step and changing the capitalist mindset.

\* These rich bosses are the movers and shakers who run the establishment – very dangerous operators who will engage in a running rearguard battle against any loss of money and power.

## **ACT SIX – OPENING UP PROFESSIONS**

\* In most of the well paid higher professions, doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants, entry is restricted by limited places for academic training often controlled by the professionals’ own administrative bodies. They’ve cornered the market and scarcity means more money.

\* Remove the power of self-regulation from professional bodies. Strip away meaningless time-consuming

qualification hurdles. Sub-divide professions into categories relevant to actual use. Introduce paid-for occupational training on an apprenticeship basis.

\* We face industrial action from the haute bourgeoisie, unlikely as that may seem. For generations they have been limiting admission to their professions. They will use this artificial shortage they have contrived as a weapon and seek to create chaos in the delivery of services.

## **ACT SEVEN – EQUALISING PUBLIC SALARIES**

\* Highly paid top civil servants are the natural allies of the bourgeoisie. For them receiving the average industrial salary might produce a sea change in their outlook.

\* Unfortunately, due to their ingrained respect for the bourgeoisie, it will be necessary remove many of them from their positions of power and influence.

## **ACT EIGHT – TAXING OUT EXCESS INCOMES**

\* Once excessive pay has been brought under control in private companies and the civil service, it will be the turn of the idle rich. Or why delay? Should we not start making them pay back now?

\* How about a 95% tax rate at the top of the scale. €50,000 is left out of €1,000,000 a year.

## **ACT NINE – DEVELOPING AFFINITY GROUPS**

\* Affinity group – volunteers dedicated to equality and direct democracy.

\* Remember reactionaries are going to fight back. They will enlist traditional attitudes and prejudices to sabotage progress. They will have successes. Perhaps many successes along the way. Unless every reactionary move is stopped in its tracks by proactive local volunteers, we may be in for a never-ending battle.

\* It is not just the reactionaries. There are the attentistes. Beware of the attentistes! The dead weight of armchair progressives: the ones who say, “No need to do anything. Communism is inevitable. All we have to do is wait. We will sit in our gardens discussing Marx and literature and the Royal Academy exhibition.”

## **ACT TEN – PRODUCTION DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE**

\* Public ownership of major companies.

\* Small companies remain independent, but managed as partnerships or co-operatives.

\* As an interim measure bonds will be issued to the previous owners of equity in newly nationalised or socialised companies. A redemption plan would be put in place.

\* Is there a size limit after which workers’ co-ops need to be subject to a central plan in the public interest? In most

cases plant and machinery would probably be leased out to public companies and co-ops. Whatever the arrangement, day to day operation of large and small enterprises must always be on worker co-op principles.

## **ACT ELEVEN – GUARANTEED JOBS**

\* Even lumpen proletariat layabouts and the ci-devant bourgeoisie hold outs would have to be given food and shelter. But everybody willing to work gets a full salary.

\* Without question we would then find everyone work – real work that is necessary for society.

## **ACT TWELVE – EQUAL PAY**

\* The sine qua non. The beginning of the end of exploitation.

\* Every adult, who is willing to do work within their capacity, receives the same monthly allowance. Students, apprentices, carers, the disabled – all get equal pay. Pending the implementation of the principle of “from each according to their need, to each according to their ability,” allowances will be put in place for children and persons with special needs.

\* We are now getting close to the death of the system and we can start planning and building actual libertarian socialism.

***“Come and dance with me in Ireland”***

# ON HILL BEAUTIFUL

## DAWNING

\* Our affinity group on Hill Beautiful is getting together a local commune. We've got rid of the fat cats. We've got equal pay and public ownership. But we're still being governed – governed by the state. Time to do something about it.

\* In libertarian society the commune is all. The word must go out to affinity groups – strike while the iron is hot. Start creating Hill Beautiful.

\* Of course, nobody has to belong to a commune. You can choose. Everything is voluntary. But it also goes like this – if you don't want to join us, we don't want to join you. It works both ways.

\* In our commune we work together. We supply our local needs and services. If anyone doesn't want to go along with us, they can go off on their own and join another commune or set up as members of a travelling group or be hermits – let a thousand flowers bloom.

## GROWING

\* Now things have moved on. We have made a start. We called a meeting. When asked, most people said something like, “I don't know, I suppose so.”

\* All the same quite a few actually turned up and some came forward and volunteered to get things going. As a result we have a convener and an oversight committee and are getting going here.

\* Several, indeed, offered to be the delegate to the district. A bit worrying that – incipient boss tendencies maybe. Anyway, they drew lots and we now have a full complement of activists, including the district delegate.

## **MATURING**

\* The commune is up and running. If they get their act together, others will be as well. Unfortunately, these days we don't live in neat little self-sufficient agricultural settlements. Many of our members travel away to work in shops or factories or offices - some, in fact, to local farms.

\* This requires planning and organisation on a wide scale. This is where, sadly, federation shows its face.

## **STRUCTURE**

\* **COMMUNE:** Basic social unit – a direct democracy commune of about 500 residents.

\* **DISTRICT:** District federations of about 50 communes.

\* **REGION:** Regional federations of about 200 districts.



## FUNCTION

\* **SELECTION:** A system of volunteers chosen annually by lot rather than the old system of voting for representatives and officers. The expectation is that, for the most part, we will not volunteer for a task we do not feel up to. Since we are in a money free situation we will not be lured into jobs we can't do by the expectation of financial reward.

\* **FREEDOM:** Membership of a commune is entirely voluntary. Alternatively, communes can drop individuals from the commune or from their function in the commune. Just as the individual is free to drop the commune so the commune is free to drop the individual.

\* **COMMUNE:** Quarterly meetings, a convener of meetings, a moderator to recognise topics and speakers at meetings, an oversight panel of 25, chosen annually by lot, to monitor local activities - a creche, a concierge arrangement, a primary level school, local amenities along with security and emergency provision.

\* **DISTRICT:** One delegate, selected annually from each commune; responsibility with delegates from other communes for district level action involving roads, buses, small enterprises, secondary education, housing and local services generally.

\* **REGION:** One delegate, selected annually from each district; responsibility for regional action involving airports, railways, motorways, third level training, large enterprises and generally whatever cannot be managed at commune or district level.

\* **INTRAMURALS:** Two or more communes or districts operating in the same geographical area are termed intramurals. These consume a huge amount of time and effort in sorting out the consequent service and supply problems. The existence of intramurals is an essential part of freedom, although admittedly counter-productive. Affinity activists must work constantly encouraging members of intramurals to resolve their differences and reorganise or merge.

\* **AFFINITY GROUPS:** Made up of independent, voluntary, unofficial individuals. Hopefully in all communes. Perhaps working on the basis of what are called the platformist principles – theoretical unity, tactical unity, collective responsibility and federal structure.

\* **SURVIVAL:** The foolish and the greedy will, of course, be out there working to destroy libertarian societies. Well intentioned affinity groups of libertarian socialists are necessary at each and every level for the protection and smooth running of libertarian socialism.

## **LIFESTYLE**

\* **WORK:** When its good it's very, very good – a constant delight in accomplishment; when it's bad it's a great curse – physically and mentally destructive. But why is it bad? - we all know about that, at least we should know and that is why we must replace the system. Making work fit for the people – an enormous and never-ending struggle.

\* **VOLUNTEERS:** It's a funny thing in trade unions and left wing political organisations. Where no one in the branch or the campaign is getting paid for their union or political activity, then it is surprising how easy it is to get people to volunteer for early morning pickets, canvassing, leafleting or the routine office duties.

\* **HIRED HANDS:** But as soon as we get a paid full-time organiser somehow the volunteers dry up and nothing much gets done except perhaps fundraising to pay their salary. Suddenly there has been a sea change. No longer are we in a family or community setting. We are operating under capitalist principles with paid officials and bosses and under their rules.

\* **PRINCIPLE:** The tradition of libertarian communism is, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need." We do our work out of community spirit. We do whatever needs doing. We do not have to be bribed by money or driven to work by fear of poverty.

\* **SPONGERS:** There are always some who will sit around doing nothing sponging off the rest of us. Not an unfamiliar situation. We have all had to deal with it in a family and in other interactive work or social situations.

\* **SOCIAL EXCLUSION:** Dealing with spongers. Start by using encouragement, then a talking to and group pressure, going on to shame and ridicule, finally end up with social exclusion, where everybody else just moves on and leaves the recalcitrant to their own devices.

\* **WASTED TIME:** We have been so concerned with keeping comrades' noses to the grindstone that we have

ignored a significant point. Under capitalism over half of all work is useless.

\* **NON-PRODUCTIVE, COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE:** Advertising to promote profits, spin to protect the system, cyclical overproduction artificial demand, built in obsolescence.

\* **THREE HOUR DAY:** Strip away all the time wasted on maintaining the non-production of capitalism and what will we have? A three-hour day.

\* **PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION:** Carried out by individuals, by partnerships or by workers' co-ops. Democratic supervisions of large scale co-ops.

\* **UNEMPLOYMENT:** None. Everybody has chores, everybody has work, even the very fat man who watered the workers' beer works, pensioners work, the disabled work, everybody – as far as anyone is able to – works. Not that there are too many chores to do with everyone employed and no wasted jobs.

\* **POSSESSIONS:** None, other than personal; all share within reason; think of the property arrangements in a civilised family setting; each group or commune will produce its own guidelines for what is reasonable and there will probably be lots of boring meetings to resolve disputes.

\* **CHOICE:** Will everybody always choose the most valuable items? No. There won't be valuable items. Co-ops and partnerships will not produce different qualities of goods for different classes of consumers – for the rich and the poor – but rather they will try to produce things

that people want and need; cooks will produce a range of meals based not on what people can afford but based on what they hope people will want to eat.

\* SCARCITY: Sometimes there won't be enough to go around; if say building co-ops can't produce enough houses of the right size in the right place. What do we do? Probably a lottery system for certain houses.

\* SURPLUS: Goes hand in hand with shortages of essential goods and services. In capitalism production is unbalanced due to manipulation by multi-nationals and then corrected by financial collapse and recession. In libertarian socialism you can get unbalanced production due to misguided efforts of workers' co-ops. Unfortunate, and only kept in check by common sense and people pressure.

\* MIGRATION: Open door policy. Commune membership subject to mutual choice. No guarantee of membership or support for non-members. Hopefully communes would try to provide minimal food and shelter for strangers or for malfunctioning communes.

\* SECURITY: All commune members invited to volunteer for security service on a rota basis. Affinity groups provide their own security arrangements. A volunteer system for extended training and heavy-duty service would operate at regional level.

\* LAW: None. No rules, no orders, no contracts, no codes. Yes, agreements and broken agreements. Yes, doing what seems right and doing what seems wrong, but no laws.

\* **DISPUTES:** Civil cases disappear. There will be complaints about blunders, prejudice, physical violence, unfairness, special needs. They can be heard initially by local ad hoc committees chosen by lot and referred to communes for action.

\* **TRAINING:** Post-secondary, all skills preferably learnt through apprenticeship or in-work training. Some advanced skills will need specialist provision.

\* **EDUCATION:** Under capitalism more often than not a propaganda or divisive exercise to maintain the status quo. Arts and pure science – teaching arranged either by individuals or by groups of students and teachers.

\* **UNDER LOCK AND KEY:** Where necessary there may have to be restraint for the dangerously violent, the maliciously greedy, the seriously mentally unbalanced and reactionary terrorists.

\* **OVERSIGHT:** By district and regional panels for – food supply, housing, utilities, production, distribution, security, infrastructure, communications, services.

\* **HAPPY:** No, we won't be happy. We can't get away from problems, personal and interpersonal. Our human problems will still be with us. Maybe the good thing about capitalism and the rat race is that they took our minds most off the heart wrenching things that disturb us at night.

***“Here we all are by day; by night we’re hurled by dreams, each one, into a several world.”***

# TALK

## The Air Traffic

Before the change we used to work long boring hours, really boring. I had thought it would be interesting. I was wrong. It was like playing a dull video game. Everything goes in circles and nothing happens.

Now actually nothing does happen. With the coalition no fly zone we don't have air traffic control. We still go in on a rota and we also have a few students that we train up in case they ever stop the blockade. The machines are still running and there are the – let's call them rumours – yes the rumours of clandestine flights, but the less said.

However, my rota is only a few hours a week so I've volunteered for a gardening detail. A sort of loose co-op, we meet Mondays and decide what needs to be done. Since I'm new I mostly just do rough maintenance – roadsides, old graveyards, things like that. So far I like it, sort of. If it rains we go off and do work in the potting shed, though we soon get through that and in bad weather we mostly just sit around and chat and wait for the rain to stop.

## The Barber

I used to be a lawyer, a solicitor. I did conveyancing and wills and contracts. Of course, we don't do that any more, no private property. Actually conveyancing wasn't that much fun. I used to drink a lot.

Some of my former colleagues are still in the business though. Reinvented themselves as conflict counsellors. That sounds stylish, but very stressful. Originally it was avoiding stress that kept me clear of criminal work. A quiet life for me.

With shorter hours they said they needed extra barbers. My partner and I volunteered (he used to be a banker.) We work half days, four days a week and we get to chat. Work is still work. I don't drink so much.

### The Car Clerk

Cars – a real problem in a libertarian society. We assign so many to each commune. Self-service wasn't working. The commune lends cars out to individual members. They take temporary responsibility.

I've got to look after the 88 cars in my commune. Members are asked to return their borrowed car at an agreed time. Not that they do.

I spend half my work time on the phone or touring around collecting cars. The other half I'm explaining to people who need cars that they'll have to wait.

On safety grounds I can refuse the loan of a car subject to the member appealing to the commune. If the member doesn't like the commune decision he can quit and go and join another commune. Doesn't usually happen.

### The Check Out

We don't do checking out any more – no more money. What I do is rare items and hoarders. With the blockade



and the sanctions there's lots of things we don't get enough of. That's aside from the people who just hoard anyway, for the fun of it I suppose. We call them squirrels.

My job is to watch how much people are taking and have a word with them. Actually, commune members are always coming and telling tales on other members.

Having a word usually works. Others often stand round and listen and that helps.

### The Coke Dealer

There's no money so what's the point? Even though cocaine isn't illegal any more there's still a lot of antagonism. I know it's not real work. The allocators are always coming round talking to me about doing my share.

With no money you can't get supplies from abroad any more. There are sort of self-help groups, I've heard, trying to produce the stuff locally.

Anyway, I've given that up. A friend of mine said they need waiters and I'm going to give that a go.

### The Dancer

I'm a dancer. That's what I say I am. I toured with the national ballet. Ivanova was my best role. Now they say they don't need me any more. They'll be casting again in the autumn. Auditions. Auditions are for kids.

I'm a dancer. The allocator came to me and said to me what about nursing. She was looking for care assistants. I said I'm a dancer.

Finally, this was last year, she said she'd been to the district and the planner said there was a need to train students for the ballet and could I give lessons.

I don't say I'm a teacher. I say I'm a dancer (and I give lessons).

### The Delivery Driver

I didn't always do this job. I used to be a district agent. That was really interesting. I liked that job. I was happy doing it. I felt important. Until, that is, the nouveaux bosses gave me the push.

I was still in my teens when they had the draw for the commune panel and I got picked. It was only for a year and when it was up I felt disappointed. I liked talking and planning and being at the centre of things. So I put my name in for the draw for a vacancy for a district agent. I didn't get it, but a few months later I heard there was a vacancy for a regional agent so I volunteered for that. Some do-gooders came and talked to me and said maybe I should stick to my ordinary job for the time being and think about trying again later for the agency if I was still interested.

“Look,” I said, “everybody's got the right to volunteer so I'm volunteering,” and in the draw my name came out. At first it seemed OK. Then at planning meetings when I offered to do something others would offer to help even if it was a one-person job. They were undermining me. I complained, but all they said was that I would be happier doing an ordinary job again. Then one day they came along and said the agency members had closed themselves

down and set up a new group. Surprise, surprise, I was not in the new group.

Now I'm a delivery driver. I'm thinking of quitting and joining a new commune, maybe in a new district or maybe one of the intramurals.

### The Dentist

Most of my ex-colleagues have gone to England for the money. I stayed. My family is here and I don't see the point (never did) of wanting to brag about being better off than your neighbours.

The exodus of professionals has made life difficult. While most people are working shorter hours, I'm working longer. Hopefully not for long though. I'm training up three replacements and by the summer they should be filling cavities and taking impressions on their own.

Then I'll only be coming in a few hours a day, mostly doing rare or tricky cases. I'm quite looking forward to it. Better than looking in people's mouths eight hours a day, I'll only have to do it for three hours.

### The Electrician

I used to work in the tax office. No more taxes. I've opted to train as an electrician. I've always been fascinated by it. It was a couple of months before they'd let me do a job of any kind. Now I'm working on my own a lot and it's going well.

Some of the lads from the old office aren't all that happy. They say doing eight hours a day in the tax office was easier than three hours of real work.

### The Factory Worker

We have a shift meeting before we start and talk about who does what. I volunteer for the stamping machine. I'm good at it and I make sure the production line keeps moving.

Mostly I like to do the same job. If you do change to something different you have to go and watch for a while and then try doing it with someone keeping an eye on you.

We also have general planning meetings. At the last planning we decided to expand production. It means a building extension. First we're going to train up some new machine operators. Then some of us are going to have to learn bricklaying and carpentry because there aren't enough building workers for what needs to be done. They sound interesting, but I'm not sure. I might not be any good.

### The Farmer

Same as before. We do the milk churns, the planting and the harvesting. No pay. We collect what we need from the shops.

No labourers, no owners. All partners these days.

Not that we get along that well together. Everybody is always complaining about something or somebody. Maybe it's better than moaning about the weather.

## The Fixer

Balance and moderation that's what I look for. No overproduction no underproduction. All things useful getting done and no waste.

But then what is waste? Well, that's my job – deciding what is a waste of time. Everybody has to do their share of useful work. If it isn't useful it doesn't count as work.

There's a teacher of Latin. That's his useful work he says. Useful? He's only got two students and what are they learning anyway? A dead language. I told him it doesn't count. He has to do his share of work for the commune. He can teach Latin as a leisure activity.

That is my opinion, but he's gone for an appeal to the commune and he'll probably win. Soft hearted they are.

Maybe I should do a different job. Frankly, I've always I've always rather fancied myself as a poet.

## The Foreign Agent

When the change came I was pretty bitter about it. I was doing a postgrad course in England. Suddenly there was no money. Back home the family business was gone.

My bitterness was noticed at the university. To my surprise I was called in and made an offer. A grant to finish my course with an academic post to follow. I took the offer.

I go back home in the holidays. I've been questioned by the region, and I do sometimes seem to be followed. Obviously they think I'm a British agent.

## The General

I used to be a dustman. We called it recycling or working for the council.

Now it's been decided we take unfashionable jobs in turn. I take my turn along with everybody else.

It's rather like the old jury service. You get a notice requiring you to turn up for general duty.

If you don't turn up, they come round and call on you and explain the situation. If that doesn't work out you end up getting reported to the commune.

## The Housing

Almost all my clients are unhappy. Extra rooms. Parking. A garden. No garden. Better area. Neighbours. Neighbours. Neighbours.

There are never enough units – except estates. Hundreds of applicants, all are disappointed or so it seems. Everybody is unhappy. I'm unhappy. I don't see why they can't be satisfied with what they've got and get on with their lives.

Part of the deal is that house agents can't apply for rehousing. Though friends and relatives seem to be quite lucky.

## The Intelligence

We call ourselves the service. We don't take volunteers. Word of mouth only.

We protect the revolution. Sounds pompous. It is. Sounds exciting. It isn't.

Mostly we target local malcontents, ex-bourgeoisie troublemakers, deadbeat lumpen proletariats. If there's anything serious, we have an action squad.

### The Leprechaun

They call me the leprechaun. I have a beard, I wear a hat, I'm small, not that small - average height I call myself.

I couldn't stick it in their commune. So I told them I was leaving. At first after I left I was on my own. That was bad, but it wasn't for long. Here and there I met up with others who were different like me. Now we have our own lot, our own collective.

We live in the forest, well a clearing at the edge actually. We've got caravans for the moment, but we've started on some solid structures. We've done a deal with a couple of local communes. We look after their woodlands and do odd jobs. We're getting supplies through the district.

### The Machinist

Nothing fits anything. We've got no machines, we've got no tools, we've got no replacements. There are no parts for anything. We cannibalise to keep going.

At first we had stockpiles and some imports got through. These days we're lucky if one or two blockade runners a month make it to a beach in Kerry.

We've got books and best of all the internet. We're teaching ourselves from scratch. Remarkably quickly

actually if you put it in perspective. Our machine tools production has advanced from the stone age to the middle ages – about 2000 years of progress.

But it's getting faster. Now we know exactly what we don't have, we can contact sympathisers, arrange for a fast boat or a small plane. And the other side are getting a bit sloppy.

### The Migration

It's actually “The Welcome Agent for Visitors and Migrants” but everybody calls me the migration. Here in the commune we've got some short stay accommodation for visitors. More or less enough. No real problem.

The problem is trying to settle in people who want to stay permanently or at least long term. We never have enough housing and if there's an influx I have to find rooms or prefabs or even put up tents.

But if, as sometimes happens, the commune says it can't cope with any more members, then the newcomers have to join another commune or they can form their own. In that case it's up to them to arrange their own food and housing. Of course we supply the minimum until people get themselves sorted.

### The Minister

Now I'm a maintenance man. Ci-devant I was a priest. There's not much religion around these days. The commune don't seem to think prayers count as work.



At first the fixer wanted me to teach a class in the local primary school. We need lots of teachers since we've cut the class size down to ten pupils. Then I heard that the district wanted to keep the cathedral open as a cultural and activity centre. They needed a maintenance worker for it and for the cemetery. I volunteered and was lucky in the draw.

A few people actually wanted to attend old-fashioned church services. Nobody objected. So now, after I've finished the sweeping and washing and grass cutting, I hold a 12.30 service and with blessings and remembrances for those who want them.

### The Planner

I plan. Or rather I make suggestions. The district or the commune make the decisions. Then I start figuring out how it's going to be done.

Next we call for volunteers. If there aren't enough I go round trying to sweet talk people into coming forward. When I do get them, more often than not they don't know how to do the work and I have to train them.

If there isn't anybody who knows how, it's up to me. I read a book or look things up on the net.

### The Public Order

I used to be a garda, a police officer. It's quite different now. There's lots of volunteers and we work half days. No uniforms any more.

Not really any stealing because not really any property. But you still get disputes over sharing. One of the lads compared it to policing a school playground.

When we can't settle things we pass them over to the commune.

And then there's domestics. There's always domestics. Oh, and the drunks.

### The Records

I'm a spy. That's what my friends call me. My friends mind you.

We're the record keepers. We update lists and details of members, addresses, occupations, duty service, things like that. Not everybody wants to have their details listed. So I'm a spy.

I suppose it is nasty snooping around finding out whether people are turning up on time and doing a proper job when they are there. Amazing, actually, the number of anonymous letters dropped off at our office from neighbours and colleagues. However, that's not the hard part.

The hard part is when we find somebody isn't do his or her bit in the commune. We're a libertarian society. We don't do punish. We just do talk.

And who has to do the talk. We do. We do it in pairs. Go round to call and have a word. It often turns out rather unpleasant.

Somebody has to do it.

### The Regional Agent

Sandra suggested I volunteer for it. Our factory was having trouble with supplies and she came down from the agency to sort things out. As a result I put my name forward for the draw.

It was the draw of the fourth year in a row when my name came up. I was really about to stop going in for it.

Anyway, I'm in it now. We move round the country trouble-shooting. We get to know the movers and shakers.

We work in groups and meet and share out the jobs. You soon get to size people up and know who can manage to do what.

### The Regional Delegate

I usually work in the media shop on O'Connell Store and I'll be going back full time after I finish my year on the Region. Each district gets one delegate and this time I was picked. I manage two or three hours most weeks at the shop. It's difficult to keep up your job having to travel to Dublin all the time for panel meetings.

The Region is fascinating and boring; people talk a lot more than they have to. But mostly it's important stuff about how things are done.

Some of the delegates are a bit out of their depths, but others explain how things work. The people from the agency give us all the facts.

## The Soldier

There were lots of volunteers for the defence, and still are. There have to be. Most members drop out after a few weeks. I suppose most people think it sounds romantic. I know I did. Except it turns out to be uncomfortable, boring and rather nasty.

Training exercises, manoeuvres, sleeping rough, keeping fit, days at a time. And in between doing nothing because nothing ever happens. Sometimes we get called out to help the public order guys with drunks on the rampage or even a gang fight. Of course, if ever anything did happen and we had an invasion by the coalition forces I'd probably get killed or wounded and disabled for life.

Still for some reason I like doing this and I'm going to stick with it for a while longer. We're all equal. No officers. We all meet together and decide how we're going to do things. Somehow it seems important though I suppose it isn't.

## The Teacher of Latin

They said it wasn't useful. So I give lessons as a leisure activity.

My day job is at the dry cleaning centre.

O tempora, O mores.

*“The world turns and the world changes,  
But one thing does not change,  
In all my years, one thing does not change.  
However you disguise it, this thing does not change”*

*T. S. Eliot*



# IDEAS

ANTIGONE: Even if no one else is willing to share in burying him I will bury him and risk the peril of burying my own brother. Nor am I ashamed to act in defiant opposition to the rulers of the city.

Aeschylus 467 BC  
“Seven Against Thebes”

No need to rebel. Everyone is already free.

Diogenes 350 BC

If people follow their instincts, they will have no need of law courts or police, no temples and no public worship, and use no money.

Zeno the Stoic 301 BC

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?

Juvenal AD 100

When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?

John Ball 1381

Property is theft.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon 1840

A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism.

Marx, Engels 1848  
“Communist Manifesto”

Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.

Marx, Engels 1848  
“Communist Manifesto”

Since it seems that every heart that beats for freedom has no right to anything but a little slug of lead, I demand my share. If you let me live I shall never cease to cry for vengeance.

Louise Michel 1871

In the past I was a poet and a tyrant. Now I am an anarchist and artist.

Oscar Wilde 1891



Turning and turning in the widening gyre,  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

W. B. Yeats 1919

Born out of the mass of the workers, the General Union of Anarchists must take part in all aspects of life, always and everywhere bringing the spirit of organisation, perseverance, militancy and the will to go on the offensive. Only thus will it be able to fulfil its role to carry out its theoretical and historical mission in the social revolution of the workers and become the organised cutting edge in their process of emancipation.

Nestor Makhno 1926

It was in the black mirror of anarchism that surrealism first recognised itself.

André Breton 1952

The moment anarchism becomes capital-A Anarchism, with all its requisite platforms and narrow historical baggage, it is transformed from the activity of the people into yet another state ideology for sale on the market place.

Curious George Brigade 2003

“How I Forgot The Spanish Civil War And Learned To  
Love Anarchy”

Yet we can't stop the process. A capitalist economy lives by growth. As Bookchin observed, "For capitalism to desist from its mindless expansion would be for it to commit social suicide." We have, essentially, chosen cancer as the model for our social system.

Ursula Le Guin 2015

Opportunities for radical change, including revolution are related to the point capitalism is at, but are very much more related to the confidence, size and experience of movements of the working class and the marginalised. Simply put when we win a little we are far more likely to fight for more than when we have been defeated. Victories matter, defeats that turn into routs are disastrous.

Workers' Solidarity Movement 2016

Printed and published by First Commune



