

RAVEIW

North of Ireland 15p
Elsewhere 20p

A BELFAST ANARCHIST MONTHLY ISSUE No. 1. MARCH 1985



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Where we've come from....

With a few notable exceptions, anarchism in Ireland is a fairly recent phenomenon. The syndicalism and short-lived soviets of the early part of this century showed many anarchist tendencies, but it was not until the late '60's that groups were prepared to call themselves anarchists.

There were groups in the Civil Rights movement, and in the South a group emerged from the renewed anti-imperialist campaign. In the late seventies groups sprang up in Dublin and Belfast, and the 1980's have seen a continuance of these ideas from Cork to Ballymena.

Some of us working on this paper have come through the Belfast Anarchist Collective, which disbanded almost two years ago, and were involved in the publication of Outta Control. We have refined our politics to a clearer understanding of the forces of imperialism as one of the causes of the particular oppressions in Irish society. Also, as some of us are women, we bring our consciousness of how 50% of people are oppressed because of their sex, and some experience of resisting that oppression.

As anarchists we oppose authority in all its forms and support those struggling against the classes and institutions of social control:- the church; the education system; the judiciary. We fight for a society based on cooperation and equality as opposed to the exploitation and authoritarianism which characterises our present system. We also support the right of those sections of society which are particularly oppressed because of race, class or sex to organise and fight independently.

We intend to produce the paper collectively and will concern ourselves with three main inter-related areas: patriarchy; state repression; capitalism.

These troubled times?

Living in the North of Ireland we have constant reminders of an authoritarian, imperialist state: an army of soldiers and an armoury of repressive legislation maintains British colonial presence in the North against the wishes of the minority. A sectarian attitude has deliberately been fostered between workers for that same end. Also loyalists have been given relatively more privileges over anti-unionists of the same class to ensure that workers' struggles are divided. Furthermore, political instability in the South, created by the deepening recession and British pressure over the North, has been used as a pretext by Southern governments to introduce their own Draconian measures.

Anarchists oppose the centralising of power in the hands of any group of people, whether that be in a unionist statelet; a neo-colonial state; or British, E.E.C., U.S.S.R., or American domination. If delegates are necessary then they should be under the control of those who elected them and not be allowed to assume power in their own right.

Caviar and chips....

Under capitalism the working class is exploited by the owning class

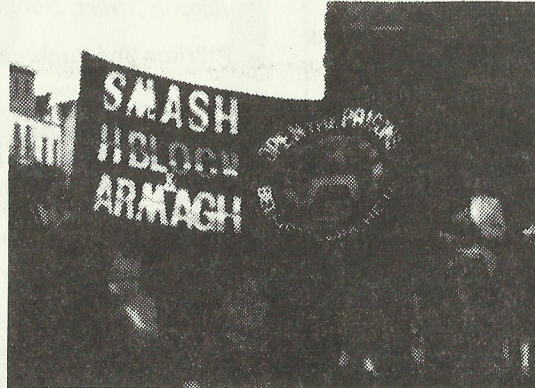
WHO WE ARE ...

We see ourselves as fighting alongside the working class - whether employed, unemployed or working in the home. Unions have a defensive role to play in protecting workers' interests but at present union bureaucracy is hampering the struggle. If workers were allowed to make direct links with other workers in disputes they would be more successful. Part of the British and Irish governments' aim in suppressing opposition to themselves is to make Ireland a safe place in which to invest capital so that big business can cream off the country's wealth. We see no difference though in exploitation whether it is done by Irish capitalists or foreign ones. Also, the pollution and destruction of the environment are extremely dangerous no matter what the nationality of the firm responsible.

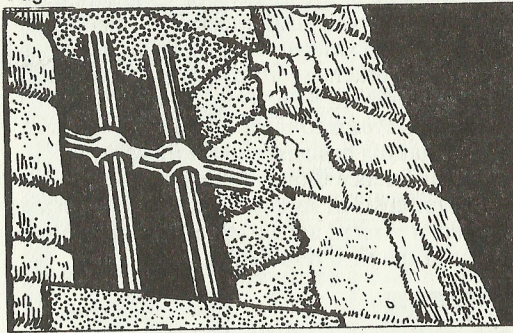
Control of our lives.

We will be examining the oppression of women in society and publicising and supporting women struggling against that oppression. The patriarchal relationship between men and women where women are made economically dependent on men is degrading for both sexes, but especially degrading for women - though we do not support women who enter the system to take on a man's power role e.g. as a politician or a careerist. The subjection of women is an integral part of the capitalist system and has been institutionalised by the state. The exploitation under capitalism of sexuality as a commodity to be bought and sold, for example in pornography or in advertising, is one of the factors which leads to the crime of rape. Another factor is the distortion of our sexuality under patriarchy where human beings are rigidly divided into two sexes each with clearly defined roles, values and aims in life. This is a source of repression for both sexes, particularly for women whose limited aims are expected to be achieved through the family, and for gay men and lesbians who are denied their sexuality.

We hope that in future issues that this publication will develop analyses and highlight out critiques and proposals - to explain what we're against and, importantly, what we're fighting for.



For further information contact:
R@VEIW, 7, Wintavern Street
Belfast 1.
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PRISONERS CAMPAIGN

CONJUGAL RIGHTS ISSUE

On May 14th of this year an unusual case will be heard before the High Court in the South: two prisoners will be taking the Southern government to court to be allowed conjugal rights, i.e. the right to have a sexual relationship.

Marie and Noel Murray, two anarchists, have been imprisoned since 1975 and are currently being held in Limerick prison under high security conditions. They receive a one hour long visit together per week, supervised by two or three prison officers. Marie would like to have the choice of bearing a child and, as she is now 36 years of age, that choice would need to be available soon.

In many other countries, such as the U.S.A., Canada and the Scandinavian countries, facilities for conjugal rights already exist. For example, special buildings within the prison may be set aside or prisoners may be given special weekend paroles. A recent report on prisons* in the 26 Cos., published by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace and sponsored by an inter-denominational body, the Irish Council of churches, has recommended, amongst other reforms, that facilities should be provided for conjugal rights for married prisoners.

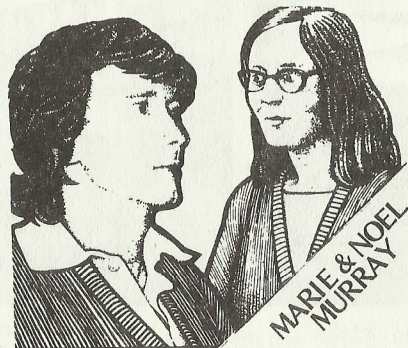
Noel and Marie have a strong case in that they are married and were living together before their arrests - a situation which does not apply to any other prisoners as far as we know. However, if their

case is successful it will set a precedent for other prisoners to take similar cases on their own behalf and will help raise the issue in the North with its high proportion of prisoners.

Although barristers, solicitors and researchers are offering their services free, it is estimated that expenses will amount to £5,000, so funds are urgently needed. If you are concerned with extending the very limited rights of prisoners, you could help by sending a donation to:

Committee for Conjugal Rights,
c/o 7, Winetavern Street, Belfast 1.
or 15, St. Aidans Park Road, Fairview,
Dublin 3.
or Acc. No.48034381, Bank of Ireland,
Baggott Street, Dublin 2.

*'Prison and Punishment'.



WHOLE MEAL, BUT EMPTY STOMACHS

Hyndmans bakery of Maghera, Co. Derry, is a family business employing about 45 production workers. Three months ago most of them were in a union, the N.I. Bakers Union. Today only about ten of that original number are still employed. The rest were sacked and replaced.

The management alleged at the time that the shop steward at the bakery had used threatening language. On the day of his dismissal, Nov. 30th, '84, 35 of the 45 workers came out in protest. On day-one of their strike they were dismissed too. They stood on a picket line for 10 weeks before an Industrial Tribunal ruled against

Hyndmans, on Feb. 7th. The shop steward was unfairly dismissed, and has to be either reinstated by March 4th, or paid compensation. The strike was over. The strikers had made their point. But they had lost their jobs. They had all

been replaced. So were they to take Hyndmans to an Industrial Tribunal? They couldn't, because they had been sacked while on strike. The I.T. considers such sackings to be 'fair dismissal', because the workers are breaking their contract. The I.T. therefore cannot consider them.

And the union? The union is unable to offer any help. They have approached the Labour Relations Agency, a 'conciliatory' body. But the LRA can't conciliate if one party to the dispute won't participate. And Hyndmans won't. All the union can do is regard the six members who didn't come out, and the 30-odd who replaced the strikers, as scabs.

This raises questions about the role of unions. They were set up as defensive organisations, but the bureaucracy of full-time officials increasingly became mediators between workers and bosses. When the bosses go on the offensive, and don't need to talk, that role of mediator becomes redundant.

Rank and file trade-unionists need to develop alternative ways of organising, and methods of struggle, if the bosses' onslaughts are to be successfully resisted.



New 12 inch record available from Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast.

WORKERS SOLIDARITY
PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

BISHOPS RULE?

IRELAND'S ANARCHIST PAPER

Available from WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8. and Just Books.

NOT FRONT PAGE NEWS

The "Supergrass" System is no longer front page news. In fact, it hasn't been for some time. People in the north have developed a certain numbness towards excesses by the British state. And the establishment media have affected a certain boredom towards an issue which doesn't provide enough 'controversy'.

This was very much the background to the making of a video programme 'One Man's Word' last August. Two anarchists who were part of the production group, explain why and how they made it, and what they hoped to achieve.

LOCAL CAMPAIGN

It started with the local group against the 'supergrass' system, the Lower Ormeau Campaign for Justice. In our area there's been a tradition of non-aligned groups coming together on issues such as the RUC killing of Michael McCartan, as he painted slogans, and the hunger-strikes in Armagh and Long Kesh. There were members of different parties etc., in these groups, but they remained essentially independent. As anarchists we could work within that structure.

We were working against the 'supergrass' system for two reasons. Firstly, it was the latest in a long line of counter-insurgency strategies employed against those suspected of opposing British rule. Secondly if it were to operate unopposed, then the system could be extended to anyone the British state found a nuisance and wanted off the streets.

THE TRIALS

The trials have several characteristics peculiar to them. There is no jury under the Diplock Court system anyway, and one judge sits alone; the main 'evidence' comes from one person and is rarely corroborated; the number of defendants in one case can be as high as forty; the majority of charges are based on conspiracy and so almost impossible to disprove; the 'supergrass' is induced by the offer of either immunity or reduction in sentence, and the sum of up to £50,000; and people can be held for up to three years on remand.

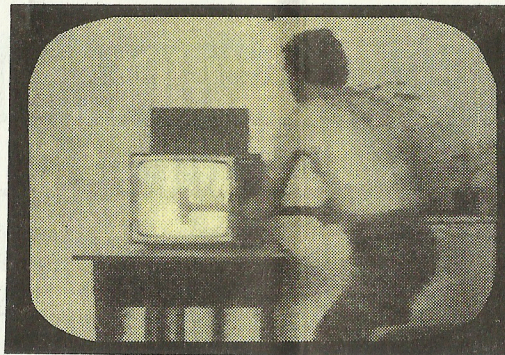
EFFECTS

In our own small area of the Lower Ormeau, and the neighbouring Markets, there were originally four 'supergrasses', though two later retracted. The initial effect not only concerned morale in terms of opposition to repression. It also affected communities. People desperately need to come together on issues such as housing etc., but this strategy made people a bit wary of each other and of organising.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

We were in contact with the various campaigns against the 'supergrass' system, and went on their marches and pickets with our own banner. But a few of us wanted to add something new. Rather than always following behind we wanted to take an initiative.

The group had already fly-posted three series of posters; had organis-



One man's The Making of a Video WORD

ed a door-to-door petition (with 95% of those at home signing) and handed it in at the city hall; had shown broadcast documentaries on the subject in the local community house, and raised money to help finance delegations abroad.

It's worth mentioning that it was impossible to demonstrate on the streets locally. During the hunger-strikes, as soon as people showed their noses on the Ormeau Rd., the RUC would open up with plastic bullets, despite there being prams and children everywhere.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST

We decided not to do any interviews with people affected by loyalist 'supergrasses'. The programme was set in the context of anti-imperialism, of being opposed to the British presence. If we had explained this to them, they obviously wouldn't have taken part; if we hadn't explained it to them, we would have been dishonest. The programme was not just about civil-rights, it was also about the way the law is established and manipulated by the oppressor. And the oppressor is the British state.

HOW WE DID IT

We set up a sub-group of the LOCJ, a video group. Of the three of us who worked on the programme over a three month period, two already had full-time jobs. So we worked evenings and week-ends. We raised the money by running a social, and individuals and groups buying a copy of the video in advance. One person in London sent us £100. It was disappointing (or was it?) that not one political party gave us a penny more than the cost of a tape - and only one of them did even that.

We borrowed VHS equipment from two sources. But they were both community-based and their equipment had received a lot of wear and tear. It kept breaking down, and in one situation we had to travel to Derry (70 miles away) three times to get one interview.

The main cost of the production came in the editing, as we had to travel to London. In Ireland the only access is via commercial firms (too expensive) or academic institutions (who practise censorship).

DISTRIBUTION

As for distribution, we had planned on the various campaigns to help out, if not take over entirely. Only Citizens Against the Show Trials in Derry, and Relatives For Justice in Belfast, helped out locally. Troops Out Movement in England bought two copies. With their help, and comrades internationally we did achieve a reasonable success.

Other groups in Ireland which bought copies were based in Cork, Dublin and Galway. It was also bought by support groups in Glasgow, Bradford, Birmingham and London (with Bradford University having it on their Peace Studies Course!). It has also been shown in New York, Hamburg, Göttingen, and at the International Anarchist Congress in Venice.

continued next page...

censorship

Three incidents in getting copies made of One Man's Word, typify the problems of access and censorship. Altogether it took us three months and the tape travelled all over England and Ireland before we could get a company to make decent copies.

A local academic institution initially made us ten copies. But, after realising what the contents were, they refused to make more. They hadn't the time. No, they never would have the time.

A company in Birmingham was more honest. Although they had copied political tapes for the local Trade Union and Community Research Group, they wouldn't do ours. Why? 'We disagree with the political content', they said. Irish political radicalism is not the same as English radicalism.

Finally the original tape spent four weeks in the Customs House, Sherriff St., Dublin. Every tape coming into the South has to be screened, we were told. On the day before its release one of us was told, 'No its not here, never heard of it'!

DISCREPENCIES

The Crockard 'Supergrass' case ended last week with the acquittals of those charged only on the uncorroborated word of Crockard.

Coming after the Bennett appeal acquittals, this means that not one person is currently serving a sentence on the word of a 'loyalist supergrass', though many are still held on remand.

This is in contrast to the 63 people who have been convicted on the uncorroborated word of the four 'republican supergrasses'

There is also a discrepancy in the granting of bail applications. It is not unusual for a defendant in a 'loyalist supergrass' case to get bail while on a murder charge — not one defendant in a 'republican supergrass' trial on a murder charge has got bail.

Also, Sean Tomelty, who receives therapy treatment for a plastic bullet injury which has left him half paralysed, is refused bail. He collapsed twice last week

AN AVERAGE WEEK....?

The Kirkpatrick trial has started. You wouldn't have realised this if you depend on the T.V. and Newspapers for information. Until the 'star', Harry O, shows his face, the media aren't interested. Then they'll be full of the alleged activities of various 'terrorist' units.

But other units operate in the North, such as the E4A and DMSU of the RUC. And they told some of their stories in court last week. What little came out makes interesting reading. Firstly because it is only half the story; and secondly because you'll not read about it anywhere else. The press were rarely in court, and, when they were, show no interest in publication.

The main 'evidence' concerned an incident in 1981 outside Mackies on the Springfield Road when someone was shot dead in an attack claimed by the INLA.

The area was crawling with different squad cars and landrovers; some cops were in uniform, some not. All of them claimed not to know of each others presence. They also gave evidence that they possessed and used weapons about which no records are kept.

Judge Carswell failed to ask why a variety of units were in the area at one time; why someone was allowed to be shot dead; and why no records are kept of certain weapons and their use.

Coming in the same month as the RUC admission of cover-ups over the shooting of Michael Tighe, and the killing of three young republicans in Strabane, the RUC's 'shoot-to-kill' policy is not the collection of isolated incidents the press portray. If they bothered to attend, and report on, Crumlin Rd. Courthouse, they would see that last week was only an average week.



Strip-Searches: Security or Subjugation - this video has been recently produced by the Derry Film and Video Collective and is a welcome addition to the current campaign to bring an end to the strip-searching of women prisoners in Armagh Jail.

The video follows the usual format of interviewing different people directly and indirectly involved with strip-searches. A number of women who spent time in Armagh Jail tell of their experiences of being strip-searched and of the effects it has had on them emotionally and physically, as well as the effects on them as a group of women forced to live with each other in confined spaces.

I feel there is an over-reliance on 'experts' in the video : a psychiatrist from Dublin (who, admittedly, did make some good points), a law lecturer, a journalist (for the Sunday World!!) and a Trade Union official - are also interviewed.

The video does give a good and comprehensive account of what strip-searching is, how it affects the women, and why it has been introduced-not as a security measure — but rather to break down the women by using this specific form of violence against them. As the mother of one of the women prisoners said, 'Strip-searching is

the next thing to rape'.

However, the video does not explain the overall political context in which strip searches take place. Instead, it presents them as simply something that Murtagh (the governor in Armagh Jail) introduced to try to break down the women political prisoners. And yes, it is that. But it is also a lot more. It is one in a long line of repressive measures brought in by the British State to try to break down any opposition to itself. And there are also reasons why these women are in prison which are not even mentioned let alone discussed. The arguments given against strip-searching are purely humanitarian ones as opposed to political ones when the women are in prison for political reasons in the first place.

There are reasons, of course, why the video takes the angle it does, it has been made as part of a campaign which is appealing to liberals of various hues in order to bring 'acceptable' pressure on the British state to end strip-searches.

However, despite these criticisms, the video is certainly well worth viewing because not only is it well produced but it is also breaking the media silence on strip-searching.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY : MARCH 8th - 10th.
Saturday : March and Rally - Cornmarket 12.00 p.m. Workshops on various issues in Whiterock Leisure Centre 1.00 - 5.00 p.m. Social in P.D. /Andersonstown at 8.00 p.m. Concert in 'Speakeasy' Q.U.B. at 7.30 p.m. **SUNDAY** : Picket of Armagh Jail - buses leave Dunville Park at 1.00 p.m. Further information from N.I.W.R.M. at 243363 and Fall's Women's Centre at 238123.

IRISH FEMINISM the past few years

At last! A Review of feminism in Ireland which does not consist of reports on the comings and goings of women politicians and senators! The Irish Feminist Review '84 is a history of how, why and in what areas Irish Women have been struggling in '84 - and as it is the first Irish review of its kind it effectively gives us a short history of what has been happening to women in the last 4 or 5 years.

ACTIVE WOMEN

All the articles in the Review are written by women who have been actively involved in different struggles and, as such, most of what is written is very illuminating and stimulating reading for all women involved in fighting oppression. There are women talking of problems and obstacles which echo our own experiences and of how they have tried to overcome these effectively. The review is primarily one of information, ideas and references rather than a theoretical journal and is particularly valuable given the lack of documentation and analysis of womens struggles in Ireland over the last number of years.

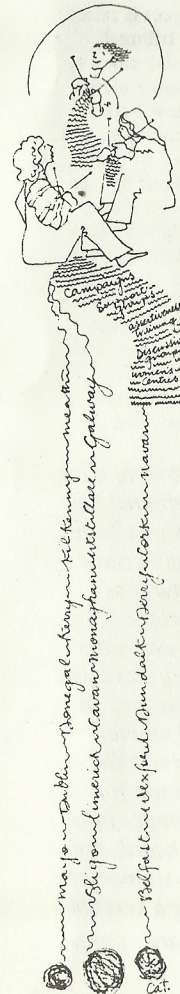
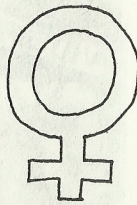
"FIGHTING FOR CONTROL"

Given that the right of women to control our own fertility is one that has always been denied us, this section of the Review is of particular interest to most women. Articles in this section chart the ways in which women over the last few years have been struggling to control our own fertility. One could be forgiven for thinking that the Referendum to the Constitution in the south in Sept.'83 (giving the foetus equal rights to those of the mother) was the only significant (and negative!) thing happening in terms of womens fertility in Ireland - not so!

These articles show women in all parts of the country involved in campaigns around issues such as contraception, health centres, abortion and sex education. Women from different groups talk about their reasons for getting involved in various campaigns and the politics of the groups they work in. The internal organisation and politics of these varied groups makes interesting reading for women involved in any kind of agitation as we can learn from what has happened in other groups previously, and we can get pointers as to how to organise more effectively in the future. Also, it is pleasing to see that various disagreements and splits are described and explained in what seems to be as supportive and positive a way as is (humanly) possible!

WOMEN WORKING (SO WHAT'S NEW)

Two other sections that I found particularly stimulating are entitled, 'Hard Labour - Women and Work' and 'Behind the Walls'. In the first,



women workers talk about their responses to some of the oppressive forces working against them; women teachers face the old Catholic morality/double standard bit; Ranks women fight against the closure of the flour mill and the loss of their livelihood; CIE women (bus conductresses) take a stand against the misogynist ravings of the gutter press and the ensuing harassment they encounter on the buses; and the young Belfast woman who fought against sexual harassment and assault at work. All powerful stuff!

As long as we are forced to work (through economic necessity) in exploitative jobs and conditions women have to fight to gain whatever 'small' successes we can, i.e. equal pay (equal to what!), an end to sexual discrimination and harassment, child care facilities, maternity leave etc. From these articles women are doing just that and are all the time gaining strength and confidence through struggling in solidarity with other workers.

WOMEN IN CHAINS

In 'Behind the Walls' there are articles dealing with the two most recent methods devised by the British state to break down anti-imperialist resistance to it. In 'Armagh Jail - a History' we hear about the treatment meted out to women prisoners - the lack of health care, the indiscriminate use of drugs and the punishments dished out for petty infringements of prison discipline. But the most offensive and outrageous act being committed against women in Armagh Jail is that of strip searching.

In interviews with two women prisoners, it is quite clear that the act of strip searching women is as close to raping women as you can get. Another article looks at the effects of the so-called 'supergrass' system and especially as it affects women on the outside.

From a woman who spent 16 months in Mountjoy Jail in Dublin there is a strong and challenging call to Irish feminists everywhere to at the very least begin to look critically at the whole question of imprisonment, especially as it relates to women and ultimately to support women prisoners, and to fight against an oppressive system which denies us our freedom and a state which, when we do oppose it, uses one of the most barbaric methods it has yet devised - prisons - to deny us even the most basic rights and to break down our spirit.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

One of the most important aspects of the review is that it is very positive : it ends with short reports from womens groups, campaigns, and services in all parts of the country and while some of these projects may seem to be at a very 'basic' level the important and ever-hopeful thing is that women are coming together and, from whatever starting point, are fighting back!

IRISH FEMINIST REVIEW, Womens Community Press, £3.35stg.

YELLOW ROSES

Reading the newspaper and listening to the news of late, we could all be forgiven for thinking that there has been very little of a positive nature happening in the area of women's reproductive rights. The law has been coming down firmly on the side of sexism and authoritarianism.

In England, where contraception has been available for some time, a woman has recently won the right through the appeal court to prevent doctors from giving either contraceptives or contraceptive advice to young women under sixteen. And not just her own children, mind you, but everyone else's as well – no matter what the family circumstances may be.

Despite promises made by the SPUC / Pro-Life anti-abortion campaign during the amendment referendum, we see a glaring example of the real situation in the Eileen Flynn case. The reality is that society is totally prejudiced against women having children whilst unmarried. Eileen Flynn has just lost her appeal against her employers who sacked her when she became pregnant. Oh no, no, no, said the holy nuns, it wasn't because she was pregnant, it was because of her relationship with a married man and her drinking in pubs. Strange though, that they only got round to sacking her when she became pregnant – as though the baby was considered proof of her 'immoral' life-style.

On a more positive note, however, a bill has just been passed by the Dáil to allow the sale of non-medical contraceptives (i.e. condoms and spermicides) in chemist shops to anyone over eighteen – Garret, in the full flight of his Stop Sectarianism in the South Campaign, is braving the wrath of the catholic church. However, this change in the law, which will be a very significant – though limited – improvement for women, has been used as a political football in the Dáil. The Fianna Fail party, which first legalised contraceptives on prescription for married couples, voted against the bill in the Dáil for political reasons, i.e. they were hoping to defeat the Fine Gael government, callously ignoring the many women who stand to benefit from this legislation.

As in rape cases where the victim herself is put on trial and vilified, so in Kerry an entire family has been in the dock in a tribunal which is supposed to be investigating Gardai 'misbehaviour'. The most vicious attacks have been reserved for the young woman at the centre of the case, Joanne Hayes. She is at the centre of the case because of her fertility – she gave birth to a baby (which later died). The 'Kerry Babies Case', as it has become known, is a classic example of how women's sexuality is so abhorred in our society that once the subject is raised all other issues are diminished. This tribunal should be investigating how the Gardai came to bully an entire family with threats and violence into confessing to the murder of a new-born baby found stabbed to death at Cahirciveen. Yet, for days on end Joanne was subjected to brutal and insulting questioning in court about her sex-life in an effort to 'prove' the ludicrous theory that she had had a sexual relationship with two men within 48 hours, become pregnant by both and subsequently gave birth to twins of different blood groups – one twin being the Cahirciveen baby.....The tribunal clearly wished to find her guilty of something in the public eye – even if only guilty of having a relationship with a married man – so that everyone would forget about the real purpose of the tribunal: the Gardai's misconduct.

Many people, particularly women, have been appalled at the way this tribunal has been conducted, and during the questioning of Joanne Hayes the tribunal became a focal point for women who saw it as a glaring example of sexism in society. Therefore, to show Joanne that she was not alone and that she was supported, there was a picket of the Tralee courthouse and, as a symbol of support, individual women and women's groups from all over Ireland sent yellow roses to the courthouse for Joanne. Later, when Eileen Flynn's appeal against her dismissal was being heard, she also received yellow roses from supporters --so the yellow rose is becoming a symbol of solidarity with women who are oppressed because of their sex.