

# Outta Control

**News & Views of the  
Belfast Anarchist Collective**

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BAC, WRITE: BAC, C/O MINUTE AGAINST, BELFAST.

OUTTA CONTROL of the state, classes, 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 four weeks and we welcome contributions, criticisms etc.

## DEATH THROUGH PROTESTS

JOE McDONNELL became the fifth hunger-striker to die in the prisoners bid to win their five demands. He died on July 8th, on the 61st day of his strike. There were immediate protests with marches, rallies and some rioting. The response from the Brits showed their willingness to shoot dead anyone who took to the streets.

Within 2 days three people were killed, two teenage boys and a woman. 16 Year old John Dempsey was shot as he threw petrol bombs at the Andersonstown Bus Depot. Nora McCabe, who stood at the corner of her street, with two neighbours, was hit in the face by a plastic bullet. She died two days later. David Barrett was standing at the front door of his home, when 2 jeep loads of Brits opened up indiscriminately. Flax St Barracks had been fired on minutes previously and the jeeps were sent out on a raid

HOW MANY DEATHS DO THE BRITS WANT?

### CROPPIES LIE DOWN

At the funeral of Joe McDonnell, the Brits and RUC launched a snatch on the 'firing party' who had given a volley salute over his coffin. After changing clothing in a 'safe house', there was a shoot-out. Two people, a man and a woman, were arrested. In a 'follow-up' operation 4 more people were arrested. Some youths attempted to drive off the Brits who had moved into the side street for the snatch. Amid flying stones and plastic bullets, the youths were pushed back.

There followed an attack on the funeral procession itself. About 40 Brits and over 10 RUC jeeps surrounded an end section of the procession. They fired indiscriminately at children and parents, old and young. In the ensuing panic many were injured by either falling in the rush or being hit.

As well as the propaganda coup of scooping some of the 'firing party', there was a deliberate attempt to terrorise those who had come out to express support for the hunger strikers, and pay respect to the courage of Joe McDonnell.

Occurring just two days before the big loyalist Orange parades, it has also the effect of appealing calls for 'tougher security' from the DUP, Official Unionists and UDA.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

## THATCHERS RIOTS

### PRISONER DEMANDS AND TYRANNY'S TRICKS

Just four days before Joe McDonnell's death, the protesting prisoners elaborated their demands. Among the most significant was "We would warmly welcome the introduction of the 5 demands for all prisoners ... [This] would not mean the administration forfeiting control of the prison. . . the prisoner could have his (or her) dignity restored and cease to occupy the role of established zombie."

Around this time the Catholic church again tried 'to be seen doing something'. Previously O'Faich and Daly, and now the Commission for Justice and Peace, took part in secret talks with the NIO and the prisoners. In fact not only did they allow themselves to be tricked, but the illusion of progress created and then dashed hopes among supporters.

The refusal of the NIO to negotiate directly with the prisoners until the strike is called off is an obvious ruse to defeat the protest. The increasing attacks on the streets, and the visit of the minister responsible for prisons (Allison) to the USA, show better the intransigence of the government, and the enormous task it faces.

MARCH TO BRITISH EMBASSY, DUBLIN, JULY 18<sup>TH</sup>

## SUPER-CON ELECTED

So GARRET FITZGERALD is the new t-shock: a prime minister with a clean record and as yet untarnished image. Fitzgerald is going to be a busy man for the next year or two, trying to drag the Irish capitalist economy out of its bankruptcy.....and put into force the management of the new Ireland as decided by the world bank, the I.M.F., N.A.T.O., E.E.C., while at the same time keeping discontent down by stopping people getting together.

But Fitzgerald knows what he is doing. He's been secretly training since 1977 (the year he became leader of Fine Gael) as a member of the Trilateral Commission and Bilderberg groups. These are exclusive, secret, and private clubs of top bankers, industrialists, media figures, politicians, and reactionary union bosses from N.America, W.Europe, and Japan. They meet from time to time (the Bilderberg group met recently in Dublin) to discuss their view of the world which is invariably the outlook of the biggest financial and industrial corporations in the world. They arrive at some sort of consensus as to how the western world should be governed, should be controlled: They manage the social change of our present and our future. The task of politicians in the Trilateral Commission and

Bilderberg groups is to implement the decisions made through the discussions of top industrialists....they must implement the decisions yet make it look like democracy - our choice! Managing democracy, managing social change. To understand why the Irish economy is up to its ears in debts to the IMF, why Ireland is the dumping ground for every shit industry imaginable, why unemployment is going up and up, money spending power down and down, laws more and more severe, prisons full - the reasons for all this are to be found within the policies decided at these secret meetings of the world elite. And what is the job of super-clean Fitzgerald? He has been attending meetings of the Trilateral Commission and Bilderberg as a member since 1977, and in 1980 was elected to the executive committee of the TC (the executive committee makes policy decisions and implements commission proposals). Fitzgerald also helps formulate their political documents and only this year presented a report on the "Trilateral Commission and the Middle East." Mr. Super Clean must have just forgotten to mention all that during his electioneering....after all, it is a state secret!

\*To replace Executive Committee member Mary Robinson who resigned in 1980. Why did she resign? After all, she had spent nearly a decade in the secret club helping implement US government policy concerning the Shah of Iran, South African Apartheid and third world massacres. What got through to her in 1980?

If you are one of those living in a flat or bedsitter in Belfast, the chances are that you are forking out between £10-20 per week for second rate accommodation, often with no security of tenure. It is estimated that there are about 10,000 flats and bedsits in Belfast, all owned by private landlords, and for many single people, newly-wed couples, students and nurses the "private sector" is their only hope of getting any accommodation, since many cannot afford to buy their own homes or do not have enough "points" to qualify for public housing.

In Belfast, the majority of properties converted into flats are in the University area, Cliftonville and parts of the East. Many of these buildings were acquired by landlords for a relatively small sum and then converted into separate dwellings, often without planning permission and in flagrant breach of fire and health regulations. The landlords are interested only in the fast buck, and know that the authorities turn a blind eye to their activities — such is the housing crisis in this city.

Some of the dwellings are disgusting pits, and yet many people are paying through the nose to live in them. £20 a week is the asking price for a small flat consisting of one bedroom, living-room, kitchen and toilet. If you are looking for something for less, the chances are that you will be offered something that is an insult to human dignity. Dampness, rat infestation, intimidation and rent exploitation are the lot of those living in the 'private sector'.

Belfast is not the only city in this country where this type of racketeering exists. In Dublin, landlords the authorities into allowing them to increase rents. In Galway, a city which has grown fat through the boom created by the student and tourist influx, some enterprising parasites have put the family car onto the street and converted the garage into "self contained flats". Hardly surprising that tuberculosis, a disease that had been virtually eradicated has now reappeared in young men and women living in sheds and garages. In Coleraine — Portrush — Portstewart, students at the new University pay, say, £20 during the college term, but are expected to fork out £60 — £100 during the tourist season. The majority, not unnaturally, pack their bags and leave.



A second attempt in recent months by hunger strike supporters to have a rally at the City Hall was attacked by the RUC. 34 people were arrested, with many more being dragged and thrown onto the road(!) from the footpath, where they had dared to sit down.

About 200 people had gathered for the advertised rally, which had also attracted 5 local councillors, and one from London. Perhaps this, with the increased number of cameras present, explains the restraint (sic) shown by an otherwise vicious sectarian

Dear Friends,  
I had never visited Ulster before, but had worked out a few ideas of my own regarding a form of radical autonomy for the province, ideas which turned out to be a libertarian development of the proposals for an independent Ulster as put forward by the New Ulster Political Research Group. Since my visit to the province I feel more confused than ever, but not any more than most people over there, stricken as they are by the sectarian ghetto mentality.

There clearly is no easy answer as I had previously thought — I had fallen into the trap of thinking the purpose of a new strategy is to please oneself with a neat, tidy theory (ie. Dogmatism). The central idea which must be got rid of is that of blaming British imperialism for all the ills of Ulster. A good little Irish people, a big bad British imperialism. With such ideas, one can attack the symbols of British occupation, but it would be far better to grapple with the real problems that make our lives impossible. It is not the lack of independence that has caused the disappearance of traditional ways of life — they have simply been unable to resist the growth of capitalist production relationships. Maybe there are some around who maintain that capitalism is British, but even in Britain it is rather American, Japanese, German.

force. At the previous rally, the protesters were batoned from the City Hall grounds and towards Castle Street.

On this occasion, an RUC inspector informed one of the councillors who was about to begin speaking through a loudhailer that the rally would be permitted if no one moved and no one spoke! (Paisley would certainly lose his charisma if he were to lose his voice at his regular city hall rallies).

When a councillor proceeded to speak, the loudhailer was snatched off him and a sit-down on the pavement began. For about 20 minutes those sitting down were dragged onto the road or along the pavement. Many were pushed or thrown, but they kept coming back to sit down. If they weren't going to have a peaceful rally, they were going to have a peaceful sit-down.

But the things in green put 'plan B' into operation — arrest and bundle into a jeep those who persist. Elderly men, young women and men were bundled into jeeps, including a 14 year old girl — 34 in all.

Others, who had previous arrests weren't

It is obvious that an Ulster state would be subversive to the same thing — capitalism in Ulster, even if it called itself socialist. The modern state is simply the apparatus of political domination for the class in power. The state cannot be separated from the production relationship which created it, and which it creates every day. If there is an occupation of Ulster, it is an occupation by the capitalists. If they are British, that is a local peculiarity: Frontiers and borders are paper screens in the face of the growth of capitalist production relationships on an international level. The independence of an Ulster state can only really interest the Ulster middle class. It is not from Britain that Ulster must be delivered, but from the form of social and economic organisation which has made Ulster a British province. Capitalism has no frontiers, for it's logic and the condition of its survival is it's growth. Marx said, "The proletariat are not limited by country." Today, capitalism is not limited by country and the workers have no country, anywhere.

On the subject of cultural and ethnic identity, which I discussed at length with different comrades, it seems that there is no longer any real Irish culture, only the ruins of a great and heroic past. There is no longer any social reality, life in Ulster/Ireland/Britain is the same as anywhere else — work, buy, consume, die — because the

So then it is obvious that Ireland has more than it's fair share of bums and bloodsuckers who are into making a killing out of a basic human need like housing. They get away with it because they are allowed to, because the whole power structure is on their side, and because many tenants are weak, uninformed and unorganised.

Since it seems to be the policy of both regimes in Ireland to do away with public housing over a period of years, matters can only get worse. The state housing budgets are being cut; housing stocks are being sold off; and private landlords have been allowed to increase rents in the controlled sector by up to 100% since 1978, in the vain hope that the latter would be given the "incentive" to repair and improve their properties. The "private sector", which up until now had been in decline, is now to be given a shot in the arm in order to help "solve" a part of the housing crisis.

The only effective way in which to counter the power of the landlords and those people such as estate agents and solicitors who "front" for them in Belfast, is for tenants to organise themselves into their own lobby and action groups. Such a group cannot be built overnight. It will take time, a lot of dedication and indeed many problems to overcome before it can get off the ground. I believe a flatdwellers group should take up the following in the short and medium term:

- (1) Research the extent of the plight of those in privately rented accommodation.
- (2) Take up individual cases where landlords step over the mark, giving encouragement and practical support to flat dwellers.
- (3) Campaign for legislative change and in particular on laws guaranteeing security of tenure and adherence to fire and health regulations.

In the longer term I would see the need for such a group to wage war on the whole concept of privately rented accommodation. NOBODY should be allowed to make money out of human need.

A number of us are interested in working towards building such a group in Belfast. Shortly we hope to organise a general meeting. If you are interested please contact us at:

FLAT DWELLERS ACTION, c/o 7, Wintavern St, Belfast 1.

sure if they wanted one and were herded back towards the tech. A column of RUC boxed them in against the shops and 'escorted' them towards Castle St, and part way up Divis St. At this point one stone was thrown at the RUC, whereby they opened up and fired three plastic bullets at the still walking crowd. Despite the record of these euphemistically named 'plastics', no-one was injured badly.

All 34 were released later that night and appeared in court on Monday morning. After the trials were put back a week, the crowd of supporters who had turned up headed for a press conference at the Europa. They had in fact become a demonstration, numbering about 100. Chanting and singing, they marched up Chichester St, were forced around the back of the City hall by a nervous and uncertain RUC and continued up Howard St to the Europa. On two occasions the RUC tried to stop the demonstration, but people just crossed the road, walked on a bit and rejoined — There was a City Centre demonstration after all!

people no longer have any say in their everyday lives. Irish culture in Ulster exists only in a fossilised form. If there is to be an Ulster identity it will come from a combination of free individuals, recreating a richness of individual behaviour.

So what possibilities exist for the developing of a truly libertarian struggle in Ulster? Against the sectarian ghetto mentality. Anarchists in Belfast have an almost impossible task, so it makes sense to start in the place where this mentality is at it's weakest — inside the prisons. This does not mean supporting those who went from the republican side of the fence and simply ignoring those who went in from the loyalist side. All prisoners are worthy of our solidarity, and there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to assume that one side will be more likely to be sympathetic than the other to Anarchism, and to genuine libertarian struggle in Ulster. Consistent material and moral support for these prisoners is vital for when they are released they will be pressured into re-adopting the sectarian ghetto mentality, whether republican or loyalist. Having already given a fair amount of support to those from the republican side, and almost none to those from the loyalist side, we should seek to create an opportunity to redress the imbalance, and show our true position as Anarchists.

Reactions next issue "El Faro"

## FLAT OFF OUR BACKS

not loyalist

no rally!

Military custody was first established in May 1972 when Mountjoy Prison was burned and emergency accommodation was required for civilian prisoners. The Curragh prison was opened under temporary legislation which has been renewed on three occasions. It was last renewed in 1980 for a period of three years.

At present the Curragh is the only prison in Europe which is located within an Army camp, operated solely by Army (and armed) personell and under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defence and yet it's sole occupants are civilian prisoners.

Noel Lynch was released from the Curragh on the 3rd. April 1981. He is the longest serving Curragh prisoner as he was transferred there on the day it opened for civilian prisoners, that was November 9th, 1973. He had been a founding member of the Prisoners' Union in Portlaoise Prison in 1972 and had been elected it's president.

### Union Demands Presented.

In his capacity as President of the Union, he met the then Minister for 'Justice' Patrick 'prisoners have no rights, only privileges' Cooney in Portlaoise Prison in August 1973 . Noel Lynch presented to him the 11 demands of the Union - All of which were reasonable. Amoungst the demands were:

- A call to abolish the notorious dietary punishment (then widely practised in Portlaoise);
  - An increase in remission;
  - Custodial remand time to be deducted from sentences;
  - New communal visiting to accomodate domestic problems with screws out of earshot during visits;
  - Visiting time extended from 20 minutes to 2 hours
  - Special visits and letters to be made available in the event of social and domestic problems.
- These four demands form the basis of the 11 demands of the prisoners union.

Cooney hypocritically indicated his intention of introducing reforms, but vowed that while the prisoners remained an organised body neither Noel nor any other member of the Union would benefit from them.

### The Transfer.

Shortly afterwards, in a prison reshuffle, the Provos who had been in the Curragh were transferred to Portlaoise prison. All the prominent members of the Union were rounded up and taken to the Curragh.

Thus on November 9th, 1973, the original function of the Curragh as a place of temporary accommodation was cast aside and the prison was transformed instead into an isolation facility for the disposal of 'troublemakers' who were seeking the implementation of prisoners' rights and much needed changes in the prison system. That is the present function of military custody.

### Military Custody On A Permanent basis.

Recently there have been indications that the Government intend to maintain Military custody on a permanent basis (despite public protestations to the contrary) and even to extend it's use. The existing facility is an old army prison with accommodation for a maximum of 52.

In 1976, the coalition government constructed a new building beside the old prison with accommodation for a hundred prisoners. Soldiers are billeted there at present but it can be used for the purpose constructed at any time. Furthermore, in 1980 an isolation wing was constructed inside the old prison.

At present a new workshop is being built. The new structure is large, solidly built with concrete which suggests long-term use. Further, Military Police (who guard the prisoners) are being trained in teaching methods at Mountjoy Prison. Two long vacant teaching posts have been filled this year. All these developments point to the intention to use the Curragh Prison on a long term basis.

### The Prisoners.

At present there are 25 prisoners in the Curragh. This is more or less the daily average since 1973. Most of them are long-term prisoners, the average sentence being 9 years. Among the prisoners is the Anarchist Noel Murray, serving a life sentence for the shooting of a policeman.

This situation has remained unchanged despite the fact that even the Government appointed visiting committee in it's annual report for the last 8 years, has criticised the use of the Curragh for long-term prisoners.

Secondly, there has always been a large incidence of mental disturbance among prisoners in the Curragh.

At present a quarter of the prisoners are attending the psychiatrist regularly and a third are prescribed sleeping pills nightly.

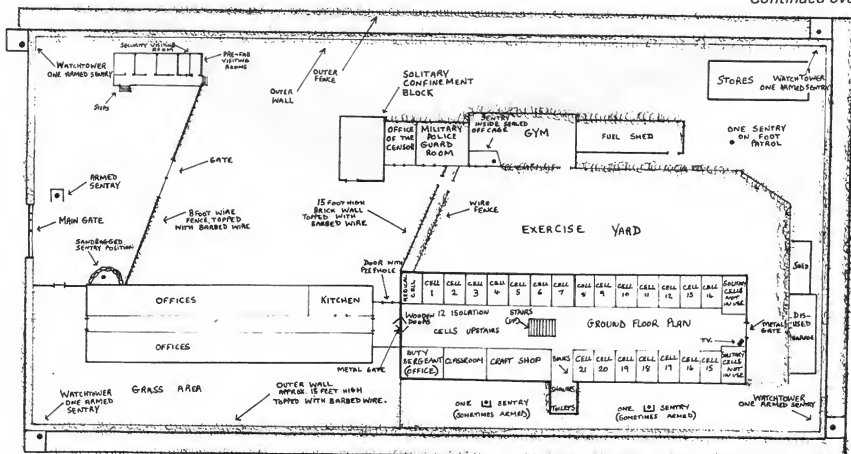
This situation is due to the dumping of disturbed prisoners to the Curragh from civilian prisons where the prison authorities do not want them to the claustrophobic effects of years spent in the narrow confines of the prison compound (see map) which was originally intended to accomodate misbehaving soldiers for a few days or a few weeks; to the tension caused by the constant surveillance of soldiers stationed in watchtowers surrounding the prison with orders to shoot to kill in the event of an attempted escape; and to the hostile attitude of the military authorities and military police to the prisoners.

### Harassment.

Since 1978, th Curragh has been even more unbearable as a prison. In that year a new Governor, Adrian J. Mullooney, took command and imposed a strict military discipline. More and more prisoners were put on what is termed, 'Report'. The Military Police operate this system by which a prisoner

*Continued overleaf*

# THE CURRAGH MILITARY DETENTION CENTRE



THE CURRAGH MILITARY DETENTION CENTRE

SCALE: 1/4" = 1' 6" APPROX. REFERENCE: - = BARBED WIRE.



Continued from previous page

is put on 'report' for breeches of discipline or the breaking of the prison rules. He then appears before the Governor and is punished. The 'report' system also operates in a way by which each individual MP is evaluated for promotion by the number of 'reports' he makes to his superiors.

This practise ensures that the MP's have a vested interest in prison unrest and disturbances. The disturbances then in turn create the impression that the Curragh is necessary to contain these 'unruly' elements and this is one of the ways the continued existence of military custody is justified to the public.

Many of the prisoners who were put on report were punished on charges that did not exist previously ie. scraping spots of paint from the ground and not standing respectfully to attention for the Governor. It is the sort of mindless discipline that soldiers are taught to jump to without question but prisoners quite rightly objected to as it was demeaning and should not constitute part of their imprisonment.

However, refusal to obey was and is treated very severely. The normal punishment became 14 days loss of remission and one to two months loss of privileges. For long term prisoners remission is very important and the power to withdraw it is a powerful weapon in the hands of the authorities. For protesting against this petty authoritarianism, Noel Lynch lost the enormous total of 16 months remission out of his 10 year sentence.

### The Protests.

The prisoners in the Curragh protested strenuously. In 1978 alone, there were three major peaceful protests before the new governor imposed his particular brand of discipline.

In 1979 there was a further protest and on March 6th, a major H Block type dirt strike started.

On this last occasion, two prisoners were wrongfully accused of damaging the cloth covering of a pool table. They lost 14 days of remission, were locked up for two months and were denied letters and visits for the same period. As a gesture of sympathy the other prisoners refused to cooperate with the authorities. They would not work nor answer the staff and left all their belongings outside their cells.

The Military Police threw everything back into the cells, and chamberpots were overturned. After that, all refuse, food, excrement and urine were put on the walls and floor. This continued for three weeks. Then MP's dressed in protective clothing entered and steam-hosed some of the cells, but these were immediately dirtied by the prisoners when they returned to them. That night, some military police (members of a clique of non-commissioned officers nicknamed 'The Gestapo') entered the cells of 4 prisoners and brutally beat them. One of the prisoners had three ribs broken.

A 7 day hunger-strike followed after which five men remained on protest until June 22nd.

On average, prisoners participating in this protest lost 8-12 weeks remission. As a result, hostility and ill feeling between staff and prisoners is at a very high level.

### Lack of Work and Training Facilities.

The Army are determined to treat civilian prisoners like military prisoners. Instead of trying to help them serve their time usefully, the Army is only interested in imposing its will and military discipline on the prisoners. There is no job training or preparation for outside life. The only work for prisoners at the minute is craftwork. The craftwork is mostly organised and financed by the prisoners themselves, making wallets, thread pictures and matchstick boats.

The fact that there is no work in the Curragh for the prisoners is in defiance of the specific stipulations of the 1947 and 1972 prison rules and regulations that "Work be provided." Neither is there any facility for granting a prisoner working parole, that is, allowing him out to look for work prior to his release.

### THE TRIAL.

Lord 'Justice' Gibson refused to grant bail to a 19 year old Belfast woman who was, whilst on remand in prison, about to give birth.

Gibson, with inbred arrogance, stated that "When born, your baby should apply to me for bail!" These words reflect a number of things:

— On his part, an upper class tradition of

"Stiff upper lip," emotions a thing to be suppressed and punished. Presumably, 'justice' Gibson was able to address his father as 'Sir' and clean his riding boots from birth.

— By saying that the baby should apply to him for bail, he must assume that the child has committed some crime... which says something for the Mothers chance of a fair trial — none.

— As is so often the case, the Courts rule

Noel Lynch has spent 8 years and 6 months inside. He was left at the gates of the Curragh on the morning of the third of April 1981 with IR £64 in his pocket. Before he left, an MP said to him "You'll be back."

Last year alone, the Southern state spent approximately IR £10, 000 per annum, or IR £20 per week to keep him in prison, he had all the time in the world to be trained for a good job on release (Noel Lynch wished to be trained as an electrician). He learnt absolutely nothing and he was given no assistance to start a new life in a world that is vastly different than when he left it in 1972. The prisoners on leaving face a world with 120,000 unemployed. They have no preparation or training for outside life. The ex-Curragh prisoners will either be forced to emigrate or else return to "crime," very few will get work.

A month before their release date, the prisoners name, date of birth, last address (before conviction) and more than likely his photograph will be printed in 'Fogra Tora' the confidential internal Garda bulletin. The police have also been known to print, 'likely to offend again'. This bulletin will be circulated to every Garda barracks in the state. This is the hostile world that awaits the ex-prisoner after he has 'paid his debt to society'. The Curragh prison has one of the highest levels of recidivism in the state. The lack of useful work, jobs training, the constant harassment and persecution lays waste to the theory that prison is supposed to rehabilitate offenders.

### Parole.

Neither compassionate nor working parole are granted to prisoners in the Curragh.

The Department of 'Justice' has stated as its policy that prisoners be allowed out (under escort if necessary) on compassionate grounds eg. to attend the funeral of a close relative and to look for a job prior to their release.

The Department of Defence refuses all parole. In 1975 a prisoner, Sammy Joyce, was serving only a 12 month sentence in the Curragh when his father died. He was refused leave to attend the funeral.

In 1976 Buster Carroll was refused leave to attend his Mothers funeral.

In 1980 Peter Fagan was refused leave to attend the funeral of his common law wife.

Also in 1980, Noel Lynch's Father died. He was also refused parole even though he had completed most of his sentence and a well known Priest had offered to attend the funeral handcuffed to him and so guarantee his return.

Yet at about the same time the then Minister for "Justice," Collins, granted a convicted UDA prisoner parole from Mountjoy prison to attend the funeral of a deceased parent in the North — a separate jurisdiction! — and entrusted him to the safekeeping of the leader of the UDA, Andy Tyrrie.

### The Carrot And The Stick.

The Curragh now plays an important role in the tactics of the Department of "Justice" and the Penal system.

When male prisoners are sentenced they are sent first to Mountjoy prison. There they are observed by the authorities and if they show any signs of standing up for themselves or the rights of others, they are then threatened with being sent to the Curragh 'the stick'. On the other hand, if they keep their heads down and become 'yes' men they are rewarded with an easier life and ultimately transferred to the new prisons, Glengarrighe Parade, and Arbour Hill — the Carrot. These prisons have a 'softer' regime. In Glengarrighe Parade, the new training prison attached to Mountjoy, each prisoner on entering has to give a guarantee not to get involved in prison protests.

That is the reality of Military custody in the 'Free State' to-day.

of habeus corpus is defied...the baby has not been charged, should not be considered as 'held' and as such should not have to apply for bail.

— Finally, it accentuates the fact that 'Justice' Gibson is merely another in a long line of the 'Cream of society', an élite placed in judgement whilst being void of any humanity, and lacking any comprehension of what it is to be woman, child or human. Such is the quality of justice...and didn't Kafka recognise it straight off?

# Gaining Ground

## OUTTA CONTROL ANARCHA-FEMINIST NEWS

*The right to vote, or equal civil rights, may be good demands, but true emancipation begins neither at the polls, nor in courts. It begins in woman's soul. History tells us that every oppressed class gained true liberation from its masters through its own efforts. It is necessary that woman learn that lesson, that she realise that her freedom will reach as far as her power to achieve her freedom reaches.*

EMMA GOLDMAN 1911

## NOW OK TO ATTACK WOMEN

Judge Russell dismissed the civil action against Atkins brought by two Armagh prisoners on the protest, Breige Ann McCaughy from Andersonstown and Eileen Morgan from Newry, and a third released prisoner, Shirley Devlin, from Newington.

They were suing Atkins for assaults and injuries resulting from the attack on republican women prisoners on February 7th 1980, which led directly to women going on the no wash protest, and a further assault in the prison yard in March of the same year.

Rose McAllister from Ardoynoe, who was on protest in Armagh at the time had this to say after she had attended part of the hearing:

I felt absolute and utter disgust at the blatant lies that were told in court by the screws and the Governor Scott—the lies that man told! The decision was a foregone conclusion. The judge was biased from the start—probably thats why Scott knew he could tell lies.

What the Judge has actually done is to condone more physical violence against women in prison. He had no sympathy at all for their case. He has now given the prison authorities a free hand to attack both men and women prisoners—in fact he condemned the women for trying to defend themselves! As for the rejection of Shirley Devlin's evidence and the medical report supporting her claims—the judge pointed out that all she had was a slight bruising on her head and shoulder and that this proved nothing—its therefore acceptable to beat up a woman if you only slightly bruise her. What is ignored is the violence and brutality of the attack itself upon a woman. Any attack whether slight or ferocious—and Shirley's was ferocious (they tried to force her head through iron bars) is allowed now.

Scott in the dock justified the use of male screws by claiming that on a cell search the female screws were liable to be attacked by women prisoners. That is a lie and he shouldn't have got away with it. The point is that on cell searches all the prisoners are locked up so such an attack could not have taken place. The real reason for the use of male screws was to attack instead, to try and break and demoralise the women

FREEPOST

Toxteth

Hi folks!  
Having a wonderful  
time, wish you  
were here!



To  
all friends in  
Belfast.



WELCOME TO TOXTETH SERIES  
Scenic view of the glorious red skies at  
nighttime over Toxteth.

The British State can now add another dead hunger striker and insurrections in three British cities to its long list of atrocity and repression. Whilst people are protesting at the horror, the grief and the frustration of the policies of this government, it sits in Westminster swaddled in smugness, and superiority: an implacable brick wall. It has been the Irish who have been constantly looking at new initiatives to stop another hunger striker dying. Relatives tour the United States, publicising the issue, thousands demonstrate in the streets of the North every week and it is all condemned in the British media as IRA propaganda, just as they are trying to condemn the riots in British cities as racial violence when it is clear to everybody that it takes the police to enforce Thatcher's policies in England never mind in the North and that judging by all those bleeding policemen it won't be long before the Army is called in too. At last people in Britain are wakening up to the fact that they are living in a police state and they are seeing for the first time, the same tactics used against them as have been used against us.

The British government are doing nothing, nor are they remotely interested in doing anything in London, Liverpool,

Manchester or in Northern Ireland. "There can be no U turns" has now been incorporated into the English language as an absolute truth. Police harassment and brutality, petrol bombs, riots and CS gas are words usually reserved for Northern Ireland not Britain, and, Liverpool got its first whiff of CS gas this week.

The Toxteth part of Liverpool is an area of walk up flats, terraced houses and redevelopment, where repairs and maintenance are not being done because the repair teams have been cut back. It is an areas where one school has closed down and a threat of closure hangs over another, which if it happens will mean that children will have to be bussed out of the area for secondary education. It is an area of desperate unemployment, in a city with unemployment figures the highest since the war, with over 60% of young blacks without a job.

Police harassment and brutality is no news to the people of Liverpool. Although the police have been very racist, brutality affects both whites and blacks. People still remember the Jimmy Kelly incident a man who died whilst in police custody. He had been walking home drunk one night, singing, and was stopped by police on wasteground. Local people who had heard him and witnessed the incident felt that he had died as the result of police violence and this view was not helped by the photographs of his body, covered in big gashes. Although the family mounted a campaign for a public inquiry and had the support of local councillors, they were refused it.

The media has been harping on about racial tension all the time, trying to find a scapegoat to blame as usual. The fact

Cont back page

# LET THEM DIE!

Over the past couple of years it has become easier for women's groups in the North of Ireland to discuss the subject of abortion more publicly. Letters proclaiming that women have the right to choose whether or not to have an abortion have been published in the local press and the subject has been aired on radio and television. For women in the south of Ireland, it is a very different story, with no support coming from outside the feminist and left wing circles. The subject of choice for women is still virtually taboo with the anti-abortionists pressing for more and more reactionary measures.

The recent beginning of a campaign for a pro-life amendment to be made to the Irish Constitution has been received with fervour by all the political parties, competing with each other to be even more anti-abortion than their rivals, and by some of the most influential gynaecologists and obstetricians. Unlike the North, there have been no subsequent updates to the British 1861 Offences against the Persons Act which means that at present a woman is liable to be imprisoned for life for aiding or procuring an abortion. The only way in legal terms that this can be eased is by the woman herself, whose life was in immediate danger, taking out a

Supreme Court case to defend her own life. The Pro-life Amendment Campaign want to make the 'rights' of the woman secondary to that of the unborn foetus by guaranteeing absolute right to life to the foetus—thus, *The State recognises the absolute right to life of every unborn child from conception and accordingly guarantees to respect and protect such rights by law.*

Such organised opposition to abortion and to contraception from groups outside the Catholic Church has been growing during the last four years, since the Catholic Church realised that it was not strong enough to go it alone. Organisations like the Irish Family League and the League of Decency have come to the fore, plus the ubiquitous British organisation SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child). Like LIFE in the North, SPUC knows that they have lost in Britain and are making an enthusiastic last stand in Ireland.

Feminists have tended to veer away from arguing over the moral, biological and scientific data presented by the anti-abortionists. The issue has been over the control of our own bodies and the choice for safe and legal abortion to be quickly and freely available to all women who choose to have one....and rightly so. However the proposed amendment is so serious and has such a good chance of succeeding that maybe we should start to question openly the claims of SPUC and LIFE, particularly on scientific grounds. A woman's life cannot be thought of as secondary to that of the foetus.

This brings us to SPUC in particular. They are essentially a religious group, hiding behind a veneer of quasi scientific knowledge and straightforward lies—their Founder President and 'scientific expert' was appointed by the Pope to the Pontifical Academy of Scientists a couple of years back. Unlike the Pregnancy Counselling groups and the Women's Right to Choose group who present all the information and the options open to women and do not pressurise them into having abortions, SPUC and similar organisations rely heavily on emotional appeal and gloss over actual facts. They continually misquote statistics about maternal deaths during abortion and childbirth to uphold their argument; they talk about murdering the 'unborn child' yet see no objections to carrying those same unborn children to meetings in pickle jars to show to people—where did the sanctity of life disappear to? Their literature is well known for its technicolour photographs of six month foetuses, given as examples of a 12 week abortion....how many women are aware that in countries where abortions are legal and easily obtained between 8-10 weeks, the foetus is about the same size as an adult's thumb nail with no obvious human characteristics and that it is only in countries where abortion legislation is restrictive that the problems of later abortion exist. SPUC and like groups are restricting the choice of Irish women by imposing their religious views on everybody—they are so fanatical that they would rather see a woman die than grant her an abortion.

It must be stressed that many women when shown colour photographs of childbirth or someone having their appendix out feel just as sickened by all the gory details and blood as they would when shown pictures of an abortion.

The anti-abortion feeling in the South spills over into other areas of pregnancy as well—a woman, for instance, who has had a malformed or handicapped child will not be screened in subsequent pregnancies to determine whether the baby is normal. Her choice is between the birth of another possible handicapped child or the abortion in England of what may well be the perfectly healthy baby that she wants. At least in the North, the Genetic Counselling service will offer immediately an abortion to women in these circumstances, on the National Health Service.

Through the Irish Pregnancy Counselling Association and the Women's Right to Choose Group, women in the south have been able to get information and counselling about abortion before going to England. Thousands of women travel to London or Liverpool every year and most arrive with little idea of what lies ahead—how to get to the clinic, who will help, what the law is, what the standards of hygiene are—many are trying to get abortions on the NHS so they give British addresses although it is a well known fact that most Irish women are too afraid to give their real address anyway...some will be wearing disguises, most will not engage in any



conversation with other women until the abortion is over, maybe not even then. These two groups have been invaluable to Irish women and need the support of Northern women. Attitudes to abortion are similar [throughout Ireland and it is going to be an uphill struggle for all of us to get free abortion on demand. Joint action between the Northern Ireland Abortion

Campaign and the Women's Right to Choose group is in the making and there will be a conference in Dublin at the beginning of November to discuss the whole issue with various 'stunts' proposed for the Southern State and Westminster to contemplate....any woman who wants to take part should contact the Women's Centre about the next NIAC meeting.

## MUJERES LIBRES

Known as Mujeres Libres, there are several groups scattered throughout Spain. The following article comes from a meeting with some women out of the Madrid group in their premises which they share with several CNT unions and a libertarian Ateneo.

—First of all—we should like to make it clear that we regard ourselves as an affinity group rather than an organisation...that is, we are a group of women united by a set of ideas which place us in the libertarian camp, the camp of the anti-authoritarians.

**Q.** How do you see the Womens Movement today?

A. Basically we dislike all -isms, but we accept the meaning which many women invest this word feminism, that it does not mean man's inferiority to women but a relationship of equality between the sexes in the context of an egalitarian society.

The Women's movement has gone far in theoretical terms and gone deeply into the women's situation, but in terms of participation and organisation it finds itself in a moment of crisis. Many organisations or groups are only female wings of political parties and consequently do not campaign for liberation as women, insofar as they are hindered by political interests and considerations (electoral prospects, for example).

We hold that the introduction by such groups (connected to the parties) into the Movement, or the notion that the organisations/groups of the Womens Movement should be organisationally at one with the parties who deem themselves the authentic representatives of the working class, is one of the present factors behind the present crisis of the Womens Movement. A substantial part of the Womens Movement has lost its autonomy and as a result many women have been disillusioned to discover that in practice this means that their concern must take a back seat to some supposedly strategic broader concern.

**Q.** What are you relations with other organisations within the Women's Movement?

A. Here in Madrid, we are in touch with them through our participation in the Platform of Women's Organisations with a view to mounting specific actions to improve women's circumstances. On the abortion issue for instance all women's organisations are agreed. Then again there is one specific campaign upon which nearly all feminists are agreed, but which we have agreed not to join. We mean the campaign for a divorce law.

Falling back upon the old libertarian idea about free relationships without institutional bonds we refuse to campaign for divorce because we take the line that a campaign for divorce keeps the institution of marriage alive by rationalising it. We are for the non institutionalisation of a couple's relationships as well as the same thing in all human relationships. In that sense we take

communal relationships as our model against the nuclear family and the monogamous couple...without seeking to impose it of course.

We think too that the campaign for divorce would involve us in an American style process in that we would be feeding the highly profitable marriage and divorce industry.

That may seem utopian and it has brought down upon us the charge that we are a token group far removed from the concerns of the bulk of women. But we think one has to move far beyond what some narrow minds term the realities. And thus we accept the fact that we may be out on a limb here. In fact, any time that anything specific has been achieved in terms of legal reforms the real lives of many people have gone further still. For example, in the area of marriage-divorce-remarriage business, there is an increasing number of people who do not bother to marry and do not institutionalise their relationships, and this is happening not just in what are termed advanced societies such as Northern European countries, but here in Spain also.

**Q.** How do you stand with regard to the Mujeres Libres of the past?

A. In 1936-1939, the Mujeres Libres organisation comprised libertarian women but times have changed. We are women and libertarians too but changing times mean changes in the form and content of our struggles. For example Mujeres Libres used to campaign for basic educational facilities for women but today the State provides that already. We take the view that the real Mujeres Libres during the Civil War need to be studied but without idealising them.

**Q.** Finally is there a lot of male chauvinism among libertarians?

A. In this society where one is manipulated and moulded from birth so that you internalise your role as 'little boy' or 'little girl' and where you act as 'big brother' as a result, it is very hard to escape this manipulation. Thus it is in trying to rise above these real traumas of our childhood one finds, incongruously, anarcho-chauvinists, individuals who are for a free society, a just and egalitarian society but who in the moment of truth,

patronise and underate their female colleagues.

Only by realising our hypocrisies can we overcome them and that is why we exist as a specific women's group.

Since in a male society we are the most scorned of creatures of whom it asks a life of subordination, of abdication of self and that we should be the servants of others, it must be us who revolt against this 'order' and in denouncing it, we demand total and effective equality.

## CORK ♀♀ CONFERENCE

Around fifty women attended the Gay Conference in Cork and of these a few were straight feminist women who came to give their support to the lesbian women. We discussed issues such as the isolation and oppression we suffered from the link with the Women's movement and the gay social scene. One straight woman made the criticism that we lesbians didn't know what we wanted or where we were going. What she failed to realise was that in a society which oppresses women, lesbians do not exist. We do know what we want: we are fighting to have our existence recognised, both as lesbians and as women. Most women felt very lonely and isolated and we felt that a national lesbian network should be established to help overcome our isolation and build a strong lesbian movement. We proposed a motion that was passed at the Conference: That all gay men's organisations in Ireland (ie 32 count countries) make resources available to assist women to establish a national lesbian network under the control of women, to be co-ordinated initially by L.I.L.

As well as discussing these issues, we talked about ourselves and got to know each other. We discussed the problems of being gay women in a male dominated society with its bourgeois morality. As lesbians we continually have to face disgust and insults; we are seen as perverts who should be locked away, and this made it extremely hard for many of us to face our gayness. When we did as in my own case, we experienced mental illness and depression. We were angry that society makes gay women and men ill and self hating, and at how the medical profession views us as psychiatric cases who need to be cured. The way forward is clearly for the lesbian and gay men's movements — although they are separate and fighting for different things — to present a united front. But we lesbians feel that the movement should not be hierarchical, that we should have an equal say in decisions and should control more of the resources. Above all, we must show that we exist, both as lesbians and as women, and the link with the women's movement is essential in doing this.

## -STOP PRESS—STOP PRESS—STOP PRESS—STOP PRESS-

*A new gay club, the Carpenter Club, has just opened in central Belfast. Named after Edward Carpenter, utopian socialist and gay liberation pioneer of the late 1800s the club aims to provide a non exploitative place of entertainment for lesbians and gay men in Belfast. There were only about half a dozen women there the night that I went but I hope that if more women support the club we will in time feel the club is for us as much as for the men and a friendly and progressive atmosphere will be encouraged. I did find my ears battered by the heavy disco music and my senses disorientated by the peacock pattern of the lighting; other dancers tottered back into the cafe area looking pale and shaken, so it wasn't just my age! I also found (a more serious criticism) my pocket emptied by the high cost of membership (£5) — there should be a reduction for those not in employment. For more information contact NIGRA or Carafriend at Belfast 22023*



that there is not really any anti-black feeling in Toxteth where white people have been living with black people for years does not seem to deter them. It was clearly and definitely a 'mixed' riot and that the incident which sparked it off, a black youth riding along on a bicycle, stopped by police and accused of stealing it, could not have provoked such a spectacular response had there not been grievances against police harassment for years previously. In fact everybody has been saying that this was going to happen in Liverpool for ages and Thatcher's policies have put the lid on it....or blown it off! Liverpool like Bristol has one of the oldest established black communities in Britain. It is a well known fact that both cities owe much of their prosperity in the past to being part of the slave triangle between Africa and America. The black community in Liverpool has been there since the nineteenth century. It has received few benefits. Money has been spent in Liverpool on providing community facilities for ethnic minorities, there is a Pakistani centre and a Caribbean centre, but Liverpool born blacks have been ignored, and anyway they want jobs first not centres. It is significant that the Peoples March against unemployment originated in Liverpool earlier this year and that there was a big response to it. It was one of the peaceful ways in which Liverpool people have been protesting for years, and was duly reported and then ignored by the British government. Although a majority of cities in Britain declared their city council to be an equal opportunity employer years ago, Liverpool have only recently done so, even though people have been pushing them for quite a while...there are still few blacks employed by them.

Areas like Toxteth may have realised to some extent what British repression means to people in the North of Ireland. The British State will not give an inch. We have seen what happens to 30,000 people who go to the polls and vote for Bobby Sands, the only peaceful and legal protest that the British Government has left us, so that through this totally meaningless gesture of democracy it can be publicised world wide as well as to the people of Britain, that people do think the prisoners five demands are reasonable and should be granted, and, that it is not just a 'handful of extremists' who think so.... and what happens....30,000 people are accused of being IRA supporters alias thugs and hooligans so their vote is of no importance even if they did play the game. The British media are now virtually saying rather than implying that all Catholics are thugs and hooligans (this does not seem to exclude the Catholic hierarchy!) and that as such all Catholics in England should disassociate themselves. London, Liverpool and Manchester may yet experience at first hand the treatment meted out to 'thugs' and 'hooligans'. The British State has been quick, too quick, to print out that rioters in Manchester are 'just looters and arsonists' and so playing on the traditional conceptions people have about 'criminals'. They want to cloud the issues involved, the social and economic crises that they have themselves created. The similarity with Ireland and the British policy of criminalising political activists is too clear to mistake

*It is a sad lack in women's papers that there is little or nothing written about women living in the country in Ireland. Ireland is a predominantly rural country and yet the problems faced by rural women have hardly ever been discussed in feminist circles in Belfast for instance. The following was written out of a conversation with a friend of ours who has been living in Co. Down for the last ten years....we would welcome more articles on the subject.*

## COUNTRY LIFE

**Why did you move out to the country?**

I moved out to the country in the early seventies after having lived most of my life in Ardoyne. As a teenager most of my thoughts had been on how to enjoy myself, although I knew what was going on around me, the pressures people were living with and at that time the continual threat to people of sectarian assassinations. I felt those pressures too and I wanted to get away from it but it wasn't until I was twenty or so that I really began to think about what was going on around me. Living in the country where I do you don't come in contact with people who share the same views or stimulate your interest to get involved as a person in your own right although that is coming together for me now.

**Did you feel isolated?**

Yes it can be a problem. At first it is a novelty for friends to come out and see you but it wears off. You can get very dependent on friends coming out to see you, it isn't simply a matter of popping round the corner or if you want a break in the day going for a wee dander in the town. But you gradually become more in tune with the country. I love the silence and tranquillity now, cycling into Crossgar for instance, when before I wouldn't have seen any beauty in a country lane....it was just boring to me.

**How do you think your children's life here differs from your own in Belfast?**

Well, there is plenty of space for them to play and no traffic for a start! They don't have to establish themselves as street fighters and I don't have to go out and do battle for my children. It could get quite rough in Ardoyne with mothers scrapping over their children.

I don't feel that I could have done that. The kids are much more sensitive to nature, they know a lot about birds and trees and flowers, they play games like all kids—Brits and Provies—but they miss out on street games with lots of kids like hide and seek and red lights. I don't know how it will affect them as they get older. Teenagers are lost round here, there is nothing for them to do at all.

**What's school like for them?**

It's a bit of a hassle. You have to go a couple of miles and you don't get a selection of schools to choose from. It's a lot harder to get a school with a 'broader' education. I find country schools narrow in their outlooks, more insistent on uniforms and that sort of thing. The school hasn't got many facilities, there is no gym equipment, just the odd game of rounders once a year, they don't go in for day trips or nature walks—most of the day is spent in the classroom. The teacher/pupil ratio is better but then they are trying to close down some of the schools and amalgamate to make them bigger. You can't pick and choose your schools because you don't want your child to know children nine miles away, you want them to have friends in their own area.

**What about yourself. How do you feel about country life?**

I can't believe I ever lived in a terraced house. They make me feel claustrophobic and then you are always aware even subconsciously of the neighbours and the noise and whether you are disturbing them. I can see how living in the country you could lose what pushes you to be sociable. There have been certain periods over the years when I have felt I was becoming inward looking and it got hard to talk to people. You start to lose confidence in yourself. I don't feel that at the moment. It would be almost impossible for me to find women interested in starting a women's group, I might manage a 'coffee morning' maybe, but I suppose this would apply to parts of the town as well. Ideally country life would be marvellous if you could build up a community of people who felt the same way about sharing and helping each other but unfortunately 'country living' has become so fashionable that property is out of reach financially for most working class people.

their bikes up the entries, they talk to each other in 'real' language—me Mammy, me Da, wee boys, wee girls, yous, wee taste of tea, etc etc.

Farsat admit that that the characters are socially stereotyped, but the stories are so funny and so real, so full of ideas and traditions that even so they actually helped me to talk to my daughter and son about the roles they were expected to play out on the street. There were knowing smiles between us when we got to the conversation between Sandra and Betty and Sandra says 'I'm glad you came to live in our street. There's only been wee boys up til now'—well worth reading and The Bus Run got them thinking!

Available from Farsat Co-operative Press, 95 Shankill Road, Belfast. Price £1.50 or from Just Books, 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast.

## Kids book REVIEW—ANGELA'S STORIES

At last I've found a really fascinating children's book that written for and about children living in working class streets in Belfast. There are eleven beautiful wee stories about how a single parent and two children move from a small flat into a house of their own with their own yard on Majuba Street and become accepted and make friends in the community. Its one of those book books that are impossible to review, you just see something in every line that you want to write down. Its full of Belfast axioms and colloquialisms—the house they move into looks like a three minute warning, they go to the chippy on a Friday night, they have races on