JAN. '81 NO.11

News & Views of the churches... As Anarchists we oppose the authority and exploitation of this society, and advocate one of free association and self-management.

Belfast Anarchist Collective This paper comes out every 3-4 weeks and we welcome contributions, criticisms etc.

During December, the hunger strike for political status intensified, with more prisoners joining in and the original seven reaching a critical condition.

On December 1st, 3 women from the 28 on protest in Armagh began a hunger strike, not simply in solidarity with the 7 men in Long Kesh, but because of the logic of their own resistance. In their statement, they said, "For four years we have been refusing to work and conform to Britains criminalisation policy. Therefore we lost all privileges, and were locked up 23 hours a day. Now for the past 10 months we have had our endurance stretched to what we would have thought of before as being impossible. However, comradeship, and your unfailing support have been gifts to keep us sane."

Then on December 12th, 6 U.D.A. loyalist prisoners started a hunger strike calling for segregation from republicans, and political status. This lasted only 5 days when churchmen promised to take their case up. The prisoners threatened to resume the strike if the government refused to consider their demands. When the N.I.O. 'solved' the republican strike, they dropped any pretence of considering the loyalist case, so the ball is now back in their court.

On December 15th, 23 more republicans joined the hunger strike in Long Kesh, because of N.I.O. duplicity. The previous day, the N.I.O. sent a senior civil servant in to read from a prepared commons document, stating the governments position. The 7 men refused to have this done individually, and met in the canteen. When their spokesperson, Brendan Hughes, asked a few questions, the civil servant refused to answer. On December 16th, another 7 joined the strike.

December 18th. was a day of great confusion. The 7 hunger strikers called off their strike when Atkins offered them considerable concessions but which did'nt meet the demands of no uniform and no penal work. The proposals for work were sufficiently vague to allow for a certain optimism, but the prisoners were still expected to wear prison issue clothing for a quarter of the time. In a statement issued on the 17th, the prisoners said "....these proposals meet the requirements of our five basic demands" but the previous day had warned "that the failure of the British government to act in a responsible manner towards ending the conditions which forced us onto a hunger strike, will....lead to inevitable and continual strife within the H-blocks."



On the 19th, the women in Armagh came off their strike, and the 30 other republicans did likewise.

WHAT NOW?

In the 2 weeks since the ending of the strik -es, there has been both a sense of relief that no-one died, and the almost inevitable street confrontations were avoided, mixed with a wariness about the British governments intentions to fulfil their proposals.

Accounts from inside Long Kesh claim that those coming off the blanket protest were placed in clean cells with the old prison uniforms provided. These were thrown out and the blanket protest begun again. There are even rumours of another hunger strike starting again.

Only time will answer the following questions -will the N.I.O. implement their reforms; will the prisoners see them as enough; will a renewed hunger strike get the same support, and will it be of a different nature; will the loyalists also restart their hunger strike?

An important point is that any gains won by the republicans will benefit the whole prison population. The proposals are fairly vague but include more association, more scope for eduction (including self study) up to 20 hours a week; uniform only to be worn ¼ of the time; work to be based on the individuals needs as well as the prisons. The practical results have yet to be seen.

PRISON POTENTIAL

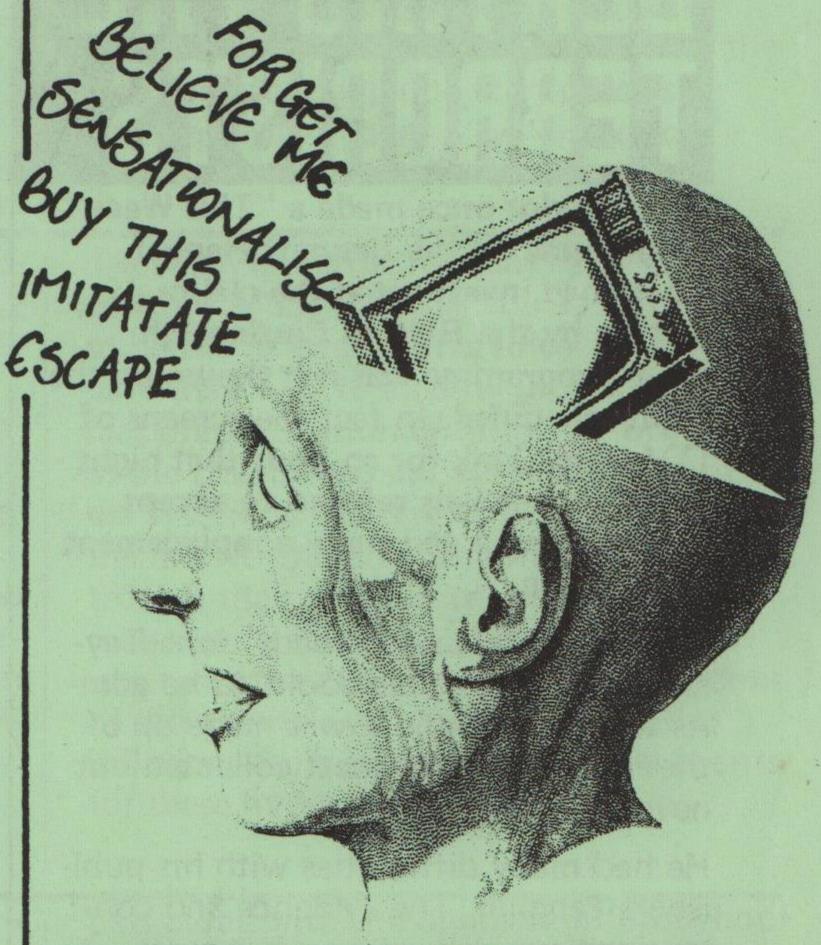
Local word has it that the southern government intends to build a new maximum security prison on the island of Owey, a mile offshore from the Rosses in Donegal. Over the past month, officials from the southern department of justice have visited the island twice, refusing to give their reasons for the visits. People in the area say that they believe that a survey is being carried out to determine the suitability of the island for a maximum security prison-almost certainly for prisoners convicted of political offences.

LEGAL DRUGS

5pence

As predicted in O.C. Ulster Television can continue to broadcast for the next 10 years until the next review of their licence This frigid little company, along with all the other tight-fisted commercial stations around Britain will continue to feed us their shit, designed to maintain the status quo and line the pockets of the chosen few.

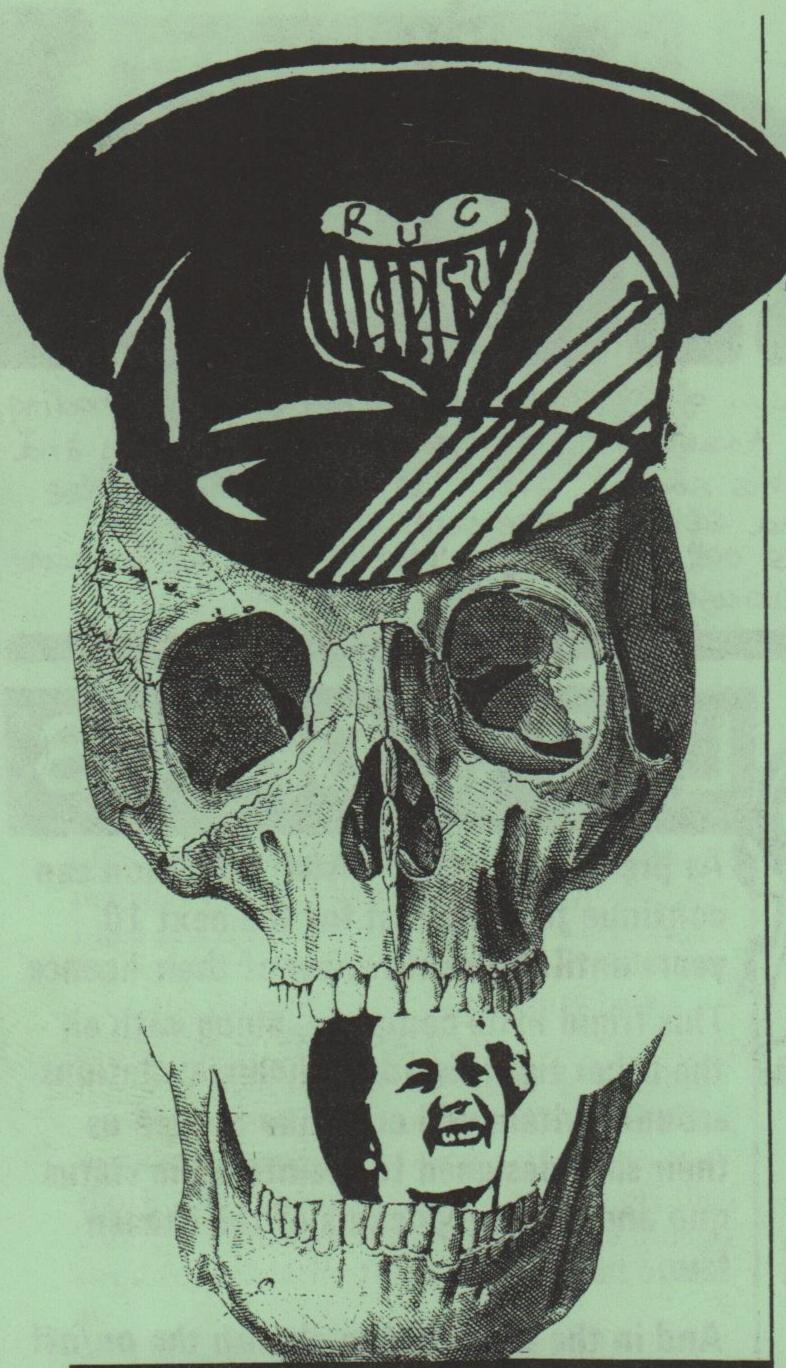
And in the latest hid to abolish the on/off switches we will soon be presented with breakfast-time TV shows.



RUC ESCAPE!

The first ever Police Authority tribunal into torture in N.I. got off the ground last month. James Rafferty alleged that in Gough Barracks between the 11th and 13th Nov. '76 he was punched, slapped, had his hair pulled and froced to do exhausting exercices. A doctor confirmed that the extensive bruising could not have been selfinflicted. And a member of the RUC, then a chief inspector, who had conducted an internal RUC enquiry, had been able to pin-point certain RUC interrogators as responsible. The DPP had received his file and the doctors report, but after 3 years still had given no direction to prosecute.

All ingredients were available for an embarassing conclusion for the RUC so on the second day when the RUC barrister asked Rafferty about his republican involvment and he reserved his right to refuse to answer, the RUC barrister walked out of the room. The chairperson continued with the tribunal and issued subpoenas for 29 RUC members to attend the tribunal. But the RUC put their case to the High Court and finally it squashed the subpoenas. Next day the tribunal had no option but to end, as there were no more witnesses. What its conclusions will be, and what effect they will have, time will tell. But the RUC can always claim that it was not impartial!



BEATING THE TERRORISTS

Peter Taylor once made a "This Week" programme on the Bennett Report, which had investigated the claims of torture by the RUC in Castlereagh. That programme was not shown on the night scheduled. In fact the screens of ITV were blank for an hour that night as the technicians refused to accept the censorship and show a replacement programme.

With much research already done Taylor began writing his book. As he admits towards the end it was made up of the information Bennett collected but never published.

He had many difficulties with his publishers Penguin. The evidence and conclusions not only prove what most people already know ie: that there was a systematic application of torture techniques to extract 'confessions'.

The introduction in the book is presumably the result of Penguin disquiet towards these revelations. It asserts there was no SYSTEMATIC torture; that a few RUC got carried away; and after all they were under intense pressure (being shot at etc). If Penguin hoped this would compensate for the rest of the book they were mistaken.

When the book was launched in Belfast, Taylor was made by Penguin to play the same game for radio and TV interviews. I am giving Taylor the benefit of the doubt here. He either thought these sacrifices were necessary and worth it to get the book published or he does not realise that he has contradicted 99% of the evidence of the book.

Taylor first explains the devlopment of a two pronged policy to defeat the IRA and other opposition to British rule here—'criminalisation' and 'primacy of police.'

'Criminalisation' was the attempt to

replace the internationally embarrasing internment with a form of judicial trial. The Diplock Commission's recommendations of a juryless court, the admission of 'confession' as evidence, and the reversal of the onus of proof of torture were implimented and became "due process of law"

The "primacy of the police" was to help portray the political conflict here as a problem simply of "law and order" The R.U.C. established three interrogation centres—Gough in Armagh, Strand in Derry and most notoriously Castle-reagh in Belfast. They also increased their number of patrols, surveillance and armaments. Four new regional crime squads were established. Their role was to be as flexible as the IRAs Active Service Units, and to carry out interrogations.

The new policies had new people at the top. The GOC was House, the Chief Constable was Newman, and the Secretary of State a certain Roy Mason.

In the new legislation which covered the Diplock Courts, Section 6 allowed for the admissability of 'confessions'. When it was challenged in May 77 Lord Justice McGonigle interpreted the Act in a judgment which became known as the 'torturers charter'-inhuman treatment had to cause SEVERE suffering, torture was an AGGRAVATED form of inhuman treatment, and degrading conduct had to GROSSLY humiliate! Incidently a Directive from the Chief Constable in July 76 had stated that the judges rules on questioning of suspects, referred only to interviews and not interrogations!

So the interrogators zealously set about their work. Mav/June '77 and Feb/ March 78 were the two highest periods for alleged assault. By no coincidence the period of the Amnesty International mission to enquire into torture and their final report 7 months later were the 2 periods of lowest allegations. On the occasion of the Bennett Report the RUC also played a low profile.

There is methodical coverage of many cases—of those who were convicted despite evidence of torture (Judge Rowland had the worst record) and of those who were released because of this evidence at the trial (there were in fact many who couldn't be brought to trial because of the obvious degree of the beatings).

To release someone whose defence was that s/he was beaten implies that many RUC interrogators could have been charged. But the judges kept their jobs by taking up a recurring theme—there was no torture. But the confession was 'induced' and so excluded as evidence.

If the evidence of beating was overwhelming then a new line was taken. When Patrick Fullerton was released without charge from Castlereagh in July 77 he took the RUC to court for assault. The magistrate McLaughlin, had to admit that there was assault but he did not know by whom, because of the large number of interrogators involved. Five detectives walked free! In fact not one member of the RUC has ever been convicted for assault.

The most serious incident was the death of Brian Maguire, a shop steward from Andersonstown. The RUC alleged that he committed suicide but

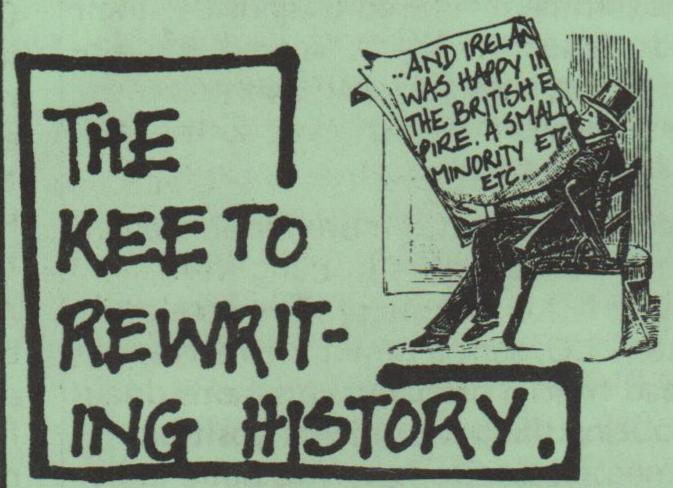
the common practise of 'throttling' suspects is well known in Northern Ireland., and well documented in the book. As Brian's mother said ... "I think they (RUC) went a bit too far with him".

One of the main mistakes of the RUC was to ignore complaints from police surgeons that no explanation was forthcoming as to the injured condition of the many people they received for examination after interrogation. Dr. Elliot operated from Gough barracks, and Dr. Irwin from Townhall Street in Belfast who recieved suspects from Castlereagh.

Taylor methodically covers the cases they came across and explains the doctors' frustrations at being ignored. The Police Authority also took up several cases but even they were given the run around by the C.C.Newman. Just before the British governments Bennett Report was due for publication Dr Irwin agreed to an interview with Mary Holland on ITV's 'Weekend World'. He feared the Bennett Report would not be extensive enough nor give any context. But immediately a smear campaign against him began. Whitehall leaked a story to the Daily Telegraph alleging that Irwin had a grudge against the RUC because they had failed to catch the man who had raped his wife in '76. The 'dirty tricks' tactic failed and even rebounded on Whitehall.

The peak of tortures have not been repeated, but the policies which lead to them, and the practice, continues. Dr Irwin and Dr Elliot left their jobs and more cooperative doctors replaced them.

An interesting postscript is one detectives admission to Taylor. He keeps all his interview notes in case there were ever to be, at some distant date, a war crimes tribunal.



Anyone who begins the series "Ireland: a Television History" with the statement about "telling the truth about Ireland" is immediately suspect!

Kee could have, at least, said the truth as he saw it. There are different ways of looking at history. We are told of the exploits of kings, the queens and the leaders and rarely a mention of the "common" people's continual struggle to survive and challenge their oppressors.

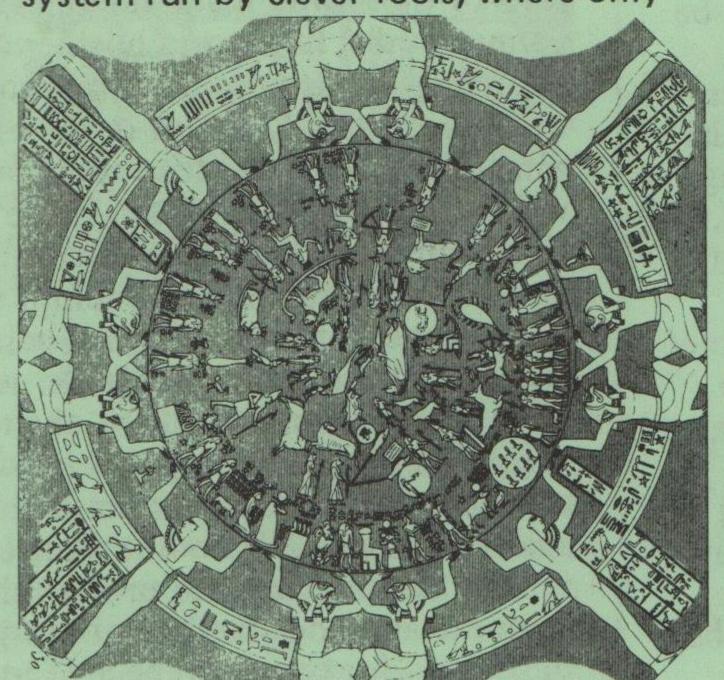
And by opening the series in the sensationalist way by saying that all the Irish welcomed the Queen's Jubillee visit and then SUDDENLY in Easter 1916 there was an insurrection against the British must be taking those pro-Brit school history books too far. What about Maud Gonne, James Connolly, Jim Larkin and the thousands of others during that period who were continually struggling to boot the Brits out?

ITTEES EL DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE BY THOSE CONCERNED IR. NEIGHBOURS IN AM PREA, WOMEN ON ABORTION, NORKERS IN A FACTORY

THE DOLE

The dole queues are getting bigger and bigger.....many more women, kids straight from school, people who have known nothing else, and people just now being made redundant....things are bad indeed when those considered Protestant now line up once a week (or once a fortnight) with their 'Catholic' counterparts. The dole is a lot of things to a lot of people but one thing it could be is a sizeable handout for just your signature's work... if seen from this angle it doesn't have the trappings of guilt, the scroungers-status that some would like us to feel (to force us off the dole).

The true aspect is a weekly handout, a compensation for having to live amidst a system run by clever fools, where only



The new social security code, used to determine a claimant's rates.

the interests of the possessed are protected..the dole, though doesn't conjure up such happy thoughts in most heads-its a soul destroying experience for many, laden with years of guilt trips about sponging. It would appear that even self respect is lost if we are not working 5, 6 or 7 days a week for some institution or employer that cares only what your time can create for them. The dole tries to strip us of our dignity, our stature as human beings. Last week in Shaftesbury Square in Belfast a middle aged man was told off for "getting his signing on card grubby"....every week rain or snow we are made to stand outside and wait until the last second before we get the privilege to queue up inside at our box...no prams inside the building...please keep your children under strict control reads the supervisers sign, speaking volumes about where they are at! The dole is the STATE at work, an inhuman, cold, bureaucratic network that is used to frighten people out of any workplace militancy...'the more strike the more unemployment' runs the current lie(and suitably dulled people are queueing to join even the RUC, UDR and prison service rather than go on the bru.) And new rules and regulations this week make SS even more offensive to those who rely solely on their handouts...

At a time when police pay has risen over 55% in under a year and a half, the dole is to be no longer index linked to the cost of living which could make next year's increase as low as nothing!! The N.I. Supplementary Benefits Commission responsible for overseeing SS operations

is being abolished and replaced by a central UK body, centred in England with one NI representative (a Methodist minister!). In one sense, the disappearance of the NI SBC is no loss-it was they who upped the number of special fraud investigators and doubled prosecutions for those not playing by their rules. This new Central UK body will act like that other frightening institution—the court system with our payments based on rules (legality) as decided by London bureaucrats. The area of need no longer applies ...it becomes an area of 'right to benefit' with a list of bureau principles and rules decide just who can get what-the need of the claimant disappears in an attempt to make the dole fit mass processing. Any 'Discretion' is now abolished. Likewise the PDA becomes more efficient and even though the total amount per week is reduced, all the state agencies, gas, electricity, rent and rates can get their arm into you. And for those who do not do as they are told, social workers can now withhold your money if you don't budget properly.

And the result of it all? More people will be forced to fiddle and do the double—nothing wrong with that if you do it with joy in your heart and are not caught. Unfortunately though it is going to mean real hardship for many...real distress, depression, more valium, more despair as the STATE increases its hold on our well being. Maybe, just maybe it will allow the free time for people to start organising themselves to change a system which gives us the dole in the first place.

SOFT COPS

Since Thursday 9th October, a course "The Community and Crime" has been running in the extra mural department of Queens University. It is jointly organised by the Probation Service and NIACRO. (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders).

Normally I wouldn't pay much attention to a course for middle class do gooders (the last evening ends with a wine and cheese party) but I happened to hear the plug for the class on Radio Ulster. Apart from members of the Judiciary and the Probation Service, we were told, the list of guest speakers would include 'articulate ex prisoners'.

The phrase 'articulate ex prisoners' is an unconscious revelation of the professional social workers view of their clients. They seem to be saying and passing on the prejudice to their next generation of recruits, that people in conflict with the law are monosyllabic social inadequates who have nobody to blame but themselves for their problems. Such a Victorian view of wrongdoers is of course a load of crap. Being an ex prisoner myself I know that most non political inmates become expropriators as a response to harsh social conditions which condemn them to a soul destroying existence on the dole. So I went along to the initial lecture to see the middle class indoctrination process at first hand.

While I had known that the course was ostensibly designed for those interested in voluntary social work I felt altruism would'nt be the only motive that would

make people attend. In that I wasn't wrong. The class, numbering about 25, fell into two groups. The majority were students who seemed predestined for careers as social workers. Some even admitted as much. They at least had inexperience and good intentions as an excuse. Not so, the second smaller group., which wouldn't have been out of place at a Tory Law and Order debate. Although they were reticent about their motives it seems they were more concerned with personal advancement than the welfare of society's rejects.

There are three paths into a career in social work or the probation service, a

degree, A levels or 'relevant experience':
It was obvious that this course was going to be the 'relevant expereince' that would pave their way to a cushy job for life. The fact that Probation Officers are 'officers of the courts' and are as much a part of the system as the screws in Long Kesh or the interrogators in Castlereagh won't trouble their conscience unduly. Its a melancholy fact that as Thatcher conscripts more unwilling recruits into the ranks of the unemployed in her fight against inflation, the numbers of potential clients for these hypocrites will mushroom.

Only one rig left to go!

The Donegal Co. Council have had another monthly decision to do something about stopping uranium exploration..... though the councillors with sizeable share investments in P. Hughes' Companies have somehow managed to thwart anything being actually done about it. Not surprisingly, the task of getting the mining companies out has been left to the local people themselves...those who have most to loose from the international speculators. Latest news is that Tara Exploration (tied up with P. Hughes private family trust) has pulled out altogether, and Northgate (again chaired by P. Hughes) is to run down its operations. And another of Hughes' companies, Anglo-United, have substantially reduced their committment, with only 3 workers and one rig left to go.

So why do they seem to be pulling out now? The local opposition is certainly much greater than they could ever have anticipated, and this is playing a large part along with the opposition throughout the rest of Ireland.... but the very nature of the nuclear industry (and uranium exploration/mining in particular) will always mean such sporadic ups and downs. Uranium exploration/mining is based on upping share-prices, EEC grants the price of and demand for uranium on the world market.... with enough nuclear armaments to kill us all 1000 times over, and enough nuclear waste literally lying around to do the same, the rush for even more uranium has slowed somewhat.

As Anglo-United themselves say...
they are temporarily running down...
"in view of the current world-wide
circumstances affecting the short-term
prospects for uranium". Demand for
uranium and hence the return of AngloUnited and friends to Donegal will
depend on people like mad-Reagan pushing us all even faster than Carter towards
oblivion.

The uranium grabbers with their false promises of jobs and community welfare will be back when it suits THEM.....this much they say. What they don't say, (but won't forget) is that the real feeling against them will not disappear in their absence!

SUPPORT DURING HUNGER STRIKE

LETTER FROM A FREND IN LONDON-R.

Though support activity in London seems to have gathered some more momentum in the past week or so, it has so far stayed within the traditional leftist milieu. I went on the Nov. 15th March a few days after returning from a week in Belfast-and upon seeing the banners of 52 irrelevant Trotsyite sects among the marches I knew I was really home. In Belfast, I had just observed a situation in which support for the hunger strikers and their demands took the form of direct community based action against the state. While I was not expecting precisely that sort of 'scene' in London at the moment, the ritualistic quality that has usually afflicted leftist events still came as a shock: the various groupuscules dust off their banners, exchange newspapers, take a Sunday stroll for solidarity followed by a pint of real ale.

There has been some recent improvement, perhaps because of the increased urgency of the situation. The second national march was a bit more energetic, particulary as we entered Kilburn. (The police already in copius supply seemed to have increased in numbers and heaviness at this point). Local Troops Out chapters and ad hoc groups have been initiating action in their areas, and on December 10th the Central Polytechnic was occupied for a few hours. Needless to say, this sort of action should not be restricted to universities, but applied to department stores, banks, city streets and underground stations. Turn outs for various demonstrations will tend to be low and dispirited unless action is taken and information, where people actually are when possible with some creative disruption of the daily social and economic relations of which the H Blocks, torture and the British occupation are extensions.

The demand for political status has caused some controversy among British anarchists, given the view that all prisoners are political. Questions regarding the relation of republicanism and nationalism to an autonomous class movement have also been raised. While these issues won't be resolved easily, many anarchists have taken up at least critical support. A leaflet put out by some people in Rising Free (an anarchist/libertarian communist bookstore in London) points out that the demand for political status relates to the specifically political nature of the prisoners detention. "This may be no excuse for limiting these demands to 'political prisoners' far less is it an excuse for not supporting these prisoners at all.....Revolutionaries in Britain, the source of the military and administrative apparatus in the six counties have a direct responsibility to confront the British state and support the Irish working class"

For some time, a group of anarchists have been going on the marches and doing graffitti. Two were recently arrested for painting a brief, succinct "letter to the editor" supporting the hunger strikers on the Sunday Times building. A week after the anarchist 'decorators' had their encounter with the law, two other activists busted for graffitti in the same area were held for two days and threatened with the PTA when one tried to call a solicitor (some indications of how the authorities will be dealing with increased activity in England against the H Blocks) In addition to such artistic pursuits, London anarchists have organised a showing of the Belfast Anarchist Collectives video tapes at which further action will be planned.

MORE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Over the past few months, and particularly since the beginning of the hunger strikes in Long Kesh and Armagh prisons, many people have felt the need to define for themselves the terms 'criminal' and 'political', in relation to prisoners.

Republican, as well as some loyalist prisoners have been struggling since 1976 for a restoration of political status, removed by the then secetary of state, Roy Mason. This was a psychologically motivated move to label those people convicted of consciously political acts as 'criminals'. The reasoning behind this move should be clear—any person, or group of people who attack in any way an established order are labelled as being criminals-'social deviants', unreasoned people committing certain acts for their own personal gain, be it spiritual or financial, psychopaths with no regard for the welfare of the rest of society. The British government attempted to hide the fact that they were, and are still engaged in a war, in opposition to a group representing the aspirations of a different political force, with their own political programme. These 'criminal' laws are used against these people, and those who offer any threat, on any level, to the present six county state.

Although we disagree on many levels with the means and eventual aims of Sinn Fein, we see that it is perfectly clear that anyone, who, in any way (ideologically/physically) attempts to undermine the existence of a given state, it's laws, it's repression, it's benefactors intrests, is going to be labelled

as being a 'criminal'.

The fact that many people who committ political (in the states mind, criminal) acts are not conscious of having done so, or of the political nature of their crime, is important. Many of us automatically accept that people who are imprisoned for crimes of shoplifting, robbery, vandalism, violence against security forces, fiddling social security, electricity meters and other property/authority related crimes that you can think of, are criminals. Yet when we look at the circumstances under which many of these acts are committed, we can see that they are political. Capitalism breeds wealth for a priviliged few, and poverty for many. The vast majority of people are deprived from birth, deprived of an adequate education, deprived of an adequate environment in which to develop. Instead, we are given the minimum, what we are told we need. We are taught to accept that the possibilities of a better existence are non-existent(except, if we are good, a better life in heaven). These, and a combination of other factors lead to us being labelled as failures at an early age. It's a fact that in our present system only a few may become successes, and the rest of us are destined to be 'failures'. Economy demands that a few will fill the positions of bank managers, technologists, state bureaucrats etc. and that the rest will become the unskilled, low paid, unemployed, housewives- many times subordinated-failures, preferably with a sense of guilt about our position in society. It becomes a necessity for a lot of people to shoplift in order to fill the plate at dinner time, to

clothe the children and fulfill our basic

needs of existence. Theft takes place on

many levels, and often is very individualistic. Working class homes are broken into and burgled by people who, in spite of their need, cannot distuinguish between the real enemies, and those who are in the same position of need. Nonetheless, when people are inprisioned for being so antisocial as to try to steal from the right sources, they are automatically, and effectively criminalised. It is also anti-social, or counter revolutionary, as the rantings of the media would have it, to strike for a better wage which is, for many, necessary in order to survive, a danger to Britain, Poland or wherever— a danger to the intrests of those who make the rules. Many young people, in a world hostile to their unpriviliged existence, destroy property which, realistically, is not in their intrests, which isn't theirs and forseeably never will be. Besides, there is very little else to do in a high rise state of existence. Of course we cannot support or attempt to justify all crimes, but we do have a basic understanding of the conditions under which these acts are committed (eg. the role of the patriarchy, stereotyped attitudes towards sex roles, and the resultant violence against women). We do not want to justify such acts, we want to prevent them, to promote an understanding of our position in society, for people to be able to identify who the real criminals are.

"50 LONG AS THE MAJORITY"?

The British Cabinet papers on Anglo-Irish Relations from 1948 to '49 were made public this year. One of these (CAB128 /32) showed that the Labour Cabinet under PM Atlee agreed with the statement of the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Norman Brook.....

'So long as Eire owes no allegiance to the crown and is not a member of the Commonwealth, . . . some part of Ireland should remain, because it is essential for strategic reasons, within His Majesty's Dominions. . . . It will never be to Great Britain's advantage that N.I. should become part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree to this even if the people of N.I. desired it.'



If someone says they're an anarch what does that mean? Attaching the label is easy ... as we don't organise as a Party or issue membership cards who can judge who is or isn't a member of the movement? If I said I was a conservative or communist or whatever I'd have a card to prove it. They only way to judge whether someone is an anarch is by their actions... unfortunately most of the people who claim the anarchist label in England never do anything beyond lifting a pint glass to their mouths, so how can we know if they are what we understan stand by the term?

Phil, HMP Long Lartin.