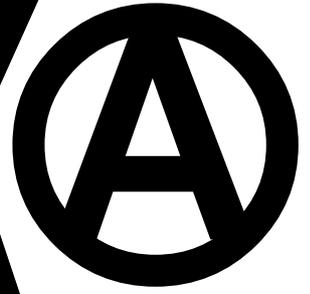


resistance

anarchist bulletin

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PEACE? WHAT PEACE?

THE RECENT MURDER of catholic postal worker, Daniel McColgan, in N. Belfast led to one of those rare moments in the history of Northern Ireland –a public display of solidarity against the paramilitary intrusion, usually fatal, into the lives of ordinary people here. The large-scale protests which brought tens of thousands out onto the streets of Belfast, Derry and Newry are a clear signal to the paramilitaries that enough is enough, and that what the vast majority of people desire now is peace –a peace in which society here can hope to attain the levels of 'normality' that appear to exist in societies elsewhere.

Daniel McColgan was someone in a uniform doing his job, but he was also a catholic doing his job in Rathcoole, a protestant stronghold, and for this reason he was gunned down. That most people come into contact with postal workers everyday (one of the few strangers we don't mind opening the door to in our atomized society) perhaps helped in marking the difference between his death and the countless numbers of other sectarian murders that have occurred throughout the last 30 years. Perhaps we all thought we knew him. Perhaps his death, which was part of a series of assaults on other members of the working class (ambulance and public transport workers have also come under attack) whose job is to serve the community, was enough to push people here beyond their already high powers of endurance. But the fact that thousands of catholics and protestants were irate enough to come together and voice their anger publicly is a positive sign, and gives hope for the future –but it is only the first step.

Everyone wants peace in Northern Ireland, but what kind of peace does everyone want? Politicians in Stormont, on the odd day in the week they bother to meet, want peace too. Their idea of peace, however, is the peace that renders possible the long-term economic and political interests of Britain, and its commander in chief, the US. For them, peace represents the opportunity to open up Northern

Ireland to multi-national investment, and the accompanying third world style exploitation of our workforce. Stormont itself will not lead to the end of the kind of sectarianism that culminated in the death of Daniel McColgan. It has, and will, merely institutionalise the sectarian divide that continues to be the dominant feature across the social landscape of the north.



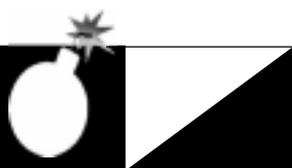
At the moment, North Belfast, is testament to the lingering hatred that the so-called 'peace process' was meant to stamp out. The recent upsurge in violence there is seen by many as an anachronism, a blip in the normalisation process. This view however ignores the reality that N. Belfast has been one of the most impoverished and neglected areas of Ireland, north and south, for decades and, as a result, a hotspot for the recruiting agents of republicanism and loyalism.. With the UDA (Ulster Defence Association) no longer on ceasefire, and with their political wing, the UDP (Ulster Democratic Party) recently disbanded, the stakes have been raised in this particular enclave of Belfast (117 pipe bomb attacks on catholic homes in 2001) where violence orchestrated by the UDA etc. is being met by the less organised forces of hardcore republican youth. Sinn Fein and co. have too much to lose by taking the bait, and being drawn out of the peace process which recently has witnessed Gerry Adams, erstwhile 'socialist', being feted by the WEF in New York, rather than attend a Bloody Sunday commemoration rally in Derry. Likewise, other mainstream politicians like the DUP's Nigel Dodds, are too fearful of losing potential votes in a contentious Belfast seat that could swing republican at the next election.

Alternatively, the UDA, who carried out McColgan's murder, need drug turf and thus drug money to finance future 'military' operations. They need to continue to fuel the fear of catholic penetration of protestant areas in order to maximise more hatred which they can in turn channel for their own ends.

So what does the future have in store for N. Ireland? The hawks in the UDA will continue their campaign of intimidation and violence in order to destabilise the 'peace process' which they feel has failed them, and hope that the IRA slips up over demilitarisation, a prospect which is unlikely given the financial windfall that capitalists can expect with prolonged peace. As small-time entrepreneurs themselves, the UDA is guilty of a marked naivety if they think anything they can do will rock the boat now. That said, perhaps they will be content with the ghettoization of various interface and poor loyalist areas in which they can conduct their business, and like their counterparts in the IRA, renounce, if they haven't already, their version of the phony concept of 'national liberation', as implausible as the idea of national economic dependence given the nature of the world we inhabit today.

So, the demonstrations against the murder of Daniel McColgan, positive as they were, must be followed by the growth of a culture of resistance which sees the communities here united again, but this time united in the daily struggle of life under capitalism, united in their realisation that they should no longer be manipulated as two rival sets of exploited labour, divided by religion and nationalism, and underpinned by a bogus cultural identification of what differentiates something or someone British, from something or someone Irish. It is up to anarchists to involve themselves in this process, to build the foundation for class struggle, and destroy the capitalist stranglehold over us. ★

For more info about anarchism in Ireland, check out: rebelweb@cjb.net



The 1919 Engineering and Dockers' Strike

THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR witnessed a dramatic rise in working class resistance throughout Europe. The establishment of workers' councils in Germany, Austria, Hungary and Italy indicated a growing belief in workers' self-management of industry, and a complete rejection of reformist trade unionism that had not only collaborated with imperialism during the war, but had used its muscle to break up the anti-war and food strikes common at the time. Closer to home, factories in Scotland set up their own committees with delegates being elected to them on a non-union basis. This was the working class, freed at last it seemed from the manacles of union bureaucracy and the inevitability of union sell out.

In Belfast, workers, catholic and protestant, faced the same problems as their comrades in other lands. During the war, naval and engineering workers had been forced to bow to the demands of the British military machine and work a gruelling 54 hour week 'for King and country'. When the war ended, they realised that enough was enough, and decided to strike for a return to their previous conditions.

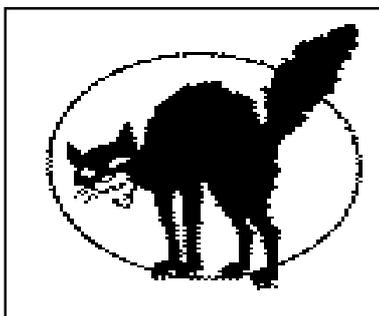
Gas all across the city was cut off, and electricity was reduced to the minimum requirements needed for health and other essential services. For 3 weeks, the strike remained solid while the army moved in to protect capital by manning power stations. Unfortunately, the strike committee set up to coordinate action, had among its ranks the pro-union Unionist Labour Association whose members leaned more towards the bosses, and a settlement was soon reached with workers gaining a 7 hour reduction in the working week.

The strike had shown however the possibility of catholic and protestant workers uniting in common cause. The following May day parade to Ormeau Park saw 100,000 people take to the streets. It seemed the working class in the north was finally beginning to believe in itself.

Unionists like Edward Carson though soon realised the dangers inherent for the state if the two communities ever rallied together in the long term. The tried and tested 'orange card' was played again, with protestant workers engineered to believe that their livelihoods were under threat

from catholics. In July 1921, 10,000 catholics and socialists were expelled from shipyards and engineering works everywhere and paved the way to the 'normalisation' of the sectarian divide.

The strike itself failed because it remained under union control with workers 'represented' by a committee which unlike the committees in Scotland, and the councils in mainland Europe could not be recalled, or communicate the views of the movement as a whole. The fact that the Belfast committee had pro-boss members seeking a sell out would not have been possible if organisation had taken place outside and beyond the unions.



The AFI feel that only by operating free of union control can workers ever gain the confidence to push strikes beyond the natural limits imposed on them by the boss-controlled unions. Organisation in resistance groups that are non-union, and which have no desire to be alternative unions is the best way to ensure high levels of class struggle. These groups would not seek to be alternate unions, but must be anti-capitalist, anti-union, anti-political party and have no respect for legality. They should instead advocate class war, and practise direct action to achieve their objectives. (After all, if as anarchists we espouse direct action on the streets of our cities against bodies like the WTO and IMF, why not in the workplace too?) They are intended for activists determined to make things as difficult for the bosses as possible either by calling for sabotage, go-slows, mass sick days, and other forms of unofficial action. In times of dispute, they will be prepared to put their ideas into action and wildcat. Only unofficial wildcat strikes, organised from the bottom-up, and linked with workers in other groups, growing outwards to the community at large can ever hope to sow the seeds of social revolution. ★

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IN 2001, 6,500 pregnant Irish women were forced by rule of ancient law to make the journey to Britain in order to have the right to choose to have abortions denied to them in their home country. If they had stayed at home, they could have, if 'caught', either faced a penalty of 12 years imprisonment, killed themselves (to avoid prosecution), or alternatively, after long arbitration, decided not to kill themselves, but in the process proved themselves 'suicidal' enough to get the state to sanction their abortions. The celebrated 'X' case in 1992 won Irish women this latter 'right'. A national referendum soon afterwards supported it. But now the likes of turncoat tanaiste (deputy prime-minister) Mary Harney along with her Fianna Fail partners in government, want another referendum to try and overturn the previous result, and thus win over the conservative vote in the upcoming election.

As anarchists, the AFI believe in individual freedom and support the right of a woman to decide what to do with her own body. We call for a NO vote because we seek the complete legalisation of abortion, and the right to have information about abortion made widely accessible.

Join the resistance

The **Anarchist Federation Ireland (AFI)** is an organisation of **class struggle** anarchists aiming to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is **Anarchist Communism**. We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: **the ruling class** which controls all the power and wealth, and the **working class** which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the **direct action** of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism. As the capitalist system rules the whole world, its destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it, such as working through parliament and national liberation movements, as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits. **Organisation** is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations. The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world outlined above. Contact:

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