

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

May / June 2010

Twenty-Six Years of Irish Anarchist News

Deal or No Deal *It's a Scrap Either Way*

The long days and nights of bargaining between government and union top brass at Croke Park ended when the participants emerged and presented the fruits of their deliberations. It is a pretty awful deal, which rubber stamped the pay cuts already handed out to public sector workers and added a whole layer of new working conditions, essentially extra hours and responsibilities for the same or lower pay. Over the couple of weeks that followed, the various public sector unions in conference or at executive level recommended either accepting or rejecting this deal, with the final call resting with the membership. As we go to print the final result of these ballots are still unknown but recent experience should warn us that, in either case, the battle is far from over.

This government is pursuing an agenda whereby the economic crisis must be solved by an assault on social services and workers pay. The savings garnered from these attacks are trifling when compared to the tens of billions handed to crooked banks and defaulting property developers but it seems that it sends the right message to international investors, the IMF and Brussels.



What the Union Negotiators should have said in Croke Park

A government addicted to taking and then taking again can never be trusted to abide by an agreement, especially when they're across the table from union bureaucrats desperately clinging to their place at that government table.

Either way, they will be back demanding more cuts and more pain and this will only stop when the union membership finally stand their ground and push back hard. It's never too soon to get in the habit of fighting back. Strong, united in-

dustrial action would not only end the cycle of pay cuts but would also be of enormous value in learning how to stick together, strike back and win victories as workers. An all-out strike, supported where possible by semi-state and other non-public sector workers, can quickly resolve this issue, where 18 months of talks and 'deals' has only led us deeper and deeper into trouble.



Shell in Mayo

Local man, Pat O'Donnell, jailed for resistance to dangerous Shell pipeline



International Women's Day

Report on successful celebration of women's struggle in Cork.



5th Dublin Bookfair

Anarchists take over Liberty Hall once again.

Lessons of Pride

There will be celebrations of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Pride across Ireland this summer, including Cork's Pride Parade on June 5th and Dublin's Parade on June 26th. The original Pride marches were held to commemorate the Stonewall riots in New York which began on June 28, 1969, and which were led mainly by working class Black and Puerto Rican trans people, butch dykes and drag queens sick of being beaten up and arrested by the police. The following year, in commemoration of the riots, the Gay Liberation Front organised a march from Greenwich Village to Central Park. Almost 10,000 women and men attended the march. Today, many major cities all over the world hold LGBT/Queer Pride Marches on the last Sunday of June in honour of Stonewall.

Paul McAndrew

Nowadays Pride celebrations are more like big parties and the politics can get lost. The increasing commercialisation of Pride can lead to situations like Manchester Pride where you can only access the gay village during the Pride Festival by buying a wristband that costs around £50! Queer people have won a lot of victories in recent years and some people think we don't need to fight anymore.

But the Catholic Church, an openly anti-gay organisation, runs most of Ireland's school's and hospitals and it has sweeping exemptions under equality legislation. A nurse or a teacher can legally be sacked for being queer. The civil partnership legislation, which is currently being written into Irish Law, will formalise our status as second-class citizens. Civil partnerships will, for example, make no provision for recognising the children of same-sex partners and won't give immigration rights to the partners of Irish citizens. Yet the numbers of people on the protests against civil partnership are tiny compared to the turn out at Pride Parades, despite the overwhelming feeling among queers in Ireland that we are being offered much less than equality.

Also, we could so easily lose the gains that we have made. Since medieval times, queer communities have been making progress in economic good times, only to get stomped on again as soon as there's a recession. Late medieval transvestite subcultures were driven deep underground by persecutions



that were part of the witch-hunts from the 14th to 17th centuries. The long depression of the last quarter of the 19th century saw persecutions that included the trial of Oscar Wilde. The powerful homosexual, feminist and sex reform movements of the early 20th century were mostly crushed by fascism, Stalinism and the conservative climate of the Fifties. During the depression in Britain in the Eighties, Thatcher introduced anti-gay laws.

To quote from the blog of Panti Bliss, Ireland's best-loved drag queen, "what we need is righteous anger. What we need is a Stonewall riot ... 1,000 gays to get angry on the street. What we need is 2,000 gays with eggs to turn up at the Lenister House railings at Merrion Square and have them hail down on the cars of country TD's, to chain the gates shut, to refuse to move, to pour paint on the pavements. What we need is for 50 gays to get arrested. So what if we get arrested? A day in court and a fine? We'll have a whip round! But we need to get angry."

It's not something we have to do on our own either. The current wave of Irish LGBT Liberation started with (mainly straight) feminists, trade unionists and peace activists marching with us through Dublin in 1983 in outrage at the decision of Justice Sean Gannon to not jail four bigots for their roles in chasing and beating to death a young gay man, Declan Flynn, in Dublin's Fairview Park. We cannot depend on politicians to fight our corner, we can only rely on the working class to do it with us.

www.anarchistblackcat.org



A friendly and respectful online discussion board for anarchists of all stripes and those just interested in seeing what anarchists think.

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Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group (RAG)
PO BOX 10785, Dublin 1.
<http://ragdublin.blogspot.com/>

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>

Solidarity Books
Cork Radical Bookshop & Meeting Space
43 Douglas Street, Cork.
solidaritybooks@gmail.com

Just Books
Belfast Radical Bookshop
13-15 Clarence Street, Belfast.
justbooks@rocketmail.com

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

Cork Palestine Link
Part of the Free Gaza Movement that is sending a convoy of aid to Gaza.
palestinecork@gmail.com
086 337 8146

Iranian Protestors at War with God

On Monday November 9th last year, news of the impending execution of Ehsan Fattahian, a 28-year-old Iranian political activist of Kurdish origins, began reaching the outside world. Human rights groups, caught unaware, began a frantic effort to halt the execution. In less than 24 hours, 15,000 people had signed an online petition addressing UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon, asking him to intervene. Ehsan was executed unceremoniously early on November 11th. Reports indicate that he was hanged in the basement of a prison in the provincial city of Sanandaj in the Kurdistan region of Iran. His family, who were waiting for a response to pleas of clemency outside the prison doors, was refused permission to see him for one last time. Ehsan, who did not hide his affiliations with the Kurdish freedom movement, was initially convicted of ten years imprisonment by the Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj on charges of conspiring against national security and membership of an armed opposition group. Both his lawyer and the prosecutor appealed the sentence. The Appeals Court, apparently because Ehsan was not prepared to publicly confess and recant, added to his indictments the charge of 'At War with God' or *mohareb-e*. Prominent Iranian human rights lawyers objected, in vain, to this abuse of the legal appeal system. Ehsan Fattahian's death was followed by the execution of Fasih Yasamani, a 27-year-old Kurdish political activist, in early January.

As in previous waves of bloodletting by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the executions in far-flung Kurdistan were a prelude to an even more brutal crackdown throughout the country. On January 29th, Mohammad Reza Ali Zamani and Arash Rahmanipour, the latter barely 20 years-of-age, were also hanged to death. Sixteen others, including seven members of the Baha'i faith and two human rights activists, were also handed the death penalty. The list is a macabre representation of the intricate tapestry that is the people of Iran, with its many ethnic groups, religious faiths and political affiliations. What is common to them, in the eyes of a regime that regards itself as having been appointed by God, is their enmity towards God, *mohareb-e*.

The reintroduction of the charge of *mo-*



hareb-e, which has been absent from implementation in Iran for over a decade, has sent shock waves through Iranian opposition groups and international human rights organisations. The Iranian Islamic penal code defines *mohareb* as the person who plans to overthrow the Islamic government. The Iranian government, from the outset, has accused this new wave of protestors of attempting a 'velvet revolution', planned and financed by foreign countries and outside institutions. The charge transforms them from ordinary street protesters to enemies of God. The punishment, according to Articles 190-196 of the Penal Code, could range from lynching to the cutting of the right hand and foot or to death by hanging or crucifixion. Thirty-six pro-government members of the Iranian Parliament added to the current bellicose tone by presenting a new plan to execute those sentenced by the courts on charges of *mohareb-e* within five days of the court's judgement. The most alarming element of all of these declarations is the blanket use of the word *mohareb* to describe all anti-government protesters. The fears are real, for there are currently at least five hundred prisoners facing the charge of *mohareb-e*.

So, what can be done to prevent further bloodshed and state-sponsored murder in Iran? As always with Iran, no clear answer presents itself. The ongoing, seemingly fruitless, negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program complicate the West's position. Iranians have never reacted well to outside interference and the very idea of a military attack or a 'regime change' di-

rected from outside the country would be anathema to most Iranians, even to those risking their lives on the streets. Any moves in that direction would certainly give the regime the excuse they need for even worse repression.

Yet, the Iranian government, who is a signatory to a number of UN human rights conventions, does respond to world opinion, particularly when that opinion comes from countries and people who are not easily identified with imperialist powers. The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly recently approved a non-binding resolution condemning the violations of human rights in Iran, paving the way for the adoption of the resolution by the General Assembly. The approval of the resolution, amidst the contentious discussions surrounding Iran's nuclear program, was a small yet positive step. A unified and consistent international voice condemning Iran's breach of universal principles of human rights remains one of the few effective options in dealing with an unpredictable but exceedingly brutal regime.

This is an edited version of a longer article by Professor Maria Baghramian, who lectures in the School of Philosophy in University College Dublin and Dr Roja Fazaeli, who lectures in the School of Religions and Theology in Trinity College Dublin.

Public Service Pay Deal The Battle Lines are Drawn

Jack O'Connor walked out of the government talks and refused to recommend the deal, saying that:

“From its inception the union was distinguished from its predecessors and contemporaries in trade unionism in Ireland by its militancy in organisation and in industrial action, its extension of membership to all sections of general workers to support other wage earners in weaker strategic positions, its vigour in fighting employers, its recourse to the sympathetic strike on the principle that an injury to one is the concern of all and its proclaiming as tainted goods, unclean and untouchable material in establishments in which its members or fellow workers were on strike or locked out”

D. Freeman

Of course this did not happen. The above quote is taken from Cathal O'Shannon's book, "Fifty Years of Liberty Hall".

The majority of public sector trade unionists voted for strike action in the run up to the budget of December last. The leadership took this vote for action and turned it into a justification for protracted negotiations, during which they claimed that the government could make the requisite savings without lowering our wages further, by implementing the "Transformation Agenda" (see Workers Solidarity 114).

The Government noted these ideas, kept them for a future date, walked away from the talks, implemented their cuts in wages and then invited the union leaders back into the room for a look at the "Transformation Agenda" again. Quickly the brakes were applied to the work to rule, which was in place to get us back our lost wages, and the new "Croke Park" deal emerged on March 31st.

Like all deals, we should not reject it out of hand. Let us calculate all the benefits that accrue to us from this deal:

- ◇ They will not cut our wages again, possibly until 2014, but the Government has previous in terms of walking away from deals when it suits them, while we also live in an era of constant stealth taxes.
- ◇ The promise that if we are on target



PIIGS is an abbreviation for Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain. Will Ireland include itself in fighting back against the bailouts with our European brothers & sisters?

with the many savings which we will bring about via 'rationalisation' and 'restructuring', and if this is passed by the review body (see below) in Spring 2011, the Government will see what they can do in relation to low waged workers, i.e. those earning under €35,000.

- ◇ No compulsory staff redundancies if they (the government) get the outcomes that they want. So that's not really a plus.

That concludes the positives. Now for the negatives:

- ◇ New pension agreed to start by 2011, which will move people away from defined benefit schemes and towards a defined contribution plan. Effectively we will have agreed to this without seeing any details, thus signing a blank cheque for a Government who've already proven where their interests lie.
- ◇ Longer core working hours for many staff, from 8am to 8pm.
- ◇ Reduction in staff numbers.
- ◇ No replacement of staff until the government reduces staff levels to an unknown figure that they have in mind.
- ◇ Complete co-operation with the plans in terms of 'rationalisation' and 'restructuring.'
- ◇ No strikes in terms of pay or working conditions.

- ◇ Independent Review body set up consisting of some members of ICTU, which will oversee this transformation and agree that sufficient progress is being made.
- ◇ Maximise productivity, whatever that means in the context of education, health, and transportation to name but a few.
- ◇ No plans to re-instate wages to pre-cut levels.
- ◇ New contracts agreed to, although amazingly we haven't seen any details of what these new work contracts will contain

We must reject this deal, which is worse than the status quo. It is so bad that the executives of a number of unions have even gone against their negotiators by recommending rejection of the deal. The union leadership has forgotten how to fight and even those amongst them, those who argue for rejecting the deal simply want to get back to the table for further negotiations.

When we vote for rejecting this deal we are going back to what we voted for back in October, strike action. Our unions are still ours. It is time to send that message back to both the Dáil and to the top brass in Liberty Hall and ICTU. The transformation we require is to reclaim our unions and that can only be done by us.



In 2009, "11% of employers visited by welfare officials were not compliant with their PRSI commitments", according to the Department of Social and Family Affairs. In plain English this means that they never paid PRSI to the government, as they are obliged to do. When workers steal, it's 'theft', when bosses do the same, it's 'non-compliance'.

The new Marks and Spencer boss, Marc Bolland, got €8.5 million just for signing his contract. It would take the average M&S worker 595 years to earn that amount. Bolland also pockets €1.1m a year, 77 times his workers' average pay.

Supermac's saw its pre-tax profits quadruple last year, so how is it thanking its workers who made this possible? It has joined other fast food bosses to call for a €1 per hour cut in the national minimum wage, a weakening of the minimal legal standards laid out by the Joint Labour Committee and a challenge to the right of the JLC to determine working conditions.

There are 306,000 empty houses in the 26 counties right now, many built by speculators during the boom years. Meanwhile 56,000 families wait on local authority housing lists.

Rolls Royce, makers of the world's most luxurious cars for the super-rich, announced profits of €1.05 billion for 2009. That's 4% up on 2008.

The archdiocese of the head of Irish Catholics, Cardinal Sean Brady, has spent more on legal fees than on compensating victims of sex abuse by priests. More than €600,000 has been paid to lawyers defending the Archdiocese of Armagh in 10 civil actions while victims shared compensation payouts totalling €562,000.

Cowen's government has spent €4.8m on converting the residence of the Irish ambassador to Canada into "an abode of unbridled luxury, a sprawling mansion, financed by a country on the economic skids," according to the Ottawa Citizen newspaper.

The super-rich in the USA have so much loot that if you confiscated the income of the top 13,000 households and distributed it to the bottom 40 million, it would double their incomes.

The gap between rich and poor in the UK is wider today than 40 years ago, according to the latest report from the government's own National Equality Panel. The richest 10% are now 100 times better off than the poorest 10%.

One out of every 100 Americans is now in prison, which makes the USA the most jailed society on the planet. With 5% of the world's population, they have 15% of known prisoners. Either the most dangerous people on earth live in the USA or pressure from the privatised prison industry to increase their profits is paying off.



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

Thinking About Anarchism: Should the Church Remain in Control of Our Schools?

Despite the Catholic hierarchy's shameful efforts to silence the survivors of abuse, we now have some idea of what was happening behind the walls of church-run institutions across Ireland. In the wake of this, many people have begun asking whether the Catholic Church should continue to have any control whatsoever over state-funded education. As it stands, the Church still control 92% of primary schools. However a MRBI/Irish Times poll in January of this year found that a majority of Irish people now want this situation remedied. The Church is understandably reluctant to cede one of the most important sources of its power and has launched a series of media and policy initiatives over the past few months with the aim of retrenching themselves within the schooling system, albeit on a smaller scale than before (1). Given the Church's response and the fact that there seems to be no end to the torrent of stories of abuse and attempted cover-ups, it is unlikely that this debate is going to finish anytime soon.

Irish anarchists are clear about where they stand on this issue. They want to see the control of schools completely taken out of the Church's hands. While individuals have the right to worship as they see fit outside of schools, there are numerous reasons why we support the curtailment of Church power within the compulsory education system, not least of which is the poor quality of education that they have provided to date.

The Church stakes its claim for a continuing role in the education system on the basis that somehow the abuse scandals are anomalies and that, if you look at their overall record within education, it has made an invaluable contribution to learning and inquiry in this country. According to Cardinal Sean Brady, critics of the Church have conveniently ignored that "Catho-

lic schools bring light to each generation of pupils and to society". Let's look at this claim by examining the performance of the educational system that the Church has had a central role in stewarding for most of the past century.

Well, despite all the lazy rhetoric about Ireland being 'a land of saints and scholars' and our 'world class' education system, it is clear that, on a very basic level, it has failed an enormous number of people. The only comprehensive survey of basic literacy skills undertaken in this country in 1995 discovered that one in four adults has problems with very basic literacy tasks and that up to 40% of those surveyed had very limited literacy and numeracy skills (2). This can be ascribed to a number of factors, not least that free schooling only became available in the 1960s. However, it is very clear that the widespread experience of violence and petty humiliation within schools has had an enormously negative impact on generations of Irish students. Moreover, both research and anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that these experiences were particularly common amongst vulnerable and working class children. This atmosphere is poisonous for learning and, to add insult to injury, those who fell behind because of this or due to other difficulties often found themselves ridiculed, ignored and labelled as 'thick'.

These were not accidental or exceptional phenomena but rather were widespread and an integral part of schooling that was clearly designed to foster a culture of uncritical obedience and submission. It is unsurprising then that large numbers of people left school without even acquiring basic skills and that those who did manage to get through the system learnt to rely on rote learning rather than curiosity and intellectual stimulation. This can hardly be described as 'bringing a light' to students and society.

Of course it should be acknowledged that people have also experienced acts of kindness and care and benefited from the interventions of capable

lay and clerical teachers. It is also important to note that school system has become far more humane in the past thirty years. However, given some of the claims being made by senior Catholic clergy recently, it should not be forgotten that, for most of the history of the Irish state, the compulsory education system has undoubtedly been characterised by violence, authoritarianism and the demand for obedience. All of these things are ruinous for creativity and effective learning. As one of the key players within the Irish education system, the Catholic Church bears a significant measure of responsibility for this.

Given this legacy, and the massive breach of trust that has been documented in the Ferns, Murphy and Ryan reports (3), removing Church influence from schools would be a progressive step. The task, however, of creating a 'world class' education system will require far more than this. In the short term, this will mean ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to education in a period of severe cutbacks and that access to those resources is more equitably distributed. In the long term, it will require that we develop new educational ideas and practices based on the principles of democracy and freedom right across an Irish education system completely freed of dogma.

1) <http://www.catholicbishops.ie/media-centre/press-release-archive/71/1714-28-january-2010-cardinal-brady-launches-catholic-schools-week-2010-and-inaugurates-the-new-catholic-schools-partnership>

2) <http://www.nala.ie/content/international-adult-literacy-survey-results-ireland>

3) The Ryan Report:

<http://www.childabusecommission.com/rpt/preface.php>

The Murphy Report:

<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504>

The Ferns Report:

<http://www.oneinfour.org/about/fernsreport/>

Anarchism & the WSM

As the economic crisis continues, the WSM has been busy in a variety of campaigns against measures attempting to impose the costs of the crisis on workers and the poor. WSM members in the public sector trade unions have been active in organising against cuts and pressing for a 'No' vote in ballots on the "Croke Park" agreement. We have also been involved in getting the anti-water charges campaigns up and running in both Dublin and Cork and attended a protest organised by these campaigns at the Green Party annual conference in Waterford.

Elsewhere, our Cork branch was instrumental in organising a very successful celebration of International Women's Day (see article). We also attended a solidarity protest in Castlerea in support of jailed Mayo fisherman, Pat O'Donnell (see article). There was also a WSM presence on a march seeking justice for Toyosi Shitta-Bey, the 15-year-old schoolboy who died following a racist attack in Dublin 15.

We have been making a number of efforts to further awareness of anarchism. In Dublin, we have been running a series of educational for those interested in anarchist ideas, covering anarchist thought, capitalism and the Russian Revolution. Our outreach group commenced the "Rethinking Revolution Discussion Series" in the Seomra Spraoi social centre in Dub-



lin 1, which, according to their Facebook group, will aim to cover "the core ideas those of us who want revolutionary change think we have in common and so too often neglect to discuss. The discussions will be kicked off by an opinionated presentation of one or more approaches on these questions with the purpose of drawing all present into a discussion that we hope will continue long after the meeting."

We have republished two pamphlets (see article), the first in a series of planned reprints of popular anarchist pamphlets. The "Rebel Worker" news sheet has hit the streets in Cork again recently, produced by our branch in the city, while we continue

our planning for the 2010 Anarchist Book-fair in Dublin to be held on May 29th (see article). Finally, the second edition of our show, "Radio Solidarity", was broadcast recently on Near FM and is available to hear at:

<http://www.nearpodcast.org/podcast/audio/podcast-2010-03-26-58991.mp3>

It covers NAMA, the economy, the Irish Glass Bottle Factory fiasco and the Shell to Sea campaign. If you like what you read or hear and want to learn more about the WSM, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

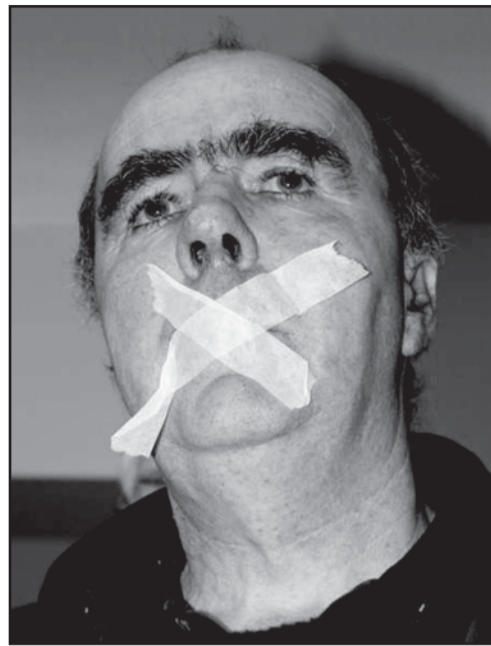
State Repression Continues in Mayo

Local Mayo fisherman, Pat O'Donnell, was sentenced to seven months in Castlereagh prison in March for his role in campaigning against the Corrib gas pipeline and the corrupt deal that has given Shell access to Ireland's gas fields. He has been consistently targeted by Shell and the Gardaí, being falsely arrested on two occasions when Shell attempted to carry out works in Mayo. This intimidation reached its pinnacle last summer when Pat's boat was boarded and then sank by four masked men. When he continued to stand up for his community, the state stepped in and imprisoned O'Donnell. He had the misfortune of living in the wrong place and not being part of the cosy cartel of businessmen, bankers and politicians who run this country.

Sean Mallory

Another prominent campaigner, Niall Harnett, was jailed for 6 months on April 21st after an incident when he came to the aid of another campaigner during a previous court sitting. His conviction was the only one secured during a week-long special sitting of Belmullet District Court in March, when twenty-seven Shell to Sea activists were summonsed to face various charges. Twenty-five of those had their cases withdrawn or dismissed for a variety of reasons including unlawful detention and contradictory evidence from the Gardaí, while another was given probation. The arrests and charges that followed in these cases were clear attempts by the State to repress protests against the project.

The controversy around the Corrib gas project is now entering its tenth year. The arguments that the Shell to Sea campaign put forward around control of our natural resources and the revenues from them are becoming even more relevant as the government argues that we have no choice but to cut spending on health, education, etc. The



communities in Mayo have said on countless occasions that they do not oppose the extraction of the gas but want it done in a safe way for the benefit of all and not just a few Shell shareholders.

The next step in this dispute is now uncertain. Shell has announced that no works will take place in Mayo this summer. However, as long as they still fail to understand people's basic concerns in Mayo, resistance to the project in its current proposed format is likely to continue.

Write to Pat and Niall:

Mr Pat O'Donnell/Mr. Niall Harnett
Castlereagh Prison,
Harristown,
Castlereagh,
Co Roscommon.

A Day Out of the Ordinary The Dublin Anarchist Bookfair!

This May sees the return of the annual Anarchist Bookfair to Dublin, our fifth Bookfair to take place in the city to date.

Ciaran Ó Muireadhaigh

Starting from humble beginnings in the St. Nicholas of Myra Hall in The Liberties five years ago, last year's Bookfair was arguably the most successful to date. Over one thousand people passed through Liberty Hall during the day with ten different meetings and workshops held discussing a wide range of topics ranging from Palestine to Left Unity, Iran to Shell to Sea, Social Centres and beyond. Special guests included anarchist and ex-Black Panther Ashanti Alston and renowned feminist and author of *Mujeres Libres*, Martha Acklesberg. Several thousand euros worth of books and pamphlets were purchased from stalls operated by the Workers Solidarity book service, Barracka Books, Just Books, AK Press, Anarchist Federation, Irish Socialist Network, Oxfam Bookstore and others. Pamphlets and leaflets from a vast array of campaigns and political organisations, including the Revolutionary Anarcha-feminist Group, Shell to Sea, Residents Against Racism, Choice Ireland, Seomra Spraoi and Justice for Mumia Abu Jamal, were distributed freely. The place was abuzz all day.

This year, we are returning to the successful site of last year's Bookfair and the doors of Liberty Hall will again be opened to anarchists and activists alike to ply their wares. This year, we hope to cover as wide a range of topics as possible, including a guest lecture from the authors of "The Lost Revolution," Brian Hanley and Scott Millar, and a lecture on trade union organising and syndicalism in Spain from CNT activist Manuel Garcia. We hope to have the same abundance of stalls as last year, and all going well, a couple more!

A WSM leaflet for the Bookfair a couple of years back stated that it was really a day out of the ordinary; a day away from the mundane, where the best thing to leave with is not the book, or pamphlet, or badge you've just spent your hard earned money on, but the experience of the day itself. It really is a great opportunity to mingle, meet, and talk to not only anarchists, but activists from all walks of life, as well as the large contingent of passers-by and interested onlookers that the book fair always attracts. So come along, take in a meeting or two, find a book or pamphlet of interest to you, or even just come up to the WSM stall and say "hello" - you're more than welcome!



The fifth annual Dublin Anarchist Bookfair takes place in Liberty Hall, Eden Quay (the tallest building in Dublin, you can't miss it!) starting from 11am on Saturday 29th May. Stay tuned to www.wsm.ie for more details or search "Dublin Anarchist Bookfair" on Facebook.

Successful International Women's Day Celebration

The Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM) in Cork was delighted by the success of the Douglas Street Community Celebration of International Women's Day on Monday, 8th March. The day comprised of fifty free, open events involving poetry, music, workshops, speakers, fortune tellers, performance art, a community dinner, knitting club, films, a community art exhibition and much more. The celebration ran from 10am to midnight at Solidarity Books and many other venues on and around Douglas Street.

Nicola Morry

This event was organised and hosted by the Douglas Street Community, of which Solidarity Books is an integral part. The enthusiasm and support of all the local organisations, businesses and neighbours was the driving force behind the incredibly successful celebration. It was deeply gratifying to witness the local community working together with such enthusiasm to celebrate, showcase, educate and empower women and to begin to build a strong, united community.

Cork WSM's own interest in International Women's Day was of course first and foremost political: we wanted to highlight the continued need for full reproductive rights for women in Ireland while cel-



Kate and Caroline speak of their experiences in Gaza in Solidarity Books during International Women's Day

brating the contribution of women workers and activists throughout history whose struggles have resulted in more equitable working conditions for women today. We also wanted to highlight some of the current issues that Irish women activists are so passionately involved in:

Deirdre Clancy, Pitstop Ploughshares, spoke about her experience disarming an American war plane in Shannon and the aftermath; Maura Harrington, Shell to Sea Activist, spoke to a packed house about the recent events surrounding Pat O'Donnell's jailing and answered questions; Kate and Caroline, Cork to Gaza Convoy, told of their experiences being part of

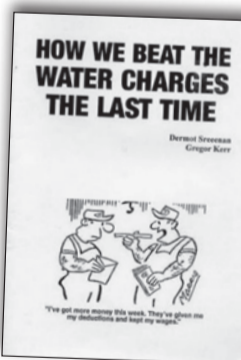
an international aid convoy to Gaza; Sandra McAvoy spoke about the continuing struggle for full reproductive rights for Irish women and Anne McShane, Hands Off the People of Iran, spoke about the current situation for women in Iran.

As well as our political workshops, we hosted a range of workshops and helped prepare the free community dinner which was happily devoured by 150 participants. We were immensely satisfied at the tremendous diversity of activities, which were hosted by the many other participating venues on and around Douglas Street. This truly was grassroots organising in action.

Two new pamphlets

How We Beat the Water Charges the Last Time

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