

Undesirable and Unconstitutional

WHENEVER a lifelong servant suddenly and for no apparent reason turns on his or her master or mistress it is a time of great satisfaction for anarchists but great concern for all others in the household. When the servant is Lord Denning and the master is the state, those around become all the more nervous. So when, in March this year, his eminence declared jury vetting to be both 'unconstitutional and undesirable', some believed this to be the long awaited signal that not all state excesses could automatically command the approval of those who permitted them to develop in the first place. Others, more cynically, saw it as conclusive evidence of the Hampshire horror's senility rather than his conversion to pursuit of the common good.

Whichever the case, any hope that our obscure criminal system might be moving towards the creation of a tenuous link with justice was soon dashed when, less than three months later, Lord Justice Lawton ruled that police were not merely entitled to submit the jury panel list to a search of their files, but should actually be encouraged to do so. In this case, Vincent Mason had been convicted of burglary and handling stolen property and offered an invitation he couldn't refuse of five years' free board. He appealed unsuccessfully against conviction when his lawyers discovered that the names of potential jurors had been vetted.

The failure of Mason's appeal becomes remarkable when the Attorney General's guidelines are studied. According to these, jurors may be vetted in only two classes of cases: first, in serious offences where strong political motives are involved "such as the IRA and other terrorist cases and cases under the Official Secrets Act" and secondly, in serious offences "alleged to have been committed by a person or persons believed to belong to a gang of professional criminals". Although difficult to picture a situation further removed from these cases than that of an unfortunate burglar, it comes as no surprise to learn, once again, that police ignore the guidelines whenever they think they can get away with it. What is incredible is the

acceptance of the prosecution's bland submission that the sole purpose of the vetting was to determine whether any potential jurors were disqualified on account of their previous convictions. In that way, the police were doing no more than to carry out their duty to prevent crime.

The inevitable conclusion to all this is that, in the race to abolish the words 'random selection' from legal parlance, the Attorney General, shackled by parliament, has been rapidly overtaken by the judges, shackled by prejudice alone. It now appears likely that any jury of the future will have been, in effect, selected by the prosecution. Two possibilities will remain: to trust the police to restrict their searching to a 'crime prevention' exercise, or to plead guilty and get it over with. Bearing in mind that police exercise integrity to the extent that Thatcher indulges in self criticism, the latter choice is probably preferable.

To regard such a development as the thin end of the wedge between the jury and defendant would be wrong, because the wedge is already firmly embedded and its movement has passed almost unnoticed. In 1967, the judge in the Angry Brigade trial was criticised for allowing defence lawyers to ask potential jurors questions designed to reveal any bias against the defendants. In 1973, the removal of jurors' occupations from the list was designed solely to make the exercise of challenges by the defence more difficult; and in 1977, the defence right to exercise the challenge itself was reduced from seven challenges to three. So the demise of the jury has been heralded by a diminution of the accused's rights and a corresponding growth in the prosecutor's rights to the extent that, in the Persons Unknown trial, all aspects of the life style of potential jurors were checked, including criminal convictions, political affiliations, type of living accommodation, employment and whether they had ever made complaints against the police.

The weakening of trial by jury should not be dismissed simply as further evidence that the state is alive and well and living just above

us, for it carries far greater significance. The vulgar finery of lawyers and their archaic and ridiculous mode of address, set against the solitude of the accused in the dock, has always conjured up a stark picture of repression and unfettered power. Against this stood the jury, its origins lying within the community rather than the state, composed of citizens from the bottom of the pyramid, chosen at random to study facts dispassionately and apply justice rather than rule of law, the final bulwark against omnipotent authority.

The enormous rate of acquittals in recent years has been a sign of contempt from ordinary people for false statements, planted evidence and consistent malpractice. The consequent and inevitable erosion of this bulwark is more than just a symbol that freedom is diminishing more quickly than we thought: if the accused is no longer to be judged impartially by his or her own people, then the accused's subjugation and alienation are complete. In fact, no-one can be very surprised to learn that what was 'unconstitutional' three months ago has been very much a part of our constitution for some time and is one more component of a machine which is unlikely to seize up of its own accord.

R. T.

FUNDS

Deficit Fund

Donations received, June 26th - July 9th Incl.

Gateshead. G.D. £3.00; In shop Anon. £1.15; London E11. L.T.R. £0.50; Frankfurt. R.S. £5.00; Charlottenlund. Denmark. S.A. £4.00; Wolverhampton. J.L. £1.50; J.K.W. £0.50; Barnstaple M.B. £1.50; London E1. B.W. £1.00; Torpoint. M.R.A. £2.50; Chelmsford. E.A. £1.00; Wolverhampton. J.L. £1.50; J.K.W. £0.50.

TOTAL= £23.65

Previously acknowledged =£964.29

TOTAL TO DATE =£987.94

Prisoners of Politics

'AFTER a while we had to have all our joints bandaged, because they were only skin and bone or bedsores, or gangrene would have set in easily... I could smell death off myself, a sickly, nauseating stench'. So wrote Michael Traynor, a surviving striker in the Republican death strike of 1940, who only drew back after the death of two strikers and the promise of concessions which, in the event, failed to materialise. Things have changed dramatically since then: the resolve of the seven blanket men now on hunger strike in the so called 'dirty protest' has already been severely tested and their continued determination makes the recent fatuous government manoeuvrings appear all the more predictably short sighted.

Blame for the present crisis must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the odious Atkins, foremost among the many who have risen without trace. The order that male prisoners in the province could wear civilian clothes was trumpeted as a major concession which followed in the wake of an agreement last August to allow prisoners engaged in protest brief periods of parole. In fact, the civilian clothes will be official issue, not property belonging to the prisoners, and the decision is a contemptible and shallow subterfuge intended to avoid a politically damaging hunger strike whilst conceding nothing.

The statement of Michael Alison, Atkins's underling, that the decision is part of an 'ongoing evolution' in the development of the province's prison regime, is not wholly inaccurate. The move can be neatly dovetailed with such earlier stages in this evolution as the systematic use of torture, brutal interrogation techniques, juryless Diplock courts and convictions in the absence of witnesses or evidence to corroborate the confessions of the system's victims, among whom are the blanket men. The Amnesty report of 1977 and the Bennet Inquiry of 1979 catalogued these evolutionary excesses in great detail but next to nothing has been done to prevent them.

The net result of Atkins's decisions has been to provoke the manic Paisley into eruptions of uncontrollable but carefully rehearsed rage, accusing him of

capitulation to the IRA. In fact his magnanimous gesture of compassion was rather less than that, as was shown a few days earlier by his order to SAS terrorists to raid a house in West Belfast used by the prisoners' aid committee (an attack which proved totally counter productive). The real purpose of this decision, as stated by the prisoners themselves, was to stage an attempt to defuse the whole protest and deflect criticism in the face of a protracted hunger strike.

The truth that the myopic Atkins refuses to face is this: no cosmetic changes in the treatment of H Block prisoners will do any good until he concedes the demand for recognition of political status, which includes the right of prisoners to wear their own clothes and that of free association. After all, for prisoners whose arrest, detention, interrogation, trial and sentencing have all taken place under 'special' emergency legislation, the demand for special prisoner status seems reasonable and logical. In rejecting this demand out of hand, Atkins is certainly making the greatest mistake of his miserable career: it is probable that Whitelaw introduced the special category status as a direct result of the mass hunger strike in 1972, and the years leading up to the present crisis point, if anything, to an even harder resolve. By his recent show of ineptitude Atkins has simply brought the plight of those now on hunger strike into even sharper focus. If, as seems likely, he adopts the hard line attitude developed by Woy Jenkins, the confrontation will be one from which no face saving formula can ever emerge for, by operating in the shadow of twelve Republicans who have already starved to death this century, he is contesting the incontestable.

The prisoners in the Maze are writing another chapter in the long bloody struggle for a Republic, and the press will no doubt apply its usual prejudice and distortion to coverage of the strike. But there is another, far reaching issue that cannot be ignored: the men are victims of a government which has ensured convictions where none would have been forthcoming in the normal process of law and, in so doing, has made the independence

of the judiciary a laughing stock. A warning lies here for all who fear the robust health of a state which accepts vetted juries, perjured evidence and a prejudiced judiciary as commonplace and where laws are manipulated as tools of oppression and division against an apathetic populace. The hunger strike of the Maze strikers is only matched by the insatiable appetite of a state in search of further excesses which, so far, has encountered little effective opposition.

R. T.

In the preceding article the writer argues that the H-block prisoners in Long Kesh should be given political status and we think that what he has to say on the matter is worth printing. As anarchists, however, we believe that the whole question of political status is meaningful only at the point where it becomes meaningless - in other words when all prisoners are regarded as political.

For wherever in the world we look we can find reasons for giving prisoners political status. In most countries people are imprisoned after trials in which the juries are non-existent or packed, in which defence rights are curtailed, or in which the laws pre-determine the verdict of guilty, and which are therefore mere, irrelevant formalities. Today in England there is a good case for arguing that anyone detained under laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Official Secrets Act, or indeed the Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Bill - most recent example of the way government can vote itself what powers it likes in no time, whenever it feels sufficiently threatened - should be given political status.

But why stop there? Why should it be more important to grant such status to the Long Kesh or Armagh prisoners than to those in Strangeways, Wandsworth or Holloway - yes, and Rampton too? Look at the histories of any number of men and women or children in such places and you will find them steeped in social and class injustice of no less political significance than the histories of their more organised counterparts in Northern Ireland. In the final analysis, we believe, there is not such a big difference between the Diplock courts of Northern Ireland and the magistrates' courts of England.

EDS

ANOTHER TURN OF THE SCREW

IF EVER THERE is a time not to get nicked with a brick at your feet, a crowbar in your hand, cannabis in your clothes or an unpaid for dictionary in your inside pocket, then this is it. If you are, you are likely to spend a night with your local guardians of the peace crammed into a single cell with people more unfortunate than yourself who have been excluded from prison by screws in search of a better deal for their dinner hour.

Throughout this dispute the press has bleated on and on about the 'appalling effects' of a failure to settle as soon as possible. The diversion of police resources in accommodating those who should be on remand in prison, the need to transport them to and from court, and the inevitable problem of escapees were all listed as the usual signs of sickness in our society. Hardly a word has been written or spoken about the real victims of the dispute, who are presently spending up to 23 hours a day locked up three to a cell, with little free association, no work, few good meals, little access to lawyers and even less contact with family and friends outside. Some 3000 prisoners unlucky enough to have missed the move to the new Frankland prison remain incarcerated in police stations, described by one official as 'unsanitary, uncivilized and dangerous' - and the cells are even worse. We must now await with gloomy expectation a rise in the current figure of 274 deaths reported to have occurred in police custody, each to be dealt with in a confidential and imaginative police report and each, undoubtedly, ascribing death to some bizarre self inflicted injury or misadventure.

In his manner of dealing with the current crisis, no-one can deny that Whitelaw's instincts have served him well for a 63 year old conservative landowner. Out went the screws, in came the squaddies. If the bastards continue as they are, few will be capable of resisting the opportunity of joining the elite band of dustmen, water workers, fire-fighters and occupiers of Northern Ireland with a bit of terrorism thrown in for good measure, who will now be trained to guard people as well as kill them.

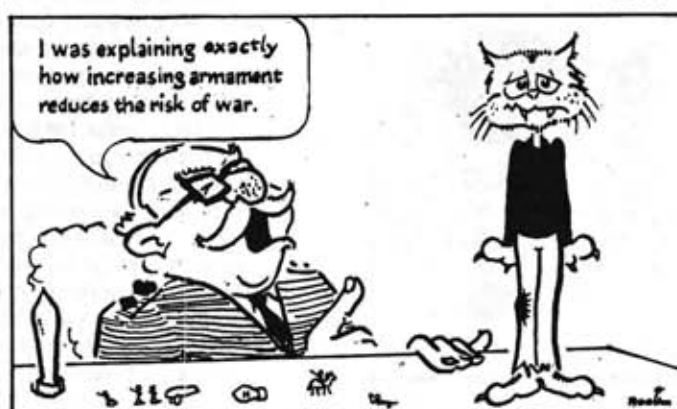
Inevitably our decrepit Minister of the Interior appears unable to improve the position of the inmates with the same spontaneity he uses to contain them. Those who say that the present situation is the product of deep seated resentment within the Prison Officers Association (whose members object to the control exerted over them by civil servants) are wrong. The real malaise lies in the whole system of correction and imprisonment itself, which simply serves to remove human dignity from those already the victims of social injustice and class prejudice. And yet, if anything, our rulers have acted even more oppressively in allowing to become, at between 43000 and 45000, the highest in Europe, and in authorising no effective improvements in accommodation or welfare. In his report of 1966 Mountbatten, the hero of our time whose bungling ineptitude as Viceroy of India exceeded that of any professional politician, was once again allowed to assert himself by making security the central feature in prison development. The report was followed by a decline in the programme providing for open prisons and introduction of an expensive dispersal

system for prisoners deemed a high security risk. The result has been to allow intolerable overcrowding, where stress disorders grow ever more serious and in which an increasingly volatile atmosphere is only defused by extensive use of tranquillisers and other sedatives.

The Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Bill empowers Whitelaw to approve places other than prisons for detention of inmates, to authorise the temporary release of prisoners imprisoned or remanded in custody, to release prisoners nearing the end of their sentences, and to authorise the courts to remand people in their absence. As such, although it has to be renewed after one month and will lapse after twelve months unless parliament descides otherwise, the bill has been acclaimed by some as a means of promoting penal reform. In fact, this law shows the ease with which the judiciary can be overridden as the administrators of justice' and is a further sign that our constitution is a lie and a sham. Whitelaw and his cronies pay only lip service to the cries for prison reform for, their chief concern must be systematically and relentlessly to suppress those who show themselves in any way opposed to the status quo. The administration of prisons, like the building themselves, has changed little since the nineteenth century: it remains a business for suppressing the will, not allowing it to develop, and no amount of reform will ever change that. We can be certain that our goal, the abolition of prisons and restoration of individual liberty to all, irrespective of background or conduct, will never be granted during the life of a state which forever demands more power and less accountability.

R. T.

WILPCAT



Held in Contempt

IF YOU had recently returned to these shores after an absence of several years you would be forgiven for thinking that the presumption of innocence was no longer extant and that the accused's final barrier against the state grinder had at last been removed. If you read the newspapers or simply overhear conversations on buses and trains you will know by now that Peter Sutcliffe is the Yorkshire Ripper and that Gerard Tuite is an IRA terrorist and the most dangerous man in Britain. You may also recall that neither man has actually been convicted of any offence, although that fact is afforded little prominence by a press and police force concerned only with the enormity of their alleged crimes.

Coverage of Peter Sutcliffe's arrest is difficult to evaluate in terms of sheer blatant prejudice and hysteria. Inflamed by a campaign of innuendo, speculation and selective reporting, there is little wonder that the usual public lynching party performed so convincingly outside the court on his first appearance. Adequate evidence of Sutcliffe's guilt was readily available without actually making any accusation: we were soon to learn of the police officers' 'total delight' following the arrest and the subsequent scaling down of their costly enquiries; the same day the photofit likeness and Sutcliffe were said to be identical; as he was driven away after arrest, a hammer and a knife were found in the road - a very interesting fact in view of the disclosure that victims had been bludgeoned and stabbed. Later reports were accompanied by a timely catalogue of the 13 murders and enlightening interviews with neighbours in the course of which Sutcliffe had suddenly appeared 'rather odd', 'very quiet - you could say mysterious' and 'away from home a lot'. Any remaining doubt was dispelled by a report which concluded with the astonishing insight that he had once been employed as a gravedigger. The climax to this ill-placed and mischievous journalese was reached when the accused's sensible reticence in court was met with a vivid description of public jeering, neon lights, Sutcliffe's 'oblivious demeanour' and the inevitable hustling away under a blanket.

Coming in the wake of such an in-depth character study, the Sol-

icitor General's appeal to the good sense of editors to do nothing to prejudice a fair trial comes a little late. In their press conference, Yorkshire Police can hardly be said to have acted in the best interests of the man who was then only a suspect and their recently revealed use of the police computer to check all cars travelling through red-light districts in the area gives the lie to their boast that the arrest showed the value of routine policing of the community.

If you consider coverage of Sutcliffe's case to have been the most prejudicial in recent years then you will have forgotten the classic statements which followed the escape of Gerard Tuite last December. Tuite was one of many who, during the prison officer's dispute, had taken advantage of the lax security to visit the outside world again. However, Tuite and two others had no intention of returning and the scale of prejudice in the statements and actions following his disappearance is impossible to match. As a potent reminder of the description of Tuite as a dedicated and dangerous member of the IRA, a public enemy who has planted bombs in central London, we are now confronted daily with posters bearing the legend 'Terrorist Alert - this man must be caught'. When confronted with the fact that all this is attached to a man who remains unconvicted and awaits trial at the Old Bailey, the official police response exceeded every precedent in the annals of police banality. No less a personage than Deputy Assistant Commissioner Powis of Scotland Yard tartly replied that 'the safety of the public is the supreme law'. Powis, you may recall, is the intellectual athlete who recently published a blockbuster entitled 'Signs of Crime' reviewed in *Black Flag* and *Xtra*, which identified unmistakable characteristics of the 'criminal type'. Whilst this statement may appear obvious to a man who recognizes no need for a jury to pronounce on guilt or innocence, the significance for anarchists must bode ill for the future. Logically, such a catch all phrase knows no bounds and may be applied as and when the police consider it expedient.

In the light of all this the possibility that either man will now benefit from a fair trial must be considered nonexistent. That both the press and police have acted in contempt is beyond

question: the damage to both accused men is irreversible and must affect the outcome of any subsequent trial. And yet the likelihood of proceedings being taken here is remote because of the ambiguity of the contempt law, which prohibits publication of matter which might prejudice a case from the point at which proceedings are 'imminent', a term which, in the proposed contempt Bill relates to the moment when the arrest warrant is issued, and not to the moment of the charge (as the Phillimore committee originally recommended). No jurors, however randomly selected, can hope to remain objective and immune within the storm of prejudice whipped up by press and police alike and, in view of the state of the contempt law, there appears every likelihood that similarly extensive coverage will be repeated in other cases of 'public interest'.

To anarchists, such events come as no surprise; that innocence before proof of guilt is a lie has been shown many times before in discussion of perjured evidence, vetted juries, biased judges and the like. The lie must continue to be perpetrated by a state which proclaims equality but which practises suppression; the inadequate and belated warning of the Solicitor General claims to be prompted by the need to ensure a fair trial. In fact, it is spoken out of fear that lengthy legal argument by the defence may avoid a conviction by showing that no juror could ever approach the cases with an open mind. And so, for the time being, the grinder grinds on and only the individual stands in contempt.

RT

No Heroes

Dear FREEDOM

Why must we keep living in the past, glorifying long lost heroes such as Ravachol (Review, 20 December)? No wonder our fellow human beings tremble at the sound of the word anarchy. It's worrying the way so many anarchists perpetuate this foolish cloak and dagger image; it almost seems nazi (fascists use the black flag as well). Anarchy means love and liberty so my flag is all the colours of the rainbow. Yours
Hampshire P. DISMAL

IMPORTANT

The weekend of activities in Plymouth between 30th January and 1st February has had to be cancelled because of inadequate response in the South-West.

If, however, people are really interested, please contact G. Short, 115 St Pancras Avenue, Manadon Vale, Plymouth, and perhaps the event can be reorganised.

SAS heroes

DESPITE vetting by the police, prejudiced directions from judges and all other efforts to secure the proper verdict, our juries are showing themselves to be an ever more unreliable part of the state machine. A serious lapse occurred last week at Westminster Coroners Court, where the jury took nearly an hour to reach a verdict of 'justifiable homicide' at the Iranian Embassy siege inquest. The surprise confessed by the coroner at this extraordinary case of indecision is quite understandable. After all, we have been treated, under the glare of TV cameras, to a real life drama which puts 'The Professionals' right in the shade. All the ingredients were there: Iranian 'terrorists' with no popular support; innocent hostages supported by the inevitable police hero; long drawn out negotiations and then, finally, the wreaking of vengeance by our home grown SAS heroes.

The coroner clearly found it difficult to see what could have caused the delay. Could it be that the jurors were a little disturbed by the discovery of only one air pistol in the embassy, the other weapons having been thrown out? Were they perhaps concerned by one witness's testimony that a 'terrorist' was held and shot through the head at close range and that others, apparently after surrendering, suffered 10, 15 and 39 wounds? Well, even if they were disconcerted by the sheer savagery of the siege, the coroner clearly suffered no such misgivings, and that's all that matters. Our state heroes may have ignored the 'rule of law' coveted by their masters, but then rules are made to be broken, aren't they? And to think the Iranians chose England because they regarded it as the 'home of freedom'!

R. T.

Subscribe

INLAND.....	£8
OVERSEAS	
Surface mail	
Canada.....	C\$22.50
USA.....	US\$20.00
Airmail	
Australasia.....	£10.50
Europe.....	£9.00
Canada.....	C\$28.00
USA.....	US\$25.00

LETTERS

Lennon

Dear Editors

No doubt you're receiving a lot of feedback about the recent article 'Chapman' (20 Dec, vol. 41, no. 25). I am inflamed with anger. The insinuations about John Lennon are ridiculous. Your true priorities are obvious when you dwell on the fact that John Lennon was very rich. So what? What would it achieve and prove if John Lennon were on the dole? What if he had given his last penny to feed starving Kampuchians? It might have bought one meal - then what? It's a cop-out to lay that responsibility on him. If it belongs to anyone it belongs to all of us. It is true that money is power in our society. But note the vast difference in the way John Lennon exerted the influence of his 'power' from someone like Rockefeller. Don't forget the benefit concerts, the peace rallies, the freedom marches. And for your information, yes, John did give cash to various causes: in fact 10 per cent of his earnings. I'm all for peaceful revolution, aren't you? I think it's pretty fucking revolutionary to enlighten and inspire the lives of as many people as John Lennon did. Don't get so wrapped up in figures and finance of revolution to forget that the most valuable gift that's givable is awareness.

SUZY MAY

London

THE REPLY....

OK I agree we're all to blame, but bloody hell - did you see the newspapers the week he died? - talk about obscene. 'Working Class Hero' all over the centre pages, (famous champions of the working class are the Daily Star and The Sun) not to mention thousands of people weeping and wailing in public over pictures of him at organized mourning ceremonies. If that's John Lennon's 'Revolution' (or rather his followers version) then I'm afraid we part company...

And in the meantime, what's happening about Mark Chapman???

DS

By the way, only unsigned articles should be regarded as having been written by the Editors.

Trot threat

Comrades,

PS in his comments on Labour happenings in the last issue said that - in one sense - the LP right has justification in attributing the so called swing to the Left in the LP (a purely mythical swing of course. Benn is not as radical as the Bevan of 49, Bevan was not as radical as the Lansbury of 35, the Lansbury of 35 was not as radical as the Lansbury of 06) to Trotskyist infiltration; instancing the Militant's descent from one or two members of the old RCP. However that descent proves no more than the fact that at the other end of the LP spectrum, Dennis Healey is also an ex-member of the RCP as was the late Bessie Braddock, so that one could as fairly argue that the Labour Party's undoubted swing to the right in the fifties was due to Trotskyist infiltration.

Indeed this latter theory would seem to be supported by the weight of numbers: item, Jock Haston, former Chairman of the RCP, leader of the Independence faction of the RCP - to which Militant's theorist belonged - subsequently witch-hunting political officer of the London Labour Party and a senior official in Frank Chapple's EEPTU; item, T. Dan Smith, former RCP convert from the ILP, responsible for the rightward move within the N.E. England Labour Party, and for the involvement of the L.P. there with capitalist business, his enthusiasm for which subsequently took him to prison; item, Eric Varley - who was campaign manager for Denis Healey in the recent LP leadership contest - who was a member of the Fourth International, and of the editorial board of *The Week* in 1963 (both IMG and the founding group of the Institute for Workers' Control, are descended from *The Week*);

The list could be extended indefinitely; (to say nothing of the noble lord of Gowrie, member of the

continued on page 7

N.B.

All those of you who have been writing letters recently about Max Stirner, and all those of you who are going to be interested in read-

ing them are requested to patiently await the next issue of *FREEDOM*, when they should find them lurking somewhere in the Review.

continued from front page

would be no 'u-turns', there was no alternative. So, they did it. Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to have done a lot of good for the level of inflation or the money supply. Muttering from the ranks has necessitated another show of firmness. So the leaders, slightly reshuffled, go away and do as they want.

Not forgetting the Chief Constables having a little get together in sunny Torquay (...of course my riots were bigger than yours...). One of the speakers will be Harriet Harmon of the NCCL, on

civil rights. So the leaders, still ignorant, will go away and do as they want.

Somewhere along the way there will be a conference by a mish-mash of shop-soiled social democrats, centralist jellies and gravy-train hoppers. As yet they have no policies. So the leaders....

This is no way to run a country. A better example might be provided in Poland, where Solidarity is based on industrial unions and on recallable delegates, mandated on specific issues. In the old days, say Spain in 1936, this was called anarcho-syndicalism. But don't tell the Russians.

A Case for Protest

LAST week, at Old Street Court, the notorious Italian 'anarchist-link rioter', Patricia Giambi, was sentenced to 28 days imprisonment with a recommendation for deportation following her conviction for threatening behaviour at Brixton. However welcome the prospect of the massed forces of law and order, armed with batons, shields and helmets being threatened by Patricia, the circumstances of her conviction and sentence were only too predictable. The practised, fluent lies of police provocateurs and the continuing press campaign carefully orchestrated by the Special Branch combined to make result inevitable, and are inadequately countered by 'subdued booing from a small group in the public gallery' which, so far, has been the sole anarchist response.

In the event, far more serious than her conviction for threatening behaviour was the re-appearance for the passing of sentence of magistrate Nichols, widely believed to be 'heavily involved' in the maintenance of the status quo at all costs and to have 'close links' with Special Branch prosecutors, as witnessed by his silent but meaningful nods and winks throughout the proceedings with police lackey Sergeant Cork. The lengthy, well reasoned arguments put on Patricia's behalf proved all but useless in the face of a bigot who had already demonstrated the ability to view evidence entirely subjectively. As a 'worker' in this country,

Patricia was protected by the EEC regulations which allowed freedom of movement and prevented deportation except in the most serious circumstances.

However, it was only when the prosecutor rose that the scribblers at the back could record the rhetorical question they had anticipated for so long. 'You have got an interest in anarchy, have you?'. By showing that she had spent four months here before enrolling for a language course, he sought to show that Patricia's true purpose had not been to learn English, as she claimed, but, by implication, something more sinister. By this brief, irrelevant questioning the press were satisfied and Patricia's fate sealed.

After weighing up the arguments for three seconds or less, Nichols announced that imprisonment for 28 days would be the sentence for threatening behaviour and a recommendation for deportation be made on the basis that her presence here was 'to the country's potential detriment'.

Insofar as the effect on Patricia's immediate future is concerned, this predetermined decision is to be contested in every way possible and the system be exposed for what it is, a sham protected by the mask of mystery and respectability. But in the broader sense, the whole sequence of events is to be seen simply as confirmation of the irrelevance for anarchists of legality or illegality, innocence or guilt and a reminder of the futility of

attempting to make headway within the bounds of the state. As Patricia pointed out, an 'interest in anarchy' is not illegal; nevertheless, it provided the basis of the deportation order. The guilty verdict was for a minor offence reached on perjured evidence; but it was expedient in opening the way for a particularly severe sentence, almost certainly decided upon shortly after her arrest.

Predetermined as the verdict and sentence were, justice was seen to be done through civilised proceedings punctuated by courteous exchanges of learned friends and the patient hearing out (and prompt ignoring) of lengthy defence submissions. But nothing could conceal the magistrate's limitless capacity to adjudicate on the basis of exaggeration, innuendo and an obsession with the activity of outside agitators and international conspirators, with the police seizing every opportunity to prejudice the trial of Jean Weir by defaming her in open court.

There is little point in expressing surprise at all this, for anarchists never expected anything less than a double trial through both the courts and press. Is anything to be learned from it? Perhaps, in the light of bitter experience and in the wake of ever more repressive state measures, the time for open confrontation should be preceded by a more subtle advance where, in the words of another victim, we gauge and operate only within the limits of our effectiveness and choose the right ground on the right terms, from a position of strength.

R T

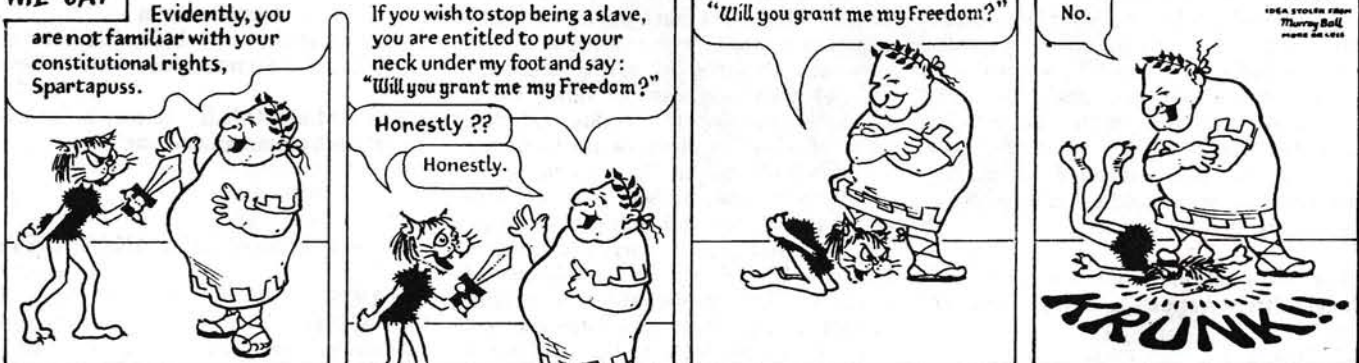
Latest news

On Monday 21st an application for bail pending appeal was rejected. The police objection was based on Patricia's political beliefs. The appeal will now be heard after she has finished the sentence. A campaign to publicise this case and the State's attempt to deport Patricia has been started. Help of any kind would be appreciated.

Contact:

Friends of Patricia Giambi
c/o 121 Books
121 Railton Road
Herne Hill
London SE24.

WILDCAT



THE NOT SO DISTANT STRUGGLE

At the end of May 1981, five members of the FREEDOM Collective visited Northern Ireland at the invitation of the Belfast Anarchist Collective. This review section contains thoughts, news and comment, written during and after that visit. The views expressed are individual ones.

Other contributions were offered by Ann, which a majority of the Collective felt unable to publish on ideological grounds.



From Umanita' Nova, Italy.

BREACHED barricades, riot debris everywhere, burned out vehicles abandoned in housing estates, searches of everyone entering the city centre, raids in the middle of the night, nervous soldiers patrolling busy shopping areas, the tensions grown out of a familiarity with violence - all these, whilst constituting what has become normality for Belfast or Derry, leave unforgettable impressions on the visitor. The inevitable, and perfectly valid, emotional response to such impressions immediately finds expression in the call 'Troops Out!'; the attempt to harness this response to an anarchist analysis of events in the Six Counties in the light of the visit, however, seems to raise more and more questions than before.

But this in no way abrogates the urgent task of seeking answers. BAC, in their writings in OUTTA CONTROL and FREEDOM, and in their discussions with us, have consistently posed the questions from the vantage point of long experience in a situation to which no facile theories, tribalism or otherwise, may be attached, and have sought to lay out an anarchist perspective. It would be difficult to deny that anarchists have, in general, avoided at all costs a properly objective examination of the situation in Northern Ireland, preferring instead to concentrate on the important but less thorny problems of more distant struggles. Why? After all, within a short distance of Britain we are daily witnessing a most repressive regime whose intensity supports no comparison with life in London; a regime where there is near total monitoring of movement day and night, where constant use is made of the Prevention of Terrorism Act to detain and prosecute 'political offenders', where the overt presence of armed forces often reaches saturation point, where prisoners are condemned by juryless Diplock courts, and where widespread condemnation has been directed internationally, particularly from America.

One reason put forward to us in Belfast carries the distinctive ring of truth: That such an examination would inevitably involve the choice between total support for, or denial of, the

aims of the IRA, an organisation which, on the face of it, bears no apparent signs of movement towards anarchism. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, ideological scruples must not be allowed to erode the clear responsibility of focusing attention on what has become the embodiment of the repressive state visibly at work in utilising all its resources, using the streets of Belfast, Derry and elsewhere as a prime testing ground for future urban unrest in Britain. In doing so, the striking image of people demanding to determine their own existence emerges not just from individual IRA actions, but rather from the close communities of which the IRA guerrillas are an indissoluble part.

Such an image is sharply defined in at least two ways. Firstly, in the knowledge that the state forces, whether police or army, are totally rejected by many thousands, demoralised, and themselves effectively imprisoned in their garrisons, barracks, Landrovers and Saracens. Unable to defeat the IRA militarily, and hampered by the continued redundant attempts to alight on a 'political solution', they are less able than ever to justify their existence. Secondly, in the recognitions of almost daily signs of reverses for the British state and its agencies. There has been humiliation for the RUC and army from people whose bitterness and violence makes them impossible to control except by containment; humiliation for the odious Atkins and his cronies, whose lies and scheming did not prevail against the hunger strikers last December and will not prevail now; humiliation for the arrogant, legalistic Thatcher, who is only now discovering the cost of her intransigence; and humiliation for parliament itself at the election of Bobby Sands MP.

A second reason, frequently argued, is that the scale of distortion commonly achieved by the media makes extraction of truth and genuine objective assessment impossible for outsiders. Such an argument can be attempted by ideologues who turn away from Northern Ireland as a situation too hot to

handle. But to the most casual observer no propaganda can mask the intensity of a war which has overcome every device of the state, including proscription by legislation. Uncontrollable rioting, amounting at times to near insurrection, and the willingness of prisoners to starve in prosecution of the demands are stark facts which survive any attempt at distortion. The fact that the Divis flats have been partially destroyed by occupants suffering 67% unemployment is itself a telling sign that the fight for better housing conditions and work forms an inextricable part of the overall struggle.

No pragmatic analysis of the far reaching historical developments in Northern Ireland can begin without accepting that the IRA has always occupied a central role. Whatever epithet used to condemn it, whether 'authoritarian', 'militarist', 'statist', and so on, it continues to offer formidable opposition to the state and its members retain powerful living roots within local communities, for whom republicanism is life blood rather than an adopted cause. It appears inevitable that the growth of libertarian influences, even in such potentially fertile ground, cannot mature without recognition of this fact.

To accept this and act upon it is not to sacrifice ideological principle for the sake of speedier, more immediate change,

nor is it the justification of any means to achieve a common end. In the short term, the absence of anarchist influence apart, the IRA objective of causing a failure of will at Westminster, resulting in withdrawal of the troops, appears incontrovertible. In the long term, after victory in the immediate struggle, there are more far reaching difficulties for anarchists concerned with developments in every area of life. The central position of the IRA in such fundamental changes only makes the difficulties insuperable if its strength can be shown to lie outside the political and social life of the working class, a view which even a brief visit makes untenable. If it lies within, then the IRA, too, will be dynamic and subject to the same changes, or else stagnate and fail. There is no evidence to suggest that, should libertarian influences grow within these communities, the IRA could remain ideologically static and unresponsive, or indeed would wish to. Here, perhaps, in the acceptance or denial of this probability, lies the clear choice between attempting to stimulate the argument from within or continuing to frown and walk away, allowing an impression of the past to determine an anarchist approach for the future.

RT

Guns and Crosses

IN Northern Ireland today the British Govt. is engaged in the systematic oppression of 1,500,000 people. This oppression covers all areas of life, the cultural, economic, social and the political. It is also applied regardless of religious background. All are oppressed. Of course, some sections of the population are hit harder than others. As is usually the case it is those who are different in some way from the majority of the population who suffer most. In England it is the coloured community. In Northern Ireland it is the Catholic.

Over hundreds of years the Catholic community in Ireland has been under attack from the British. Since the 1920's the major part of Ireland has freed itself from direct British domination (however British economic domination remains). As part of the price for that freedom an area in the North was retained by the British. Set up as a 'state within a state', Northern Ireland, with its own government at Stormont, is perhaps the perfect example of how a large number of people can be exploited, oppressed and denied any form of freedom under the auspices of 'Democracy'.

To keep control of Northern Ireland the British Government delegated the running of the statelet to the predominantly Loyalist Protestant community. To maintain that control the Protestant Government of Stormont engaged in a determined denial of any rights to the Catholic community (some 30% of the population). The police force was mainly Protestant, the police reserve (the B Specials) was almost completely Protestant. The Civil Service, local government, major industries and the public service companies gave priority in employment and promotion to the Protestants.

By use of 'gerrymandering' (the manipulation of constituency boundaries) elections of MPs and local councillors, even in predominantly Catholic areas, were rigged in favour of the Protestant Loyalist Parties.

Naturally the Catholic community began to fight. The historical method of resistance to the British had always been the Republican Movement and its military wing the Irish Republican Army. From 1920 onwards they engaged in many campaigns with the avowed aim of forming a united 32 county Irish Republic.

The Stormont Government replied with all the weapons of a threatened State. Internment without trial, harassment of the dissident population and further oppression.

A distinct polarisation took place. On the one side the Irish/Catholic/Republican community, yearning for a freedom they had been denied for centuries. On the other the British/Protestant/Loyalist community, only marginally better off in the main, fearful of being absorbed into a country professing a different religion, perhaps fearing a reversal of roles, of being the powerless and not the powerful.

In the 1960's, as in other countries throughout the world, a feeling of anger, of protest, reached a new height. In Northern Ireland this led to the Civil Rights movement. The Catholic community became charged with a new vigour and pride. Mass marches declared their intentions to be free and equal. The Protestant State, fearing the mass movement as all governments do, used its force to try and halt this explosion of feeling. The police and B Specials attempted to beat, gas and shoot the protest into extinction. Of course they failed. The British Government, fearful of international approbation, sent in troops to stop what was becoming a mass insurrection. The B Specials were disbanded and the British Army took their place.

The oppression, intimidation and discrimination of the Catholic community was directed now from Whitehall, the smokescreen of Stormont removed, the iron fist in the iron glove of the state was openly paraded. The Catholic community replied with rent strikes and civil disobedience, they replied with marches and riots and through the IRA and others replied with the bullet and the bomb.

Today the war goes on. New tactics are tried on both sides, some stay, some are dropped. New political initiatives are touted. Victories are declared, defeats forgotten. Communities face each other across devastated streets, troops and armed police patrol in armoured jeeps, empty gutted houses testify to broken homes and often broken families, barbed wire, corrugated iron, burned out vehicles. Flags fly declaring each area's affiliation. A society locked in mortal combat with no winners, only losers, politicians voicing hackneyed phrases always with one eye on the opinion polls and the other on the media, generals and police chiefs clinging to their talismans of 'military solutions' and 'law and order', graffiti on the walls 'Brits out', 'up the Queen', 'up the Pope', 'UVF', 'IRA', 'Provs rule', priests and preachers boasting of Christian brotherhood whilst damning each others eyes. Slums and palaces, churches and barracks, guns and crosses, police and priests. Ireland's agony, Britain's surgery without anaesthetic, hatred and distrust, death and mutilation, all in the name of Democracy, Civilisation, Republicanism, the One True Faith, all in OUR name, which ever 'side' we purport to be on.

This is what we have to fight, this is what we have to defeat. To bring people together in mutual trust, cooperation, tolerance of each others differences, to bring love and peace to this sad, troubled land, to heal the scars that divide us all, here and there. We can argue the methods, the ways, the means but the solution cannot be doubted. As anarchists we must work towards a free and equal society, an Anarchy. There is the solution to Northern Ireland and to everywhere such conditions exist.

DAVID McCABE