



There is Another Way

Anarchists Find Huge Hoard of Wealth

The rich remain rich and the rest of us are supposed to keep them that way. That's why we get pay cuts, health cuts, education cuts, job cuts. It's not as if dipping into the pockets of PAYE workers is the only way to foot bills.

A mere 5% of the Irish population own 40% of the wealth. And a tiny 1% own most of it (34%). What pinko fantasist came up with these figures, asks the cynic. Well, it was that well-known radical outfit, the Bank of Ireland (in its Wealth of the Nation report).

This small number of super-wealthy people own assets (that the Revenue Commissioners know of) worth €100 billion. 1,500 of them, the ones that didn't take tax-exile status, declared incomes over €2.3 million last year.

And then there's the gas and oil fields off the west coast valued at €420 billion and rising. Any chance of looking again at the incredibly generous terms given to the oil companies by crooked Minister Ray Burke back in 1987? Seemingly not.

When Brian Lenihan said there is no pot of gold to be had from the wealthy, he was telling a quite deliberate lie. The only thing that is lacking is the political will to make the rich pay for their own crisis. And no surprise there, the supporters



of capitalism are going by the rules of capitalism – the working class supply the wealth, and the ruling class supply endless reasons why this arrangement is the only possible one.

Marching will not be enough to stop the government and IBEC. It was a good start by showing that the stomach for a fight to preserve working people's living standards is there. To truly show that we mean business and to build a campaign to force the wealthy to pay for the crisis, we need to begin by winning the argument in

our workplaces for a national strike that will shut down every job – public sector and private sector alike.

Our strength lies in the fact that we do the work. Without us there are no busses or trains, no deliveries to shops, no teaching in schools, no production, no services, nothing. We have a great power in our hands if we stand together. The time has gone beyond protest, now we need to use our muscle in defence of ourselves, our families, the retired and people on social welfare.

Inside: Strike Action | Anti-Facism | Francisco Ferrer

Review: Someday Independent

“Someday Independent” is a 4 page leaflet produced by Dublin Shell to Sea. The design/layout and graphical work is of a very high standard and compares favourably to high cost, professionally produced brochures. The overall colour scheme and design is a pleasing blue “wave” design which is easy on the eye and appropriate to the subject material without drawing too much attention to itself.

The leaflet employs a satirical headline which emulates the tabloid style - put something controversial and attention-grabbing on the front cover to catch the reader’s attention. But in this case, the headline “Ireland Strikes it rich, all cuts to be scrapped”, has a deeper purpose, which is to make the very salient point that the huge wealth contained in the Corrib Gas Field would be sufficient to solve our economic woes many times over.

A sidebar along the bottom of the front page brings the difficult to grasp figure of 420 billion euro into perspective by showing some examples of what such money could provide, for example: “300 times the annual pension levy”. This is an



excellent tactic which brings the figure down to earth and shows the practical value of the Corrib Gas field reserves to the current economic predicament.

A side box on the 2nd page summarises the background to the gas giveaway originating with Ray Burke and Bertie Ahern 20 years ago and the new terms and conditions they introduced for oil and gas exploration and exploitation.

Columns are split up in a logical way so that each covers a different area of concern – one column deals with the news and media personalities involved, detailing their

links to resource extraction multinationals and the web of connections that can be drawn between media figures, the Gardai and Fianna Fail. This is useful stuff.

Other columns cover the origin of the quoted figures, questions of security of supply, safety concerns, and the possibility of a better deal being made. Useful quotes are interspersed along with the text – one from Green Party member, Trevor Sargent, highlights their cynical about-turn from a previously strident and principled opposition to the Gas Giveaway.

A former director of Statoil, Mike Cunningham, gives a very illuminating quote: “No country in the world gives as favourable terms to the oil companies as Ireland”. Coming from a former oil company director, this is quite something to consider!

On the last page, a brief summary of the history of campaign to date is presented, which is especially useful in showing the length of the struggle, the breadth of individuals and organisations involved, and the frightening levels of abuse (both verbal and physical) dealt out by the Gardai and Shell security forces to those resisting this project.

The final page also gives over a side column to a checklist of actions which the reader can take to help the campaign and contact details for Shell to Sea Dublin. It’s a solid way to end a very effective leaflet which should be distributed as widely as possible.

Cian Lynch

Contacts

Anarchist Organisations

Workers Solidarity Movement

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www.wsm.ie
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cork@wsm.ie | belfastwsm@yahoo.com

Organise!

PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ
organiseireland@yahoo.com

Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group (RAG)

PO BOX 10785, Dublin 1.
http://ragdublin.blogspot.com/

Libertarian Networks

Indymedia Ireland

Alternative user-generated Irish news.
http://www.indymedia.ie

Seomra Spraoi

Dublin Social Centre
10 Belvedere Court, Dublin 1.
http://www.seomraspraoi.org

Galway Social Space

24 Middle Street, Galway.
http://www.galwaysspace.org

Campaigning Groups

Free Education for Everyone

Campaign to stop the reintroduction of college fees and to promote the right to free education for all.
stopfees@gmail.com
http://free-education.info/

Shell to Sea

Campaign to move Shell’s gas pipeline offshore from Co. Mayo.
http://www.shelltosea.com

Hands Off the People of Iran

Anti-imperialist network for solidarity with Iranian trade unionists & the women’s rights movement.
http://www.hopoi.org

Choice Ireland

Abortion rights action group
choiceireland@gmail.com
http://www.choiceireland.org

Alliance for Choice (NI)

http://allianceforchoiceni.org

Residents Against Racism

Opposing racism and deportations.
24 hour helpline: 087 666 2060

Francisco Ferrer Murdered By the State

'Teach people how to think, not what to think.'

A hundred years ago this year, a huge campaign arose around the world to save the life of Francisco Ferrer. A Catalanian by birth, Ferrer was an active anarchist and well known across Europe and the Americas for his radical views on education. Ferrer's enemies were not for turning though and the campaigns failed. He was shot to death by firing squad on October 13th 1909.

Born to Catholic parents outside Barcelona, Ferrer became involved at a young age in anti-royalist activities in Spain. He fled to Paris to escape the Spanish authorities and there became involved with anarchism and the great love of his life: education and learning.

Ferrer held the view that people were born free with inquiring, independent minds. He believed that children had a thirst for knowledge and that the role of education was to develop and encourage this fundamental quality. At the time in Spain, the Catholic Church had a stranglehold on education. For many there was no other means to learn other than to go to a school run by Catholic priests – sound familiar? Yet what happened to children in these schools? Ferrer witnessed Catholic nuns and priests filling children's heads with superstitions and nonsensical ideas about 'miracles' and the 'afterlife'. To Ferrer, this practice by the Church served the interest of the status quo. He abhorred the idea that irrational ideas (or ideas that made no sense) should be forced on children and those seeking knowledge.

OFF BY HEART

For many people at the time, the solution to this problem was to involve the State in education. But Ferrer didn't agree with that idea either. He argued that the State also had a political agenda when it came to education. It was similar to what the Church desired in that the State too wanted to make people docile and regimented. As an example of what he meant, Ferrer pointed to the State's obsession with exams and teaching by the method of 'learning off by heart'. Ferrer



thought that these practices were the opposite of what teaching and learning should be about. He opposed the idea of exams and believed that inquiry, discussion and egalitarian practice between teachers and students were central to how teaching should be organised.

If Ferrer had confined himself to writing books about education, he might well not have become such a thorn in the authorities' side. But that was not his style. Returning to Barcelona in the early 1900s he organised the first of his 'Escuela Moderna' (Modern School) schools in Barcelona. These schools were non-religious, co-educational and democratic. Today many of the ideas at its core are accepted as being not only correct but central to what education should be about. Concepts such as building 'self-esteem' and 'respecting children as individuals' are now regarded as standard ideas around which good learning practice can take place.

A NEW WAY

Ferrer's new schools in Barcelona survived in the teeth of repression for only a small number of years. But he had already sowed the seeds of a new way of doing things. At the same time he also started a school for teachers that would

use these new methods of teaching and he commissioned and published school books that looked at the world in a different way to the way the ruling class of that day wanted.

In those years in Spain the anarchist movement was growing stronger by the year. Their activities were met by repression and Ferrer himself was arrested on numerous occasions for his involvement. In 1909 though, the authorities finally saw their chance and took it. A general strike in Barcelona turned into a bloody uprising that later became known as The Tragic Week. Military law was imposed and Ferrer was arrested. He was quickly charged with treason and found guilty even though no evidence was produced.

Oddly Ferrer's execution drew a huge amount of attention to what he had been fighting for. Across Spain and around the world many schools were founded which set about following in the example of his first Modern School. Moreover, in time, his views became a beacon of light for educationalists and teachers of many persuasions who wanted to break forever with the idea that schools and teaching should be used to indoctrinate and control children.

It's Time to Strike Back

Working people hit the streets in huge numbers on November 6th. The protests showed, once again, that there is a willingness to resist the government's attacks on living standards. Most observers put the total number who walked out of work to take part in the eight protests at around 100,000.

When 120,000 marched on February 21st the Irish Congress of Trade Unions followed this up with their plan for a general strike on March 30th, only to cancel it in return for the promise of new "social partnership" talks.

The prospect of new "social partnership" talks has been suggested again. Congress leaders want little more than to be 'consulted' and negotiated with. They want to moderate the government's strategy but accept the "need" for income cuts.

Statements from ICTU general secretary David Begg and SIPTU president Jack O'Connor say they want the cuts to be implemented more gradually. Begg has said public spending cuts should be spread over the next eight years up to 2017 instead of the Government's target of 2013 "to minimise the effect the cuts have on workers". They have agreed with the government's argument that workers should bail out the rich, they just want it done over a longer time.

Some public sector union leaders have made it known they are prepared to support cuts in services, allowances, working conditions and even extending the working week as long as there are no more cuts in basic pay. This has led to a feeling among many union activists that the leaders have "sold out".



With many senior union officials on wages many times higher than their members it is certainly true that they have no personal motivation when it comes to resisting pay cuts. INTO's John Carr gets €171,313 a year, IMPACT's Peter McLoone €171,000, ASTI's John White €144,000, David Begg €137,400 and Jack O'Connor €124,000.

However, while it would be easy to blame this small but very influential group of overpaid people, it ignores the reality that the majority of union members voted for the 'partnership' deals. The agreement may be dead but the concept of a common interest between boss and employee still hangs over us like the ghost of yesterday.

There is no alternative to income cuts if we continue to "embrace the spirit of partnership". If the bosses and government are our "partners" then it makes sense to go along with their priorities. That means bailing out the rich at the expense

of working people. As SIPTU's Brendan Hayes pointed out when he refused to sign the Taxation Commission report, "people earning more than €200,000 would not have to pay any more tax".

This is a class conflict. There is an employers' offensive to reduce wages and public spending. It is not about everyone taking a hit, it's about the minority who own a huge amount of Ireland's wealth preserving and adding to their holdings.

Employers unilaterally impose new contracts, pay cuts are imposed in profitable firms like Marine Terminals and Boots, pension schemes are changed to no longer guarantee a set payment and jobs are outsourced to low pay firms.

Instead of buying in to the fiction that the bosses' interest is somehow a "national interest" we can start asking questions

like, why can hospitals and schools have their funds cut but €54b be quickly found to bail out a handful of mega-rich property developers and investors?

Why are people like Tony O'Reilly, Margaret Heffernan or Denis O'Brien not being relieved of a chunk of their wealth when workers have to give up a chunk of our pay? Why are PAYE workers, who have absolutely no control over economic decisions, expected to foot the bill?

The alternative to pinning our hopes on David Begg getting a great deal over tea and sandwiches in the Taoiseach's office is strong, combative unions. And that means shop stewards and activists who want to fight back getting together inside our unions to convince our colleagues to back an alternative based on letting the rich "share the pain".

Alan MacSimóin

Find out more. Check out www.wsm.ie

Informacje i artykuły w języku polskim dostępne na stronie www.wsm.ie/polska

That's Capitalism



If the recession is hitting everyone, who is buying the Goldvish mobile phone? This diamond-encrusted mobile costs a cool €1 million. See www.goldvish.com. And you can write the cheque with a limited edition Montblanc fountain pen for \$25,000 (€17,072).

Nearly one in five rented homes across the 26 counties inspected last year did not meet minimum legal standards, according to the Department of the Environment. 2,854 of the 14,880 rental properties checked were found to be below minimum standards. Yet there were only eight prosecutions of landlords.

Pupils at St John's Girls National School in Carrigaline, Co Cork have been asked to provide their own toilet paper because of cutbacks.

Green Party leader John Gormley went to a conference on climate change in the Welsh town of Hay-on-Wye. If he had travelled from Holyhead by bus and train, the journey would have cost £15 each way. But John sent for a limousine from London and left the taxpayer with a bill for €2,200. This is the same Gormley who criticised the salaries paid to top RTE stars, describing them as being "completely out of touch with the reality of ordinary people's lives."

The Central Statistics Office says that average pay increased in the first quarter of this year. A look at how that figure is arrived at tells an interesting story. In the manufacturing sector, office workers saw their hourly pay fall by -2.3% and production workers saw theirs fall by -0.8%. However, managers got a 6.5% increase. In addition, their annual bonuses were 2.5 times that of the bonuses they received in 2006.

Coca Cola announced a profit of \$2.04 billion in the second quarter of this year, up 43% from last year. In Ireland their drivers were told to take pay cuts of up to 40% or be transferred to another transport firm on similarly reduced wages.

The gap between wealthiest 10% and the rest of the USA is worse than at any time on record. Two thirds of all income gains from 2002-7 went to the top 1%. The Walton family, owners of Wal-Mart, is worth more than the bottom 100 million Americans combined.

anarkismo.net

International Anarchist website
with news & discussion from
all five continents.

Thinking About Anarchism: Workers Have the Power

In the WSM we're often asked why we spend so much time talking about the working class. Even the title of our paper, Workers Solidarity, seems a bit odd to some - why are we talking so much about workers? Isn't anarchism for everybody? And aren't we all middle class now?

Questions like these are based on a misunderstanding of what class actually means. Being working class doesn't mean being poor, working down a mine, or keeping pigeons, any more than going to college or working in an office makes you middle class. The working class is, basically, everyone who has to work for a living, and the ruling class is the people that we work for. The middle class is a small group somewhere in between the two - not rich enough to live off the work of others, but still not entirely dependent on their own wages.

The working class is important because of the society we live in today. Capitalism is based on an unequal distribution of wealth and power. A small minority of people control most of

the world's wealth, which means that they own the farms and the factories that produce all of the necessities of life. The rest of us have to work for them - and this, not the clothes we wear or the books we read, is what makes us working class. (Obviously, the working class includes the unemployed, and the partners and children of workers).

At the heart of the capitalist system is profit, the difference between what we get paid for our work, and what our work is worth. In every profitable business, by definition, workers are being paid less than their work is worth. What's left over is your boss's profit, money that they've earned from your work. And this is why the system continues - for all those that are exploited by capitalism, and suffer because of it, the rich and powerful continue to benefit from it.

The working class are those with the most to gain from the abolition of capitalism, and we're also the ones with the power to change society, because capitalism depends on our continuing to support it. Whenever we take

action to improve our wages or working conditions, we realise that we are stronger when we stand together, and we cut into the profits of our bosses. And the more successes we have in campaigns like this, the more we realise that we don't have to stop there, with small gains and reforms, but that we're able to fundamentally change society so that it serves all of our interests.

And that's our ultimate goal - not to improve the position of the working class, or even put the working class in charge, but to abolish the property system that creates classes. When every workplace is run by the people who work there and production is for need alone then there can be no profit, and so no working class or ruling class. That's the basis of an anarchist society, a society where everyone is truly equal, and so everyone can be truly free.

Ray Cunningham

Fascists Get the Boot

In October, Anti-Fascist Action successfully prevented a large European neo-nazi gig from going ahead in Kerry. Dozens of Slovakian, Polish and Czech neo-nazis were planning to spend a long weekend in Ireland to celebrate the birthday of a leading fascist living in Dublin who's originally from Prague. AFA managed to stop the gig from taking place and even had the pleasure of bumping into a few of the Blood & Honour fascists in Dublin.

A couple of months earlier, a small self-styled neo-nazi skinhead gang was behind a number of racist assaults in the Temple Bar area.

In response, anti-fascists from various groups mobilised and leafleted the area a number of times - talking to local shop workers and teenagers who congregate in the vicinity.

As a direct result, the boneheads have stopped hanging out in Temple Bar and harassing passers-by. We have also built new relationships with local shops that have pledged their support to further anti-fascist work.

WSM members will continue oppose the growth of fascist groups in our cities and communities. To read about the WSM's policy on resisting fascism, please log onto:



www.wsm.ie/story/841

J. Carax

Anarchism & the WSM

We carried out an anti-Lisbon campaign involving the distribution of 15,000 copies of a special edition of Workers Solidarity and putting up posters advocating a no-vote. Our activity was designed to begin a discussion about the sort of Ireland and Europe people would like to live in, and was centred on the needs of working people. The vote may have been lost but several thousand people got to hear about the anarchist alternative.

Our members have been active in supporting the MTL dockers during their prolonged strike in Dublin, where several community marches and an occupation of the freight depot were staged. As we go to print talks are still taking place about the details of a return to work, but the company has been defeated in its attempt to break the union.

We were also on the streets, with 15,000 others, in the national march against cuts in the community sector on Sep. 30th in Dublin and mobilised for the ICTU regional protests on Nov. 6th. Our message was that 'marching is not enough - a national strike is needed'.

WSM members have been involved, with others, in the new Social Solidarity Network of workers, unemployed, students and communities who want to resist cutbacks in pay and services.

Members in Belfast, who earlier this year were involved in defending Roma immigrants



Attendees at the recent meeting on South Africa in Cork

against racist gangs, supported a picket of the BBC offices there in protest at the neo-nazi British National Party being given a television platform.

We held well-attended public meetings in Cork and Dublin with a guest speaker from the Zabalaza Anarchist-Communist Front, a South African anarchist organisation. You can find out more about Zabalaza at www.zabalaza.net.

Our series of public meetings about the economic crisis and the anarchist alternative con-

tinued with one in Navan in early November. WSM members also met with probably the planet's best-known anarchist, Noam Chomsky, who visited Belfast and Dublin at the end of October.

The WSM held a successful national conference on October 31st, where we discussed the future policies and strategies of the organisation as we head into what might be a period of heightened social struggle. If you are interested in joining us in this struggle, then get in touch!

Social Solidarity Network formed

The government has inflicted growing hardship upon workers and communities across the country, spreading the ethos that we should all commit to sharing the pain. This has been perpetuated by mainstream media, as "sharing the pain" has been portrayed, as the only way out of this crisis.

The Social Solidarity Network (SSN), however, believes otherwise, and wishes to provide people and communities with an open forum that can serve to resist these attacks and to share and spread information among individuals and groups affected. The SSN aims to make links between different struggles (from workplace and community organising to re-

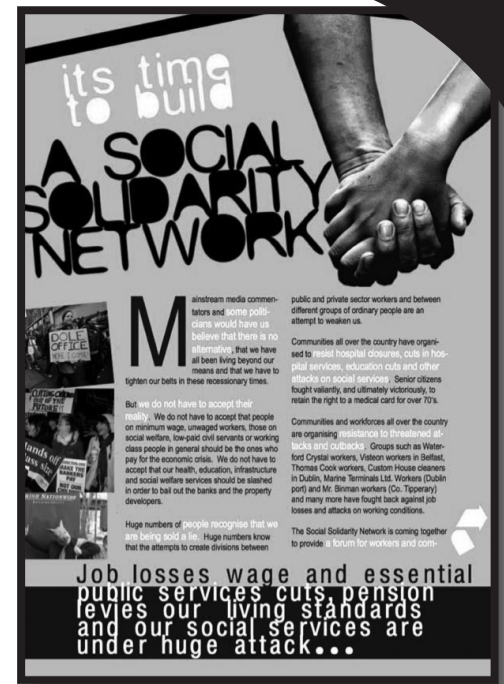
sistance to educational cutbacks and unemployment) so that a network of resistance can successfully be built.

We had our first meeting on the 3rd of October in the Seomra Spraoi social centre. It was a positive day that saw around 40 people coming together. It involved the sharing of experiences, much discussion about the crisis and potential ways of resisting its effects, film screenings, dinner and an evening social event.

This was followed by a second meeting on the 19th of October, which focussed on continuing previous discussion and furthering the growth and potential of the network.

Much attention was given to building for the ICTU national demonstration on November 6th, as it was seen as an important way to show the government that Irish people won't just lie down and accept cuts to vital social services and as an indication of the mood for a fight back.

With this in mind, the SSN leafleted the march in Dublin and held another meeting in its aftermath to plan future actions. This network is still in its early stages and its success will depend on getting large numbers of people involved. If you are interested in knowing more about the SSN and/or getting involved, please contact: socialsolidaritynetwork@gmail.com



Review of Black Flame

This is an excellent work. It is wide ranging, both in terms of subjects covered and geography. The latter makes a welcome break from most accounts of anarchism, which are sadly all-too Eurocentric. The former sees anarchist analysis expanded from the usual subjects of political authority and economic class into gender and imperialism (and national liberation struggles). It covers such perennial issues as anarchist organisation (including 'Platformism'), the Spanish Revolution and a host of others.

Black Flame gets almost everything right. It concentrates on the mainstream of anarchism, class struggle anarchism (collectivist, communist and syndicalist anarchism, in other words). It is comprehensive, discussing all important issues, people and movements.

The authors are right in showing the anarchist roots of syndicalism and exposing the Leninist myth that anarchism and syndicalism are fundamentally different. They debunk the notion that Sorel was the creator or main theoretician of syndicalism. They place anarchism where it should be: as part of the wider socialist movement, its libertarian wing. It is right to say that anarchism is "a product of the capitalist world and the working class it created" (p. 96) and that thinkers and activists alike "defined anarchism as an anti-capitalist ideology and a form of socialism." (p. 46)

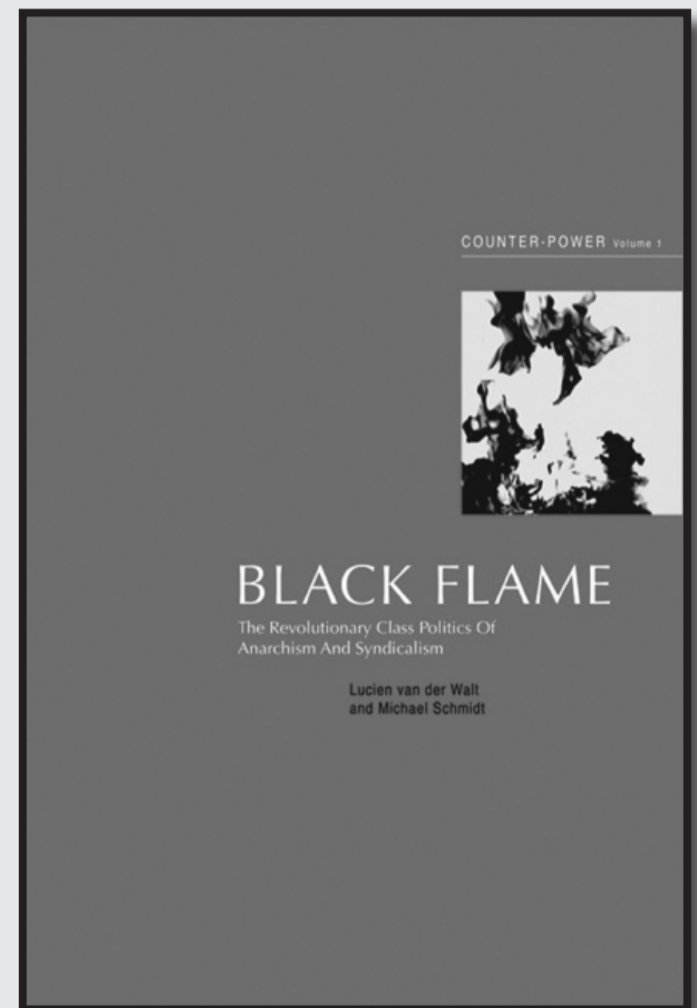
I have two somewhat minor quibbles about it. The first, minor criticism is the claim that Daniel De Leon, Big Bill

Haywood and James Connolly can be included in the broad anarchist tradition. They were Marxists! By no stretch of the imagination can they be considered anarchists. Syndicalism is an anarchist tactic, and like other tactics can be utilised by non-anarchists.

My major criticism is their relegation of Proudhon to being a forerunner of anarchism. It is strange to read that Proudhon was not an anarchist and that "the anarchists took [from him] the notion of the self-management of the means of production, the idea of free federation, a hatred of capitalism and landlordism, and a deep distrust of the state"! (p. 84) So, except for anti-statism, anti-capitalism, anti-landlordism, federalism, communes, self-management, the vision of a revolution from below, the name "anarchist", what has Proudhon done for us?

It rightly rejects the "dictionary definition" of anarchism – as if a rich socio-economic theory and social movement can be summed up in such a way! As Black Flame stresses, anarchism needs to be defined in terms of its ideas and history, not by whoever calls themselves an "anarchist" or has been so-labelled.

Black Flame is a wonderful book which every anarchist will enjoy reading. It is well researched, well argued and should be read by every one interested in anarchism.



€23.00 / £20.00 (including postage) from WSM Books, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

A Veteran Anarchist Speaks of Revolution, War and Bad Coffee...

During his recent visit to Dublin, Workers Solidarity took the opportunity, over "bad coffee", to chat to 93 year old Roma Marquez Santo about some of his experiences of the Spanish revolution. In 1936 Roma was a metal worker and a member of both the UGT trade union and the POUM, an anti-Stalinist communist party.

What was it like on the first day of the revolution (after the generals' attempted coup d'état)?

It was chaotic! For a while no one knew what was happening or what was going to happen. The streets were full of workers with every type of weapon, the factories and barrios (neighbourhoods) were quickly secured but we had to take the main barracks where an anarchist comrade Francisco Ascaso was killed. The army surrendered there and elsewhere, especially where the Guardia Civil (Spanish paramilitary police force) came out on the side of the people.

But there were factories to be organised and food to be got from the countryside. This was organised very quickly as committees were already set up and ready to deal with such a situation. After a day or two, there was lots of

food. And weapons too.

The revolution is crazy, disorganised. But quickly enough it gets organised... It was a good time to be in Barcelona, we the people were in charge!

What was the journey like to the front?

We'd be going through the villages and people would call to us 'stop, we want to come too!' Many did but more had to stay to take over the land and secure the harvest. This was organised by committees in each village and the harvest was organised and sent back to the cities and towns where the factories were now held by workers' committees who'd always been there in the background, waiting for something like this to happen.

We were finally issued with 81 mm mortars and stayed on the front until the government started to arrest the leaders of the POUM in Barcelona, then I became an anarchist and a member of the CNT militia.

What happened to you at the end of the war?

We were all arrested by the fascists. Those who admitted to have volunteered were taken away and it looked as if there'd be mass executions. However, we were put on trial and were lucky: a fascist officer we'd captured had no complaint to make against us. There was nobody to make false allegations about our conduct and they decided to give us 20 years.

This was in 1939?

Yes. But there must have been too many of us and it was reduced to 6 years. I was actually in for 3 years, 9 months and 14 days before they released me...

What then?

I went back to Catalunya but of course I couldn't get work. The whole place had changed, before the war workers had been reasonably well off; afterwards... it was a poor time.

As a former political prisoner you weren't given a ration card?



Yes. We had cousins in the US who sent money back and we lived on that for many years.

Finally Roma, what continues to inspire you?

The economic troubles in the world today show us that capitalism is still here; it has not been defeated. It is hard to defeat capitalism, but we've got to try.