

OUTTA CONTROL

BELFAST ANARCHIST MONTHLY

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MAY 1982

Sold with GAINING GROUND

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THEY ARE KILLING OUR CHILDREN

On Friday 16th April in Derry, a British Army patrol in a Saracen who had been investigating a hoax bomb fired two baton rounds at a small group of stone-throwers. When the kids ran off, eleven year old Stephen McConomy was found lying on the ground with a head wound. He had been hit at close range by the supposedly 'minimum force weapon' the plastic bullet or baton round. Stephen never regained consciousness and died a few days later, the eighth victim of this 'plastic terror' in twelve months. Angry women staged a protest march from the Bogside to the police headquarters at Strand Road demanding a ban on the use of plastic bullets by military and police.

As usual the whitewash campaign immediately swung into action. It was reported that a 'crowd' had been throwing stones when witnesses state that there were only eleven or so other children in the area. As Mr McConomy, Stephen's father said at his son's funeral,

'Even if the kids had been throwing stones they could not have harmed the soldiers inside the Saracen.'

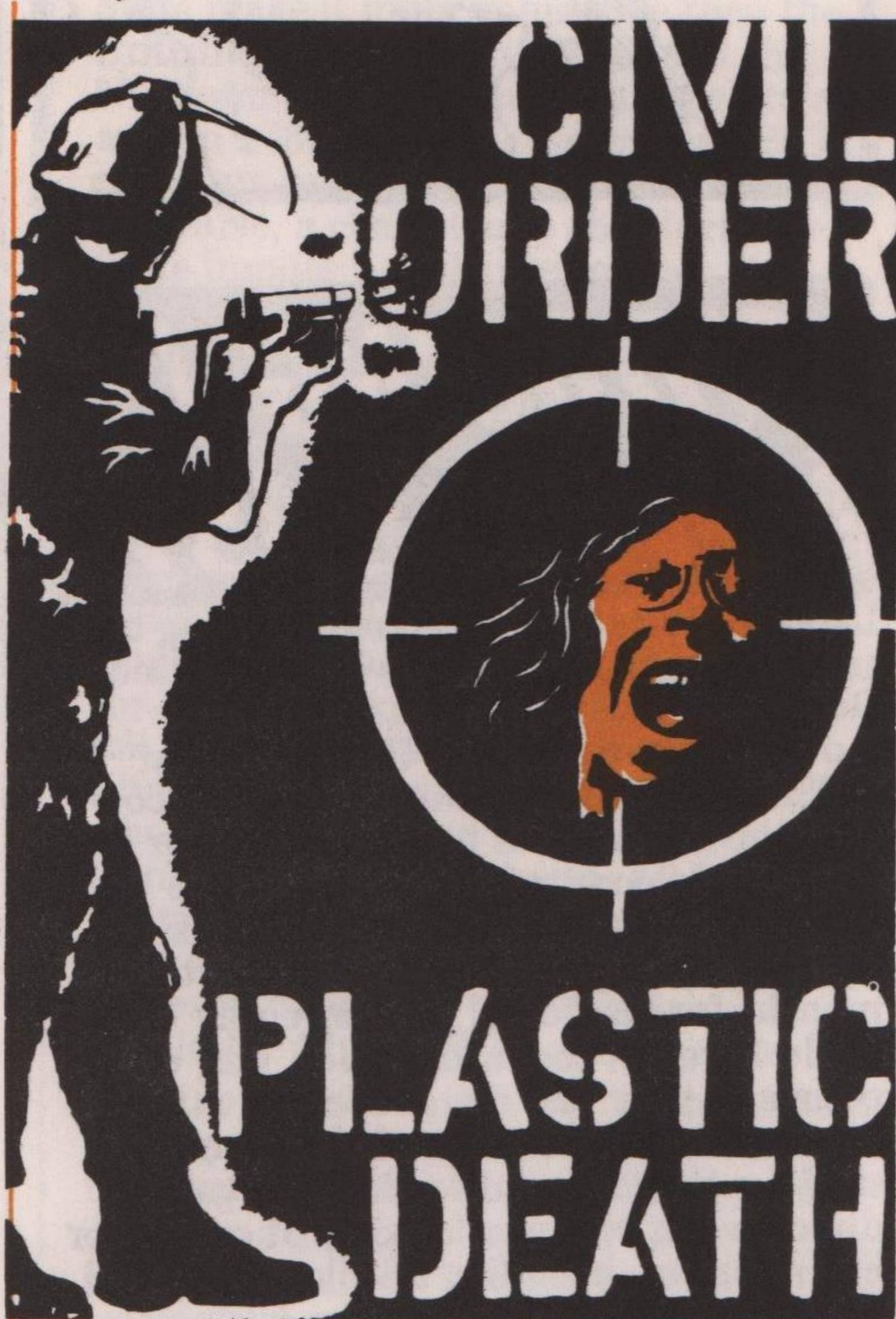
British media reports persistently used the phrase 'allegedly struck by a plastic bullet' even though there was no doubt that Stephen's death had been directly caused by a plastic bullet. Prior, secretary of state for N.Ireland, and former Peace person, Eileen Semple, attempted to shift the blame for the deaths of children struck by plastic bullets onto their parents, saying that it was the parents' duty to keep their children away from 'riot situations'. Mr McConomy refuted this ludicrous suggestion saying,

'There is no way you can lock a child up all day. Going out to the streets is part of a child's education. They will learn nothing if they are locked up and it would be mental torture to our children. You can't ask that of parents'

NEGLIGENCE AND MISUSE

The 'Sunday News' recently attempted to absolve the Security Forces of all responsibility for the murders in an article which claimed that,

'Killer guns may have been unwittingly used by police and troops to control rioting mobs on the streets of N. Ireland'. It appears that a 'design defect', i.e. a metal cap which holds the baton in place in the gun barrel and which perhaps becomes



dislodged with the bullet, is the culprit. This attempt to cloud the issue cannot detract from evidence which clearly shows that the Security Forces misuse the weapon, firing directly at targets' heads or indiscriminately into a crowd (instead of aiming at the lower parts of the body) and firing at close range. This evidence, plus the fact that some of the deaths occurred when there was no disturbance whatsoever or perhaps a small group of stone-throwers, demonstrates a clear intention by the Security Forces to kill or maim. Prior is quoted as saying that the plastic bullet is used only in *serious cases of rioting to prevent loss of life*. Yet, no member of the Security Forces has ever stood trial or even been charged with murdering a civilian with a plastic bullet no matter what the circumstances were and it is highly unlikely, given the racist attitudes of the British Government, that anyone will stand trial.

William Whitelaw made the Government's attitude towards the Irish people abundantly clear when he stated that baton rounds would not be used in Britain because they might kill people. Also, a Labour MP, supporting Independent TD Neil Blaney in his call for an emergency debate in the European parliament on the use of plastic bullets, gave as his reason that unless the weapon was banned in N.Ireland it would be used for crowd

control in Britain! The debate on Blaney's resolution was due to take place last week but behind the scenes chicanery ensured that the resolution was shuffled to the end of the list in the knowledge that there would be insufficient time to cover it. This would mean that the resolution would be passed to a committee taking months to report. Supporters of the resolution therefore removed it from the list and hope to resubmit it in the near future.

STONE-THROWERS MURDERED

The same racist attitudes are evident in the Israeli army's gunning down of young unarmed Arabs throwing stones a couple of weeks ago. More recently we have seen the rather different tactics being used in the eviction of Israeli extremists in the Gaza Strip where water-cannons and foam seemed to do the job adequately.

REPRESSION

May 5th is the anniversary of Bobby Sands' death on hunger-strike and rising tensions are certain to erupt into riots. In Derry there have already been riots following the murder of Stephen McConomy. People would not go out onto the streets in demonstrations nor would frustrations boil over into rioting if there were not grievances against the security forces and the state. The British Government's solution to these grievances has always been the same: repression and containment leading to death and injury amongst the anti-imperialist community. Calling on the state to investigate and prosecute murders by its own agents, the Security Forces, has proved time and again to be either ineffectual or a cover-up, as we have seen, for instance, in the trial of SAS soldiers for the murder of John Boyle and the trial of RUC man Robert McKeown for the murder of Michael McCarten where the defendants were completely exonerated of all blame. If the plastic bullet were to be outlawed, then the Security Forces' capacity to kill and maim would be reduced - that is until a replacement weapon was developed. Nevertheless, the British Government must not be allowed to murder and maim unarmed people with impunity forever - banning the plastic bullet would be a start.

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Gay Arrests: SS Fiddles: Gas Works: Blacks on Trial:

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Replies to Atlantis



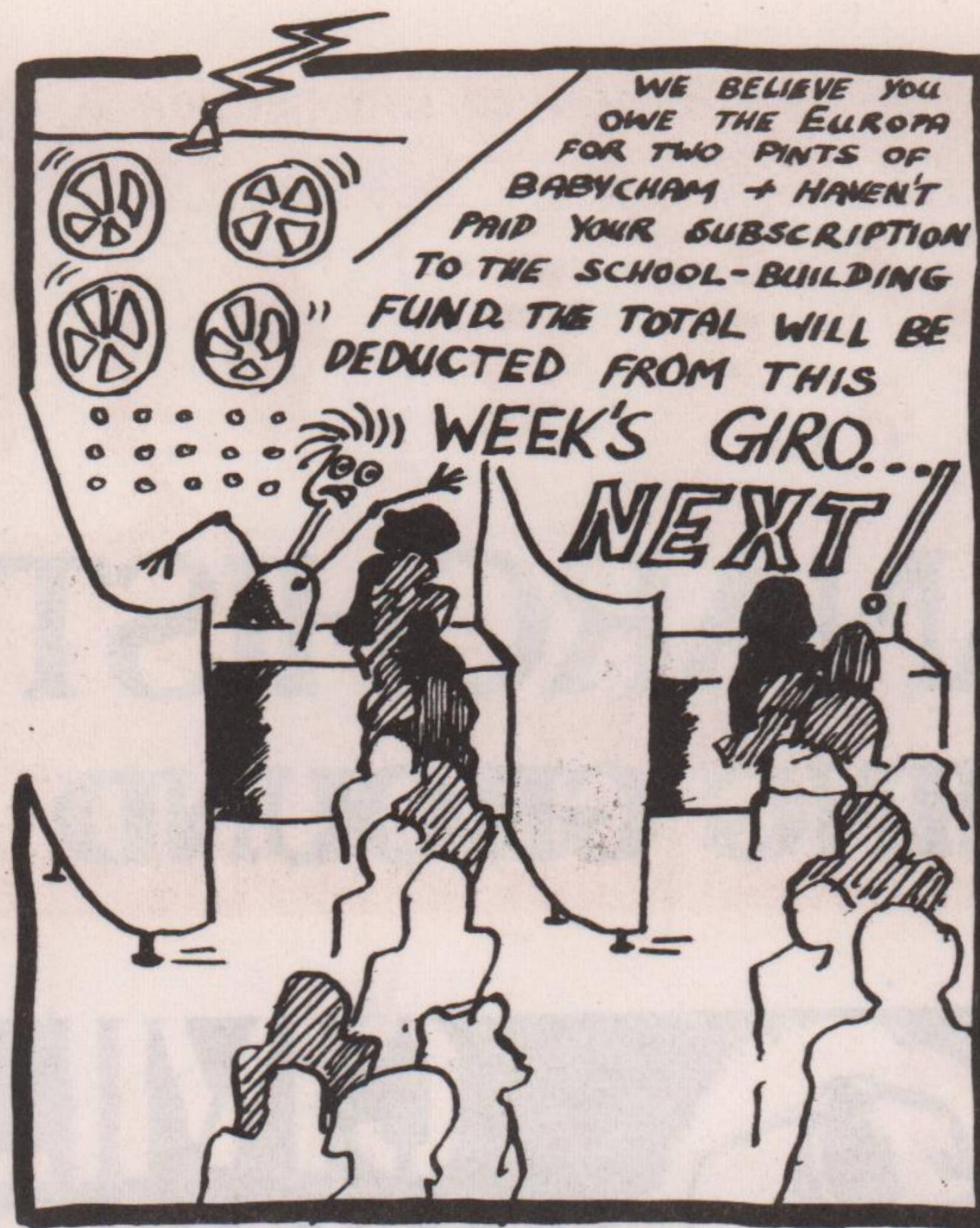
So, the people at Atlantis are leaving the island of Inishfree for the wildness of South America. Well, all I have to say to that is 'good-bye, fare thee well.' Their reasons are personal, and interesting in that context. What I find rather distasteful (and this is no fault of their in this case) is that their reasons and their views should be presented in an anarchist context and given a wider political and social relevance. If this is in fact so, and if this is a context which the people at Atlantis are happy about, then such views are open to criticism and comment. I find it personally insulting that their letter attempts to forestall any comment by using such phrases as 'pious politics' when having premonitions about the authors of such comment.

I can quite understand her desire to find a quiet, unpolluted, un-intruded upon, un-nuclear endangered space in which to live. In peace. So do a great number of people. Unfortunately, there are not enough such spaces on this earth to accommodate that vast number (not just the people from Atlantis, so it is down to the remaining dwellers in noisy, polluted, over-crowded, endangered spaces to change their environment or to destroy that part of it which they do not require. It is no part of anarchism to say "fuck you!" to the dwellers in dustbins and to covet unto oneself that which one requires with no consideration for others. Similarly, I resent the implication that all people who stick their noses in dustbins and who discover the smell then proceed to do fuck all about it. Some of us have heard of cleansing equipment, we don't necessarily say "phew, what a god-awful stench" and walk away to find the nearest flower.

The author of the letter seems to have had a singularly uninspiring and ineffective contact with political activity. It seems to have involved mostly reformist campaigns which bear no relation to anarchic activity

Anne, BAC.

A whole page devoted to the screamers. They've a very patronising approach towards the quaint Irish. —Eddie, Dublin.



FIDDLING IS NEVER EASY

Last month in Belfast someone trying to get H.P. from finance loan giants United Dominion Trust gave a guarantor (his mother) who had a job. Unfortunately U.T.D. checked with the dole and discovered the mother was being claimed for on the Social Security by the father ... a discrepancy which UDT handed back to the dole and the luckless father got three months for his fiddle. The only way UTD could have got the information was, of course, if they had direct contact with SS files. Computer technology is now sufficiently advanced for UDT to gain direct access to a whole range of computer information - including SS files. (This will be even more useful to sneaky businesses after July of this year, when all claimants will have their P45's in the hands of the dole office).

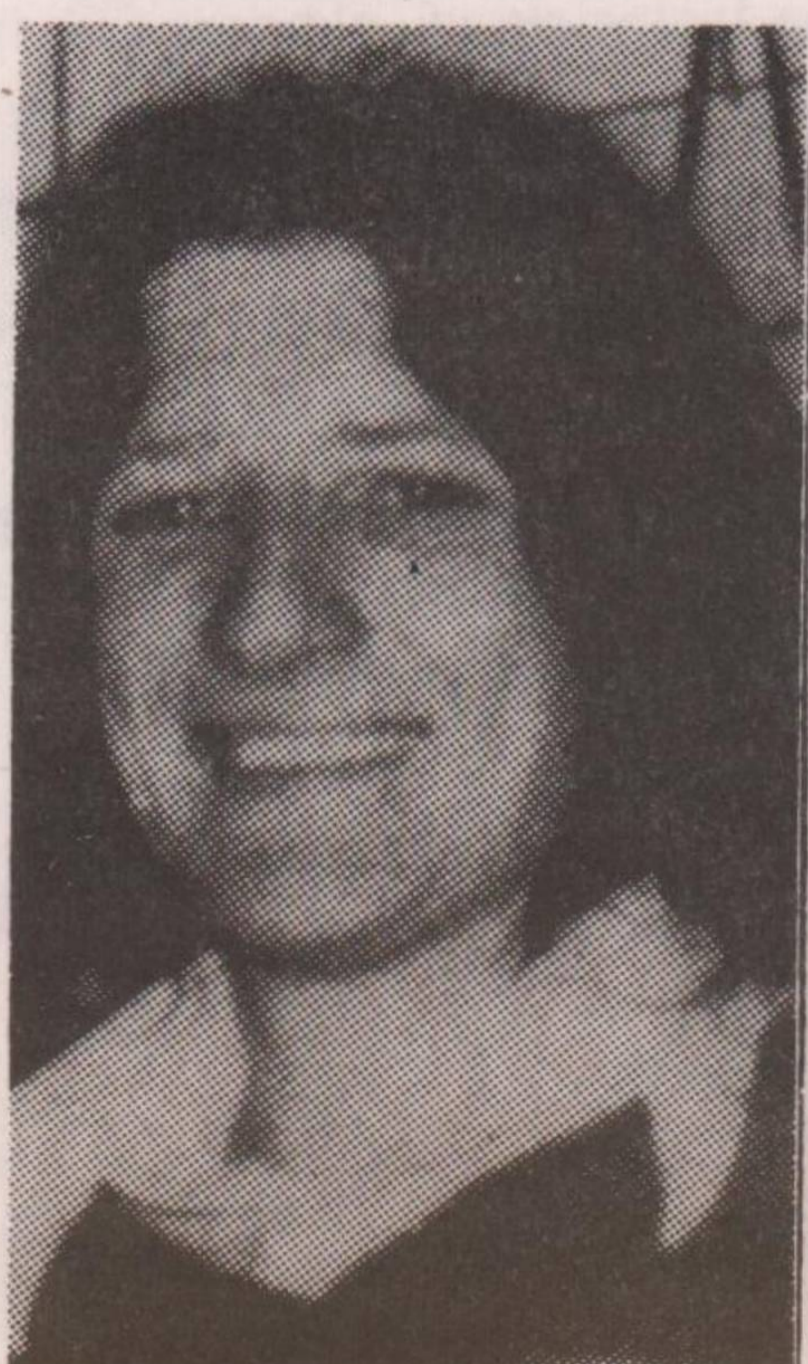
So who are UDT? They are a British banking and financial group, recently bought over by the Trustee Savings Bank. They specialise in the provision of instalment credit (HP) and only last year sold off their world-wide commodities concern which dealt with items like sugar, coffee and soyabeans on the international money market. They operated through the most corrupt financial cities in the world like Hong Kong and London, happily fiddling millions where the law doesn't apply. In their own words, they 'had a deterioration in debt collection experience giving rise to a higher level of write-offs in 1981', and have applied 'additional prudent provisions for doubtful debts'. That explains their new direct links with SS files. So even more care now is needed when fiddling in our computerised - information - control age.

SOLIDARITY AT THE GAS WORKS

The shop steward in the Belfast gas works, who was sacked for allegedly hitting a manager at the plant, has been reinstated after a total walkout of workers who were on strike for 14 days.

After talking to some of the picketers it became apparent 'the offence' had little or nothing to do with the management's reasoning for the sacking. Firstly the alleged incident took place 7 days previous to the sacking. The shop stewards own union walked out immediately, disbelieving what management had to say; so too did the other two unions in the plant - the GMWU and AUEW. Such a quick reaction shows the popularity of the man and was a spontaneous show of solidarity.

According to one of the workers the shop steward, after 22 years in the plant, was good as a negotiator, and did well for his members. Set against this is the future of the gas industry which seems to have one of two choices, either a closedown with everyone being made redundant or gas being piped from the southern gas field at Kinsale. This would mean the existing gas works and jobs being restructured away from that of production of gas to that of supply. Whichever way, a lot of negotiations with the unions is necessary and if one of the most experienced and shrewd shop stewards had been sacked, the way would have been clearer to railroad the workers into accepting not as good a pay and conditions offer as he might have won.



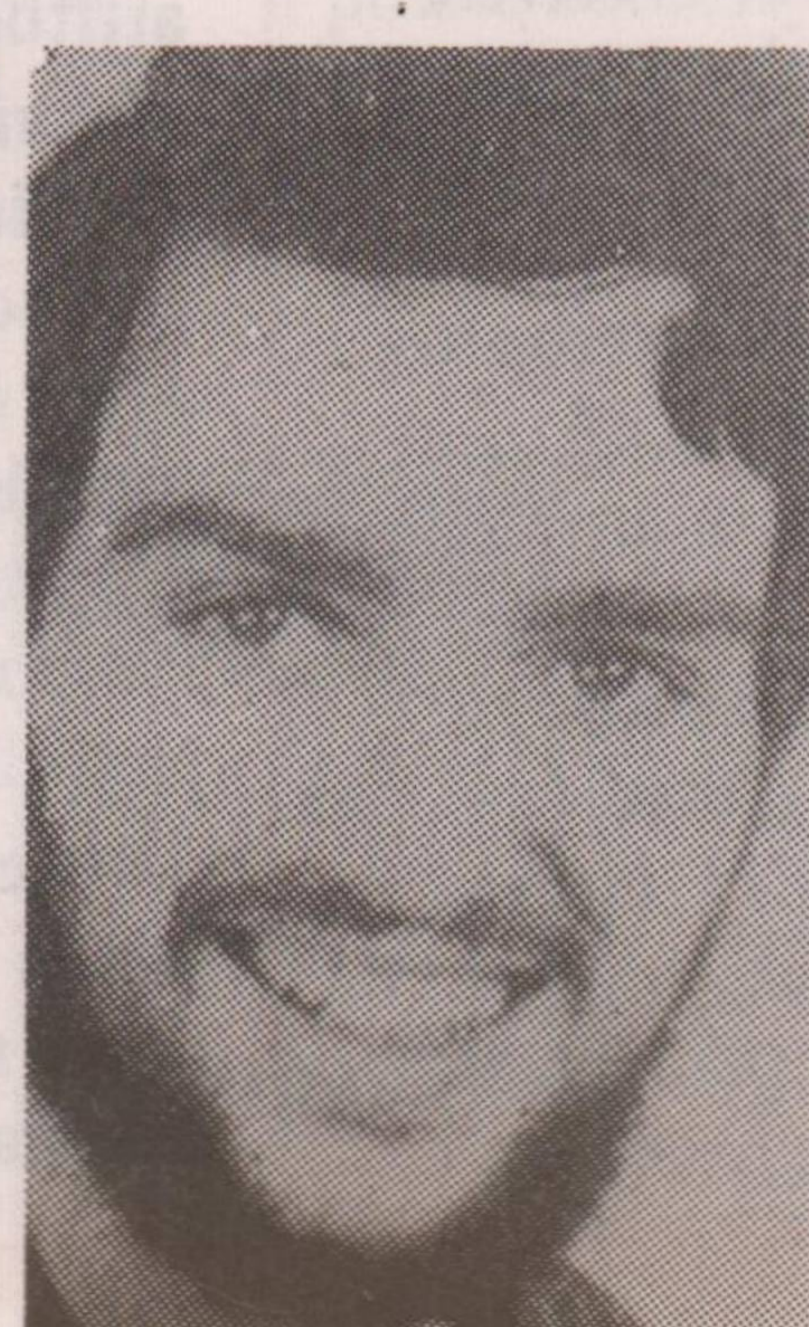
Bobby Sands



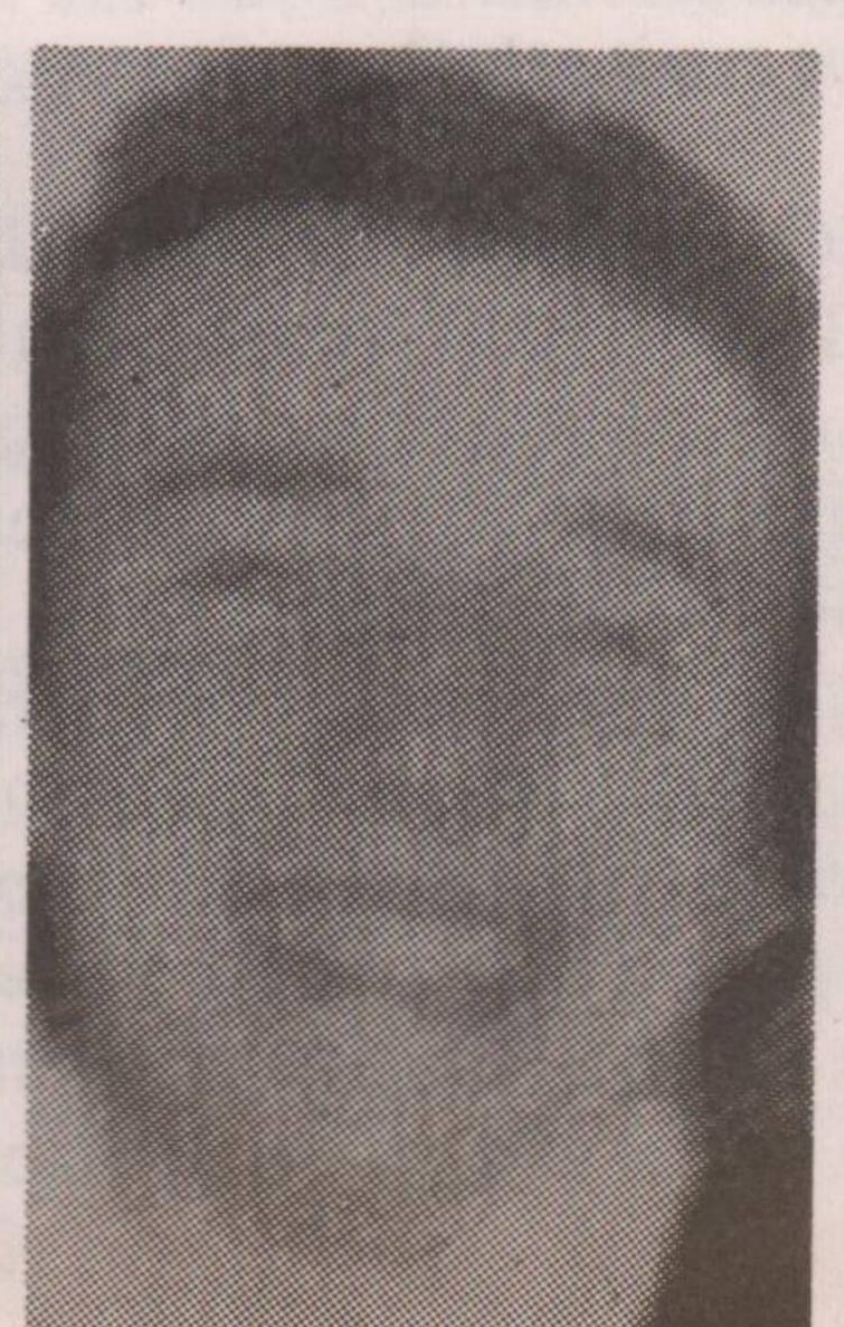
Francis Hughes

hunger strike

This month sees the anniversaries of the first four hunger strikers to die last year. Most of the demands for political status were met, but the issues of work and segregation are still the subject of a protest. About 265 men in H-Block and 19 women in Armagh are refusing to work. They lose one visit a month, 10 days out of 28 remission, half their association, and only one food parcel a month.



Patsy O'Hara



Raymond McCreech

COMMISSION ON IRELAND

The Direct Action Movement (an anarchist organisation with groups throughout Britain) passed a resolution at its February conference to set up a Commission on Ireland. We print below extracts from that resolution.

This permanent commission should orientate the organisation on Irish issues as they arise within the framework of a more general policy. We have not worked out such a policy in detail but have agreed on a few basic points which, we believe, provide guidelines within which the debate should be conducted.

These are :

1) That the DAM supports Troops Out. It should not need arguing that anarchists take up a Troops Out position. It would be unthinkable for us to support a Troops In policy or be indifferent to what British troops are doing in N. Ireland. However a policy of Troops Out is, by itself, NOT ENOUGH. We cannot say 'Well, we all agree on getting the Troops Out and we can agree to differ after that'. For example, if the policy of 'Ulsterization' ('Criminalization' - 'primacy of the the police') had succeeded, or were to succeed in the future, and the troops were brought out, but N. Ireland were held for Britain by local loyalist forces, anarchists could not and would not wash their hands of the affair saying 'the troops are out - the problem is solved'. It is not possible either to say we should support 'Troops Out' but beyond that take a 'plague on both your houses' position. The 'troops out' position, in the present context, carries its own anti-unionist logic. Taking up the 'Troops Out' position automatically puts you on one side of the fence.

2) Therefore, the DAM opposes the Orange State. We must not only oppose the British presence but the Orange State that the British presence is propping up. For these reasons: a) So long as the Orange State exists (and direct rule by Britain does not mean that the sectarian state no longer exists) there is a massive division of the working class forces. And this division will not be healed so long as the British

presence/Orange State guarantees a privileged position for Loyalist workers (some comrades tend to confuse this issue of Loyalist privileges by pointing out how shitty conditions are on the Shankhill Rd., say, compared to Britain. The point is, however, that the Loyalist workers are not comparing themselves with British workers but with Nationalist workers, and they do see themselves as having, and do have, a position that is privileged enough for them to be prepared to kill to defend it).

b) The contradictions in the Northern State make it more vulnerable than the British and 26 County States and the Northern State is being challenged in a way and on a level that the British and 26 Co. states are not being challenged (although, of course, a challenge to the Northern State implies a challenge to both the British and Irish states).

3) Notwithstanding the above the DAM does NOT give POLITICAL support to Republicanism i.e. call for victory to the IRA. A victory for the IRA would not be a step on the road to anarchism. However since we share common short-term objectives it is feasible for anarchists to work alongside Republicans. It is also possible for anarchists to defend republicans who fall foul of the state repression. The situation is analogous to a strike in Britain where we might find ourselves working alongside Trotskyists (while realising that Trotskyist parties only see the working class as a vehicle for gaining state power) and even defending those Trotskyists should they be arrested on the picket line.

3b) Re: Loyalism. There is no question of writing off the Loyalist working class; however, it is important not to have any dangerous illusions. Because the Republicans see themselves as fighting against injustice while the Loyalists see themselves as fighting to maintain historic rights and privileges the two sides have different political reflexes. Loyalism is a far-right phenomenon, and the mirror reflexion of the far-left IRSP-INLA on the republican side is the far-right UVF on the Loyalist side which has attended the annual Nazi gathering in Belgium to honour the dead of the Waffen SS.



Cara Friend

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Cara-Friend General Committee, I write to correct an impression presented by the anonymous interview titled 'Glad to be Gay' published in your March issue.

The interviewee stated that when he rang Cara-Friend some years ago all that the volunteer he spoke to advised him to do was 'Just come out' - ie. to reveal his homosexuality to the world.

Since its establishment in 1974 Cara-Friend has operated under a policy of non-directional befriending - and thus no caller would be advised to 'Just come out'. In fact it's more likely that they would be advised the opposite - particularly a 15 or 16 year old

living in the Catholic working class background described by your interviewee.

I must also correct the impression implied, that Cara-Friend and the gay social venues are middle or upper class. There is in fact a wide social range - both among our volunteers and in the gay community - which more or less reflects the social divisions of society at large.

These may seem like minor points but even minor criticism when unjustified can undermine the valuable work that an organisation such as Cara-Friend does - subject as we are to the traditional prejudices of so many people.

Yours, Doug Sobey.

ATTEMPTS TO CRIMINALISE BLACKS



'The Black Community have been put on trial' reads a leaflet put out by the Bradford 12 defence group. The trial, which began on April 26th in Leeds, is one consequence of the riots last summer in British cities, when mostly black young people staged a near-insurgency against the institutional racism of the British state, and specifically its racist police force. The significance of this trial is the states attempt to 'criminalise' opposition to it from the Black community, by making an example of one of its most militant political organisations.

Most of the 12 are members of the United Black Youth League, an independent organisation, which has been involved in successful campaigns against the state. They helped secure Anwar Ditta's right to bring her children from Pakistan to Britain; they supported the struggles of Jaswinder Kaur, Nasira Begum, and others against deportation; secured the release of Gary Pemberton, a black worker, who faced charges trumped up by the Bradford police; and campaigned against the British occupation of the north.

The evidence against them, the charges, and the arrests should sound familiar. After dawn raids they were interrogated for 2 days, facing racist abuse, and denied access to a solicitor until half an hour before the court appearance on the 3rd day. 'Voluntary statements' were extracted, allegedly admitting responsibility for a crateful of petrol bombs. These were not found in their possession, and all 12 are pleading not guilty. They spent 3 months in jail before bail was granted, and even then they were forbidden to attend political meetings.

For further information and messages of support, write to : -

Bradford 12 National Committee
Box JK, LAP,
59 Cookridge St.,
Leeds 2,
England.

GAY LAW REFORM AND STATE ARRESTS

With the proposed introduction of law reform on homosexuality, and the recent 'exposures' of the Kincora affair, there has been an increase in arrests of gays. According to the secretary of NIGRA, Sean McGouran, this is expected to be stepped up in the near future. Below we give a background and cite two examples of the state's persecution of gays.

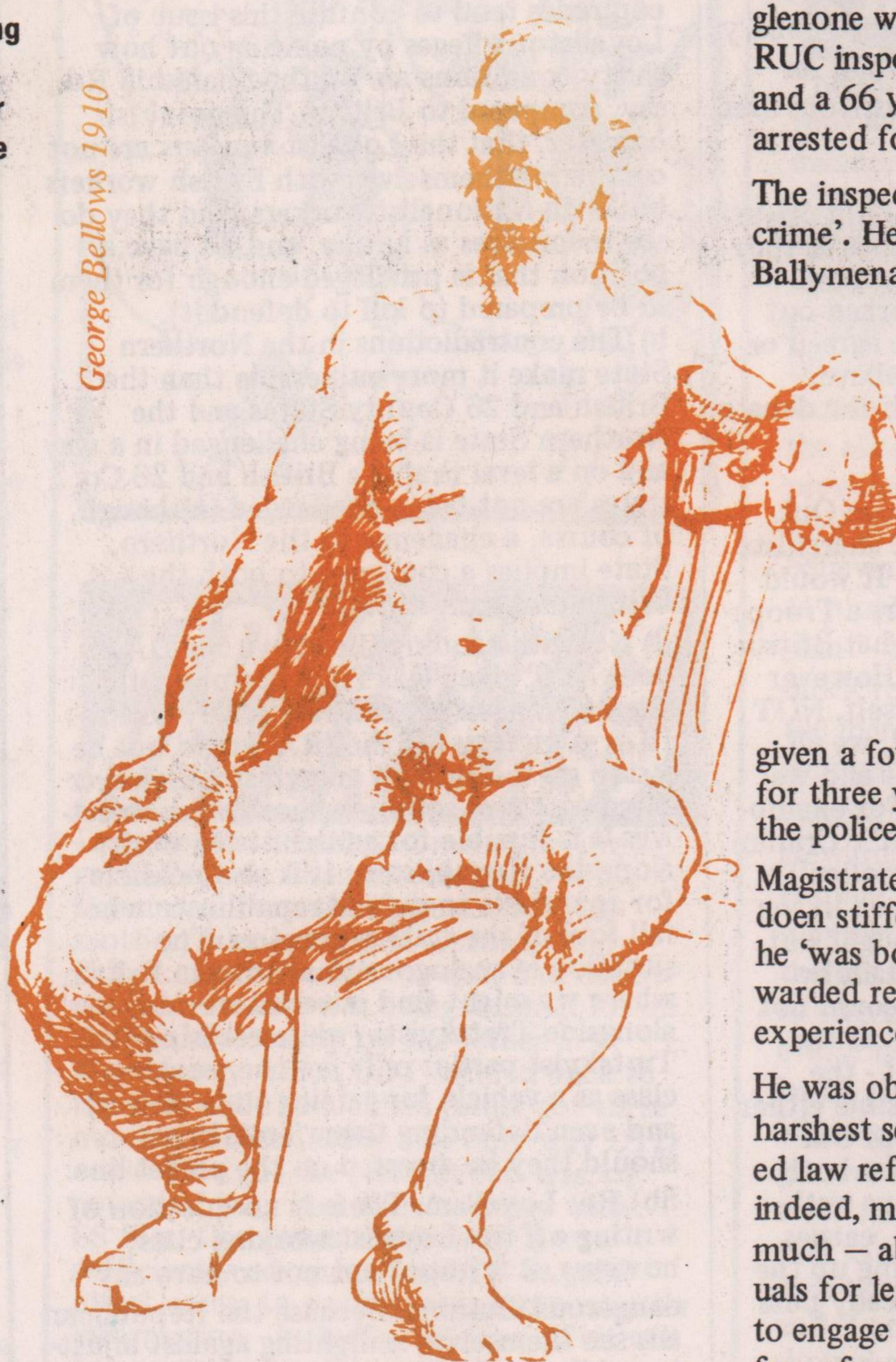
When the 1967 reform law on homosexuality was introduced on Britain, it was ironically accompanied by an increase in police harassment and arrests of gays. Now that the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association have succeeded, via the European Court, in pressurising Britain to extend that law to the north, there appears to be an increase in arrests here too.

The reasons are varied, and in the case of the Kincora affair merely coincide with the law reform timing. The main effect of the recent arrests and judges statements is to appease 'public opinion' with its entrenched religious puritanism. From fundamentalist moderator to Catholic bishop there is strong opposition to any reform, and the Chief Constable, Herman, describes himself as a 'devout Christian'.

The new Act will tighten up on legislation and help define more clearly the RUC's attempts at prosecution, especially in regard to gays showing affection in public and to those under 21. Until last November, the old Act was not used since 1976, when 20 gay men were arrested over a period of 9 months. They had been lifted incidentally by the drug squad, who also double as the vice squad. Although the arrests were made under drug legislation, none of those interrogated were questioned about drugs. From this fiasco of intimidation (no one was charged) NIGRA began the long trek to the European Court.

The Kincora affair, especially in the media coverage, has reinforced society's heterosexual prejudices. The coercion of young boys is made synonymous with homosexuality. Even the Irish Times 'dynamic duo' refused to clarify the real issues. One other consequence has been a witch-hunt within the Department of Health and Social Services. A commission of Inquiry now sits in Windsor Hospital (the psychiatric division in the City Hospital) thoroughly investigating the background files of those who work in residential care. It is known that 12 people, suspected of homosexuality were suspended from work within days of the Kincora affair reaching the headlines

George Bellows 1910



'He looked at me in a suggestive manner'.

On March 14th an 81 year old from Portglenone was arrested for looking at an RUC inspector 'in a suggestive manner'; and a 66 year old from Cushendall was arrested for 'smiling' at the same cop.

The inspector in other words 'created the crime'. He hung around a public toilet in Ballymena for several hours, and after

being 'looked at' and noting how often people went in and out, arrested four men. They were all charged with 'indecent behaviour'

A 19 year old from Ballymena received a three month prison sentence, but was released on bail pending appeal; and a 49 year old, also from Ballymena was

given a four month sentence, suspended for three years for supposedly 'looking at the policemen's groin'.

Magistrate Arthur Jack wanted to hand down stiffer sentences, but regretted that he 'was bound to follow guide lines forwarded recently by a much respected and experienced County Court judge'.

He was obviously influenced into giving the harshest sentences possible by the proposed law reform. 'We hear and read much - indeed, many people think (!) far too much - about the demands of homosexuals for legislative changes to enable them to engage in homosexual activities without fear of prosecution'.

He continued, 'Why the defendants and others ... insist upon using a public toilet, and gather in such numbers to practise their activities, is beyond my comprehension'. What the learned magistrates tiny mind fails to comprehend is that the law, and society's puritanism, forbids public show of gay affection. Heterosexuals meet in pubs and discos etc. while many gays, especially older ones, are forced to meet in public toilets.

Jack (the Boot) certainly declared his aims of preventing gays from meeting 'without fear of prosecution', when he donned his legislative hat and ruled, 'The law will never be changed to permit this type of activity'.

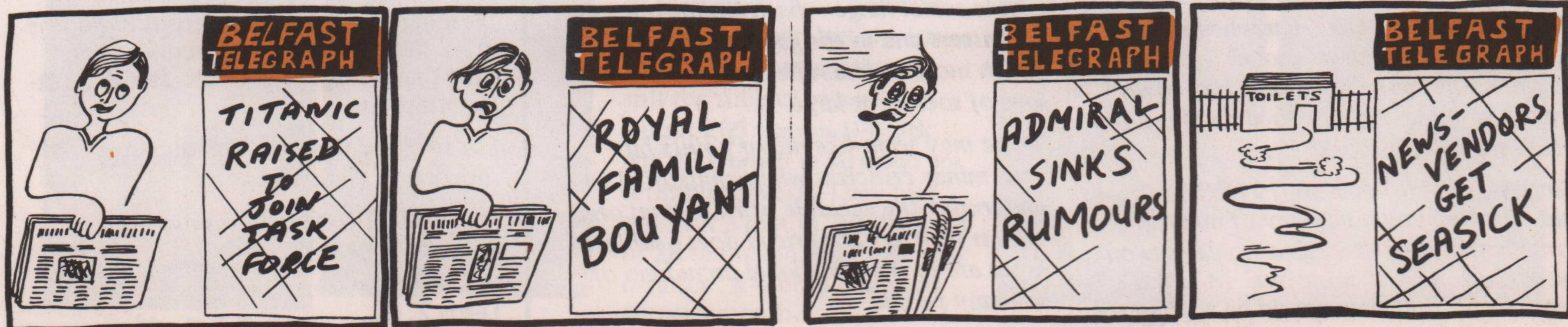
'Take this drug for 15 years'

In November last year, a man from Kircubbin was sent down for 5 years, and another from Hollywood jailed for 3 years for alleged 'indecent assault' on a 15 year old boy. The term 'assault' is used when someone under the age of 21 is involved.

A psychiatrist claimed both men were 'mentally subnormal', and described the first as having the mental age of ten. Of him he said, 'His homosexuality is something he was born with'; and of the other he said he was 'fairly strongly homosexual'. The two men had a relationship for seven years, but the pressure of the police and the court forced them to plead guilty to charges of 'gross indecency' as well as buggery.

The Kircubbin man was also forced to agree in court that he would take a drug for the next 15 years (!) to 'effectively reduce the number of male hormones in his body'.

Whether or not the 'mentally subnormal' label was used to explain homosexuality to a puritan society, the two men are now serving a daunting term in Crumlin Roads notorious D Wing.





**Sold with
Outta Control**

The right to vote or equal civil rights, may be good demands, but true emancipation begins neither at the polls nor in the 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 freedom reaches.
EMMA GOLDMAN 1911

THE 'RIGHT TO LIFE' AMENDMENT

Recently we heard that anti-abortion groups in the South are attempting to get the 'Right to Life' embodied in the Republic's constitution and that a referendum is to take place on the proposed amendment. We asked friends in Dublin to explain how the amendment would affect women and how the campaign against it is to be fought.

In the middle of a recession and with one third of the population below the poverty line, the Southern Government saw fit to pander to the demands of the reactionary but very powerful anti-abortion lobby and announce a constitutional referendum in the autumn which will cost the country £800,000. Even worse is the fact that the proposed change is a severe attack on the rights of women. What the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child and its off-shoot organisation, Pro-Life, want is a new clause to insure that abortion will never become a reality in the Republic and that Irish women will never have a real choice in the face of an unwanted pregnancy.

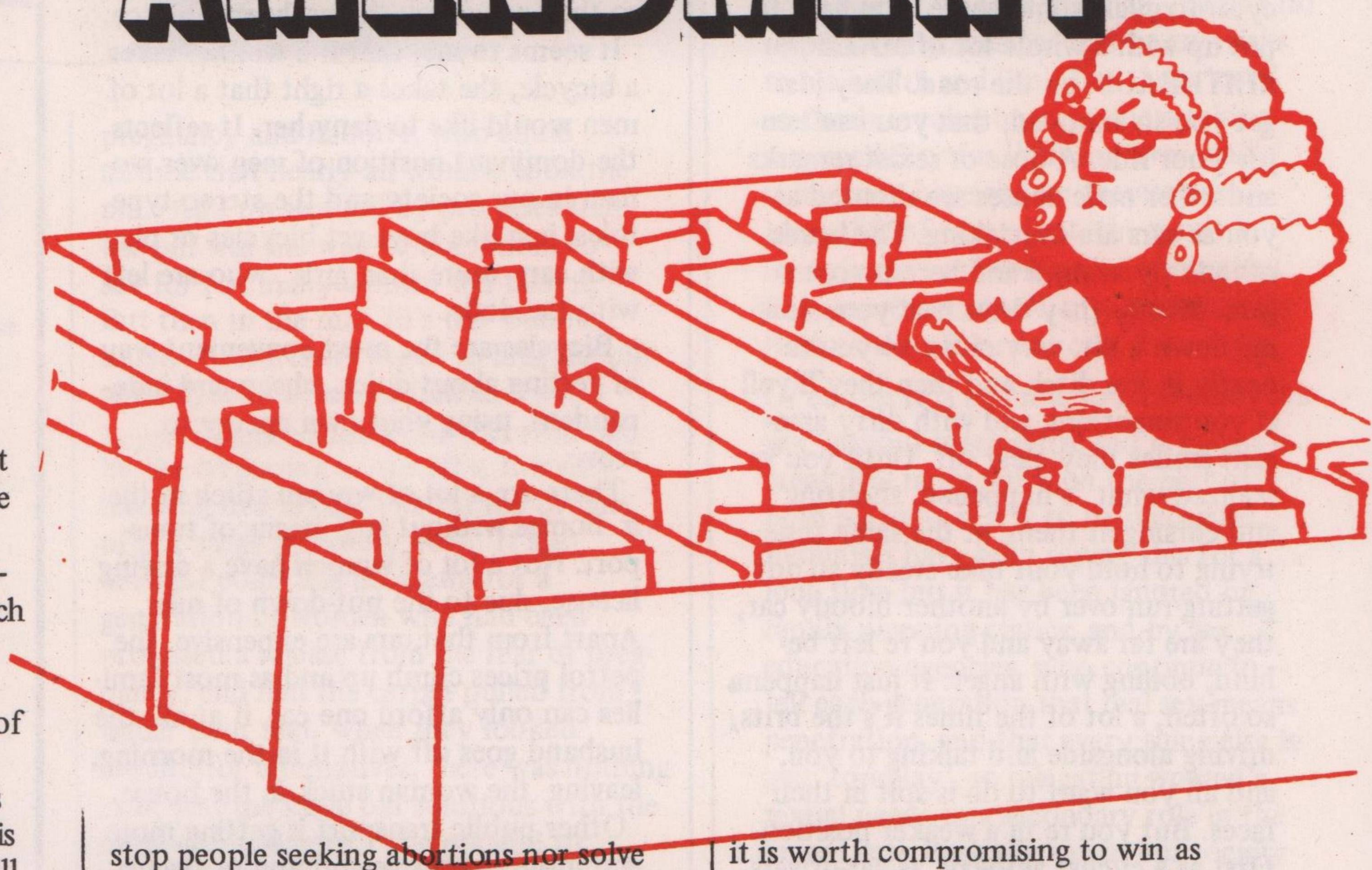
The exact terms of the proposed amendment itself are not available and need not be until 21 days before the actual referendum thus the more immediate implications of the Pro-Life amendment itself are not available and it is widely speculated that it would allow for no exceptions, even in cases where pregnancy severely threatens the woman's health, or in cases where pregnancy results from rape or incest. It also seems likely that there would be restrictions on the use of the IUD and morning-after pills as well as the forced closure of abortion referral clinics. Although abortion is illegal in Ireland and carries a prison sentence in the case of conviction, and despite the fact that at least 8,000 women travel to England each year for abortions, the anti-abortion anti-woman lobby have managed to get the three major political parties, Fine Fail, Fine Gael and Labour to capitulate to their demands. The fact that the amendment would do nothing to solve the problem of unwanted pregnancies and would not

stop people seeking abortions nor solve the social problems of inadequate sex-education and contraception does not deter the politicians who are deadly afraid of the slur of being called pro-abortion.

Those of us who view the amendment as unnecessary, costly and a severe infringement of our already very limited freedom are faced with a major battle. The anti-abortionists are very well organised, have a lot of money and, worse still, access to schools and more media coverage. Through sensationalising abortion and using emotive slogans they have won wide-spread support. They operate in an ugly insidious way, playing on the religious repression of people in general. The Right to Choose campaign, in contrast, is badly funded and divided on the issue of tactics for fighting the campaign. In effect, there are two shades of opinion. On one hand there are those who wish to fight against the amendment in itself but who also use it as an opportunity to emphasise that abortion should be a choice for women nor will we stop campaigning until it is won. On the other hand there are those who feel that the amendment would soap that campaign for abortion on demand and

it is worth compromising to win as broad a base of support as possible. To this end they wish to fight solely on the issue of the amendment -- that it is costly, unnecessary and will do nothing to stop women obtaining abortions wherever they could ect. An anti-amendment campaign then could draw in the more 'respectable' liberal groups and individuals who see the amendment as a waste of time but who are not necessarily pro-abortion. So there are now two campaigns: a Woman's Right to Choose campaign and an Anti-Amendment campaign. However the two groups will be sharing information and supporting each other.

Whatever happens in the next few months regarding the wording of the amendment one thing is certain, it will be a long and dirty campaign. Every fat-headed sodden bigot will be out screaming about murdered babies and heartless hussies but we will be out as well before and long after the referendum demanding the right to choose whether to have children or not trying to reclaim control of our bodies challenging all those who would try to stop us.



The Abuse You Take

-As a Woman Cyclist



If you are a woman and get on a bicycle to cycle somewhere, you have to put up with a whole lot of MALE SHITHEADS on the road. They just get you so annoyed, that you can't enjoy your ride. A dose of sexist remarks and other male abuses are shouted at you as cars are overtaking. The heads of men fly around and here it goes again. Mostly they drive past you, slowing down a bit, very close, so you're nearly in the ditch and then they'll yell at you something and with dirty arrogant smiles they clear off. Until you've realized what's happened, shouting and cursing at them, at the same time trying to hold your bike steady so not getting run over by another bloody car, they are far away and you're left behind, boiling with anger. It just happens so often, a lot of the times it's the Brits, driving alongside and talking to you, and all you want to do is spit in their faces. But you're in a weaker position. First as a cyclist anyway, as car-drivers tend to ignore you or drive you into the ditch as they seem to get blind towards cyclists. And secondly as a woman, being subject to all forms of male sexism.

The way men stare and shout at you, makes you sick and fed up on being on the road. The power some drivers gain behind a motor, being able to speed up, shows itself in their male arrogance and sexism towards you as a woman. It can drive you mad and you get dead frustrated. Why can men not mind their

own business and leave women alone, so they can enjoy themselves, for once.

It seems to me, that if a woman takes a bicycle, she takes a right that a lot of men would like to deny her. It reflects the dominant position of men over women in our society and the stereo-type roles; just like boys get bicycles or play with cars more than girls, who are left with the dolls.

Bicycles are the most convenient way of getting about quick, cheap and independent, using your own energy to move.

There are a lot of women stuck in their homes without any means of transport. Not a lot of women have a driving license, due to the put-down of men. Apart from that, cars are expensive, the petrol prices climb up and as most families can only afford one car, if at all, the husband goes off with it in the morning, leaving the woman stuck in the house.

Other public transport is getting more and more expensive and you're always dependent on a time-table.

Bicycles aren't solving all the transport problems, but they seem to have a lot of advantages over other ways of transport. And if men, through their male-chauvinism, want to deny women this basic right of freely moving about in a comfortable way, then I just wish, that more women would get the courage to come out on bicycles....

...(and down with all ruthless and sexist drivers and passers-by)...

LETTERS

Dear Sisters,

We have just finished writing and publishing a booklet inspired by this year's picket of Armagh Jail. It is called IMAGES FROM THE ARMAGH PICKET 1982.

Some of the women in the Manchester Women in Ireland Group who went to Ireland this March had visited the North before. For others it was their first visit. The bulletin starts with some of our impressions of being in Belfast and of talking to women living through the war. It includes an interview with a young woman from

Belfast: she graphically details how the struggles and hardships of the last 13 years have forced everyone to change. Most especially women.

This response is echoed in the statement from the women inside Armagh Jail. Also included are poems written by the prisoners a report on the picket and a summary of the position of women in Armagh Jail and in Limerick in the south.

The booklet also covers some aspects of women's struggles in the South of Ireland. Liz Noonan, who stood in the last Irish election and the previous one as a Lesbian Feminist candidate impressed and inspired us by the apparent ease with which she stood out for what she believed in. 'A woman's right to choose' is still a crucial demand in Ireland. One article looks at the facilities available and at the legal and political

KIDS BOOKS

There is another series of small picture-books of Emma's & Peter's adventures.

Titles as "Thomas bakes a cake", "Emma's workshop", "Thomas goes out" or "Different Peter and Emma" show the non-sexist approach to the books.

Emma's workshop is about Emma mending all her toys. Her doll's hair has to be glued back on again, a hole on the bear's leg has to be sown together and the pram needs the lost wheel fixed. It is shown that Emma is quite capable of doing all this and even taking hammer and pliers to fix the pram are no problem.

When Thomas bakes a cake, he is together with his father in the kitchen and the mother only appears at the end when Thomas presents her the cake. It is interesting to see how these books are trying to change the stereotyped attitudes portrayed in most other kids books. You don't see boy's cooking or girls with hammer and nails very often in children's books. The drawings are very simple, but colourful; so are the stories, taken mostly from everyday-life as kids, like going to school, the doctor, dentist or at playing and are very easy to identify with.

Emma and Thomas are very active kids able to play on their own, but having a lot more fun out of playing together.

I think the books are well worth investing in, esp. if parents are interested in non-sexist reading material for kids

Emma and Peter stories by Ginilla Wolde
Hodder&Stoughton about£1
available from Just Books



Very popular also among non-kids are the Meg and Mog books by Helen Nicoll & Jan Pientowsky. Meg is a lovable, sometimes overkeen witch, Mog her wee cat and there is Owl too.

These Puffin picture books are bright and bold in design. The pages are vivid with no unnecessary detail. The sentences are short and kids who can't yet read have been known to remember the stories and even big words like CATASTROPHY which spans 2 pages in 'Mog's' Mumps'.

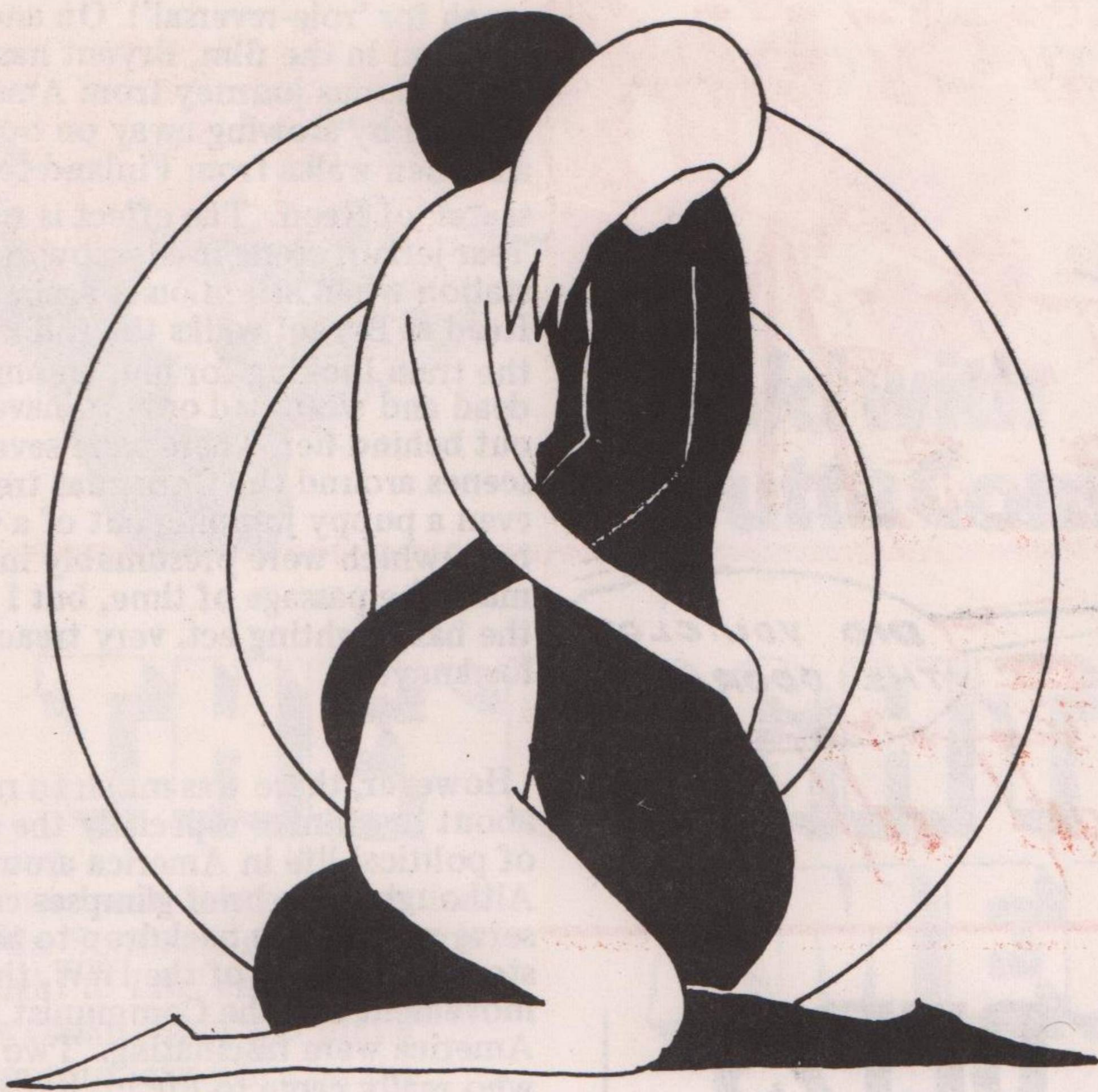
The first one in the series is "Meg &

position in the North and particularly in the South where SPUC and their allies are at present trying to ensure that a foetus has rights enshrined in the constitution of the Republic.

The bulletin Images from the Armagh Picket 1982 tries to draw these different strands together. The topics covered reflect the conversations that we managed to cram into one weekend. It is not intended to be a comprehensive report on all issues reflecting Irish women. We hope it is an easy read.

Available from Manchester Women in Ireland Group, Box 15, 164-166 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M43BN
Price 50p

CONTRACEPTION & SEX



Last year Mary reached thirty, and after nearly ten years on the 'pill' she decided the risks were just too great and so she began to look around for another method. She decided against the coil for many reasons, though mostly because of the dangers associated with that method also. Finally feeling she had no other choice she started to use a diaphragm. She wasn't very happy with it, as it was messy to use, it had to be inserted before every sex act, and then again if she and the man she lived with wanted intercourse more than once. The man wanted little to do with the diaphragm. Despite all the advice she got at the family planning clinic, that the diaphragm could be fun to use, that it could even be used as part of the foreplay to love-making, he wasn't having any of it and made it clear that he preferred Mary to insert the thing in the bathroom before sex. For Mary over a period of time this came to be like a wet blanket every time she wanted sex, she had to go off and insert this thing covered as it was in spermicidal grease. Finally one day she got so fed up and resentful that she announced that she wasn't using it anymore, and if he wanted to continue to have sexual intercourse with her he would have to take some responsibility and use condoms from now on. This caused a major row which lasted for several frustrated weeks, then he agreed to use durex, but complained bitterly every time because it cut down on his sensation. Their sex life became a battle ground.....instead of sex it was angry conversations.

Ten years previously when Mary had started on the pill it was 1972, and the pill was heralded as the liberation aid for the new society. It was a nearly 100% safe contraceptive, it only required remembering to take it every day, a painless process. It made sex easy, especially for men who no longer had to worry about the possibility of

pregnancy and liability, who could assume that nearly all women took the pill. And pressurised by promises that the pill was the way to liberation, to sex for fun many women did take it. But then in the mid-70's the bubble burst. Researchers began to link the pill with all sorts of major illness, they began to talk about women at risk, and by the beginning of the 80's, this new research had brought about the decline of pill usage by nearly 40%. It also brought countless problems for a generation of women who had been promised a release from the fear of pregnancy, and had the carpet pulled from under their feet, when they looked around for alternatives, there was nothing new, just the same old solutions with the same old problems. The pill and its promise was the product of a society obsessed with the high technology solution to its problems, like nuclear power it was a very complicated solution to what was in essence a fairly simple problem. Instead of all the benefits we were originally promised, we are now

asked to be adult about these so-called solutions and to weigh benefits up against risk, and to make the best of it. And of course if we don't wish to take the risk then we can return to the old methods and different sorts of risks.

Mary's then is not an isolated problem because the generation that began to take the pill in the 60's and 70's are now getting older just as those who are starting now will in turn be faced with the same problem in time. When it comes down to it the choice is between the diaphragm and the sheath, if safety is to be the main criteria. Like Mary though many women find that when they make their choice the men in their lives are unco-operative, and in fact many men have objected to what they see and feel as a barrier to sex - particularly when it comes in the form of a piece of latex rubber. It was alright when she was using the pill or the coil then sex seemed spontaneous - or at least it was for the man - he had no responsibility, neither had he any risks to his health and life. But these 'new' methods involve both partners taking responsibility for their sex lives, and many men have shown themselves incapable of doing that, the result in many cases has been a diminishing sex life, unprotected sex, or a return to the risks of the pill or the coil.

Of course it is possible to have enjoyable sex without intercourse but it means a great deal more work on the part of both partners if it is to be successful. Feminists have been saying this for a long time but it has been ignored by family planning clinics, and by sex education agencies, who continue to tell each generation that real sex means penetration, and that every thing else is just 'foreplay', so relegating women's sexual needs to a secondary role in the sexual act. Basically sex in our society stills revolves around male needs and demands, and as long as men control research and development, education, and the main means of communication, then the situation of women, and the fear of pregnancy and contraception will continue.

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Mog". The story and outcome are fairly typical with Meg's spells usually going wrong, but everyone making the best of things in the end. Meg awakens at midnight to go to a party with the local witches Tess, Bess, Jess and Cress. These are all identical to Meg apart from a distinctive hairstyle. She makes the spell carefully, but of course something goes wrong and the witches are left as mice with Mog chasing them.

From this we look to a more down-to-earth adventure "Meg's Veg", planting Vegetables.

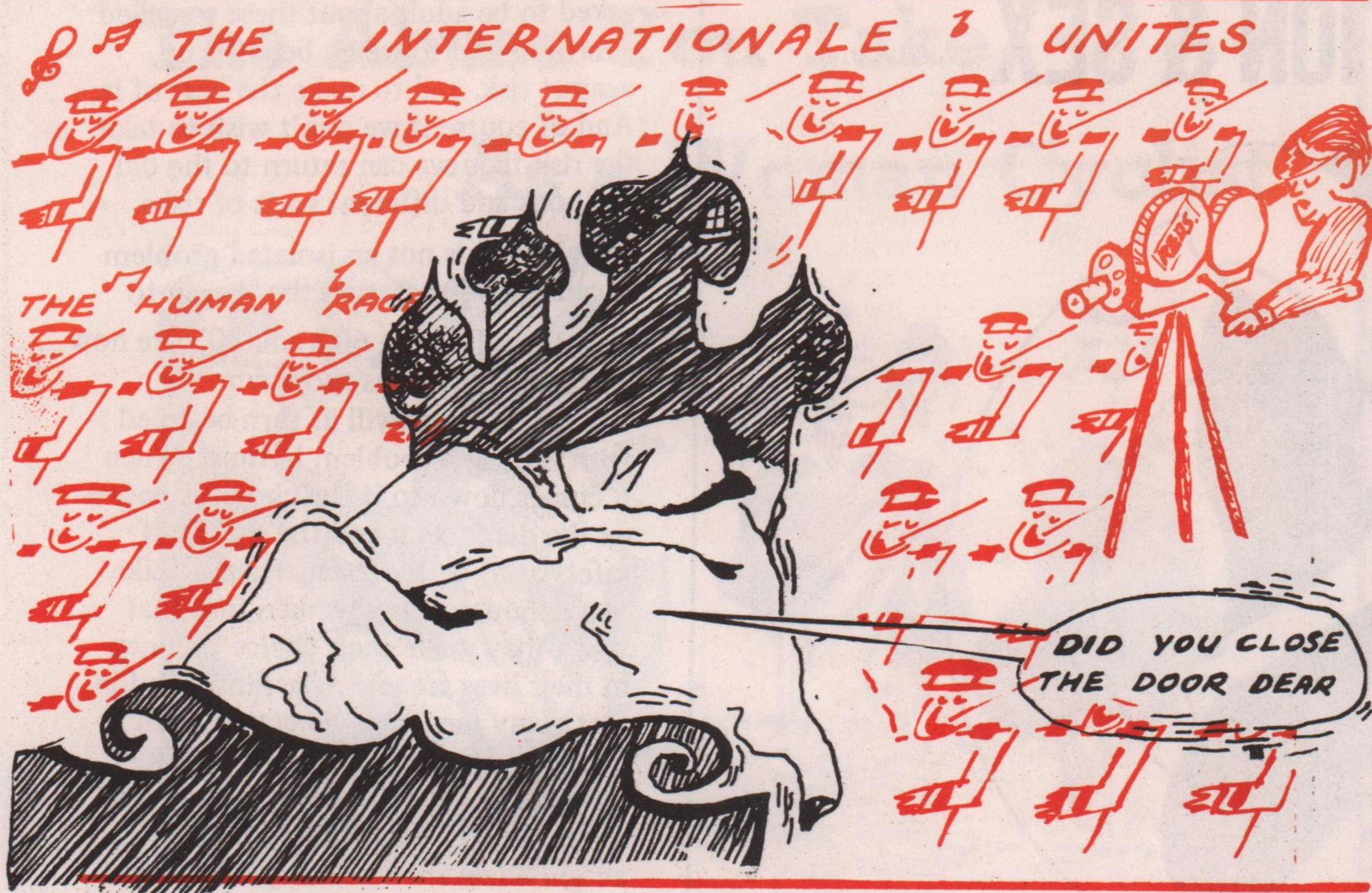
Great spell to make it grow with camel's hump sticking out of the cauldron. All 3 characters work to try and get results in the garden, Meg is complete with yellow wellingtons. There are two spells in this book, one for heat and one for rain. The result is a haywire garden with huge pumpkins, hundreds of

carrots and pages full of brightly coloured weeds. Children would love the escapades of Meg, Mog and Owl all trying to pull out the weeds.

Meg at sea is another adventure, showing how to survive on a desert island. There is a campfire, a hammock, a gangly octopus who provides some scary bits and a helicopter rescue.

At the end of each story, Meg, Mog & Owl squeeze on to the back page to say good-bye which is sometimes reassuring after the harrowing adventures. Other books include a birthday book for remembering friend's birthdays, "Meg on the Moon", "Meg's Car", "Meg's Egg's", and "Meg's Castle", so she is really a busy explorer, our Meg. Nice to see a witch portrayed as lovable, fallible and kind (she looks after Mog and Owl well).

The books cost about £1 and are the sort which would quickly become old favourites, being of a nice length (about 5 minutes to read) with lots going on.



cook. So the audience's attention is focussed on pots boiling over and burnt pans rather than on what Bryant is saying. So much for 'role-reversal'! On another occasion in the film, Bryant has made a long arduous journey from America to Finland by stowing away on board a ship and then walks from Finland to Russia in search of Reed. The effect is ruined by a 'tear-jerker' scene in Moscow railway station when attention is again shifted to Reed as Bryant walks the full length of the train looking for him amongst the dead and wounded only to have him step out behind her. There were several 'idyllic' scenes around the Christmas tree (with even a puppy jumping out of a Christmas box) which were presumably intended to mark the passage of time, but I found all the hazy lighting ect. very treacly and hackneyed.

However, there was much to recommend about the film — especially the glimpses of political life in America around 1917. Although these brief glimpses came to serve mainly as a backdrop to the love story, the scenes of the IWW, the anti-war movement and the Communist party of America were fascinating. Two characters who really came to life in *Reds* were Emma Goldman and Eugene O'Neill. Jack Nicholson's performance as Eugene O'Neill (with whom Bryant had an affair) was excellent and a refreshing change from his sinister roles in recent films such as *The Shining* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. The mood and feeling of the revolution were movingly evoked through scenes of discussions, meetings, strikers walking out and crowds marching with red banners, all to the music of the Internationale. However, the cuts to scenes of Reed and Bryant making love throughout this period (also to strains of the Internationale) seemed absurd, not to say narcissistic on Beattie's part. The technique of inserting short interviews with people who had actually known Bryant and Reed worked very well, lending a sense of realism and documentary to a film which for the most part, seemed unrealistic & fictional. Although the political content of the film is weak and sometimes inaccurate, *Reds* is worth seeing — even if only for the love story and its entertainment value.

REDS - IN THE BEDS

'Reds?' enquired one of the security staff at the cinema door after the usual search.

'Well, er, Anarchists actually', someone murmured by way of response as we followed the directions to the correct section of the cinema. And so, we settled down to watch this fairly long film dealing with the lives of Louise Bryant and John Reed and their experiences in Russia at the time of the 1917 revolution. At the end of the film I found my opinions very mixed: on one level the film was very colourful, moving and entertaining but I also felt disappointed. The film trivialised Louise Bryant, used clichéd scenes to stir emotion or to get a laugh and the main characters never became real people. There appeared to be two films within the one, that is the lives of Bryant and Reed as political figures and also the story of the love affair between the two and consequently the film as a whole suffered. It appears that the original script, written by

Trevor Griffiths, which emphasised the political aspect of their lives was altered during filming to develop the love story. Perhaps the film also suffered from the type-cast acting of Diane Keaton and Warren Beattie (who also directed) in the principal roles. Somehow they failed to put across the people they were portraying and frequently the film did appear to be about Annie Hall and the zany hair-dresser from *Shampoo*.

The treatment of Louise Bryant in *Reds* was very disappointing since her role was completely defined in terms of her relationship with Reed. We learned that she was a journalist but no prominence was given to her other work. Her own account of her experiences in Russia 'Six Red Months' is not even mentioned in the film nor is her book on the role of women in Russia. In fact, one of the few times when Bryant is allowed to speak of her work she is upstaged by a farcical clichéd scene where Reed is attempting to

IRISH WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Because abortion is illegal in Ireland, both North and South of the border, thousands of Irish women are every year forced to travel to London to have abortions. For many of the women who come it is their first time in London. Having to negotiate the London Transport system, doctors surgery and abortion clinic alone can be both difficult and frightening. Much more so when the woman concerned has found herself in this situation as a result of the insensitivity of a system which chooses to ignore her existence except as a mere statistic.

The Irish Womens Abortion Support Group was set up last October in

answer to the needs of isolated Irish women coming to London to procure abortions. It aims to offer emotional and practical support to these women. As well as the direct support offered it seeks to challenge anti-abortion sentiment among the Irish community in London and it supports NIAC and the Right to Choose Group in their campaign for legal abortion facilities in Ireland.

The Contact Number for the Irish Women's Abortion Support Group is:- 01 (outside London) 289 1123

INFO

The Northern Ireland Abortion Campaign meets on the first Wednesday of every month in the Women's Centre at 7.30p.m. All women welcome.

The Rape Crisis Centre telephone number is 49696.

UNITY MEETINGS.....

The next women's unity meeting will be held on the first Saturday in June in the Women's Centre at 11.00a.m. The theme will be women and their teenage children. There will be a creche at the meeting. The Women's Centre is at 18 Donegall St.

ENTERTAINMENT

The film ROSIE THE RIVETER will be shown in the Tech, Millfield on Thursday 13th May at 8pm.

The film is a documentary about the role American women played in the last world war and what happened to them after the war ended. The film has been followed around by rave reviews from those who have seen it. It is hoped to follow the film with a discussion and then a disco.

£1.00 waged 50p unwaged