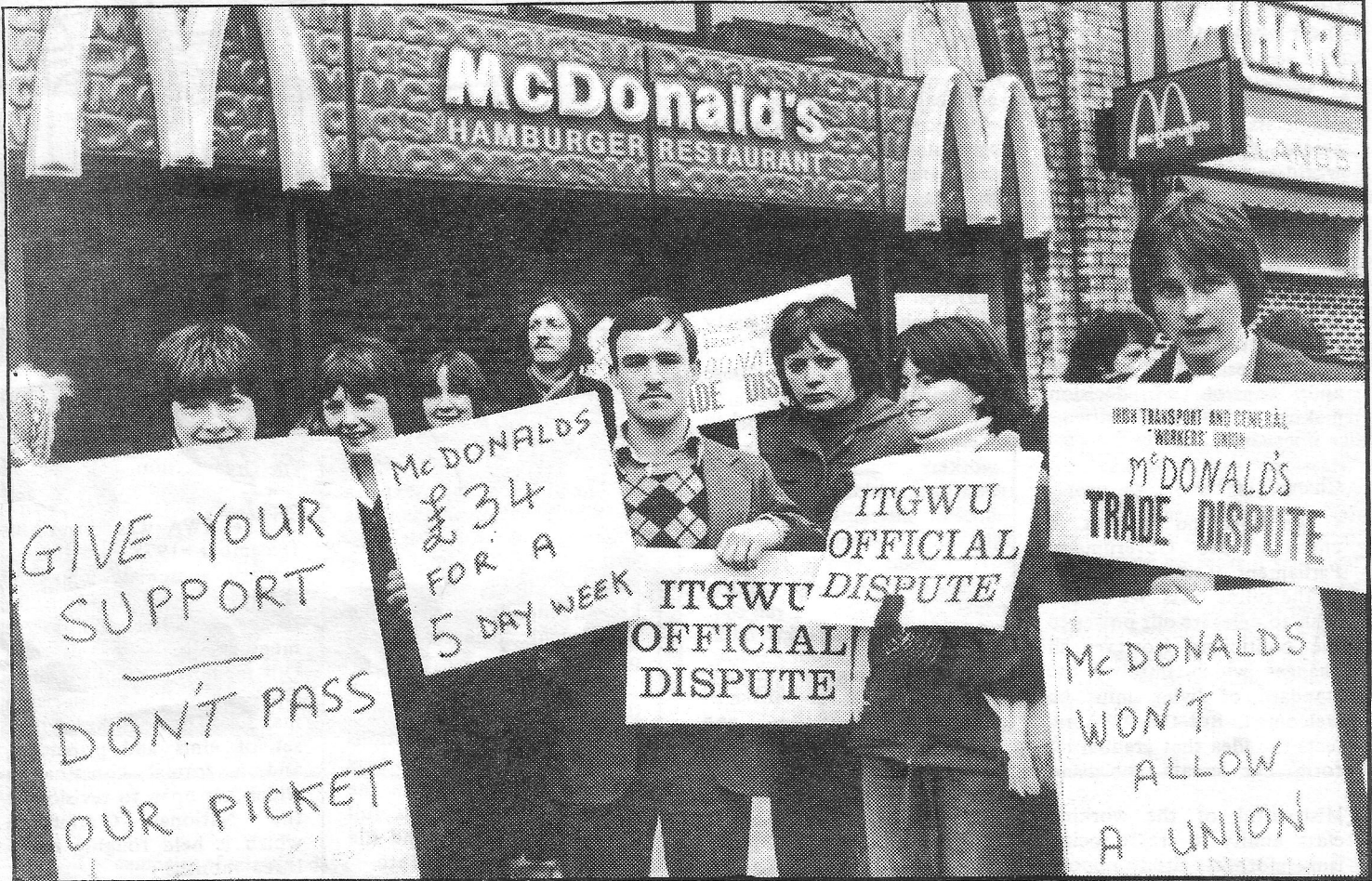


No. 1

15p

MAY— JUNE 1979

Anarchist Worker



Don't be a scab for a bag of chips

STOP PRESS (MAY 2nd) As we go to press at least nine people who have been helping out on the picket line at McDonalds have received visits from the special branch. This can not be seen as anything other than an attempt by the authorities to scare off active support for the strikers. Members of the AWA held a collection on the Dublin May Day march for the McDonalds strikers — which raised just over £200. Again the state stepped in and two members had their names taken by the gardai. It appears that they will be charged with making an "illegal" collection.

FOR STORY SEE PAGE 4

What is the AWA?

Anarchism is the most misunderstood political theory in the whole of the English language. Despite what the newspapers, politicians and bosses may say it does not mean chaos, disorder or mayhem.

It means something quite different, it means a society without bosses, without a ruling class. A society where the working class run economic and social life through their own democratic workers councils, in their own interests.

We believe that the working class, the people who create the wealth of the world, are quite capable, when armed with political insight, of overthrowing capitalism and creating a free socialist society. A society run by a co-ordinated network of workers councils using modern communications to ensure total exposure and control of decision making.

Change the Laws

We have no interest in changing the Government. Parliament is an instrument of the ruling class. We do not wish to delegate our power to the politicians. However all changes which improve the standard of living must be welcomed. But the AWA rejects the idea that gradual reform can create socialism.

Mistrustful of the working class' ability to create socialism, reformists firmly oppose independent grass roots activity. This plays into the bosses hands. The most obvious case of this was the suppression of strikes and occupations of the Allende Government in Chile. Then with the workers weakened and unarmed, the military remove its 'liberal and democratic' mask and seized power. The parliamentary road to socialism of Allende has been swamped with workers blood. Why should we trust a small group of politicians to run our lives, why should we want to.

No to the Party Dictatorship!

The AWA condemns all attempts by revolutionary groups to seize power in the name of the working class. These groups (Leninists) regard the working class as only capable of a low level of

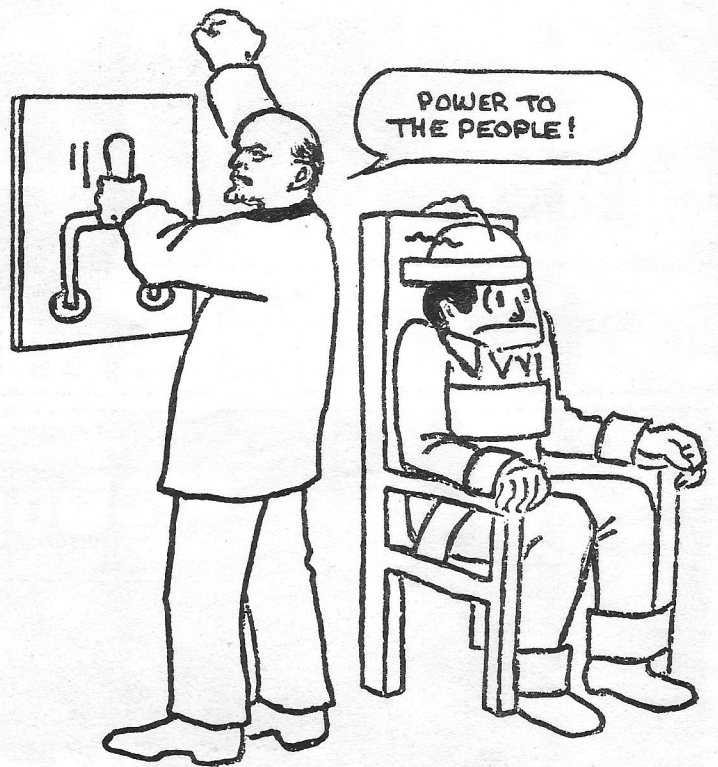
political understanding, usually termed 'trade union consciousness.' Therefore they see themselves at the head of the class (the vanguard). They will lead the class into socialism! This servile relationship between party and class is mirrored in the internal dictatorship within the party bureaucracy.

Whenever any of these vanguards has managed to seize power it has resulted in the crushing of all real workers democracy as the new ruling class tighten their hold on the reins of power.

So what is to be done?

The working class, unwilling to shoulder the burden of bankrupt capitalism and rejecting the party "solution," must create its own grassroots organisations. This, not forming new unions or breakaway unions, it is the building of rank and file groups within the unions which can by-pass the bureaucracy in pursuit of class interests. Rank and file groups with cross communication and decision making, co-operation and acts of solidarity will be natural developments as the struggle progresses.

In this way a united working class can be achieved, as confidence is built through action. The open and democratic manner of such a movement will have a dramatic effect on everyday life. People will for the first time make real decisions affecting themselves and their lives. However this development will only be fully realised with the total overthrow of capitalism and the creation of anarchism.



"Socialism equals soviets plus electrification" (Lenin)

What We Do

The AWA aims to explain anarchism within the working class, we believe that it is essential that revolutionary anarchist ideas be widely known and discussed if any meaningful change is to take place in society.

To this end we publish this paper and work within working class organisations advocating direct workers power. We work within the unions, (though not as full time officials), rank and file groups, womens groups etc.

The Organisation

The AWA was formed in December 1978 by revolutionary anarchists who saw the need to organise in order to be effective. We are a membership organisation. Our members accept the principal of collective decision making. There is an agreed set of aims and principals, and a formal constitution which are open to revision at the National Conference which is held roughly every three months.

**Want
to find out
more about us**
For more information about the Anarchist
Workers Alliance contact a local member
or write to us at Box AWA,
7, Winetavern Street,
Belfast 1.

JACK SAID HE WOULD GET THE COUNTRY BACK ON ITS FEET - HERE WE ARE!



When the Government met the farmers at the end of February and agreed to drop the 2% levy on farm produce, they could have had little idea of how industrial workers would react. Workers were already pissed off with paying the lions share over taxation while the professionals farmers and companies paid what can only be called a pittance. Not to mention the dropping of the Wealth Tax and the Capital Gains Tax. A classic example of the rich paying damn all is that of Roadstone, one of the biggest profit makers in the country. In 1977 they paid only £15,000 out of pre-tax profits of £11,600,000. This brought their accumulated tax debt to over £22,000,000 yet they received an I.D.A. hand-out of £4 million.

demonstration in Dublin for over 60-years. All over the country there were strikes and marches, including one of 40,000 in Cork.

Throughout all this the bureaucrats of the ICTU, ITGWU, WUI and the executive of the Dublin Trades Council tried to dampen feelings and divert the protest into the useless cul-de-sac of a "national petition". These leaders, or to be more accurate bosses stooges, got their answer on March 20th when they had to support the strike if they were to save face. Only the ICTU maintained its total opposition, preferring to go off and try to draw up a new National Wage Agreement with the Government. Or "national understanding" as they want to call it — the name doesn't matter it's still wage restraint.

The ordinary worker was totally pissed off with this situation and the ball was started rolling by the Howth workers who went out on a half-day strike on March 1st. The rank and file in all the unions were calling for action. Marches took place all over the country, bringing out huge numbers of trade unionists. The Dublin Trades Council called a one day general strike for March 20th and more than 150,000 workers responded to the call by walking out of their workplaces and joining the demonstration. This was the biggest working class

However the important question was never answered. What is our tax money to be spent on? If it's left to the government it will probably go on such "necessary" items as prison building, IDA handouts, increasing the strength of the Gardai and other such crap. Should we not make it very clear that we want our money to be spent on really necessary projects like housebuilding, health, welfare services and education. Tax hell out of the rich but don't just let them use the money to strengthen their own system.

The campaign of selective days of strike action by the Post Office Workers Union in pursuit of the 37% plus pay claim quickly turned into an all-out national strike. Militant POWU members, especially in the Dublin outdoor branch and in Tralee, pushed for a strike that would be effective and got it. This was a kick in the teeth for the union bureaucrats who didn't really want to do anything other than engage in a brief period of shadow boxing with the Government. This strike is important because it is for a real increase in wages, not for the all too usual 2% - 5%. It also gives a lead to other public service workers who have been held back for years by wage restraint and tame union officials. You can help the post office workers by seeing that the company you work for does not use the services of the blackleg 'courier' firms which have sprung up to make a very profitable killing and to weaken the strike.



black the 'couriers'

DON'T VOTE- IT ONLY ENCOURAGES THEM

Electing a representative every four or five years and then letting him or her do as they please doesn't sound very democratic to us. Most of us have at some time or other voted for a politician who has promised more and better housing but the waiting lists get longer all the time while building workers go on the dole. That's just one example. So some would say we need better or more honest politicians. But it is not a question of how honest or how socialist they are, once they are in power they get caught up in the system. Even if a government of good, honest, socialists was elected they would soon find out who really held power when they tried to bring about major changes in the economy. Once the profits of the capitalists are hit they will show how little respect they have for the

Anarchists have always been against parliamentary elections, not because we are against democracy but rather because we are fully in favour of it. This seems to be a contradiction. How can we be against government elections and yet believe in democracy.

The type of democracy we believe in is where ordinary working class people control the whole of society, the factories, offices, yards, schools, housing estates and hospitals. Where they exercise this power through their own workers councils and assemblies. Where there are no bosses or leaders, no politicians making a living out of "representing" us. With the development of



**IF VOTING COULD CHANGE
THE SYSTEM... IT
WOULD BE AGAINST THE LAW!**

"democratic institutions". They will try anything to regain their power as in Chile in 1973 when the bosses and the C.I.A. got together and organised a military coup against the liberal Allende Government.

The European and local elections are coming up and the parties are all out, most of them for the first time since the last election, promising the sun, moon and stars. Who should you vote for? We would suggest that you don't bother at all.

modern communications it is no longer a utopian dream that we can organise society on this basis of direct democracy.

**NO MAN IS
GOOD
ENOUGH TO
BE ANOTHER
MAN'S
MASTER**



On March 16th pickets were placed on McDonalds restaurant in O'Connell St., and soon after on their other branch in Grafton St. The strike is over union recognition. Management refused to allow union meetings to be held. They would not even talk over the phone to the union officials.

It was no surprise when some of the workers joined the ITGWU (No. 4 branch). Pay was the fantastic sum of 85p per hour, that's £34 for a 40 hour week before deductions for tax and stamp. Since the strike began those who stayed at work and those who were taken on to fill the striker's jobs had their rate raised to £1 per hour. But even this bribe could not keep them all inside, more and more have been coming out and joining the union.

After just one week of the strike two full time officials of the ITGWU were arrested while on picket duty in O'Connell St. A short while later McDonalds got an injunction banning any picketing. This was later changed so that pickets could go on but only with a maximum of three people on each restaurant, and these pickets had to be lifted one hour before McDonalds closed for the night. The

**BIG MAC:
LOW WAGES**

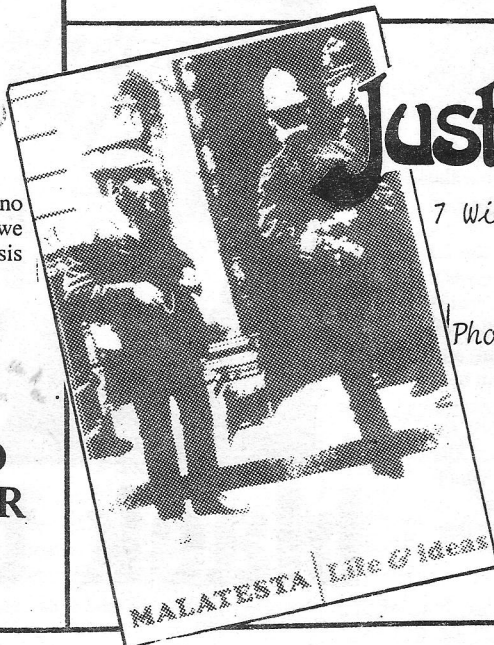
"justice" system is giving its full support to the bosses, as usual.

This injunction was a major blow to the strikers, in the busy lunch hour you often can't even see such a small picket. The answer to all such attacks on the right to picket is not to piss around in the courts as the union officials would have it but to organise enough support to smash the injunction by placing mass pickets.

McDonalds, who have 5,000 outlets throughout the world, are a violently anti-union firm. If the workers win here it will be the first time that McDonalds have had to recognise a union and pay decent wages.

In the early stages of the strike they were even offering free chips to anyone who would scab by crossing the picket line and eating there. But then what could you expect from a company which states in its rule book that you will be sacked without notice for chewing gum!

Give your support by not crossing the picket, eat in one of the dozens of other restaurants in the area. Raise collections for the strike fund in your workplace. Help to put an end to the slave labour tactics of McDonalds.



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In view of the fact that Spain has had a very strong anarchist tradition, it is important to study the aims, history, organisation and workings of the anarchist movement in Spain.

A look at Anarchist Organisation

What is the C.B.T.? What is the C.N.T.?

The C.N.T. is the organisational base of the anarchist movement in Spain. It is a confederation of workers. It is a coming together of workers for the purpose of providing a united front against bureaucracy and capitalism whilst most importantly laying its total stress on direct action.

Direct action is the keyword when speaking of the C.N.T. It means that workers in their place of work be it a factory, office, construction site or whatever shall assess and judge their own working conditions, shall decide at work place assemblies if and what action is needed in a particular situation. No person or group of persons outside the workplace has the power to decide for those workers.

However these workers maintain contact with other workers in the same trade at what is known as the section level of the C.N.T. Thus e.g. electricians in Madrid will come together from all work places to form the electrical section. Here they will discuss ways of helping, both morally and financially, some of the section members who may be on strike, but never to make decisions affecting others. The section also provides the first step of a united workers movement. Whilst workers on strike will explain their position at their section meeting (not for the purpose of justifying their action, but rather for the purpose of informing their fellow members and for discussion). There is no such thing as an unofficial strike — industrial action taken by workers is automatically official.

This coming together of workers in similar employ-

ment to form a section is the cornerstone of the National Confederation of Workers — C.N.T., while maintaining the principle of direct action at the place of work. The C.N.T. has no leaders, full time paid officials (except for secretaries) or such bureaucrats who decide for others. Different sections e.g. electrical, carpenters, plumbers etc. come together to form the tradesmens branch of the C.N.T. again only for the purpose of discussion, information etc. and not for the purpose of making decisions for others.

Because of a necessity to take action every now and then on a national basis, a national committee of the C.N.T. exists which may recommend a call for concerted action on a particular issue. Delegates are elected to the national committee to co-ordinate and monitor the activities of the C.N.T. on a national basis. These delegates are unpaid and recallable at any time. However the day to day running of the C.N.T. is at factory or branch level.

The C.N.T. is a workers movement which believes in:

(a) **Solidarity:** The problem of any one worker is the problem of all workers. The organisation supports the fight of any workers. Mutual support is the only strength of the workers.

(b) **Organisation:** The base of discussion and decision is the workers assemblies and all decisions come from the base.

(c) **Defence:** The anarchosindicalist organisation serves to secure the defence of the workers against capitalism and the institutions of the state.

The CNT is different from other workers movements and Trade Unions in Spain

in that:

(a) **Autonomy:** The CNT doesn't depend on any political party of leaders. Each branch is autonomous.

(b) **Federalisation:** An organisation based on the autonomy of each branch and against all types of centralisation. The branches only federate to provide a united front.

(c) **Anti-authoritarian:** Rejects all types of authority and bureaucracy. The liberty of man being the basis of the CNT.

What the CNT proposes to achieve.

(a) **To improve living conditions:** by reducing existing inequalities until an equal sharing of riches and goods is achieved.

(b) **Liberty of the individual:** As a means of achieving a responsible and genuine collective participation of people for their own benefit.

(c) **Autogestion:** The running of society by the member workers of it where each person has the option to participate in what concerns him under the same conditions as everybody else, and hence by his participation eliminate property, authority and bureaucracy.



SEAT Workers go out in solidarity with the petrol workers.

Means of achieving its aims

(a) **Direct Action:** Which is often misinterpreted as violence. Whilst persecution and repression of the CNT has sometimes pushed it into violent actions. It doesn't form an essential part of the anarchosindicalist movement.

It means doing away with permanent representation and so opening the way for the participation of all the workers in the resolution of their own problems.

(b) **Anti-parliamentarism:** Parliament is the mechanism position on various questions. It nominates branch officers who are always recallable and who go to make up the local syndicate committee which has no power to take decisions but carries out the directives of the local syndicate assembly. Assemblies other than those which normally take place can be called for by any section of the branch. It is also from this assembly that delegates to the general congress of the CNT are elected.

Syndicate Sections:

The sections of each branch are free to organise themselves according to their needs and fighting plans remembering to maintain its solidarity with the other sections. Each section elects its own committee to represent it. But the main organ is the branch whose committee is made up of delegates from each of the section committees and delegates elected by the general assembly of the branch.

Local Federation:

The branch delegates of a particular locality or city form the local federation. This is more an administrative and information centre, providing information on what is happening in other branches. The delegates of the local federation decide on subjects such as co-ordination of various workers fights, general solidarity, papers and keep all branches up to date on what is happening in other branches. The delegates vote on these issues but any issue of major importance is deciding by a vote within each separate branch.

Regional Committee:

This is formed by delegates from the local federations in a particular region again to co-ordinate the activities of the various local federations and branches. The regional committee again has no power to take decisions and works according to the agreements worked out at Local Federation level.

Confederal Committee:

The residence of the Confederal Committee is decided at each National Congress. The Confederal Committee is made up of 1 delegate from each regional committee and five others who are elected by the Local Federation in whose area the Confederal Committee is sitting. The Confederal Committee is responsible for international relations general organisation, legal problems, printing, papers etc. Like all other committees the Confederal Committee has no power to make decisions without consulting the various regional federations.

National Congress:

National Congress is the supreme decision making organ of the CNT and is made up of representatives of the various industrial branches. Here basic lines of action are decided and any modification of previous Congress resolutions. The Confederal Committee carries out Congress decisions.

What then are the functions of delegates and committees if they haven't any power to make decisions. The function of committees is to carry out decisions taken at various assemblies, be they branch, local or regional. The Committees are also necessary for information processing, making sure that every section, branch or local syndicate knows the activities of every other section, branch or local syndicate. The Committee also see to money, papers and such matters.

CNT
UN SINDICATO
AUTENTICAMENTE
AUTOGESTIONARIO



The Committees have to account for themselves to the assembly and relinquish their delegate position to the assembly once the job for which they were selected is complete. The responsibility for any decision taken which were not taken in assembly lies with the individual who took the decision who has then to answer to the organisation or assembly.

As shown all power lies at the base and all representatives are there to carry out decisions made in assembly and never to make decisions of their own which affect its members.

C.N.T. – SEAT (Fiat Motor Company in Barcelona)

It is worth looking at how the CNT operates within the factory. Each factory organises itself according to its needs remembering it is part of a local syndicate – in this case the metalurgical syndicate.

Factory Assembly:

This is the assembly of all the CNT workers in the factory and is the only decision-making organ for the workers. All important questions and problems are discussed and decided here. It is held each month between shifts changeover. Each general assembly elects three comrades to the chair to monitor and run the assembly.

Factory Committee:

This is the working section of the CNT within the factory. Its formed by delegates from the various factory shops and delegates elected by the general assembly.

They work out less important questions but are always answerable to assembly. Any question needing general discussion which cannot be left for a general assembly are decided at the various factory shop assemblies, whose decisions are then processed and the majority decision accepted.

Delegates elected by general assembly attend weekly CNT section meetings where they report on the activities taking place in their own factory and also they report back to their own factory committee activities taking place in other factories. In turn the factory shop delegates inform their shop members of what is happening in other factory shops and inform the factory committee of what is happening in their own factory shop.

Factory Shop Assembly:

This is the basic organ of every factory (e.g. packing, finishing dept., 1st stage production, maintenance, etc.). The various factory shops have complete autonomy to organise and run its business

which the State uses to integrate the workers into the electoral game, thus distracting them from their basic problems and their causes. The total emancipation of society necessitates the destruction of capital and its repressive State administration. The CNT declares itself anti-parliamentarian advocating the boycott of all participation in the bourgeois democracy necessitating the abstention from every type of referendum and parliamentary elections. Instead the CNT calls for the social revolution by way of direct action of the workers.

(c) **Workers Participation:** is against party politics because only through the working class acting in a conscious and autogestionated manner is it possible to make the revolution.

The CNT sees no difference between the means used to attain the end and the end it hopes to attain, the internal structure of the CNT is coherent with the final type of society it forseees — an anarchist or libertarian communist society.

The basic organ of the CNT is the industrial branch or local syndicate of the CNT.

Local syndicate assembly:

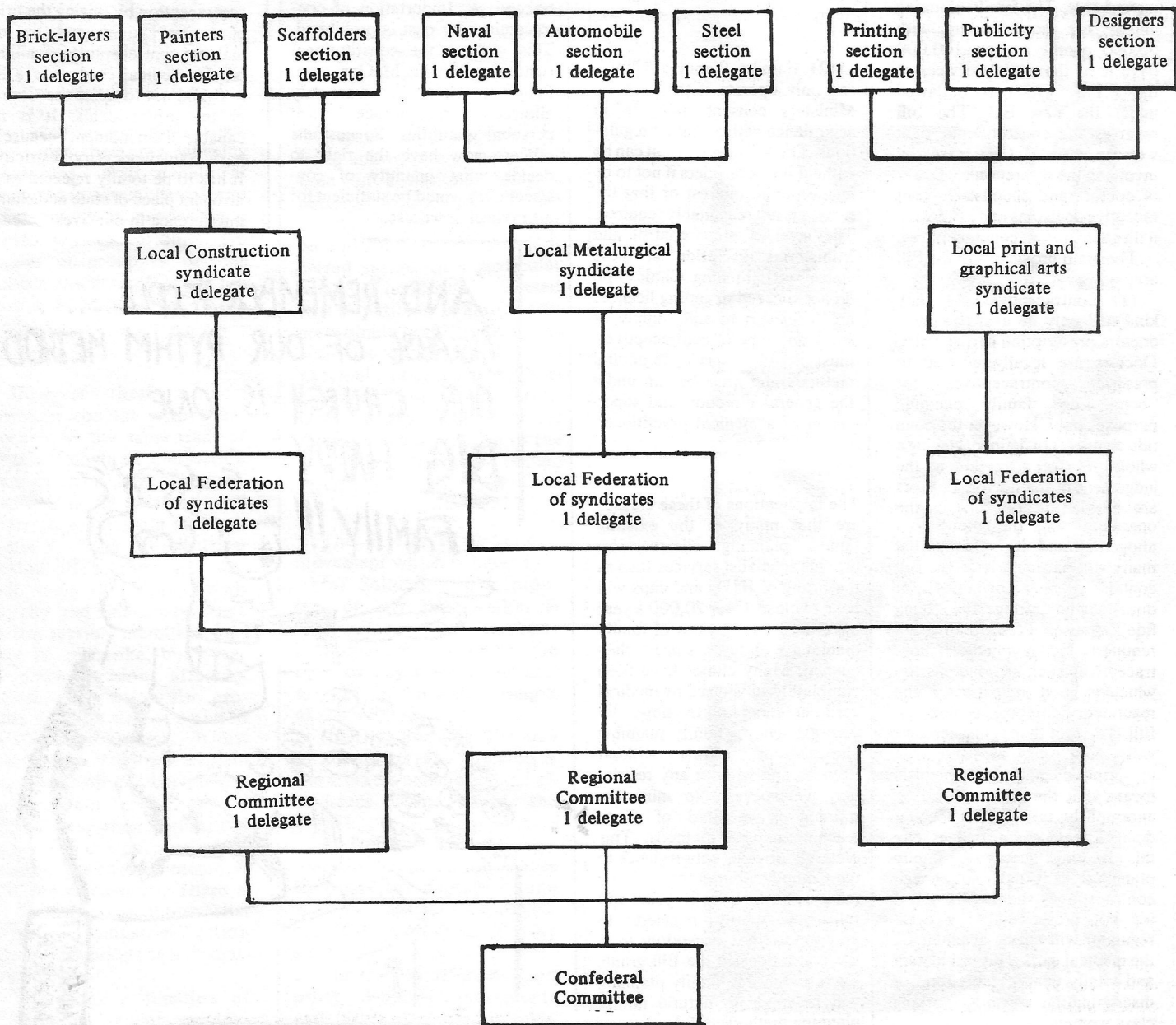
This is the basic pillar of the CNT. It is the union of all members of the various sections that go to make up the branch. It decides general strategy of the branch and its as its needs dictate. The shop assembly elects two delegates to the factory committee, also its own com-

mittee to look after collection of dues, paper and leaflet distribution etc.

At all times discussions, debates, book distribution at low cost are encouraged at every factory level to increase workers consciousness in the need for solidarity with other workers in the factory, workers in other industries and the general working class movement. Dues amount to 120 pesetas per month of which 20 pesetas go to the National Confederation (which pays for papers, books, legal battles etc. 20 pesetas to the Regional Confederation for similar activities, 20 pesetas for the local federation, 20 pesetas for CNT political prisoners and their dependents, 40 for the branch itself and so enabling it to work independently.

This article has been written not as any glorification of the CNT or the Spanish Anarchist Movement which needless to mention has its problems, has made its mistakes, but rather to show by pointing out the essential structures of the CNT a genuine effort to unite working people on anarchist principles.

A voluntary coming together of workers for their own benefit, which tries to maintain that power stays at the base and not at the top which is the case in our present trade union system in Ireland today. The CNT by its structure tries to abolish the bureaucracy that comes with centralisation by making sure that decisions effecting workers are taken by and only by those workers effected.



BILL OR BILLINGS IT WON'T WORK

The new Health Family Planning Bill is a highly restrictive and punitive piece of legislation. It is being presented as a liberal compromise with the Catholic Church while in fact it gives legal status to much of the reactionary thinking of the Church. The tortuous distinctions in the bill between contraception and "bona fide family planning" reflects the absurdity of trying to legislate an Irish solution to an Irish problem.

There is no acceptance of the autonomy of women and their right to control their own bodies in this legislation. The provisions in relation to access to contraceptives have been by-passed in practice by thousands of people which should mean that it will be unworkable. The family planning clinics are now dealing with 50,000 people a year. 100,000 have used the postal services of the F.P.S. which is outlawed under the new Bill. The Bill reverses the constitutional right won in the McGee case by involving the discretionary power of doctors and chemists in contraceptive decisions and by making it illegal to import contraceptives.

The main provisions of the Bill are:

(1) Contraceptives of any kind will only be available on a doctors prescription at a chemist. Doctors are legally entitled to prescribe contraceptives for "bona fide" family planning purposes only. However the bona fide clause is not defined, leaving a whole area of discretion to the judgement of the doctor. Doctors are entitled to opt out of the operating of the new Bill altogether and it is likely that many will particularly as the Bill contains heavy penalties for doctors who infringe the "bona fide" clause. Prescriptions are required for nonmedical contraceptives such as condoms too which is good indication of the reactionary thinking behind the Bill. The fact that contraceptives will only be available on prescription and at chemists means that the price will go up enormously taking into account doctors fees, chemists fees etc. this limiting access to family planning. As if that's not enough contraceptives such as the pill if it's not prescribed as a cycle regulator will not be available on the medical card. This is a blatant and totally unacceptable form of discrimination towards working class women.

Access to contraceptives will be severely limited by doctors and chemists choosing to opt out of the scheme and by raising prices and at the same time closing of other sources such as family planning clinics through licencing restrictions.

(2) Family Planning Clinics can only operate if they get the Ministers consent and are in accordance with specified regulations. The Ministers consent can be withheld if he considers it not to be in the public interest or that the service is not reasonably required. The level of state control and Ministerial discretion in these clauses is frightening. Clinics who do not succeed in getting licences are forbidden to sell, supply or stock any type of contraceptives, must provide a service in natural methods and must be run under the general direction and supervision of a medical practitioner.

The implications of these clauses are that many of the existing family planning clinics who provide specialist services such as the fitting of IUDs and caps will have to close. Over 20,000 a year have used the services of family planning clinics since they opened. Many clinics have been completely subsidised by medical card holders up to now. By contrast natural family planning clinics can operate without licences and without any restriction whatsoever. No minimum training is required of those teaching natural methods. This blatantly obvious subservience to the Catholic Church by the State takes us back about 20 years and must be totally rejected. In addition to these exceptions from the restrictions in the Bill grants for research into family planning will be made to natural family planning methods only!

(3) The restrictions on information on family planning are particularly reactionary. All literature or sex education has to be approved by the Dept. of Health. Information on or advocating artificial methods of contraception are forbidden. Penalties for offences in these areas are put into the criminal law code again. So you have the ridiculous situation where anyone can give information on natural methods of family planning without restriction but anything relating to artificial methods is a criminal offence.

(4) Sale & Import of contraceptives. Importation of contraceptives by post is prohibited. This violates the constitutional right won by the McGee case. People travelling abroad are only allowed to carry contraceptives in personal quantities. So customs officers now have the right to decide what quantity of contraceptives would be sufficient for a travellers own use.

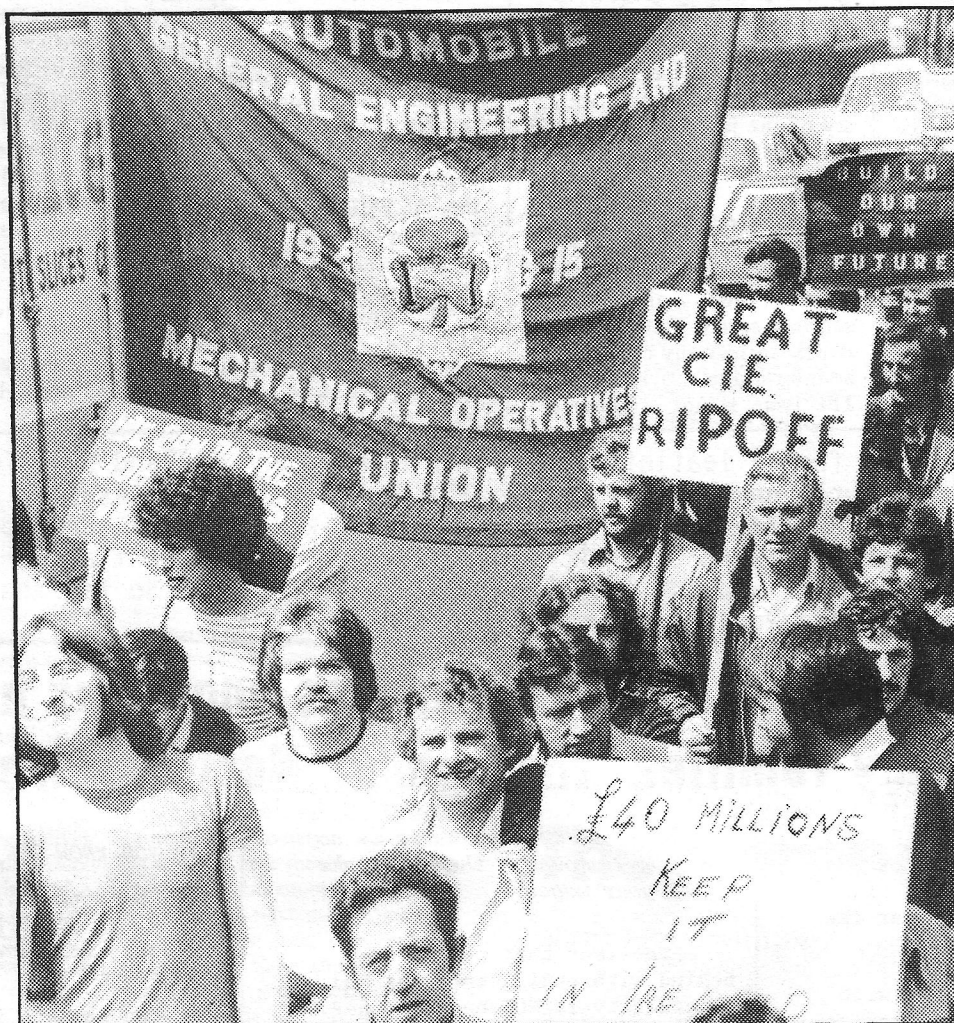
(5) Penalties: For infringing any of the provisions of the Bill in relation to the sale or availability of contraceptives.

(a) First offence max £500 and or six months
Subsequent offences max. £500 + £250 per day for continuing and/or 12 months.

The Bill makes Family Planning the property of private business and the professions instead of a State financed service that people are entitled to by right. For instance if research is to be done on the pill it will be the drug companies that finance it which must raise questions about its validity. It removes access to contraception by raising the price of contraceptives and by not making contraceptives available on the medical card. It is a bid designed not to upset the Church or the professionals. It is not capable of amendment because its basic framework is too restrictive. It has to be totally rejected as an arrogant piece of state and church interference in our lives.



C.I.E. - work to rule



Late in 1978 shopstewards of the unions representing the C.I.E. craft workers got together to work out proposals on salary scales, productivity deals and a wage increase to compensate for inflation. This meet-

ing led to the formation of an unofficial shop stewards committee with representatives from all the unions involved. The task of this committee was to co-ordinate and unify all claims.

The formation of this committee was unique in the recent history of C.I.E. where interunion discussion was rare. It also instilled a new interest in union affairs amongst the rank and file. Contact between the stewards and the shop floor workers was intense and on a daily basis. To all intents and purposes the unofficial committee truly represented the rank and file.

Just before Christmas the committee approached the ICTU for assistance and were given the "benefit" of Des Branigan, a congress hack. The committee was wary of Branigan but as one committee member later put it "with limited resources you have to accept whatever you're offered." Branigan said he would

study the position of craft workers in CIE and make his proposals early in the New Year to CIE management. A week before Branigan produced his report a well attended meeting of craft workers in Liberty Hall was warned by stewards that there would probably be a long fight between workers and management before any substantial gains were made. A proposal was also made at this meeting that an alliance with craftsmen in the other semi-state bodies be formed. This proposal was never acted upon.

Branigan made his proposals to the CIE company in mid-January. These were:

(i) A pay increase of approx. £4.35 (the downtown rate) which was to be

backdated to April 1st 1978.

(ii) Parity with similar craft workers in Aer Lingus and,

(iii) Negotiation of a new productivity deal.

The company refused to negotiate on all three points and would not recognise the unofficial shop stewards committee.

At a crowded and noisy second meeting in Liberty Hall the mood was of anger. Delegates from all over were urging to call a strike immediately. The committee in an effort to maintain control proposed a work to rule and ban on overtime. This was accepted by an overwhelming majority of tradesmen present.

There then followed a two week work to rule which seriously disrupted bus and suburban rail services. At the end of this period the Labour Court, at the company's request, arbitrated. At the end of the 21 day arbitration period the Labour Court made known its recommendations. It found in favour of (i) the increase of £4.35 but rejected parity with Aer Lingus on the grounds that their salary was the result of an agreed productivity deal. The Labour Court also found against the need for a new productivity deal but said the present deal should be open to discussion and amendment.

The shop stewards committee decided to recom-

mend acceptance of the Labour Court proposals. But the issue was far from solved. The craftsmen remembered the earlier talk of £20 increase or a long strike. Craftworkers in A.G.E.M.O.U. disregarded their stewards recommendation to accept the Labour Court's decision. Without consulting the other unions involved AGEMOU decided to renew industrial action and returned to work to rule and ban on overtime. The other unions involved voted to accept the Labour Courts recommendations by a margin of 5/1.

At a packed and very heated meeting on Sunday 25th March AGEMOU was taken to task over their action. The

main issue contended was not that AGEMOU had rejected the Labour Courts recommendations but that they had taken action without consulting the united shop stewards committee. Before the issue could be resolved AGEMOU members present walked out. AGEMOU had in effect cut themselves off from their fellow craft workers and severely damaged the credibility of the joint shop-stewards committee.

At present AGEMOU members are continuing their industrial action, but whether or not they maintain this action a severe blow has been struck against any co-ordinated inter-union activity in CIE. The issue is not whether or

not AGEMOU was right to reject the Labour Courts recommendations but the fact that they by-passed a committee which they claimed to have subscribed to.

The company has recently suggested to representatives of the other unions that it would consider paying the back dated increases if members of these unions, mainly the NEETU and AUEW, employed in the Broadstone and Donnybrook stop supporting the AGEMOU work to rule and ban on overtime. There is also talk amongst craft workers in CIE railway works of a closed shop against AGEMOU members, although this idea is not likely to be accepted by the majority of

craft workers. AGEMOU have also claimed that if they were offered an extra £1 on the £4.35 they would discontinue their work to rule.

It is debatable whether the unofficial shop stewards committee would have survived, even without the inter union conflict. The period between the first work to rule and the acceptance of the Labour Courts recommendations saw a marked lack of shop steward consultation with shop floor workers. There are many lessons to be learned from this attempt at trade union co-operation at rank and file level but for the present most CIE workers feel decidedly bitter and in no mood to learn.

The following was taken from a leaflet circulating in Northern Ireland which was produced by the Belfast Women's Groups, on the Payment for Debt Act. This Act, passed in October 1971, was an emergency measure to deal with rent and rates strikers. It has since become part of the "Welfare State" and was extended in April 1976 to include any rent arrears. Since October 1st it has been used against those behind with fuel bills. So far the use of this Act has led to one suicide, Rosie Nolan of Turf Lodge.

The operation of the P.D.A. causes enormous hardship to many families throughout Northern Ireland.

FOR EXAMPLE :

(The following estimates are based on actual cases of families deducted under the P.D.A.)

- (1) A woman on her own with 5 children, her benefit after deduction is £17
Child benefit = £20
Weekly fuel costs = £16.50
i.e. Gas = £7.00
Electric = £7.00 (under a voluntary agreement!)
Coal = £2.50
Thus she has £20.50 left to live on. She starves herself to feed the children.
- (2) A man employed as a driver who has a wife and one child. After deduction his income is £29 a week. An electricity meter is set for £9.00 a week to collect arrears. Gas is £4 a week. H.P. payments of £7 a wk. This leaves £9.00 for food clothing, etc. for two adults and a child! Gross wages of £42 have been reduced to £9.00

THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT DEDUCTABLE is as follows :

- (a) The claimant's rent per wk.
- (b) PLUS rent arrears of up to £6.00 a week (if in receipt of a state benefit, which is not earnings related, in which case it is £7 per week)
- (c) PLUS a collection charge of 50 p per week.

If you are working there is no maximum amount - they can take ALL your wages.

The fact that people are behind with their rent, gas and electricity is NOT because they are 'irresponsible' and spend their money foolishly on 'luxuries' but because they don't have a decent adequate income as of right in the first place, which will allow them to meet the costs of keeping themselves and their family properly nourished, clothed and warm.

THE EXTENSION OF THE P.D.A. TO FUEL BILLS IS ESPECIALLY SERIOUS GIVEN THE CURRENT SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

1. Electricity and gas are THREE TIMES as dear as in England.
2. A higher % of the population depend on social welfare benefits.
3. Unemployment levels are twice the British average.
4. Average earnings are below the British average.
5. A higher % of the population are on or below the poverty line

It is has been argued that the P.D.A. is needed because of a high level of public debt here. In fact, figures from British cities show that N. Ireland is not an exceptional case.

DID YOU KNOW THE FOLLOWING :

- (a) Under the P.D.A. there is NO RIGHT OF APPEAL against the amount decided on by the B.A.B. to deduct.
- (b) You have no right to a rent and rates rebate.
- (c) You are not informed at regular intervals of the amount that you still owe.
- (d) You cannot apply for an 'exceptional needs grant' if subject to the P.D.A.
- (e) You cannot transfer your house.
- (f) As arrears are deducted at source from wages and state benefits - this denies you control over your own income.
- (g) The Act discriminates against people who depend on the state for their income, e.g. public employees and claimants, since their income is accessible to allocation.
- (h) If your employer refuses to deduct from your income, he/she becomes liable for the debt!

"Over the next few weeks and months, we will be disconnecting supplies everywhere. There are no "no go" areas. It is the summer and it will cause the minimum of hardship. It is time we got the knife in. We have bent over backwards to help these people. Now it is time we took some action."

Mr. John Gaston. Chief Executive NIES
13/6/78 Belfast Telegraph

REVIEWS

The Dispossessed

by Ursula LeGuin

The sister worlds of Urras and Anarres are totally opposed in their ways of life. There has been almost no communication between them since, generations ago, a terrible revolution swept Urras and the revolutionaries left to make a new settlement on the moon — planet Annares. Now Annares is totally unruled, an anarchist society where mutual aid, equality and the common good dictate action.

Despite it being a dry and barren world, affected by food and material shortages, the Annaresti were positive that "they would not regress to pre-urban, pre-technological tribalism. They knew that their anarchism was the product of very high civilisation, of a complex diversified culture, of a stable economy and a highly industrialised technology that could maintain high production and rapid transportation of goods".

The Annaresti call themselves Odonians after the woman Odo, who formulated their ideas of a non-authoritarian communism or to give it another name — anarchism. On their world there is no authority or property relationships between people. Money does not exist. All share equally in the running of society and all receive of its fruits according to their needs. But one man, the scientist Shevek, wants to leave the planet for Urras where he feels he will be better able to continue his work. When Shevek arrives there on one of the few space freighters which travel between the two worlds, he soon sees life as it really is. He can't comprehend the economics which allow poverty and disease for some while others live in the lap of

luxury. Or the fact that Urras is male-dominated and riddled with sexist ideas. Or their strange customs and relationships to each other. "He had reflected quite early in his stay on Urras, that the Urrasti lived among mountains of excrement, but never mentioned shit."

While the difference between the two worlds in graphically illustrated the book does not view anarchism as being without faults and flaws. It sees the difficulties of a libertarian society in a world of scarcity. It sees the dangers of the growth of bureaucracy and the power that a rigid interpretation of the "common good" can present. Yet at the same time it shows clearly the great achievements and rewards of an anarchist system. The book is especially moving in its descriptions of the solidarity and humanity of the Annarcesti.

And so far I have said nothing of the plot, and I'm not going to except to mention that it is good stuff, and in no way can it be considered as mere padding for a political work. This is a book for all those who initially don't want to read a non-fiction introduction to anarchism.

(Panther SF 75p)

GUIN FARKES



the only person to enter parliament
with honest intentions

Framed through the special criminal Court

NEW PAMPHLET

This excellent pamphlet subtitled "The Great Train Robbery Trial" is an account of the attempt by the State to destroy a political organisation, the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

It details chapter by chapter the machinery used against them especially designed for repression. The *Special Criminal Court* with its empty jury boxes. The *Heavy Gang* (first used against comrades Noel and Marie Murray) with their torture and

FRAME UP!



THROUGH SPECIAL COURTS

perjury. The pamphlet contains arguments against the legal irregularities of the case, it documents the medical evidence of torture and goes into the repression which has dogged the I.R.S.P. from its beginnings.

Also there are photographs of the campaign around the trial against the Special Criminal Court. The pamphlet is helping to extend that campaign even further. Copies available from Starry Plough Publications, 34 Up. Gardiner St., Dublin 1 @ 40p.

The Womens Room

Marilyn French

The paperback version of this International best seller has just been released in Britain.

It is the story of over twenty years of the life of Mira Ward her anger and frustrations at the role that society has forced her into particularly through marriage, her internalisation of the tedious work within the home, her changing feelings towards her sons as they grow up. Her relationships with other people, mostly women and their experiences make this book a powerful and and passionate book to read.

"In Harlem the government pushes heroin to keep the niggers down and doctors by the thousands give barbiturates and tranquilizers to all the housewives; keep the natives quiet. When the drugs don't work anymore, they put the blacks in jail and us in here (Mental Hospital)"

Sphere £1.37½p (Eire) £1.25 (N.I.)

Anarchist Worker

Third Year on the Blanket

Two years ago in Sept. '76 when Ciaran Nugent began his Blanket Protest few others, other than the relatives of the men who were transferred into them — had heard about the H-Blocks. Now 1,000's march regularly about them in what is the most emotive and strongest issue in the North.

The H-Blocks — called after their H-shaped lay out — are the modern style wings of the Maze Prison, Long Kesh. The "inspiration" behind them was part of the British regimes plan to remove political status from prisoners and from June '76 anyone found guilty of political offences are being given the conditions of ordinary prisoners — prison uniform — work — cell etc. It is hoped by the N.I. Office this will give the

impression things are returning to normal and N.I. has no special problems.

Reacting against this loss of special status and its privileges more and more republican prisoners now filling the H-Blocks have joined Ciaran in protest, their numbers including 28 women in Armagh Gaol are around 400.

The protest follows the form of totally rejecting the prison system. They have long since smashed up their cell furniture, they refuse the uniform and wear only an army blanket. They grow their hair long and don't shave, they refuse prison work and are locked up constantly. And the "Blanket Men and Women" have brought the protest one step further by refusing to wash or go to the toilet.

Their cell reeks of their own excreta and their bodies are plagued with scabbies and pests.

Their struggle is a bitter one, the screws on a T.V. documentary considered a dog deserved better treatment than Republican prisoners. There are frequent beatings, violent cell searches, along with normal prison rules banning letters, books etc.

The prisoners hold their morale by shouting to each other and abuse at the screws. Irish lessons and rebel songs echo through the Blocks corridors. Their own sheer endurance and the R.A.C.s campaign outside has kept the protest one step ahead of the authorities propaganda attempt to crush the Blanket Protest.

The R.A.C. is a broadly based organisation that attracts a mass following. Their marches began to coincide with the anniversaries of the Civil Rights marches of 10 years ago when the troubles began. As the first of these from Coalisland to Dungannon last October brought out over 15,000. The impetus is still holding.

The HBlocks issue can't be put off by the British, the growing numbers of blanket men and women and more important the growing struggle back on the streets will force a victory against the administration who in true British ruling class fashion would choose to ignore the injustice it causes.

Women support Armagh prisoners



On March 8th outside Armaghs womens prison, a picket was held to celebrate international womens day and demand political status for the prisoners inside. It was attacked by the R.U.C. and 11 were held, but the organisers, Women against Imperialism, declared that they were not intimidated and promised another bigger demonstration.

True to their word on Saturday April 7th over 100 women and supporters, including 30 from Dublin showed up again. The women inside joined in the songs and slogans shout and sung from the crowd and they hung a political status banner out through the bars and waved to the people below.

The R.U.C., although they didn't make arrests, violently pushed the crowd off the road on to the path; despite torn clothes and the odd bruise they delivered, the R.U.C. kept their "crowd control" to a limit.

People and prisoners alike found the picket and the atmosphere a morale booster. The demonstration made the point that women are equal to men in the struggle in the North and that solidarity will continue till ALL their demands are met.