

Outta Control

News & Views of the Belfast Anarchist Collective

OUTTA CONTROL... of the state, bosses, patriarchy, schooling, churches... As Anarchists we oppose the authority and exploitation of this society, and advocate one of free association and self-management. This paper comes out every 3-4 weeks and we welcome contributions, criticisms etc.

**DON'T
LET
THEM
DIE!**



The prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh have played their last card. Their tactic of the hunger strike alone, will not get them political status but should act as a catalyst for action in support of the prisoners outside the prison. Certainly the threat of coffins emerging from the H-Blocks and Armagh has imposed a heavy strain on people, especially on those who have done all they can to support the blanket men so far and who now feel they have to make further sacrifices.

Clued-in.

People in anti-unionist areas are well informed about the prisoners struggle and are given quite a different story from that of the British government. Leaflets, posters and street meetings are regular occurrences calling on peoples support. The Irish News, read mainly by anti-unionists is filled with advertisements every day in support of the prisoners demands. The letters column print the letters advocating the reasons for support. People don't see this simply in terms of an extension of the provo military campaign but view it in a wider context, a show of strength against the forces of repression and reaction that have kept them knuckled under for the last 50 years.

"Just another Papish Plot"

Unfortunately, once again, the protestants are largely kept in ignorance and lies, and are unaware of other issues involved. They are fed unionist and British information from the pro-government B.B.C., U.T.V. and the Belfast Telegraph, whose letter columns never print anything in support of the prison struggle. In this sectarian state, where housing, employment and recreational facilities are divided according to your religion, it is very difficult to try to communicate another point of view to protestants. However, every attempt should be made to engage in debate. This may sound naive, but there has always been an abysmal failure on the part of the left to win over any support from the protestant working class.

It is no wonder that they hold such distorted and reactionary views on what is happening, when they supposedly get the official Catholic view from such reactionaries as the Catholic church and the S.D.L.P. politicians, not to mention the sectarian shit from their own politicians. They do not interpret this upsurge as another attack on their state, a state which they are gradually realising does not operate in their interests.

VOTE WITH YOUR FEET

The action of the prisoners in declaring a hunger strike has escalated political activity. Thousands of people have marched, demonstrated, and picketed and occupied public buildings all in support of the prisoners demands. Surely when there is a mass of people calling for reform the British government should listen? After all that's the democratic system at work. Or so we are led to believe. This democratic state is exposed for what it really is, just a pretence.

BRITISH THE LOSERS

Whatever the outcome of the strike the British government lose either way. If they do give into the demands of the hunger strikers this will increase confidence in overthrowing the sectarian state. And if they let the prisoners die there will be, almost certainly, an upsurge in street violence, not as will make out engineered by a few terrorists but by frustrated people who had peacefully tried and failed and who now turn their anger to violence. And when this is suppressed by massive British Army repression, people will not easily forget events. Maybe the forces of the RUC, UDR etc. will contain in the future the provisional IRA at an 'acceptable' level of violence but it will always take the thousands of troops to keep down the insurgent population who reject the state. The British Army will never be able to leave Ireland in a way they would like to. New forms of struggle and more effort we hope will avoid any prisoner dying.

STOP PRESS

It is now inevitable that 3 or 4 women from Armagh Gaol will also start a hunger strike. Names are not being released until the relatives are first informed. More hunger strike news inside.

**IF VOTING COULD CHANGE
THE SYSTEM IT WOULD
BE MADE ILLEGAL!**

Half the American population didn't bother to vote in the recent Presidential elections. Even under enormous pressure of the millions spent on the campaign to do so. (Even the media coverage here really made you think you were missing something UGH!) And only 25% of the registered voters voted for the ex-B-movie actor Reagan. People have always seen through and rejected this sham "democracy". The American and British states representative democracy represents nobody apart from the state and private enterprise in exploiting the many for the few.

No political party is worth putting into power, no matter how radical they appear. Once they're in power their only aim is to keep that power over us and to eliminate and repress any opposition to it. Political parties have never been the "voice" or the "vanguard" of the working class. The people have always made demands beyond what the most revolutionary parties can give. We will overthrow one tyrannical state to replace it with another and wait for the "withering away of that state". Anarchists do not see themselves seizing power on the behalf of the workers but act as a catalyst when people unite and overthrow this rotten sectarian state and urge people to take direct control of their own work places and communities. A democracy where everyone can control their own life without controlling others.



The uranium prospecting companies in Donegal continue their propaganda offensive with their expensive public relations firm churning out new ideas nearly every week. During the Donegal by-election the mining companies sent large sums of money to all the major parties. Things are a bit too touchy in Donegal at the moment, so the political machines all made a fuss about refusing. Next, the mining multi-nationals are eager to finance cable television for the local farmers in the mining areas around Lettermacaward. Their 'generous offer' has been refused here too.

They're getting the cold shoulder everywhere—except from the local shareholders.

HUNGER STRIKE COVERAGE

Because of their political sympathies and their positions as capitalist enterprises the Belfast Telegraph and Newsletter, and Ulster Television have begun and continued their coverage of the hunger-strike and protests in an unashamedly biased way. BBC are owned by the government, and Downtown Radio, while giving out a little more information than the rest are opportunistic as all good capitalists should be. The Irish News comes under pressure to give the most favourable coverage as it is mainly geared towards the minority (being a staunch supporter of the Catholic Church and SDLP). But as the weeks go on a careful counter to the strikers case is appearing more.

Firstly the Unionist media. They tend to work on two levels. On the one hand they distort and deceive. This comes naturally from much experience in denouncing the blanket protest. The strikers are 'murderers, criminals, and their condition is self-inflicted'. On the day the strike was announced the Tele carried the Diplock court judge's comments and recommendations on the seven strikers when they were convicted in the juryless court.

The BBC, after two reasonable documentaries (one national and one local) gave us a 'debate' - with 5 unionists, the BBC controller, and the editor of the Tele.

On the other hand they play things down. UTV are the best example. Despite an initial Counterpoint programme which tried to compensate for an earlier whitewash of H-Block conditions, they have consistently given scant coverage to the protests.

Downtown, the north's latest media concern, has no obvious 'political' allegiance other than to money. They do cover protests, but in order to keep walking the profitable tight-rope, they present them as 'incidents', with no context or background information.

The Irish News made a lot of money from adverts from support groups. They do cover the protests and statements from campaigners, but recently they have welcomed the opportunity of giving much coverage to the anti-strikers view of Gerry Fitt, John Hume and the Alliance Party.

It wouldn't be surprising if Gerry Fitt had a cushy job lined up somewhere. His 'regret at having supported the earlier campaign for political status' might just spell the end of his parliamentary career. On the other hand he might be confident of the Tory government's ability to repress the present campaign and hopes to be able to pick up some pieces under the banner of a new Labour party.

He and Hume, who complained about intimidation after his offices were occupied, have given the press many a headline and column in its campaign of distortion and denigration. **POLITICIANS AND THE CHURCHES**

As for the SDLP they are politicians who wheel and deal in order to get power. That is the nature of politicians and all who aspire to govern. The Catholic Church has its own command structure and flock of 'governed'.

Much pressure is being put in these 2 bodies to speak out and to 'intervene'. While it is vital to rally support and try all sorts of tactics these 'managers' of people first need to maintain and increase their sphere of power, or influence if the power hasn't yet come their way.

Because of the lobbying many of them have spoken out. Some of them genuinely believe that they are acting in the interests of the 'flock' or 'constituency', and some do speak from a humanitarian motivation.

But they can rarely help those who seek to challenge injustice and repression. Politicians and Priests are 'managers'. If out of favour with the state they will woe those repressed. But their professions are authoritarian. Without power or the promise of it they wither.

If they were to speak out, they would do so to get credibility. If they were to intervene they would make deals with those whose power they envied. When internment was ended the more sinister and effective repressive legislation, the EPA was introduced.

I don't think the hunger-strikers would thank us if the politicians and church arranged a deal which, say, gave political status, but which also was on a par with Special Category 'A' in England, as Tim Pat Coogan proposed.

If the government gives in it will be because the protests have escalated and leave it no choice. If the government makes a deal, it will do so with such as the SDLP, and as with the ending of internment it won't be the SDLP who suffer from the Rent and Rates Act and the EPA.

GOLDMAN, RED CHINA, A RUSSIAN EMIGRÉ, SHE WAS ONE OF THE LEADS. NOT WELL KNOWN ANARCHISTS, THROUGH HER JOURNAL "WATER GATE" AND IN HER ARTICLES SHE CHALLENGED FOR UNION RIGHTS, FREE SPEECH, FREE CENTRALISATION, AND SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRSTS IN THE TUNES OF THE 19TH CENTURY. IN A JOINT OF HANNO SHE RETURNED TO RUSSIA, BUT HER CHINA, ALEXANDER BERKMAN, BUT THEY BOTH BECAME INFLUENCED WITH THE LEFTIST CENTRALISATION AND AUTHORITARIANISM OF THE REVOLUTION.



TO ANARCHISTS IN IRELAND -

FROM A LONG KESH PRISONER.

From the little knowledge I have of the collectives and individuals who claim the label, anarchist, in Ireland there is much which needs criticism, this from a position of solidarity and an objective analysis of the conditions of this situation in this part of the world. I intend to show where the anarchists are failing, they are aware of their successes.

Firstly, there are the different collectives, the Anarchist Workers Alliance, the Belfast Anarchist Collective and the Anarchist Bookshop Collective in Dublin. There are also some anarchists who remain aloof not only from collectives but even the reality in which we are forced to exist. Is not the basis of anarchy, association through mutual association? If so why can these collectives not come together in an alliance or federation of anarchists? Embracing at the same time the individuals and other smaller groups of anarchists in Ireland. Are they so totally idealistic that there is no common ground, no mutual interests? For so long as the politics of the parties and their fixation on power is allowed to dominate the scene of organised people attempting to bring about change then anarchy will be an abstraction of little consequence to the daily lives of the people and after all who is this about, the anarchists or the people? The same question that is put by anarchists to the political parties I now put to you. The only way to negate the power politics is to organise against it. This can only be achieved if the collectives and individuals come together and federate not only on a small area but also on the international scale of the type that was in existence at the time of the Spanish Civil War.

It must go further than this of course because the mistakes made by others must be examples to us of what not to do. What it means is going into the controversies that are created in this situation and putting forward the anarchist alternative as a real manifestation of people's power in opposition to party power. It does not mean that we remain aloof from the struggles of the people we must get involved. To put into action a new programme of progress it is necessary for a new perspective, it is time for a new analysis, based on the history and experience of the left alternative and central to the oppression of this patriarchal world is the exploitation of women. This is not an issue of marginal importance it is crucial to the development of an alternative to party control, of any authoritarian taint or composition. It means the building of an alternative based on the crux of oppression and feminism provides the most concise and substantially correct analysis of the patriarchy to date. Women must be recognised as the foremost thinkers and innovators of revolutionary example and potential, anarchists must come to terms with the fact that the way forward is in giving solidarity to the feminists whose nature precludes a corruption of power and whose interests in the main are the interests of all. They are the base, the base of all exploitation, economic, and sexually, culturally - totally, rests on the domination of the male and the subservience of the female, not only in our society but also the eastern social orders.

We must seek to set up the alternative society by acting in opposition to the state of things, taking over run down properties and urging workers to take control of their factories, and the large ranches owned at present by capitalist interests. Real opposition to the state can only be based on the right of the people to self defence at the moment it is illegal for those without a permit to bear arms, and these permits are restricted to those who present no threat to

capital; the police and army have the right to use arms to protect the state, we must fight for the right to bear arms to defend ourselves, this can only be done by arming without permits.

Anything that they legislate is an usurpation of the power of the people; the token of resistance is worthy but not enough; the people must see the repression of the state, it will not be apparent if its true nature is always hidden.

By seeking to set up collectives and expropriating the means, we are offering a real alternative. Women who are now asserting themselves should be engaged in the actuality of resistance to the power of the male, take up new ways, the only way for people to see new possibilities is through example and at the moment the only example of the anarchist movement is cloaked in myth and fictionalised - a good example of what to avoid. It is 1980, the arguments of the last century have no real meaning. Actions are what are required. Can the anarchist and feminist movement provide them?

PAULINE McLAUGHLIN -

Pauline Mc Laughlin, 23, from Derry City, whose weight has halved to 4½ st, has returned to Armagh jail after a spell in Musgrave Hospital. She is critically ill and still refused adequate treatment.

SEAMUS MULLAN -

Seamus Mullan, 25, from Co. Derry is now over 60 days on hunger strike. He has been moved to Musgrave Military Hospital and he may not last longer than a week. He says his blackmail 'conviction' was a frame - up and wants the family who testified against him to admit they perjured.

FOR WHOLESOME, CHEAP FOOD - THE HIDEOUT CAFE - 2ND FLOOR, JUST BOOKS

"ANARCHIST WORKER" - JUST OUT - THE NEW I-PHOTO PAPER OF THE NEW GREAT ARTICLES ON LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION, WORKERS CO-OP, HUNGER STRIKE, SOUTHERN GOVS NUTRITION, ONLY 15P.

YOUTH AGAINST H-BLOCK

In recent weeks there have been more and more youth groups present on the pickets and marches in support of the hunger strikers in H Blocks.

Over the past few weeks the youth have taken a more and more important part in activities. They have done poster, leafleting, manning the cells and much more.

Among these activities is the circulation of petitions around schools. And even some walk outs have been staged. But this activity has been heavily attacked by the authorities, who say that this political movement in schools will not be tolerated and that schools are not the place for the "transaction of political business".

To say this is absolute hypocrisy when every day young people are conditioned to accept authority which is the basis on which our political and economic systems exist.

At the minute the youth groups still maintain a hierarchical system of organisation and the youth still do specifically/ typically youth activities like sponsored walks and the like.

So there is still a lot of ground to be covered. The youth will have to take the situation and their own groups into their own hands and not be misled by a few dominating adults who want to run the show. Activity within the schools is of the utmost importance. The youth group should work towards this and try and co-ordinate a city wide walk out in the various schools.

Maybe if a hall is obtained some videos could be shown and some discussions arranged.

WORKING FOR THE AMAZING MR. ATKINS

Industrial investment in the North is as rare as army intelligence. Recently, an American-owned firm—EUROWELD—(who make most of their profits by supplying pressure vessels to the nuclear industry)—announced a £1m. expansion programme at their Belfast factory. The investment, we were assured, was to the benefit of everyone. Muzzling to Atkins, the Euroweld chairman said in October... 'I can think of no more unbeatable combination than labour, management and government working together'. Indeed! 4 weeks later it was discovered the 'investment' was to semi-automate the production process, and now redundancies are planned, NOT jobs as promised. The workers are now threatening occupation. We hope that this militant stand will be accompanied by a more social awareness of the products they produce.

Again in Nov., an £18m. investment in Shorts has been heralded as great news for the skilled work-force of Ireland. The money is partly government (taken from people) and partly 'commercial investment' and will be used to increase even further the war weapons of the legal RAF. Once again, the Amazing Mr. Atkins tries to make it sound like a gift to the working people of Belfast, something we should be grateful for....more weapons, more war planning. Thank you very much, Mr. Atkins.

COMMUNITY ARTS

In September 1978 Lord (if it moves give it a grant) Melchett revealed that his department of Education was making an extra £100,000 a year available to the Arts Council on top of its existing £100,000 budget to promote 'Community Art'.

The N.I. Arts Council set up a Community Arts Committee with a brief to concentrate on deprived areas, three development officers were to go out to various community work agencies and 'Make' community art.

This idea provided a buffer zone between the concept of working class/community/rough inarticulate as opposed to middle class/sophisticated art. It might have undermined the whole concept of art if the two were to meet and might further lead to ordinary people questioning the role of art. It meant all those people wanting money for ordinary people could be safely directed to the Community Arts Department.

Where do the people in the Arts Council and the Lord Melchett get their ideas from, ideas designed to distort, confuse and co-opt any challenge to their power?

From the minutes of the Community Services Department (a sub-committee of the City Council):

"The Director reported that an invitation had been received from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon for representatives of the Council to attend a conference entitled "The Relationship of Community Work and Community Arts" to be held in Caxton Hall, London on Friday 23rd February 1979. The Committee agreed that the chairman and Director attend the conference and approved of the payment of the conference fees and appropriate travelling and subsistence allowance in connection therewith"



Films are a way of turning money into light and then back into money. This has largely been the criteria by which most films are produced by the film 'industry'.

Occasionally, however people manage to sidestep this ideology and somehow raise the money and make films designed to communicate, provoke, make a political point rather than make a fast buck. Usually we had the opportunity of seeing these films at the Queens Film Theatre, as the main cinemas see them as politically too hot to handle, or they wouldn't make enough money. The QFT's main concern was once to show films of interest rather than profit.

DISAPPOINTMENT

This season, however, the QFT's administrator, Michael Open is content to repeat films first shown in the city centre, most of which have no merit and the ones that have we could have already seen (which shows how much the QFT panders to the migrant student audience rather than the regular film goer). Perhaps its to do with him playing politically safe, a self imposed censorship. (To retain the Arts Council's grant?)

COP-OUT

He regarded the film "The Outsider" as technically inferior. What he really meant was that it was too politically hot to handle. (It realistically portrayed the RUC as torturing scum) He should take note from his predecessor who had shown such notable films as "Battle of Algeiras" "State of Siege" etc., which played to packed houses reflecting the enormous interest by Belfast people.

The Gulbenkian Foundation is a right wing foundation based on the wealth of Gulbenkian a now rich, dead capitalist who got his money by exploiting the Portuguese people.

The foundation pours millions of pounds into all sorts of causes designed to maintain the status quo (Although it gives money to radical groups just enough to retain its credibility) Northern Ireland has had more than its fair share of the money through one channel or another all contributing to the counter-insurgency plan.

The Arts Council and City Council for the past year has been nurturing the community arts in N. Ireland. The City Council, as part of their growing imperialism, stage managed the scheme to encourage the painting of murals on walls in various parts of the City at a cost of £38,000. Art College students were paid during the summer vacation to paint wall murals with the help of local people. The design for the murals, of course had first to be submitted to Brendan Henry, senior community services officer (an old CRA campaigner, oh how times have changed!) He would see if the designs were to his liking and would act as a censor if he thought anything in the drawing was politically sensitive.

These wall murals amounted to a kind of cultural imperialism. The content of the murals bore no relation or meaning to ordinary peoples lives and were done by outsiders "educated" at the College of Art which has its own bourgeois conception of high art and community art. These murals were executed in deprived working class areas and would have been unthinkable in middle class areas. Of course this was also a handy opportunity by the authorities to eradicate all those nasty political slogans.

However with the Tory cuts the mural painting will 'go to the wall'. Other aspects of community art will also suffer mainly due to the £1000 a day upkeep of the monument to bourgeois culture, the Grand Opera House.

At the recent opening of the City Councils 'Community Art' the Lord Mayor was confronted by a slogan shouting H-Block picket displaying posters and stickers. That's what we call 'community art'!



Like all groups, we need money to help us in our support for the hunger strike.... for posters, leaflets, stickers, video etc. Help us to help the hunger strikers.

If you would like to join the B.A.C. or would simply like to know more, write to:
B.A.C.
c/o 7, Winetavern St,
Smithfield,
Belfast 1. Ph. 25426.

LETTER FROM — "LONG KESH ANARCHIST."

PRISON NOTES

The British have said that my comrades in the Hell Blocks are criminals. By accusing my comrades of being criminals their accusation is also directed at me and all prisoners held in the Cages of Long Kesh. Yet we lie here in the Cages affording the Special Privilege that goes with political recognition. We have been given no 'government issue clothes' to wear, nor have we been offered any with which to refuse to wear. Why?

Since 1971 we were recognised as different. While some of our number were sentenced, others were interned for their political convictions. Sooner or later we were all housed in what became infamous the world over as a symbol of British oppression in this North Eastern part of Ireland, Long Kesh. Within these cages we were all recognised by the British Government as, dare I use the word political prisoners. Sentenced men as well as the internees.

We in the cages still wear our own clothes, still associate with our own people, still do no prison work, in short, we have what the hunger strikers and the men in the Hell Blocks are fighting for, what the hunger strikers are prepared to die for.

With all this the British Government still state we are not political prisoners, does it really matter what they call us, we still remain apart from the social offender, we are still treated differently from them. Let them term it whatever they wish, perhaps the Rev. Robert Bradford's term would be more appropriate for them to use 'ANIMALS'.

Because of our differential treatment we cannot be regarded as criminals, and because Britain states we are not political prisoners, what are we then? So long as we remain in Long Kesh with our present status we shall remain a living contradiction, an embarrassing contradiction to the British government and their 'Criminalisation' policy.

As for the charge of criminal directed at my comrades in the Blocks, have they robbed, plundered, exploited for their own ends. Are they motivated by a selfish desire to acquire wealth. No. Their only crime, and we must all plead guilty to this charge, is that they wish to see their country free from British domination. We are all guilty of the crime of want.

The British cite how cruel and murderous the men in the Hell Blocks are. They never mention how cruel and murderous those criminals in the Army forts, in the police stations, interrogation centres, in the government are.

They refuse to mention why the men in the blocks and all political prisoners are driven by necessity to resort to arms are forced to kill, are forced to cruelty. They never state that within this cruelty there is an intrinsic kindness. With all the killing there is an insatiable desire for peace, or how we all abhor war. They have never mentioned the suffering endured by these men, nor how, because of their despotic rule over us, they have made my comrades and I strangers in our homes, foreigners in our own land.

Dear comrades,

In my humble opinion the work you are doing is of the greatest importance, because whatever the immediate effect of OUTTA CONTROL may or may not be, you are establishing the anarchist tradition of tomorrow. And however we may look at it, tradition counts for a lot, maybe too much in Ireland. The libertarian hordes won't all suddenly tumble from the sky, I'm afraid, so its down to the few that there are now to start the ball rolling. There seems to me from this great distance at least to be a great potential for the growth of a libertarian movement in your corner of the Gulag. Had there been a consciously anarchist tradition in Ireland (as distinct from the various anti-authoritarian and scattered libertarian elements, factions, splits, that litter the history of other movements there) before the 70s, to pose an alternative to both Marxism and the rival Nationalisms, things would certainly have been very different today. I hope this doesn't all sound too pompous simply keep on keeping on.....

Bearing in mind that there are few people that have never heard of anarchy (except as something to do with chaos or punk rock) its a good idea to do more general pieces (like in issue No 7) on what anarchy is really about. ...not the lovely sunshine utopia just around the bend that will one day drop out of the sky (when St. Bakunin is resurrected) but that libertarian forms of organisation work are the best and are a PRACTICAL choice. (The 'no go' areas are powerful arguments in our favour) Also its worth pointing out that the 'statist' federalism 'being discussed so much in the nationalist papers (AP-RN etc) is not the only sort of federalism...that the anarchy have a (particularly when applied to Ireland) more practical form of federalism that is based on regionalism (not nationalism) and autonomous communities (not States or sectarian ghettos)

All the best.
PHIL RUFF,
HM Prison, Long Lartin, Evesham, Worcs.

We were all gentle and calm, with malice unknown, with abstracted peace. Yet courteous to their servility. They never relate the stories of how they subjected our people with famine, with murder, and surely with genocide in mind. Why have they done this? Why for all these centuries have they subjected our people, our land, by their culture, with their barbaric customs of torturing us and then lock us up so that they will be free to torture even more. Why? To rob to rape, to plunder, to murder, to exploit to dominate.

Many of us prior to the war lived carefree. We knew little of our own suffering, we were all servile until the wailings of our people filled our hearts and heads. Behind our quiet eyes we awoke to hear the cry of suffering. Awoke and recognised our slavery. Awoke at the sound of armoured cars and sirens forever sounding. How we feared those dreaded nocturnal sounds, the stench of fear when we heard the banging on the door, noises which only the unfree know about.

Do you remember the feeling as the door came crashing in, with khaki clad bodies, themselves only prisoners, charging in to drag off mother, father, brother, sister, wife, husband, daughter, son. Do you remember the shriek of nerves as we watched them being dragged, kicking, being kicked, with face split with pain, a memory only the unfree possess.

When they found their tactic of murder could not break the will of the people, in face of the USC, RUC, UDR, SAS, British Army, we remained steadfast. By tacit agreement they erected cages, but that didn't succeed. Then they created concrete jungles, they built D-15 Blocks and Hell Blocks, blocks with which they hope to break. They refused to recognise that only the people can break us, the murder gangs recognised but they failed. To break the will of the people is to make them accept the chains of British oppression, this they have refused to do. They see in the British a foe, the common foe, the centuries old foe.

It is with this knowledge that the men in the H Blocks sing in cells. By isolation they failed, with beating they failed, because with pent up feelings our voices strong and steady, but with tears close and sharp, seeking for names to settle on, brother, sister, mother, father, wife, husband, daughter, son, friends and neighbours, comrades one and all.

They say we are criminals, their distorted propaganda speaks but nothing speaks louder than the action of the people, a whole people. It is those people we take our orders from, those people whose dictates we follow, for those people say, we are with you, fight on.

The hunger strikers may well die, for what? They have accepted their fate with the strength fed to them by the courage of the people. Britain will surely let them die, for what? If they are allowed to die we must ensure that they are the last to be murdered by a foreign power.

They will die refusing the tag of criminal, because in British eyes, that is, the eyes of her government, the eyes of her ruling class, it is a crime to love your people, it is a crime to want to free them from the chains of government. We are all of us criminals in the eyes of the ruling classes, we are criminals of want.

No government in Ireland can love the people because to love them is to free them, but they fear the people free. Should we all be proud to be criminals of want?

Dear comrades, brothers and sisters,

The political prisoners in Armagh and the H Blocks refuse to accept the tag of criminality being forced on them and on the entire anti-imperialist movement. With the failure of British ill conceived policy it was expected that the Brits would cut their losses, recognise the political prisoners and allow the issue to fade away. However, this was to presume a degree of common sense which the Brit government does not possess. Instead they continued in a bloody minded fashion to victimise the prisoners in apparent revenge for the overall failure of their criminalisation policy. Four years of isolation, nakedness, semi starvation, beatings, and unbelievable squalor ensued for the protesting prisoners as the Brits in trying to paint the prisoners as criminals actually demonstrated to the world the depth of their political awareness and commitment to the struggle for liberation. In solidarity AIDAN McATEER Long Kesh.