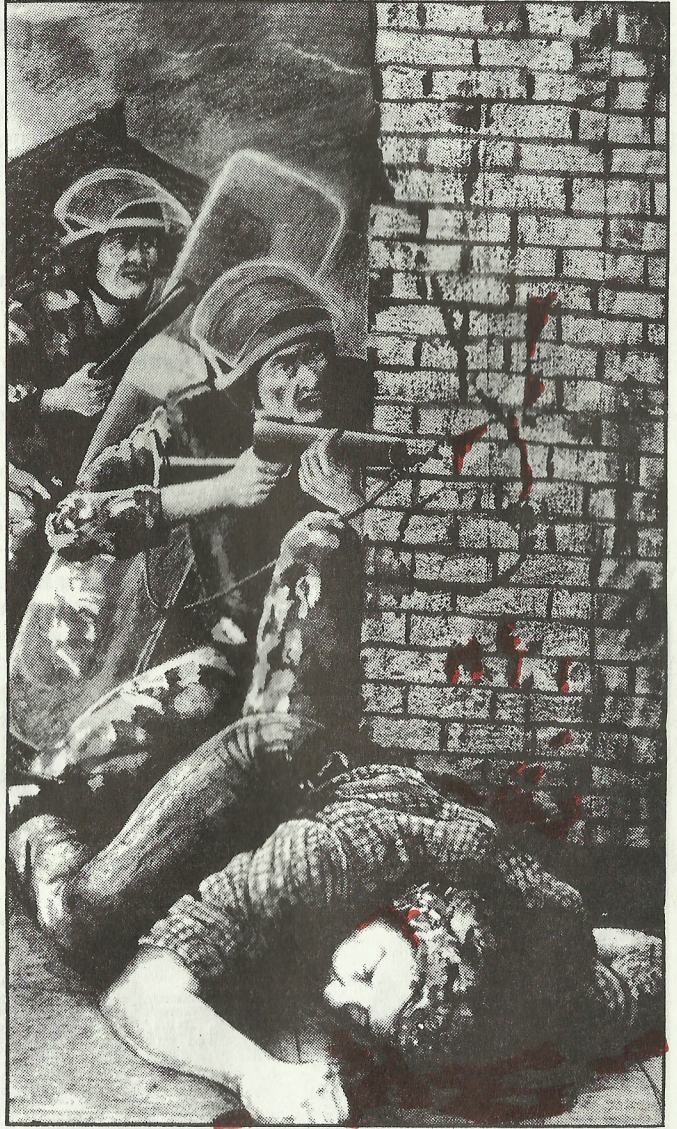


ANIRIAL

Six Counties 15p
Elsewhere 20p

A Belfast Anarchist Monthly Issue No. 1 August '85



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WHO WE ARE...

Most readers will be aware of RAVEIW, of which only one issue was produced. This paper is an attempt to carry on where it left off. Our Aims and Principles are a more refined version of RAVEIW'S 'Perspectives'.

Our group has varying degrees of experiences, ranging from only recent involvement in political activity, to experiences going back 15 years.

We have been part of such struggles as the anti-amendment campaign; the hunger-strike action groups; union work; feminist groups; the anti-nuclear campaigns; unemployed groups; opposition to the supergrasses and strip searches; support campaigns for prisoners.

We have worked in Just Books, written and sold Outta Control, produced and shown campaign videos, put on gigs; produced street theatre; and been on pickets and marches.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. But we're not recounting these experiences, to slap ourselves on the back. We are trying to convey where we've come from, and to show that anarchism has a history and development in Ireland.

We're not the only group. There is no anarchist movement as such, but there have been and still are, various groups and individuals around the country. In Belfast there are a number of anarchist individuals with whom we work daily in other projects.

The paper's functions include reporting and analysing the events and experiences which shape our lives. We need to understand how capitalism has radically changed over the last 10 years or so, and how it will constantly change to maintain its hegemony.

We want to suggest ways and means of working class people taking more power into our own hands, and depending less on our 'leaders', be they politicians, union officials, or clergy.

We would like to hear from people who agree with our aims and principles, and who wish to join us. We also welcome articles, letters, criticisms, etc, which help us develop, and offers to sell the paper.



WOMEN'S HEALTH FAIR A Critical View

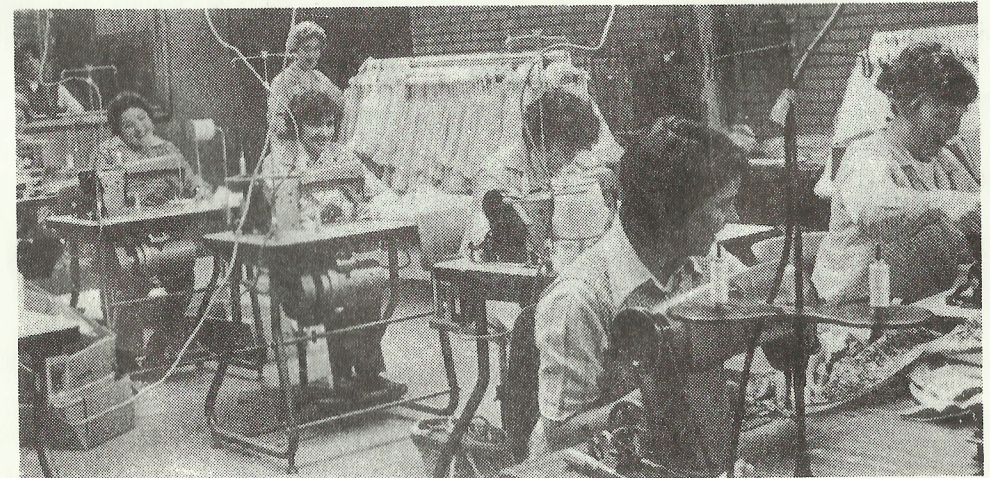
A Womens Health Fair was held in the Ulster Hall in Belfast on the weekend of 14 - 16 June. It consisted of two days of continuous workshops, stalls, information, food and entertainment. There were workshops on almost everything from women and smoking to sexuality and stalls from groups and agencies connected with health and related matters.

But I fail to see how anyone, in Belfast, in 1985, could justify having a whole week - end of workshops devoted to the many and varied aspects of womens health without having one on the subject of the strip - searching of women prisoners in Armagh Jail. Not only was there no workshop on this but a group campaigning for an end to strip - searches was not allowed to have a stall at the fair. Women prisoners in Armagh Jail are being subjected to something very close to rape almost daily. Yet this obvious and blatant state sanctioned violence against women was not deemed to warrant publicity and support at a womens health fair !

This and the fact that 'LIFE', an anti-abortion / anti-woman group was given

space for a stall left me somewhat confused as to what the Health Fair was aiming for. It did not seem to me to be particularly feminist even though there were a number of feminist groups there. The usual community of women who go to most events organised by and for women were there as well as a large number of professional women. But what attempts were made to reach all those other women who are not normally at these events - the women who don't have the resources, access to information and support that most of those attending have ?

As a first attempt at something of its kind it could be argued that it worked reasonably well - but not for those of us who struggle as feminists over such issues as strip-searching and reproductive rights. In the light of this years fair I think that feminists need to look at the whole notion of health fairs, who organises them and who funds them. On what basis can we work alongside professional women who are not necessarily feminists without compromising our politics and without unwittingly giving credibility to individuals and groups who ultimately may work against us.



MARIE & NOEL MURRAY : High Court Case Fails .

Marie and Noel Murray's case for Conjugal Rights was finally heard in Dublin's High Court in mid-May. It was brought under article 41 of the Constitution, which upholds the primacy of the family in Irish society. In July, Justice Costello found against them.

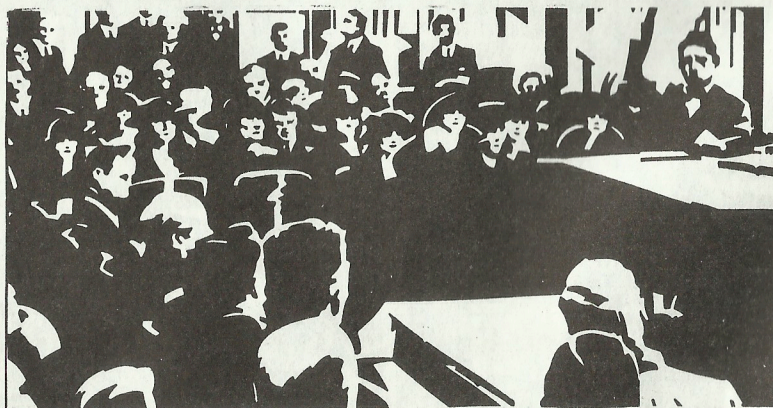
That anarchists should use the courts, refer to the constitution, and uphold the virtues of the family may seem surprising to some. But less so to others who know anything about Marie and Noel's case, or who have an understanding of the effects of long-term imprisonment.

The Murrays are unique in Ireland. They are the only long-term married couple, and long-term anarchists, in prison. They have had to rely on a very small group of relatives and friends for support. There is no anarchist movement as such, only small scattered groups and individuals, who offer what support they can.

The Murrays are approaching their tenth year in prison, and the present Minister of Justice, Noonan, in answer to a T.D. enquiry about possible parole, replied, 'I will not be considering parole for these people during my term of office'. Marie is 37 years old, and if she ever wanted the right to have a child, she and Noel would have to go to court.

THE COURT CASE

The small room in the High Court was full of garda, screws, family, and friends. The procedures were often tiresome in their legal details. The barristers representing Marie and Noel, McBride and McEntee seemed to enjoy the constitutional importance, and the debating skills required by the case. It should be mentioned that the solicitor, Paraic Ferry, of Sive and Co., worked tirelessly and didn't ask for fees.



In summary, the arguments 'for' went something like this . . .

*By being denied the right to procreate, they were made to suffer additional punishment to that imposed by a prison sentence.

*Within a few years Marie's chances of a healthy birth will diminish.

*There would be no difficulties in granting these rights for one couple in the same prison.

*And most importantly it was against the constitution to deny them their conjugal rights.

The arguments against went something like this . . .

*To grant facilities to Marie and Noel, would be to discriminate against other married prisoners where one of the spouses was outside prison.

*Marie and Noel were not a family, they had no children, therefore they had no constitutional protection.

*The right of the state to arrest and incarcerate was more important than conjugal rights.

*The Murrays had deprived themselves of those rights by breaking the law. The state was not to blame.

JUDGEMENT

One of the more interesting aspects of the judgement concerned the state's right to incarcerate, versus a prisoner's right to conjugal rights. Costello argued that the state should not be described as having the right, but the 'power' to incarcerate. It is then a question of 'power' versus 'rights'. And who decides the power of the state? The state of course.

After accepting that Marie and Noel were 'a family', and that whoever had deprived them of their liberty was not 'the point', Costello gave his main reason for failing the case.

When the state lawfully exercises its power to deprive a citizen of his/her constitutional rights to liberty, ie. lock them up, the prisoner then has rights which rely on two points — firstly, those which do not depend on continued liberty; and secondly those which are compatible with the requirements of the prison.

And who defines those requirements? Why, the governor, of course. And he had said that there were too many married prisoners, to allow them ALL their conjugal rights. Costello explained that Marie and Noel, couldn't be isolated. The Articles referred to, applied to all married prisoners, not just just where both were in prison.

The essence of nine pages of judgement came down to the claim, that a constitutional right was dependent on what was available. Instead of a matter of principle being established it was a matter of how much room there was in the stable.

If any reader wishes to obtain a full copy of the judgement, send 50p (photocopying and p. and p.) to AINRIAIL

This is the first in a series of three articles concerning the Hazards of asbestos and what we can do to protect ourselves and our future.

KEPT IN IGNORANCE

For most of my life I've been unaware of the dangers that surround a mineral substance known as asbestos. Unaware as a child playing with it ; Chalk-writing on pavements and on walls, using it as an itchy powder - practical jokes ! Such fun ! Even during my mid-teens I was surrounded by the stuff. While working on merchant ships then, I didn't know of the dangers.

ASBESTOS KILLS

It is estimated that there will be about 50,000 asbestos induced deaths in Britain alone in the next 30 years or so. It has reached epidemic proportions that will last well into the 21st century .

Inhaling asbestos dust is dangerous .87 years ago, the first cases of asbestos related diseases were recorded . A microscopic examination of the dust showed clearly the glass like sharp jagged nature of the particles . The particles are so small that they cannot be seen with the naked eye (a thousand could easily rest on a pin-head) and can do real damage which might not be seen for about 20years or more .

Asbestos is used as an insulator against heat especially in heavy industry . It is used for example in lagging round pipes yet when exposed to fire it will explode .It has been used in ship-building warehouses and the construction trade: in the construction of our homes ,hospitals and schools . It is found in the workplace and in the consumer goods we are persuaded to buy (electrical goods oven gloves ,ironing-boards etc etc) Like a game of Russian roulette asbestos is there just like a gun held to our heads and in the future our children may well suffer . For the convenience of government and profit of the wealthy,employers and land-lords .

A friend once said "Half of Belfast is made of it." that may well be true but the authorities reply is 'but dont panic just relax we'll take care of it '.Well the housing-executive never do any thing for us voluntarily only acting under pressure and the employers only concern is profit .The consumer goodies dont even have to carry an asbestos warning .

THREE OF A KIND

There are three kinds of asbestos used commercially ,blue which is used in heavy industry ,brown and white (white being 95% of asbestos produced) mostly used in construction and consumer goods. Blue was traditionally thought to be the more dangerous but recent studies show that they are all just as dangerous. Although there has been a voluntary ban on blue asbestos, brown and white imports are going up. A delegation of South African mine workers last year in London were campaigning to have all asbestos imports banned.

BREATHING IS DANGEROUS!



PAINFULLY SLOW

There are several incurable diseases related to asbestos, the most common being asbestosis (lung scarring), lung cancer, and mesothelioma (cancer of the lining), and mesothelium of the chest and abdomen, almost always caused by exposure to asbestos. They are very painful, with death being a very slow and drawnout event for both victim and family.

NO SAFE LEVELS OF EXPOSURE

Government statistics for the last fourteen years in the 6 Counties show that there have been seventy four deaths related to asbestos. Statistics are not accurate because unless the doctors know to look for the asbestos relation it may be overlooked and diagnosed as something quite different. After first exposure to asbestos it may take well up to 20 to 30 years for this slow and painful disease to take effect.

**NO KNOWN CURE
NO SAFE LEVELS
NO SHORT TERM ANSWERS
JUST GET RID OF IT !**

In the next issue there will be an interview about the removal of asbestos from the Divis Complex and what problems people face. In the third issue we will be writing about how we can get rid of it.

The contents of the open skip includes asbestos, which was being removed from the two blocks in Divis that were demolished last summer.



PLASTIC BULLETS...

CLEARING THE STREETS

We were 'marching', or should I say 'walking', up a side street off the Ormeau Rd. There were about one hundred people, old and young, children and babies, and we constituted more a bunch than a march. We also constituted an 'illegal assembly'.

As soon as we were about 200 yards from the main road, a police loud hailer informed us that we had no right to 'march' in our own area. Suddenly the unmistakable 'bangs' from the plastic bullet guns were heard. Everyone scattered amidst screams, shrieks, and shouts.

That incident occurred during the second hunger-strike in 1982. There hasn't been a 'march' in the area since, despite the outrage felt over the lack of social amenities, over the supergrass system, and the strip searches in Armagh. Effectively the streets of the Lower Ormeau have been cleared of public protest. That is the purpose of plastic bullets.

TERRORISM

Their users claim these 'baton rounds' to be non-lethal method of riot control. This is, of course, a lie. Firstly they kill, or leave horrendous injuries, and secondly they are used in 'non-riot' situations. Up to now 14 people have been shot dead by plastic bullets - there is no reliable statistic for the numbers injured by them.

The purpose of plastic bullets is to terrorise, to clear the streets, to stop protests of either a direct or symbolic nature. The negative effect of 'bad publicity' over deaths, is more than balanced by having less people on the streets.

When people march together, they can get strength and confidence from each other. They are reclaiming their area from the Brits and the RUC, from the D.O.E. and H.E. They are standing up for themselves and making demands. They are also being seen. Their march is reported and photographed for the papers, recorded for the radio, and filmed for the TV. People on a march see and talk to each other, they make demands on the state, and they are seen by millions of others.

COUNTER-INSURGENCY

The British state has been refining its strategy of counter-insurrection for decades. It has especially developed an urban and western expertise, which other states borrow from. The plastic bullet is to the forefront of its armoury when dealing with the 'civilian' population.

Rubber and plastic bullets are stored in both the south and in Britain but have so far only been used by British armed forces in the north, and almost exclusively in anti-unionist areas.

...THE DEADLY TRUTH.

Video Review

This video was commissioned by the United Campaign against Plastic Bullets and made by Belfast based Irish Independent T.V.. It contains a short history of British military involvement in the north as well as an account of the weapons used by them. It also contains footage which may not have been seen widely before as well as impressive music throughout including three songs on the theme of plastic bullets.

What is particularly interesting and unusual about this video is that only people who have been injured or relatives of those killed by plastic bullets talk in it. It is refreshing not to see the usual politicians and professionals paraded on to give 'credibility' or indeed to the further their own careers of the backs of people who have suffered at the hands of the State. Effectively this means that the people involved have a rare opportunity to say what they want because it is totally outside of the establishment media nor is it dependant on them to broadcast it.

The father of Paul Whitters, a fifteen year old boy who died having been shot by a plastic bullet in April '81, says in an introduction that the relatives interviewed feel it is imperative to break down the myths of the usual official establishment line fed through the mass media about the resulting injuries and deaths.

Running through all the interviews is a sense of the isolation and frustration felt by relatives in living in a state which can and does 'legally' and quite openly kill people and then can deny relatives any redress.

In listening to them speak about the circumstances surrounding the shootings it becomes clear that most of those killed have been so in non-violent situations or minor outbursts. Also the majority of those killed have been children who are, as one of the relatives points out, the weakest and most vulnerable section of the community. The State kills these while relatives have no public forum to express their anger and other feelings about it. The Brits and the RUC are of course in no way accountable to society or indeed rules of law - in these cases the Brits, UDR and the RUC are the law.

The relatives are open and very moving - and full of determination to bring about an end to the use of plastic bullets. This video is an excellent contribution. Go and see it - and support any pickets organised by the campaign.

AIMS & PRINCIPLES

- Our aim is the creation of a classless and free, libertarian communist country.
- As anarchists we believe in the fundamental right of people to organise autonomously against their oppression.
- We advocate direct action and mutual aid as ways of working as opposed to such ways as electioneering and depending on brokers to do things for people.
- We reject the authoritarian, imperialist, and unionist state in which we live. Practically speaking this means we oppose British occupation and partition with all the state machinery such as the military, judicial religious and educational systems which serve to maintain these.
- We see sectarianism as a creation of British imperialism, produced and maintained in order to keep working class people divided into two opposed groups - Catholics and Protestants.
- We recognise that in the 26 Counties there is a neo-colonial, capitalist state and, as such, we have no desire to become part of it.
- We are struggling for a 32 County libertarian communist country. We recognise of course that this cannot be created in isolation from revolutions on an international scale.
- We recognise the importance of the economic, military and cultural imperialism of the E.E.C., U.S.A., U.S.S.R., N.A.T.O., etc. in maintaining control of the dispossessed majority of people in the world.
- We support the attempts made by different oppressed peoples to struggle against those who rule us and to reclaim our resources, our histories and our cultures from those who have stolen them from us.
- We see modern societies as characterised by Capitalism where production is for profit of the few, not need of the many. Under capitalism those who own and control the wealth of the world also control those who create this wealth through their labour as well as controlling the institutions which attempt to condition us into accepting this as being the 'natural order' of things.
- The wealth and resources of a country should belong directly to all members of that society. We believe this should be done by people themselves setting up councils in their workplaces and communities and these councils would federate regionally and nationally.



- We recognise the oppression of women on the basis of their sex and believe that the economic and other institutions and cultures which have conditioned us all into an easy acceptance of women's inferior role must be constantly challenged and fought against..... not only as a single issue but as part of every struggle we engage in.
- We identify with all those other members of the working class who are attempting to change the circumstances in which we are forced to live. We work alongside people whether employed, unemployed or working in the home. We will always encourage ourselves and others to consciously struggle towards eventually overthrowing capitalism as well as fighting for reforms to improve our everyday living conditions.
- We support the right of women to define their own oppression and to organise autonomously against it if so desired.
- We support the right of people to define their own sexuality and oppose those state institutions and the cultural conditioning which prevent people from doing so.
- We believe that men have a responsibility to understand and challenge their own conditioning.

British Broadcast Censorship

The recent pressure on the BBC, from the British Government, to cancel the 'Real Lives' programme is not a new development.

Previous statements, both private and public, from different Governments have led to programmes being postponed, shelved, or unfinished. The hierarchy of control has led to a process of self-censorship, reaching all the way down to journalists, through the Board of Governors, Board of Managers, Dept. heads, producers and editors. This process has worked extremely well over this last fifteen years.

But a disagreement over what needs censoring has led to the recent 'row'. The basis before was supposed to concern members of 'para-military' organisations - which needlessly to say doesn't include coverage of the UDA! Since Sinn Fein's electoral successes, more T. V. time has been given to their position, and therefore to the anti-British government line. In order to counter this, and to ban such elected representatives from broadcast time, it was necessary to portray Mc Guinness as the Chief of Staff of the I.R.A. All of the media duly complied. We should not be surprised that the DUP's Gregory Campbell's calls for a shoot-to-kill policy on 'suspected' IRA members, and his call on loyalists to 'take up arms' were nowhere given as reasons for cancelling the programme.

Where the BBC's arrangement went wrong was in not taking a cue from Thatchers speech in Washington - 'Terrorists should be starved of the oxygen of publicity'. As the British Govt. is the paymaster of the BBC, and appoints the board of governors, the BBC's proclaimed 'independence' is a bit hard to swallow.

There seems to have been some reaction by the unions. While it may appear to be too little too late, they

DUNNES STRIKE

The Dunnes Strike in Dublin has gone on for over a year now. The seven young people who were sacked, because of their refusal to handle South African goods, have received enormous public support and recognition. They are at present in Moscow, and were recently prevented from entering S.A. itself as guests of Bishop Tutu.

But that recognition has not brought victory in the strike any closer. It has not, for example, encouraged their own union to spread the strike, or other unions to black Dunnes. It has not yet brought mass pickets or a mass boycott campaign of the Dunnes chain.

In fact there have been few organised attempts to end this strike at all. The union itself is the main culprit. There have been however recent efforts to begin that process. Early morning pickets of deliveries are beginning to take place in Dublin.

It is time that we in Belfast consider what is possible, and what can be effective. At the present time there are two conditions which favour some intervention.

Firstly, the recent introduction of Emergency Laws in S. Africa lead to increased barbarity in the form of arrests, bannings, and killings by the 'security forces'.

Secondly, Dunnes have this year opened their biggest store in Ireland in the Park Centre on the edge of West Belfast.

Those organisations and individuals who have organised separate pickets before should now consider the possibility of a mass campaign, which will move from the arena of token protests to effective protests.

have to start somewhere. There have been some blackouts and strikes before, but this protest is unique in that both ITN and BBC journalists are committed to strike action. Again the employers will resort to the courts to attack the unions involved. They will attempt to censor this protest at censorship!