

Murray Appeal Still Pending

No hanging date set

Fifth Estate Collective

1976

As of this writing the fate of Marie and Noel Murray, the two Irish anarchists who have been sentenced to hang for their alleged murder of a Dublin cop, remains uncertain.

The Sept. 24 edition of *Freedom* magazine published in London (which reached us two weeks ago) reported that Noel Murray had asked that his appeal of his conviction and sentence be withdrawn. This would have opened the way for an October execution.

The *Fifth Estate* contacted David Barton at the Freedom Bookstore in London on Nov. 10 who told us, "The appeal to the Supreme Court is still being heard. They've refused to accept Noel's request that the appeal be withdrawn. Right now no date has been set for the execution, and that's about all we know."

The lack of information about the case goes two ways, for although Radio Eireann (the Irish government radio) has given assurances that the Murrays are enjoying all possible privileges, they are actually being held under very stringent conditions. Each is being held in a separate solitary confinement cell and is being denied all visitors (except their parents) and in addition, is not allowed to have newspapers, radios or books.

Although the reasons for Noel's decision to withdraw his appeal are not clear, no small part of it may be because he and Marie are thought to be unaware of the defense campaign being waged here and in Europe on their behalf.

Torture and Frame-Up

The Murrays were arrested as part of a dragnet of anarchists in Oct. 1975 for the bank robbery murder of an Irish Garda, and convicted by a jury-less tribunal set up by the government to try alleged cases of terrorism. The Murrays and 20-year-old co-defendant Ronan Stenson were tortured to extract confessions, the latter being so brutally abused that he has been unable to stand trial since. The court refused to hear evidence that the "confessions" in the case were elicited through force and the prisoners were sentenced to hang on the barest of evidence.

Freedom magazine also reports in its coverage of the Murray case that this particular incident is only one in the march of the Irish nation towards becoming a full-fledged police state. In September the Irish parliament passed the Emergency Powers Act which gives the government the right to suppress all dissent.

The English publication *Black Flag* notes in its September edition that the motivation for this toughening stance is the desire on the part of the Irish government to signal to its European Economic Community "partners" (in economic terms, its masters) that their island is still the most tranquil industrial country for investment, possessing an easily exploitable labor force.

Armed with these new dictatorial powers, the government has moved quickly to suppress defense efforts on behalf of the condemned anarchists with at least eight members of the Murray Dublin Defense Committee being arrested for trying to pass out leaflets about the case. Still, the defense group has planned a series of marches and rallies to protest the convictions. Meetings and demonstrations have also been carried out in several English cities.

Also, reporting of the case has been effectively silenced by the Dublin government's prosecution of the *Irish Times* and the *Hibernia* newspaper for contempt of court for publishing criticisms of the Murray trial.

The Politicians Comment

One curious development is that for some inexplicable reason, the Murray case has brought a rash of statements of ruthless sarcasm from government officials. Cooney, the Irish justice minister in a nation which suppresses the most elementary rights of women (divorce, abortion, contraception, even civil marriage) explained to the press in defense of the hanging of Marie Murray: "This is what equality of the sexes is all about."

Connor Cruise O'Brien, world renowned "liberal" Labour Party minister, referred to the Murrays as "murderers" even before their farce of a trial had begun—pointing out that his statement could not prejudice the jury, as none was sitting at the tribunal.

Defense efforts in this country have mostly been limited to publicity about the case appearing in libertarian publications, with no reports of direct action reaching us. There has been no major media coverage of the case in the U.S. and although the *Fifth Estate* has asked Liberation News Service (LNS), a left-oriented news agency, for coverage they have yet to print a report of it. Similarly, when a supporter of the Murrays tried to send a notice of the case out through a nation-wide college press syndicate, the material was edited out as "not relevant."

The Murray Defense Committee is still asking that letters of protest continue to be sent to: The Minister of Justice, 72–76 St. Stephens Green, Dublin, Eire, or The Ambassador, Republic of Ireland, 2234 Mass. Ave., NW, Washington DC 20008. The *Fifth Estate* has written a letter on behalf of this paper to the Irish Ambassador to the U.S., but to date has received no reply.

Also, we have just received a booklet entitled "No Hangings Here" produced by the Murray Defense Committee which explains the details of the case as well as reproducing testimony illustrating the unfairness of the trial. The defense committee needs money desperately to continue its efforts on behalf of Noel and Marie—donations should be sent to: Murray Defense Committee, 155 Church Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, Eire. Pamphlets may be ordered in bulk at \$1 per copy.

Related:

For background see: Stop the Dublin Hangings!, FE #277, October, 1976.

For an update see: Miscellaneous news items, FE #281, March, 1977.



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