

Outta Control

News & Views of the Belfast Anarchist Collective

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW
MORE ABOUT THE BAC,
WRITE: BAC, c/o
7 WINE AVERN ST.,
BELFAST

OUTTA CONTROL... of the state bosses, patriarchy, schooling, churches... An 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.

A SEA OF TROUBLES



Britain's role in Northern Ireland, both on the streets and in terms of legislative measures, is clearly repressive and designed to keep in check a rebellious section of the population which calls for the granting of the Five Demands of the Prisoners, which also to some extent calls for 'Brits Out', and which seeks to take control of, and responsibility for, its own future.

The British government will not, it says, negotiate with the prisoners on the Five Demands until the hunger strike ceases, and continues its policy of criminalisation and the labelling of resistance to the British presence as 'terrorist', 'criminal' and as a problem of law and order. To admit that the prisoners are 'political' would mean that they would have to admit that the conflict is a political one and that they would have to re-evaluate their policy and their role here.

The granting of any concessions towards the demands of a nationalist and republican population also seems to represent a loss of 'face' or political credibility, and, like all governments, they wish to present an image, world-wide, of a firm and powerful consensus that does not admit mistakes nor bow under pressure to a challenge to its rule.

On the question of the prison protests, the hunger strike and the Five Demands, the British government realises the implication of reforms for all other prisons in Britain. Also, they wish to maintain their policy of not negotiating under pressure from 'terrorists' and try to limit the intentions of the Demands to ones of seeking better conditions - this makes it easy to claim that some conditions are among the best in Europe. It is clear that the prisoners' demands for 'rights' and not 'privileges' go towards the undermining of the basis of prisons which claims to 'rehabilitate'. The prisoners have recently

expressed a view that speaks for all imprisoned people:-

'They want to control our words, deeds and thoughts on a twenty-four hour basis, with the objective of turning out systemised, dispirited and broken men whose only alternative to conforming is many more years of isolation, brutality and degradation.'

Britain wishes to break the spirit of any resistance to its power, and by force of arms seeks to control the streets and to crush any signs of support for resistance. Any government will, of course, seek to protect the interests of the establishment, but the deaths of the hunger strikers and massive public support for their protest and demands have drawn attention to the political nature of the conflict and have done much to expose the lengths to which Britain will go to retain its supremacy.

It is being increasingly seen that the rebellious section of the population does not have the resources to confront the troops, RUC and UDR. When the protesting population begins to pose any kind of threat to the 'normalisation' policy, then it is all too easily contained and isolated by force of arms or by the threats of torture and imprisonment. Riots provide a justification (as if one were being sought) for the systematic murder, intimidation and harassment of Catholics and republicans. Riots and petrol bombings accompany the announcements of the deaths of hunger strikers and few attempts by the H-Block/Armagh Committees seem to be made to organise or to redirect that in a way which will ensure the mobilisation of the community, i.e. school strikes and full day stoppages of commercial and routine social life.

The military resistance to the British presence continues a steady but unchanging campaign. Military and commercial

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INSIDE

There have been two more deaths in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh - Tom McElwee, from Bellaghy, and Micky Devine from Derry. Their funerals became massive demonstrations of support for the prisoners, with over 10,000 on each occasion. To date, 10 prisoners have now died. Seven more prisoners have replaced them, with the number of days spent on hunger strike on Sept. 12th as follows:-

Liam McCloskey 41
Pat Sheehan 34
Jackie McMullan 27
Bernard Fox 20
Gerry Carville 13
John Pickering 6.

PLASTIC DEATH

In the past ten days, four children have been injured in plastic bullet attacks by the British Army and the RUC.

The most recent victim is twelve years old Paul Corr from the Beechmount area. On Friday night he was hit in the face by a plastic bullet as he cycled past a two-vehicle army patrol. Paul's face has been ripped open; his brother has said that Paul has 'a huge hole in his face with his nose hanging off'.

Eye-witnesses have repudiated British Army claims that the patrol had come under attack from youths throwing stones and using catapults. Local people say that at the time Paul was injured the area was quiet except for a few children, all under ten years of age, who had been throwing stones earlier. The people of Beechmount have decided to hold a mass street demonstration to protest over the deaths and injuries caused by plastic bullets.

Once again, the security forces have demonstrated the lengths they are prepared to go to in order to terrorise people off the streets - even to the extent of killing and maiming children. Seven people have died since April this year, after being hit by plastic bullets - three were under sixteen. Carol Ann Kelly, aged 12 years and Mrs. Nora McCabe were killed when there was no disturbance whatsoever. Julie Livingstone, aged 14, died after being hit with a plastic bullet when British soldiers attacked a crowd of women who were blowing whistles and banging bin-lids to protest over the death of hunger-striker Francis Hughes.

On the 3rd and 4th of August, the Association for Legal Justice held a tribunal on the use of plastic bullets. The International panel condemned the indiscriminate use of the bullets against people not involved in riots, and the official tolerance of abuses of the weapon. The tribunal condemned the plastic bullet as a lethal weapon and called for a ban on its use in Northern Ireland. They also called for an inquiry into the deaths and serious injuries occurring from the use of the bullets.

Banning plastic bullets in Northern Ireland would prevent some of the injuries and death, but unless the users of these weapons, the sectarian 'security forces' are banned also, the attacks will merely take a different form.

Food that we eat is made up of various substances, *not all of which are nutrients*. Nutrients are substances that provide energy; enable living material to be built up and broken down; and provide elements to promote growth and healing. As well as nutrients, food contains fibre and toxins. There are five main categories of nutrients:protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals and vitamins.

Humanity is a 'first-hand feeder', i.e. feeding on plant products directly, with teeth, digestive system and other characteristics similar to those of frugivorous apes. At some period in history (probably due to an environmental crisis) humanity took to flesh eating.

Nowadays, most people eat whatever is to hand - mostly out of habit, family tradition, social conventions, laziness, thoughtlessness and convenience. Humanity, in general, lives with the illusion that it is necessary to healthy survival to consume quantities of meat, fish and other products (such as eggs, cheese and milk). This illusion results not only in the mass oppression and slaughter of animal life - it is also the cause of much ill-health, obesity and wasteful land use.

Too many people believe that it is necessary to eat a mixture of meat, vegetables fruit and other foods in order to achieve a 'balanced diet'. Not only can this practice prove expensive to maintain, it should be pointed out that this kind of feeding is, more often than not, a question of *taste and habit* rather than one based on sound nutritional advice.

All essential nutrients can be obtained from plant sources. As long as any eating habits do not lack, significantly, any essential nutrient, then a diet which consists entirely of plant products (i.e. a *vegan*, or complete vegetarian diet) is one that is adequate, cheap and healthy and is one which does not involve a continuing exploitation and mass oppression of animal life.



Sources of Essential Nutrients

Proteins: nuts, whole cereals, soya and other beans and peas, greens, also plant-milks and textured vegetable protein (i.e. processed soya).

Sugars and Starches: cereals, bread, cake, biscuits, fruit, dried fruit, vegetables.

Fats: nuts and other seeds, 'Tomor' margarine, nut butters and creams, plantmilks.

Vitamins:

Vitamin A - carrots, tomatoes, dark greens, margarines.

Vitamin B - whole cereals, pulses, nuts & yeast extracts.

Vitamin B12 - is added to yeast extracts such as 'Tastex', 'Barmene', some plant-milks, also in Lane's vegan tablets.

Vitamin C - fruits and greens (especially fresh and raw).

Vitamin D - sunlight, vegan margarines, and plantmilks.

Vitamin E - whole cereals and pulses, vegetable oils (especially sunflower).

Minerals:

Calcium - seeds, nuts, whole cereals, bean beans, peas, greens, dried fruit. Also mol-

asses and dark treacle.

Iron - greens, dried fruit, nuts, whole cereals, Also molasses and dark treacle.

Fibre: fibrous parts of whole cereals, fruit and vegetables - essential for healthy functioning of the body. Animal products do NOT supply these.

People are rightly concerned about the human population crisis, with ever-increasing numbers putting a critical strain on the earth's resources and space. What is often overlooked is that there is *another population explosion* - that of the animals which are systematically bred to feed human beings. This *other* explosion puts an even greater strain on the environment, and one that is completely unnecessary - as humanity can get all food much more economically from plants.

'What's Cooking?' is an excellent, vegan, cookery book which contains over 300 marvellous recipes, plus pages of simple nutritional advice and hints on preparing tasty, nourishing, economical meals. It provides the answer to the high costs of meat and other animal products. It costs £3 plus 50p postage and packing from: The Vegan Society, 47 Highlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, England. A good investment in many ways than one.

There is just concern for the many thousands of animals kept in research establishments and which are experimented on (many without anaesthetic) in the names of scientific progress, medicine and biological warfare. It is about time that we, as anarchists, and as people who are seeking to determine their own lives, to accord that freedom to animal life, to stop the mass exploitation and butchery of animals for food when there are perfectly adequate alternatives.

Think about what you are eating NOW, join the vegan revolution, let us free our world of all tyranny and not just that which touches human life. That way, we give the earth a better chance of a free and truly libertarian future.

LETTERS

NEWS FROM YORKSHIRE

A comrade writes:-

We have recently set up a community centre in Kedgeley, which is run on an anarchist basis and in which we can put our ideas forward to people. We have tried to counter the state's media hunger-strike coverage by sticking up posters and handing out leaflets etc., with some degree of success.

We also have access to video equipment and have shown videos made by other groups.

We have also laid flowers, barbed wire and plaques after the deaths of each of the hunger-strikers and have handed out leaflets to accompany our action.

MEANWHILE IN SOUTH WALES.....

Billy McDermott writes:-

On the question of Ireland and the relationship with the people in Wales, many people draw similarities and are therefore within the Plaid Cymru and Welsh Republican Socialist Movement.

Quite a few people, at least in Swansea, in the WRSM fold claim to be anarchists. They have a fairly good Troops Out of Ireland stand.

Unlike the SWP, they do not use Ireland as just another issue to make political capital out of.

This does not mean anarchists don't take a stand against nationalism and patriotism.

The anarchists in the Swansea area are involved or getting involved in different struggles, but the position at the moment is organising as in DAM and consciousness-raising.

We are also attempting to set up a Swansea Community Media Group, known as Black Eye Video.

Anyway, anarchists, keep on struggling - the chains are breaking.



The Autonomy Centre in London's Wapping Wall has just opened. One of their first activities was a debate on 'Nationalism in Ireland is a Revolutionary Force'. We hope to publish the papers presented in our next issue.

Birmingham too, will soon have its anarchist club. The hope is to 'encourage the growth of a network of clubs around the country which would put the libertarian movement on a firm bedrock, cutting across the sectarian divide of paper organisations, and marking a return to the traditional libertarian idea of a decentralised club movement, based firmly in the local community.' Address to be found!

If you're across the water then contact -

AUTONOMY CENTRE
01 Warehouse,
Metropolitan Wharf,
Wapping Wall, LONDON E1 4LG.

A comrade writes from Hull:-

'Did you read Anarchy No 32? Quite an improvement I think (well, the first bit anyway). A lot of 'Anarchists' use dogma to pass the buck on Ireland. In my experience those people who bring out theoretical justifications for not supporting the Irish working class in struggle are playing an old game - they're after an excuse for inactivity. They know they should be doing something, but they'll find one hundred and one ways of avoiding it.

For example, if there's anti-militarist or prisoner-support work to be done, and someone raises the Ireland angle, the 'wets' will jump up protesting 'but I want the army out everywhere', or 'all prisoners are political'. These two positions are dead right, and as anarchists we must never lose sight of them, and proclaim them at the top of our voices; but I get annoyed when the rhetoric is used to bury heads in sand. I've never seen the people who raise these 'purist' objections go off and do anything, never seen them confront militarism really in England, or help English prisoners. If the positions were reversed, with an Irish army of occupation in England, the English revolutionaries would be screaming for support from their Irish counterparts. So, where's solidarity now?'

IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED and have done some art work in your spare time, please contact Ken on Belfast 768402 between 6.30 and 7.30 Tues, Thurs, Fri, as he is interested in holding an Exhibition of unemployed people's work.

ANYONE interested in helping in a Writers' Co-op - contact Johnny c/o Just Books, Tel:25426.
I thought JAC was a racing bike, until I discovered OUTTA CONTROL. Details: 'Just Books'.

YOUR work. Send in all your poems, stories, first drafts, etc. to 'The Windmill', c/o Just Books, 7 Wimpole Street, Belfast. See YOUR work in print!

REMINDER!! Young Building Writers of Belfast, first issue of 'The Windmill' still needed for Young People Writing, a new book to be published later this year containing nothing but

We are expected to remain silent whilst Anarchy and Chaos become a way of life. The situation is worsened by the fact that... we have no control over any of our affairs.
The Ulster Loyalist Democratic Party

Rathfriland

The notorious rip-off artist Pat Hughes worms his way deeper into the world mining economy. His company - Northgate - has just recently taken over PATINO; a big multi-national, famed for its abuse of Bolivian tin miners. The deal cost £67m.

and much of the money came from the profits made at the Tynagh mine in Galway. Northgate employed people to rip out ore from Galway for 15 years, making £30m. profits in the process. They hinted that this money would be put back into an Irish venture.....as it has turned out, this was a clever rumour in order to get the I.T.G.W.U. to persuade its members to accept redundancy money gracefully,

But the 'Irish venture', not surprisingly, did not materialise. Instead, they buy PATINO and are now involved in gold, zinc, and silver mining in Quebec.

Through this deal, Northgate increase their stake in other companies busily exploring for URANIUM in Ireland. Alongside their uranium prospecting interests in Donegal and the Mournes, Northgate also get a stake in Brascan, a North American company who own half of Noranda. Noranda control TARA, operator of a zinc mine in Navan, as well as the holders of uranium prospecting rights in Donegal.

*Big money, big business... it's time
Northgate got a big shock!*

..... to Bolivia



Mystery of the H-block protest

Supporters of violence
moved in on Keighey
Thursday on Monday.

The flowers for Hiroshima's innocent victims were shoved aside by IRA propaganda.

Powers backing dead
terrorist hunger strikers — and
blaming Britain for their
"murder" — appeared on the
— memorial

No organization has yet claimed responsibility for the demonstration — but many of the propaganda posters carried Anarchist group imprints at the bottom.

Some of the home-made posters bore the slogan "Smash H-Block"; "Bob Sands MP, IRA hunger strike."

murdered by British
Imperialism Tuesday, May 5th
1981." Others warned "W
member."

Alongside the handwritten posters were other professionally printed placards with pictures of the terror-battered: "Ireland's heroes".

Keighley had a small well established anarchy and CND sources confirm a recent attempt by the group to infiltrate the anti nuclear movement ended in failure.

● Keighley Labour MP Bob Crer was in Hiroshima

Saturday's mourners.

The latest anti-nuclear March for Survival has Gerry Fitt as one of the Speakers (amongst other middle class personalities who we can well do without).

Two questions:

- 1) Will Fitt politically survive in this last-ditch attempt?
- 2) Can he physically survive the march from Stormont to Botanic Gardens?

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE.....
THE MORE THINGS REMAIN THE
SAME. *E. McNabb*

The National H-Block/Armagh Committee held a Recall Conference on Sunday September 6th.

Despite being one of the biggest attended conferences of the campaign, no real analysis or reassessment took place. At best, there was a tampering with the present structure. An illustration was the overwhelming rejection of P.D.'s proposal to have the Committee made up of the delegates (and work towards a delegate conference). Instead, we now have 10 more Committee members (20 elected at Conference, with 10 co-opted) an Executive of 15 of these, and a cumbersome, powerless, third tier, consisting of delegates from interest groups.

There was much talk of industrial activity, but no concrete proposals as to how this can be achieved.

The limited time and cramped space certainly played a large part, but also the domination by the National Committee (particularly Sinn Féin), most of whom were re-elected, prevented the much needed reassessment.

The venue, whilst convenient geographically, was the expensive Fairways Hotel, who charged 25p for a plastic cup of tea. The 'Light Lunch' at £1.50, was a round of sandwich, a plastic cup of soup and plastic tea.

.....Meanwhile in Keighley, Anarchist friends have been rootin' about. The local gutter press attempts to paint the picture....



Drug Squad Weed Out

This month is the harvesting season for the growers of all types of plants, likewise people who grow cannabis will be using this time for drying and curing their grass either for private use or for selling purposes. The Drug Squad realise this, and it seems ridiculous that people can still be fined or sentenced for the growing of a plant which in whatever state is less harmful than alcohol.

The D.S. find this time of year profitable and have already pro-

REPORTER EXCLUDED

A comrade who has visited Belfast twice before was recently excluded from England.

After his previous visits he had reports published in 'Umanita Nova' and 'Le Monde Libertaire'; Italian and French anarchist newspapers. But third time unlucky. As the immigration officer at Southampton stated on Home Office Form IS 82C. . . . 'from information available to me about your recent political activities, I am sure that your exclusion is conducive to the public good.'

Our friend's reply is: 'I know that the situation in the U.K., and especially in the North of Ireland, is more and more difficult. The authorities try to hide what is happening in Belfast as in Liverpool and London. I've been 25 hours in custody, and had many hours of interrogation by the criminal police. They took my photograph and fingerprints.

Don't worry, I didn't say anything. The free movement of people in the 'free' world is quite limited and so controlled.

Nobody and nothing, nevertheless, will prevent me coming - soon, I hope - again to the U.K. and Ireland, even if the police said to me - NEVER !



ved this by numerous busts. Due to an increase in D.S. activity with regards to homegrown, combined with the start of the magic mushroom season, means people who are users find themselves under constant threat from the cops.

Apart from causing people great harm, the drug squad are trying to destroy a social scene where people are able to obtain cheap or free grass and find a getaway from the business side of drug use. Dealers also see the influx of homegrown grass as a threat to their maximum profit making enterprise. The more homegrown there is, the less rip-offs there are, and because dealers are harder to catch, the D.S. turn their attention to private areas.

Unfortunately, the Belfast Drug Squad have caught on quickly to this relatively new phenomenon, and their presence has been increasingly felt. Searches and surveillance have been greatly stepped up, the D.S. have now begun to search for drugs, and if they find anything the consequences are exactly the same as a D.S. find. The D.S. have found out early this year to step up their harassment, due to the acquisition of young recruits, who don't look like cops at all, so operations have been carried out virtually un-noticed, since they take the form of punks, blitzers and long hairs.

As usual, the tactics used reflect the D.S. character : underhand, planting dope on people in their homes, intercepting mail, tapping phones, trying to score dope off you, and the old-time favourite of leading you into conversations or arguments about dope or drugs in general.

So, BEWARE ! Everyone is a 'criminal' in the eyes of the state !

Due to these numerous tactics, it is necessary that people obstruct the Drug Squad by KNOWING THEIR RIGHTS. This is a much needed necessity, since it prevents McBride and his misguided colleagues from either putting you down or by making their job so easy - it seems ironic that the state sees it as necessary to outlaw dope, whilst large numbers of people can seriously damage themselves mentally and physically by sniffing glue and still remain free from a sentence or fine. Why is it that alcohol is socially accepted when it is medically termed a downer and as being inductive to aggression?

REMEMBER. . . . the D.S. is a growing and an active force; if you are busted through fault or NO fault of your own, **SAY NOTHING** until you have seen a lawyer, OR contact Just Books, (Box 30) 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast. Phone (0232) 25426.

Continued from front page
 targets are hit with regularity, but little evidence is seen of any defensive role by the IRA or INLA other than symbolic acts. The facts that there are fewer of them, with fewer arms and the fact that they are engaged in a guerilla war means that their potential to operate as a defence force is limited.

People are not free to establish basic rights of protest and to take their own decisions for the future - any mobilisation of people in defence of their streets or in support of the prisoners is soon contained by force of arms as soon as they pose any kind of powerful threat to 'normality' - i.e. rebellious people are confined to their ghettos, whilst loyalist movements are seen as having unhampered opportunities to intimidate catholics and to demonstrate their loyalist allegiances. Loyalists in uniform can murder without fear of the legislative retribution that catholics face who act in self defence or who campaign in protest at the numbers of innocent victims of sectarian hatred.

What seems to be needed is the linking of energies both to resist an oppressive force, to create propaganda with the purpose of discrediting and destroying Britain's role, and to organise local defence of ghetto areas and 'grey' areas, where powerless people are defenceless at present. For the campaigns of resistance and protest to succeed, movements have to begin to compliment each other rather than to continue action in isolation or in competition. Reams of wordy publications and massive public demonstrations do something to encourage commitment and to foster continuing activity, but unless the encouragement of initiatives is seen as a priority over struggles for power then the campaigns will remain fragmented and vulnerable.

As what is being confronted is a sophisticated military and political force, a co-operative campaign of resistance and defence must be equally sophisticated and able to withstand the heaviest onslaughts of repressive measures. There is no point in mobilising people only to leave them defenceless as soon as their determination begins to take effect. People would almost certainly be inhibited from taking direct action for themselves if they felt that as soon as their actions began to 'bite' they would be left high and dry to face plastic bullets or live rounds without having any practical means or tactics to defend themselves. Such defencelessness would also be counter-productive as people realised the limitations of their plans. Until that kind of sophisticated balance is evened out, no reasonable solution could be contemplated. At present, the rule of the force of the gun and all special legislative measures is rather like a gardener trying to solve the problem of weeds by concreting all over the area where they exist. This kind of blanket

What has also to be noted is the frustration felt by many people about the lack of results obtained by ritual demonstrations and the anger felt by those who organise peaceful marches and pickets and who find themselves harassed and intimidated by security forces. Others

find themselves under a constant threat of attack by plastic bullets and other missiles from troops and RUC in areas where completely innocent people have been killed and maimed in totally unprovoked attacks in ghetto areas. The threat of sectarian assassination adds to this climate of fear, rebellion and violence.

Britain's inflexible attitude in the face of the deaths of the hunger strikers has meant a strengthening of the campaign of resistance and a growing covert support for armed tactics. It has also meant a realisation that it may involve a long campaign. International support has also grown, with attacks on British targets in foreign countries. In Switzerland young people set up barricades and fought with the police explicitly in support of the hunger strikers, and demanded the withdrawal of troops.

All this is not yet proving sufficient to pressurise the British state into releasing its stranglehold, nor must it be believed that Ireland could count on foreign states to influence Britain's policy. International capitalism will always seek to protect its own interests. Maybe, through a process of challenging the British presence and through the support for the prisoners' demands, present campaigns will begin to give a more thoughtful approach to the prospect of a liberated Ireland free of armed troops and to the nature of the freedom demanded.



The Census — Information and intimidation.

As the Government wasn't quite able to get the census form from people ('cause they had more sense) as they would have liked to, it looks that the Brits are now trying their luck by using different means. Recently, the British Army, in full force have been knocking at peoples' homes, pointing their guns at them and even the kids to 'ask' for the census.

It's none of their business at all, and only another excuse for showing their arrogance and 'superiority' which they can only show when they have a gun in their hands. The fact that the Brits are demanding census returns shows that there is the hotly denied exchange of information between the census office and the 'security' forces. Presumably, the census office has requested information from the Army computer, the Brits naturally obliging and trying to fill in the missing bits by extorting the information from those who were recorded as having refused to cooperate....perhaps in 1991 the census office will come straight and use coercion in the first place.

HOPE I DIE BEFORE I GET YOUNG...

BENT BUT NEVER BROKEN

Young people undoubtedly get one of the rawest deals of all. In the home we've no rights, at school we're fucked over and after that thousands of us have only a lifetime of drawing the dole to look forward to, and, if 'lucky', a low paid job where you're treated like a dog by the boss and probably by the work 'mates' as well. Being young and unemployed means the daily harassment by Brits and RUC. It's no wonder that 75% of all prisoners in the H-Blocks are under 25 years of age.

The period in our lives which is potentially the most creative, emotional and enjoyable, has for many of us been stolen or lost in the straightjackets of ghetto living, school, sectarianism, religion, parents, laws and sexual morality.

NO-ONE WANTS TO KNOW

Political parties are only interested in using us for their own ends. They treat us as inferior and aren't interested in what we want or have to say. The 'socialists' who advocate a better society, the pie in the sky, have done little for us and at best are content to provide drinks and billiards.

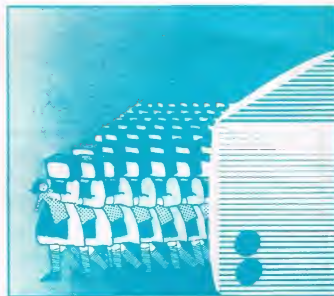
The church and state organised activities are only interested primarily in making us conform to their rules and standards and, of course, reject the 'troublemakers' who won't play along.

The only way some people are interested in us is when we become passive consumers. Our ideas are ripped off and marketed back to us through music, clothes, concerts, films, etc., it's no wonder we get blitzed out of our heads through booze, drugs, glue sniffing. Anything to blot out the shit we see around us.

DON'T MOAN . . .

Young people, no matter how brutalised, are always in the forefront in the fight against authority and repression.

We have the courage to go where we want - to listen to the music we want - to wear what we want - to have sex when and how we want - to read what we want, even when you know you'll be hassled by everybody.



JUST OUT!

Three papers not mentioned in last month's issue were: Black Flag (paper of the Anarchist Black Cross), Anarchy magazine and Angry (from Hull).

These have recently given coverage to the hunger strike campaign and advocated a principled anarchist position of support for the prisoners and the necessity for withdrawal of troops.

Anarchy also gives good coverage to the 72 Irish prisoners in English jails.
 All available at Just Books!

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

BACK TO SCHOOL

The fact that education is free makes it appear like a bountiful gift, something that makes us better off than most other people who live around the world. But although education is 'free' we shouldn't forget that up to 16 it is also compulsory, and when the government goes to the trouble of making something compulsory then it is most certainly in the interests of that government to maintain it.

Education wasn't always free or compulsory. Up until the end of the 19th century only the rich were educated as they were the only ones who could afford to send their children to school. For most this meant sending their male children to the so-called public schools which were in reality very expensive private schools, or having their children taught privately at home. These schools which exist to the present day, were designed to produce the future rulers of society - the bankers, politicians, judges etc. For the rest of the people who didn't have money then they manage as best they could, most of them unable to read or write.

In 1870 though the government decided that it was time that all the people should at least have basic literacy and numeracy skills, and so education became compulsory for all between the ages of 5 and 10, it didn't become free until 1900. What prompted this sudden concern with the working class and its ability to read after hundreds of years of neglect? Well it certainly wasn't from the goodness in their hearts. In the main there are two reasons. Firstly during the 19th century Britain had become an industrialised nation the first in the world, during this period it was also building a vast empire around the world, suddenly though it found itself with a rival that threatened to beat it in production rates, this was Germany then also starting to expand overseas. When British industrialists asked themselves why this was happening they discovered that the German worker was a more efficient producer than the British and the main reason for this appeared to be the fact that Germany had an education

on system. Immediately they put pressure on the British government to provide the same service. Secondly it was clear that the vote was going to be given to the male working class in the near future, and the then Tory government even then was good at spotting the best methods for capturing these new votes.

The education provided was of a very basic kind reading, writing arithmetic, and religion, any more was felt to be dangerous. Education then was a result of the demands of the economy rather than the needs of the people and its content directly reflected this.

Over 70 years was to pass before that basic system had a major overhaul, while in the meantime the rich continued to use the services of the public schools. Around 1944 the government - this time a wartime co-alition dominated by the then prime minister Churchill - came to the conclusion that a new education system was needed which would allow all children equal opportunity to get a good education and even go on to university if they had the ability. Again though the economy and future plans for post-war recovery, plus an election at the end of the war played the major role in the decision. The new plan was simple in essence it proposed that children should be sorted out at a certain age - 11 - into those children who had academic ability and those who hadn't. There was no rational reason to choose 11 as the deciding age it was picked at random although all research since then has indicated the uselessness of testing children at that age as it proves nothing about their then or their future ability, it continues to be the decisive year in most children's lives, in school at least. The children with ability were to go to grammar schools, the others to secondary moderns, children from then on effectively labelled the successes and the failures. At the same time the public schools were allowed to remain outside the state system, and to continue to provide for the rich and to go on producing the future leaders - at the present time for example nearly every member of the



and to the dole....

For the many who left school to get a job, and some independence, the old story that schools have been peddling for a long time, has suddenly become a fairy-tale. If your good and hard work here you will be rewarded with a good job when you leave. With unemployment, what it is, this is no longer true, and for many young people today, the only alternatives seem to be the dole, or the governments extension of school - the Youth Opportunities Programmes.

These courses designed to cut down the unemployment figures, can last from 3 to 12 months depending on the scheme. Although there are many differences between the courses, they do share striking similarities - they all provide cheap labour, and in virtually all cases the

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Tory cabinet has been to public school. So a new dawn had arisen with promises of bright futures for all children, but as before the system neatly fitted in with the demands of the post-war economy - the need for a class of professional workers, teachers, doctors, social workers, the need for a class of skilled manual workers, and of course the need for a large pool of semi and unskilled workers. It was not surprising then that very soon a pattern emerged, most working class children appeared to have no ability and went to secondary moderns, while most middle class children appeared to have the requisite ability and so went off to grammar schools. A few working class children managed to get through the net to grammar school but most of these would in turn drop out before the end and those left would be recruited into the middle class so giving weight to the illusion that anyone who had ability could really move up in the world. So the grammar schools provided the future professional workers, and the secondary moderns the rest.

Since then it has become clear that getting on in education has little to do with the ability to make your way in life, or about taking control of yourself - instead it has a lot to do with speaking with the right accent, living in the right area, being able to cope with the language of education, and having your parents make the right noises at parents meetings. The system was created by people with clear ideas about how people should behave and those who didn't measure up to these ideals were to be labelled failures, unless working class children and their parents were prepared to learn and use new codes of practice, in other words to become like the middle classes then movement was not going to be allowed.

Educations main role then was and is the passing on of ideas, values and beliefs which maintain the status quo, which make people believe that they cannot change things themselves, but only adapt themselves to the decrees of others.

Three of the most crucial elements of the education system are the learning of obedience to authority, punctuality, and hard work, also the three qualities most prized by employers. Schools work hand in hand with industry, and when for example the unemployment figures soar then one solution is to raise the school leaving age as has been done twice since the last war, and is probable in the future again. In school we are taught to believe that everything we are told is a fundamental truth, that education is an objective process, all of which masks the real truth, that schools merely reflect the society in which they are found and that the attitudes of that society - sexist, racist, and authoritarian, are passed on there, to children at their most formative time, as objective truths rather than partial explanations.

So the next time someone tells you that your school days are the happiest days of your life don't take it as a compliment to the educational system, but rather as a reflection of the awfulness and void of most of our adult lives.

Women's THE LADIES ROOM

"We understood that the laws were all for THEM(men), that the set up of society was all for THEM, that everything existed for THEM. But we didn't know what to do about it. We half believed that there was something wrong with US. We crept into our holes and learned to survive."

Marilyn French's novel *The Womens Room* really made that quote come alive in all its horror and nightmare. So much so that for a time I couldnt convince myself that all men were not like Norm, and Simp, and Hamp, - the men in the book. Recently that same book was filmed for American TV and at the end of August it was transmitted on the BBC. My reaction on hearing about it was at first in disbelief, that such a powerful and controversial, and such a real book that spoke of the reality of womens lives would actually make it to the screen. I didnt expect the production to be as uncompromising as the book - there the message is clear women are oppressed, trodden on and generally frustrated in all their actions by men, that message would be just too radical to go out on prime time TV. Nor did I think it possible that the vividness and imagination of a book that I just could not leave down for a week, and digested thought about, and reread for much longer, could be squashed into a couple of hours. Cuts would have to be made and as the film went on it became clear just what was left out and what stayed to make a good story.

The novel tells the story of a woman who grows up in the USA. She meets Norm and instead of going herself to college, marries Norm, drops out, gets herself a job to support him so that he can finish in law school, has two sons, and as Norm becomes a successful lawyer moves out into the world of the middle class suburbia of early 1960's America. Here she makes friends with the other wives, and shares their mundane empty lives, and their frustrations. It is here that she also sees clearly that it is men who decide in the world, as she watches the wasted lives of the wom women around her. Never happy but at least reconciled to her life with Norm her illusions are shattered one evening when Norm calmly tells her that he has found another woman, and that he is going to divorce her Mira as soon as possible. Her reaction is to attempt suicide as all meaning leaves her life as a result she loses custody of her children after the divorce.

Faced with all this she decides to return to college and so begins a journey of self discovery, set in the late 60s. At college she meets women who like her have wasted time, in particular Val, one

of the most powerful characters in the book, who guides Mira from her shell out into the big world were suddenly she has to make decisions for herself. Mira joins a women's group, she has an affair with a younger man, who in the end wants to possess just like all the men in the book, she manages to come to terms with her two men children and they with her, and in the end she learns that life for those willing to challenge its constraints is a depressing and lonely one.

The first part of the film followed Mira's life up to the divorce very closely, the awfulness of suburban life was depicted well as was the reality of the women there. It is from then on though that the content of the film and the book began to move apart, the message started to be distorted, and by the end I began to think that it had just been rewritten. In nearly all cases real criticism of men was left out and what was repeated over and over again was the idea that men and women suffer equally from conditioning. Mira's relationship with the younger man was treated as a romance with most of the pain and hurt simply removed, so that Mira's reaction to the ending seemed hard to understand. Again although the casting was superb in some cases for example Val, who was exactly as the book had depicted her, all her best words and actions were left out and when she talked to Mira about women it always sounded like she was making a speech rather than having a conversation. And in Val's case the most important event of the book - the brutal rape of Val's daughter and her reaction to it was just written out of the book, so losing the most powerful statement of women's oppression out.

Finally the last and the worse change was the ending. Mira was played by the ever beautiful Lee Remick, who basically never managed to adequately portray Mira as the book did, who some how always remained too good, or too long suffering. In the book the ending clearly says that in life there are few happy endings, that if a woman makes a conscious decision to live her life as a person then she risks the wrath of a manmade society. That in this society there is no such thing as love and selffulfilment on equal terms with men because they control the dice, so the choice for women is restricted - play the game by their rules, or opt out, both cost a great deal. As Marilyn French says 'the great literature of the past doesn't tell you how to deal with real endings.' Mira is left now a teacher wandering along a beach lonely, embittered, but determined to go on. The ending was profoundly depressing but also full of courage. What then of the Hollywood version? Well it was clear that a happy ending was needed and so we see Lee Remick lecture to a room of students about women, and get a standing ovation at the end. The message was clear - although we used to keep women down today things have changed, infact the opposite ending to the book! *continued on next page*



"The War Game" is a documentary about nuclear war commissioned by the BBC in 1963 but never shown on television. The reason given for this by the BBC was that they felt that it was a bit too horrific for general consumption—today nearly 20 years later after the televisation of the Vietnam War, the BBC argue that the film is out of date and so still refuse to show one of the most powerful anti-nuclear statements that I and that most people who have seen it have ever been subjected to.

Yes, the film is horrific and it is today out of date. But it is out of date only in terms of the horror it shows in the aftermath of a nuclear war—today the horror would be greater, the devastation complete.

With the use of actors the film sets out to show what would happen in Britain if a nuclear war occurred (in the documentary it is Vietnam and Berlin that set off the fighting between NATO and the USSR). Britain would be regarded as a legitimate target and 60 acres (airfields and communication centres mainly), would be specially prone to nuclear bombing. What we see are the precautions a British Government might take faced with the possibility of nuclear attack. Firstly mothers and children under 18 would be evacuated from large urban centres to villages where they would be compulsorily billeted with families in that area. Each area would be co-ordinated by a local council and the local police force.

Having shown this the film then makes the point that firstly many women may refuse to leave their older children, unmarried sisters and their husbands or brothers at such a time. It also points out that in a multi racial society, tension in racial terms might also arise as people try to refuse to billet those of a different colour.

The film then goes on to look at the effects to a small village when a military airfield 12 miles away is bombed. Firstly, anyone outside at the time is likely to receive severe retinal and skin burns from the flash and the blast afterwards would shake houses. Within a radius of 15 miles burns would still be severe.

In the aftermath, the documentary in a clear and simple manner shows a people, many of whom have not been affected by the first blast, fall ill with radiation sickness (likely to affect most of the population because wind carries radiation easily). It shows a medical system collapsing under the weight of inadequate medicine and the sheer number of casualties as people are divided into three categories—those who will die no matter what treatment they receive (these are left in pain and suffering) and as time goes on the film indicates likely to be shot to speed the process up); those who need treatment but will live; and those only slightly hurt who will recover without treatment.

As food grows short, priority supplies are used only for those who are working ie: those maintaining law and order—the police; army/government officials. The population is likely to grow restless, looting and so on and people shot in the streets. Many people will sink into apathy, mental illness will be common and diseases such as cancer would be horribly prevalent particularly in children exposed to radiation.

The documentary went into great detail on all these points and left me feeling sick, depressed and angry. Afterwards I reflected thought that nuclear weapons have become more sophisticated and deadly since 1963. If a bomb was dropped here tomorrow we are no better prepared for it than in 1963 but the devastation would be complete. At the moment the plan goes something like this—at the warning of an attack all important people

would retire to shelters (there is one in Northern Ireland), whilst the rest of us above ground would have to fend for ourselves for the first 14 days (the time it takes for radiation levels to drop) In effect that means for most of us to die. There is no such place as a safe place—bigger bombs disperse bigger radiation—so that if a bomb dropped on Belfast given wind conditions people in Donegal would feel it within a day, possibly hours. Radiation sickness is a horrible death. Add to this burns of the severest kind and a legacy of cancer of every type over many years. (For example today in Hiroshima and Nagasaki they still suffer the after effects on the 1946 Bomb). Deformed babies would be common after such an attack.

There is no such thing as a limited nuclear warwe are all affected. And as Reagan gives the go ahead for the neutron bomb the threat grows daily. This bomb is designed to do minimal damage to property but maximum damage to people as its radiation levels are increased enormously.

Its time we all got up and said no—there is no getting away from the nuclear menace. menace—no good saying it doesn't affect me because it affects everyone —no good saying what can I do because you can protest to survive.

Subscribe to Gaining Ground

In future issues we would like to include book reviews, film reviews, and we would also like to do more personal interviews about the lives of women, if you have any ideas, we can be contacted at Gaining Ground c/o Just Books, 7, Winetavern St, Belfast 1.

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people doing the courses come away with little real experience at the end.

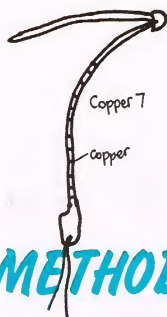
When on the course you receive £23.50, higher than the dole, the main incentive for many young people. And in the end often the only thing you will gain from the course. In a future issue Gaining Ground hopes to deal in more detail with the whole subject - if you have any ideas or direct experience of the courses we would like to hear from you. Contact address above.

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If anything the film served to underline the book and to prove its message - the world is made by men for men, their image is the one that will prevail. If you haven't read the book do so, and avoid the film - if you want to find out about the reality of women's lives rather than the fantasy Hollywood story

The Cap or Diaphragm (or Dutch Cap)

There are two types



NEW IDEAS FOR OLD METHODS

In the last twenty years we have seen a massive increase in the types and brands of contraception available to women. Most of the research has gone into the pill—low dose, high dose, combination, sequential, progestogen only, 21, 28, 20 or 22 pills etc.—and into the copper IUD's and the dangerous injection, Depo Provera, when the popularity of the pill waned. In the early sixties, scientists saw the research into the contraceptive pill in terms of controlling population in the third world rather than any great desire to free women from the fear of unwanted pregnancies. Yet, what they had seemingly developed was exactly what women were looking for—a simple 100% safe contraceptive. The pills in their little foil press out packs slipped neatly into the 'bright' and 'confident' mass myth of the sixties together with the instant convenience foods, paper cups and plates, plastic beakers and artificial gimmick foods and sweeteners. People could get something almost for nothing, with the minimum amount of effort, which could be thrown out for something slightly different. Obsolescence was planned into our lives. The highly packaged pill fitted into this somewhat clinical atmosphere, signifying freedom and emancipation for millions of women.

The swingin sixties didn't last. By the end of them the side effects of the pill were becoming known. Problems ranged from being a nuisance to major complications. Women felt irritable, depressed, were having breakdowns, migraines, high blood

pressure, blood clots and thrombosis and cancer. By 1970 Germaine Greer was to write in the *Female Eunuch* 'the devisers of the pill worried so little about the female psyche that it was years before they discovered that one woman in three was chronically depressed'. The connections between the pill and a woman's frame of mind were made too late for some women. Many could not understand why they should get so depressed. The fear of becoming pregnant had been removed, they had been liberated, so why then should they be so unhappy?

But it was the scare of 1977 when the Royal College of Practitioners dropped its bombshell that women on the pill had a 40% increased risk of dying that finally did it. Half a million women dropped the pill overnight and looked around for an alternative.

Improvements had been made in the inter-uterine devices. The Copper T and its later more reliable relative the Copper 7 (Cu 7), became popular IUDs for women who had not had children. IUDs have been around for thousands of years but they are not without their side effects either; becoming pregnant for example, miscarrying or having an ectopic pregnancy, or the fact that they just might drop out or disappear having punctured a path through the walls of the womb. Not a common occurrence but no woman wants to become that statistic however small.

Today the choice is more clearly defined—cross your fingers and use nothing, cross your fingers and hope that there is no risk to your health, or go back to the rubber devices which have no side effects bar such comments from men 'like wearing a wellie boot' and 'going swimming in a waterproof mac.' The cap is an obvious form of contraceptive and women have been mould-

ing 'all sorts of materials from opium to beeswax into caps to fit around the cervix for over 4,000 years. The diaphragm was invented in 1882, the first time that a reliable and safe contraceptive was actually put into the hands of women solely for the purposes of contraception and emancipation rather than the dictates of overpopulation.

Mainly because of the concentration of research onto the pill, little work has been done on the cap since 1953, but with the increasing swing towards barrier forms of contraception (20,000 conventional caps fitted in one year in the USA), various new devices are now under trial.

A Californian company called Vorhauser plans to market their vaginal sponge device in the USA, France, Germany and Britain in 1982. It is a disposable device made of polyurethane and pre-soaked in spermicidal solution. It can be left in the vagina for up to 48 hours, whence it is removed by pulling on a loop and thrown away. Needless to say, it failed to meet the standard for new contraceptives set by the World Health Organisation (less than 6 pregnancies per 100 woman years), but the manufacturers claimed that women in the trials didn't use it properly and were inexperienced! Another team competing for the vaginal sponge market have made theirs out of a natural material collagen—(a tough protein which makes up one of the main components of skin), apparently this version is highly absorbent and acts as a true sink, soaking up the sperm.

Thirty women are trying out a disposable sponge diaphragm that has the same rim as the conventional diaphragm but the body is made out of spongy collagen with a high dose of spermicide. All of these methods are disposable and therefore wasteful and expensive and rely heavily on spermicides which some women react badly to, suffering rashes itching, burning and cystitis. It is difficult to see what real advantages they have over the conventional methods.

One particular research does sound interesting. The idea itself is 150 years old but nothing was ever done about it until now. It is to custom make a cap, like a dental plate, which will stay in place without suction or pressure and without eroding the mucosal tissues. It has a one way valve for menstrual discharge. The longest period it has been worn is 22 months, with no detectable adverse effects, no odour problems because the cap fits perfectly and there are no cul de sacs or voids where mucus can collect and cause problems and the cervix apparently looked a lot healthier than in women using alternative forms of contraception.....this device could be available within a couple of years.

The pill and the IUD are not the miracle solutions to contraception that they were thought to be. Increasingly, vast numbers of people are using the sheath and the cap. A 100% safe and healthy barrier contraceptive like the cap is possible and would provide a real alternative to the pill and the IUD.