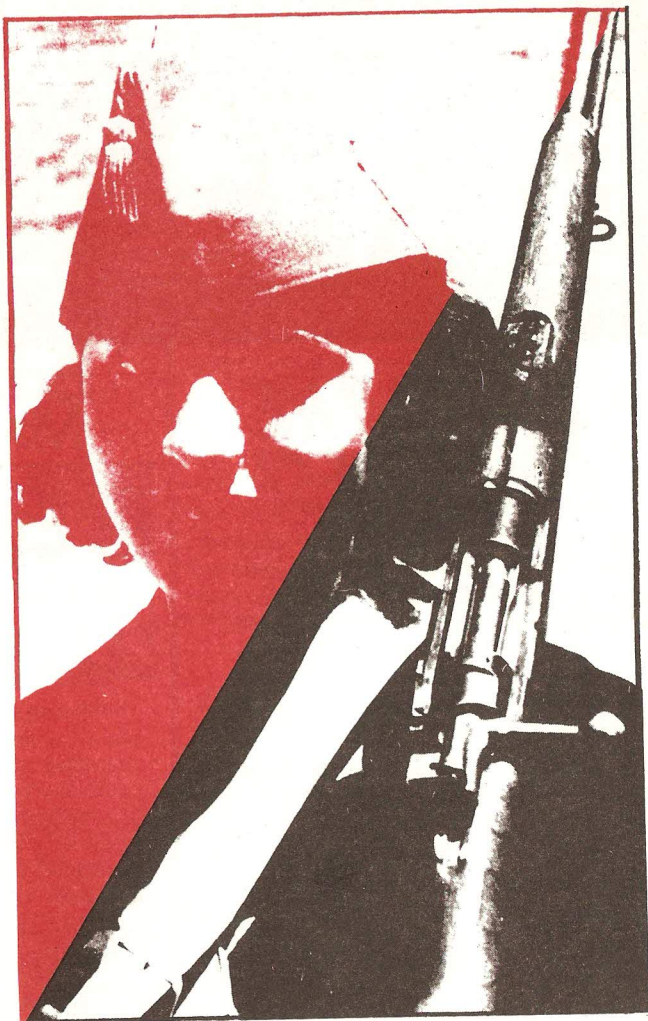


ANARCHIST

Six Countries 20p
Elsewhere 25p

Issue No. 4 May-June '86

A Belfast Anarchist Bi-Monthly



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To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the revolutionary achievements of the Spanish libertarian movement, we are holding a meeting with video and discussion.

It will take place on Wed., 18th June, 8-10pm., at Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast 1.

Areas to be discussed include:—

1. The Political Forces involved,
2. The Role of Women
3. The Collectives and Committees.

All Welcome.

DROP THE CHARGES!

The so-called 'Kerry Babies' case received a lot of media attention. Joanna Hayes was tortured by Gardai, suffered the attacks of the government inquiry, and was slandered by Justice Lynch. She received support though from the small numbers of feminist and socialist groups throughout the country.

A situation with some similarities came to light in the press recently, when a young woman from Crossmaglen was charged with murder.

Anne-Marie McShane lives with elderly parents, and her five brothers. She has an eight year old son, and has given birth to three other children, who have been adopted.

The new-born baby, she is linked with, was found in Dundalk. The pathologist said the baby died from drowning, and there were signs of 'bruises to the head'.

The RUC claim that Anne-Marie told them that she delivered the baby alone in the bathroom. Realising that it was dead, she hid it in a cupboard, and on the next day, took the body in a plastic bag to Dundalk.

If this is the evidence, why is this young woman charged with murder. Why is she being put through another hell? Was the birth and concealment not enough agony? DROP THE CHARGES!

Brixton and Maghaberry



The British state is still using violence against women prisoners. Over 40 stripsearches have taken place in Maghaberry Prison in the last four weeks despite vague hopes that stripsearching of women prisoners might be phased out once the women were transferred from Armagh Jail to Maghaberry in March.

In Brixton Prison two Irish women, Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson have spent 10 months on remand awaiting trial on 'conspiracy' charges. Their trial is currently underway. While in Brixton, Martina Anderson has been strip searched 248 times, Ella O'Dwyer 227. In May they took a case to the High Court to win a ban on strip searches, until they would receive a full hearing of their complaints. Not surprisingly, they lost the case. To grant the ban would delay their 'very important' trial according to the judge.

Messages of support can be sent to:

Martina Anderson D25134
Ella O'Dwyer D25135
H M Prison Brixton, P.O. Box 369
Jebb Ave., London SW2 5XF, England.

You Loose Some 'Grass' Goes

The N. Ireland Economic Council, the capitalists' advisory body in the north, has warned of increased unemployment in the year ahead. In its annual report, it describes the main reasons as the cut-back in public expenditure, and the lack of local and overseas investment.

In a separate report on population changes the Council argue that the areas already worst affected by unemployment, west of the Bann, will continue to suffer proportionately.

We also learned that the IDB's target of 5,750 job creations for last year, was only half met, with the figure almost at 3,000.

All of this comes as no great surprise, but the appeal of the Council to the British government to increase public expenditure especially in the construction industry, and it's warning of the statelet becoming 'ungovernable', shows that local capitalism is on the verge of panic/collapse.

REDUNDANCIES

The recent pullout announcement by Rothmans will put an extra 800 people on the dole in Carrickfergus. This is the latest blow to workers in the 'protestant' areas of east Antrim, coming shortly after the job losses in Hughes Tools and GEC. The multinationals have shown once again their priority for profit at the expense of people.

UNEVEN FIGURES

Some argue that there is a levelling out of poverty in loyalist and anti-unionist areas. However the Council's report shows that the anti-unionist area west of the Bann (Fermanagh, Strabane and Derry) will continue to experience the highest unemployment.

This is because of constant neglect, no new investment, and the increase in population. This increase is largely as a result of the smaller numbers emigrating, in turn caused by the lack of job opportunities

The appeal by 35 people against conviction in the Black 'supergrass' case ended in May. The judges announced they would need some time to consider the evidence. Judgment is expected in June.

This will have significance for the Kirkpatrick case, where the defendants were promised an appeal date in June. They realise however that, because of the backlog of cases, the appeal will unlikely to be heard much before the end of the year.

Importantly, a 'loyalist' supergrass has just been given a 'Royal Pardon'. Budgie Allen who was given 14 years for an attempted sectarian murder, has been released after just two years. This shows the commitment of the NIO to continue the practise of recruiting 'supergrasses'. The courts are expected to continue complying.

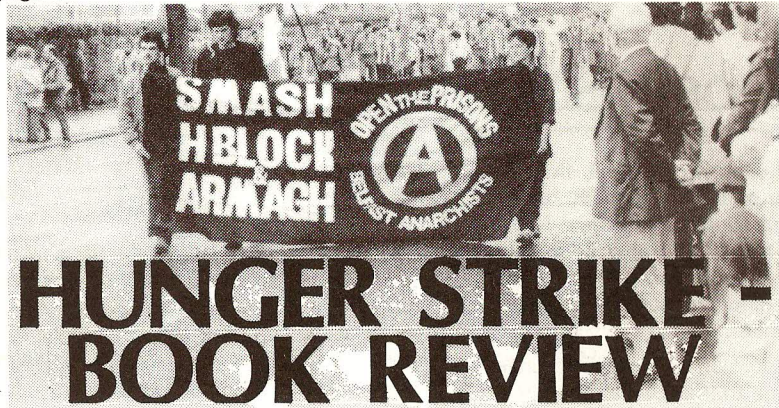
Christy Changes Tune

On the 'B' side of his new single ('Make it Work') in aid of the 'Self - Aid Concert', Christy Moore has a song which refers to 'begrudgers' with 'whinging bar stool eloquence' as 'the hallmark of their trade'.

These terms refer to people who disagree with the notion of the 'Self - Aid' concert. Christy presumably realises that many of the people he is referring to are the 'we' in so many of his previous songs — socialists, republicans, anarchists, feminists etc. What's going on, Christy ??

elsewhere. That 'safety valve', as the Council describes emigration, is no longer available.

The recent order for a Royal Navy ship being awarded to Harland and Wolffs, can be seen as compensation to the loyalist workforce. The message to them seems to be, 'you win some, you lose some'. To anti-unionist workers, the message is 'you lose some'.



Monday May 6th 1986 marked the fifth anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands in Long Kesh. In the intervening period very little has been written about the blanket and no-wash protests and the death of ten men on hunger strike for political status. Writing a book on this would be a daunting task for anyone. The difficulties of recording a period of struggle such as the hunger strike must be enormous. At last, someone has made an attempt at it. The result is a book that is informative and detailed, but overall, disappointing.

Each chapter deals with one of the hunger strikers. Collins, the author, has obviously spent time talking with friends and relatives of each of the ten men. There's quite a lot of information on how these men became politically motivated and involved in the struggle. Some of this will be new to readers though the accounts of the hunger strike itself will be familiar to most people who were involved in various support campaigns. The long and often near forgotten four year blanket and no-wash protests, the devious and hypocritical British state, the lying prison authorities, the corrupt and racist media coverage, the attempted hijackings of coffins and the abuse of some of the dead hunger strikers bodies.

ANALYSIS

In so far as the book covers all these and more aspects of that struggle it is useful and of value. But the style of writing is off-putting - it is romantic and a bit mawkish. This romanticism stems from Collins lack of a clear analysis of Irish history. For instance he frequently refers to a certain 'Irishness' that the hunger strikers and others have. This 'Irishness' is not a socialist or anti-imperialist politics but, rather, it seems to be a unique innate life force that Irish people (and especially Irish men) have. This, rather than worked out politics based on an understanding of British imperialism and capitalism, seems to play a major role for Collins in motivating oppressed people to fight back.

RELIGION

He seems to fall into the trap of seeing the war here as a religious rather than an anti-imperialist one. Sometimes he uses the terms Irish and Catholic interchangeably! To look at Catholicism as a progressive force in Ireland to-day is to show a lack of political understanding which is inexcusable. At one point he states that the 'Irish bishops, on an Irish issue, were cowed into silence' (by English bishops). He also says that the British were effective enough 'to silence

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EASTER 1916



The Easter Rising is the cause for much celebration on its 70th anniversary. Republicans have reason to celebrate. The IRA was created, an amalgamation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Irish Volunteers, and the trade-union based Irish Citizens Army. A provisional government was declared, with its proclamation remaining the ideological basis of republicanism today — the creation of a nation-state.

CONTEXT

But the rising has to be seen in the context of the working class struggles of the period. Only three years previous, a protracted and mass conflict shook Irish society, after the employers locked-out members of the militant, syndicalist-inspired, Irish Transport and General Workers Union. The whole of Dublin economic life came to a standstill, with enormous marches and street battles characterising a new class consciousness and combativity. The I.C.A. was formed to defend the workers' right to organise and march.

But there was a defeat, and it proved disastrous. Demoralisation, and unemployment, through blacklisting, lead to thousands of men joining the British army at the outbreak of 'World War One' — economic conscription — with even some ICA people joining up.

It was this frustration, and the opportunity of Britain at war, which caused Connolly and the ICA to join in the rising. In fact Connolly had initially plans for the ICA, who had been drilled by Jack White* (later to become an anarchist) to stage an insurrection, which he hoped would inspire other workers and the I.V. to join later.

* Jack White was imprisoned in Wales after the Rising, for his agitation in protests at the British executions.

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LIBERTY HALL AFTER BOMBARDMENT IN EASTER WEEK, 1916.

Undoubtedly, the executions of the leaders of the Rising, turned the tide of public opinion militantly against the British. But there were other factors which contributed, such as the attempts at forced conscription, and the dawning awareness of imperialist slaughters on the fields of France and Belgium. There were also signs that the militancy of the working class was showing signs of increasing just before the rising. A new 'war' budget, with increased taxation, led to a successful series of wage demands in the weeks before the Rising. This led to the infamous Martin Murphy encouraging other employees to force redundancies, to weaken the unions, and encourage economic conscription.

AIMS

Back to the Rising, whose aims were laid out in the 'Proclamation of the Republic'. Apart from a vague statement as to the 'right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland', there is no mention of who should control the means of production, distribution, transport, etc. Would there still be bosses and workers? Would parliamentary democracy, based on capitalism and class power, be the basis of a new Ireland?

Because no alternative was proposed, and the ensuing First Dail appeared to reaffirm a class, capitalist society, we must assume that the initial aims of the insurgents did not preclude a capitalist, class society. The proclamation certainly called for a 'Sovereign Independent State', to which all Irish citizens would owe allegiance.

It appears that Connolly and the ICA had to give up their demands for socialism, in order to form an alliance with the IRB.

Anarchism may share an anti-capitalism with other socialists, but we differ on the need to destroy the centralised, hierarchal state, which is, after all, the creation of capitalism (whether that's bourgeois or state capitalism). We believe that the state cannot be usefully captured in the working class interest, but must be destroyed and replaced with a federation of neighbourhood and workplace councils (or soviets).

The IT&GWU had been reduced to 5,000 members in 1916, but by 1918, this number had increased to 40,000. It was in this year that a successful, though token, general strike against proposals for forced conscription, showed how working class militancy had grown again.

In the next few years a new phenomenon was to be found. Little supported by socialist or republican groups, or the trade-union bureaucracy, and little-publicised by either school of history, land and factory take-overs occurred throughout Munster, and beyond. Soviets were declared, and banners read 'We make flour, not profits'.

In 1919, a general strike in Limerick against a British military curfew, left the day to day running of the city in the hands of the trades council.

It was the soviets which tested the alliance between socialism and republicanism — and republicanism failed. The first Dail, (1918 - 22), the majority of T.D.'s being in the newly reformed Sinn Fein, condemned the soviets, and local land courts ordered the return of some land, and the secession of take-overs. On occasions the IRA implemented these rulings. It must be said, though, that individual republicans, such as Peadar O'Donnell, did take part in the soviets.

INSURGENCY

Liam de Paor has described the Easter Rising as 'a classical example of the propaganda-by-deed so widely proclaimed as a tactic by anarchists at the end of the last century'. He is confusing it with the tactic of individual reprisals carried out by some anarchists in that period. Easter was an insurrection, and as such has been a tactic of anarchists, both before and after.

However, it has rarely been a purely military insurgency, more usually a proclamation of the libertarian communist society, with the taking over of economic and social life, backed up by military means. Here lies the crux of my criticisms.

Military struggle, by itself, will not lead to a change in economic or social relations. The struggle to remove British imperialism is an integral part of the working classes war against exploitation and authority (of all kinds), but only a part. There is no point (to use a cliché) in over-throwing one set of rulers, only to replace them with another.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

British imperialism is a dominant force in our country, north and south. Its role, in conjunction with the Free State, is to secure Ireland for NATO and the multinationals. It is conceivable that a realignment of forces (experimented with in the Sunningdale Agreement, and tried again in the Anglo-Irish Accord), of the 'moderate' unionist and nationalist parties, could lead to a conference, a declaration of withdrawal, and an IRA ceasefire. A united capitalist Ireland is conceivable.

The only way a socialist society is possible, and guaranteed, is if the working class make it. Our struggle for British withdrawal must be linked with our struggle for economic and social change. A political revolution, without a social revolution, will only give us new rulers. ■



