

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

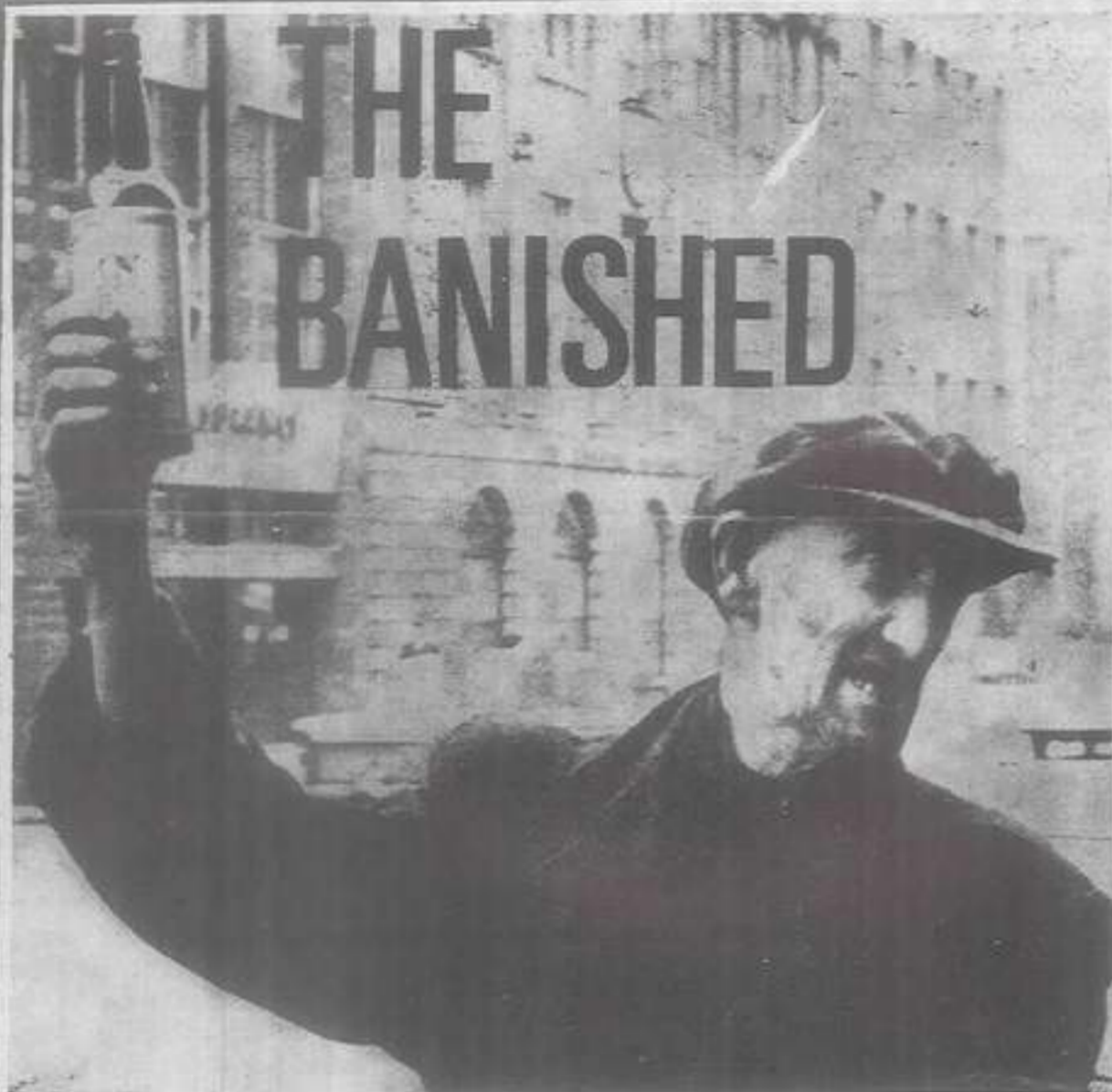
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'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . . ' James Connolly



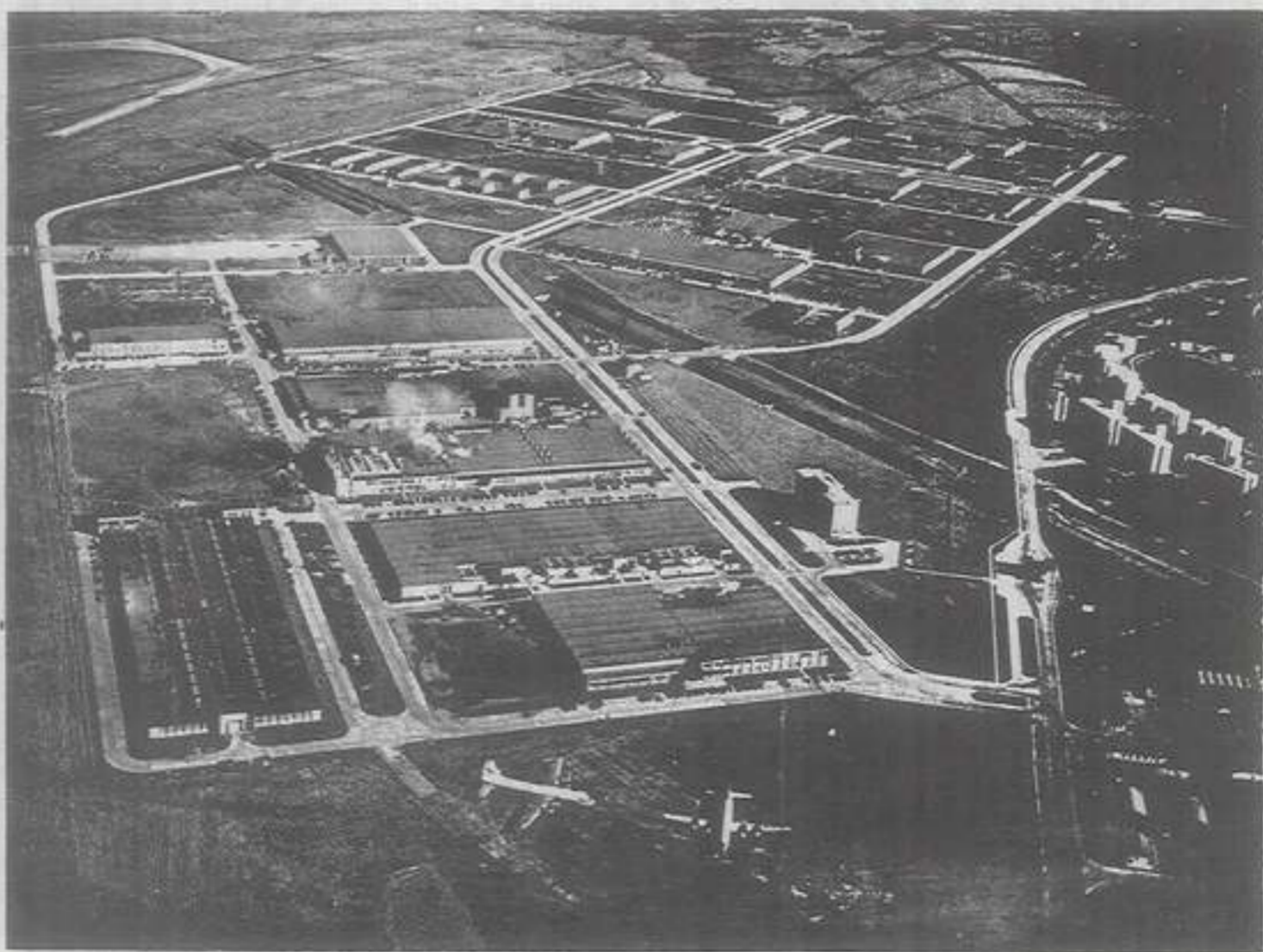
## MINES AND MONEY



The Tynagh complex.

## SALAD DAYS AT SHANNON

### R.T.E.: O'BRIEN'S DILEMMA





R.T.E.:

## O'BRIEN'S DILEMMA

A significant incident in Irish television history has passed almost unnoticed, especially by the left wing press. On September 7th, Hugh Leonard retired from his post of television critic for HIBERNIA. In his last notice he gave some of his reasons for opting out:

*The alternative to a repetitive over-inflation of small scale programmes which are not worth mentioning, never mind reviewing, is "Ungawa", which, poorly translated, means "I'm getting the hell out of here."*

*Dealing with the decision to increase the television licence by £1.50 and to create a special fee of £15 "for the privilege of suffering in colour" Leonard wrote:*

*For even without it the increase of £1.20 for old people who happen also to be poor, television is a lifeline, a survival noise and fare to the hour, and the new fee is a hardship. I have already made the point, and do so again now, that the present licence fee is probably the highest in Europe, given that we have only one channel, that we are paying to be afflicted to conventional, and that more than 50% of R.T.E.'s output consists of cheaply-bought, pre-packaged programmes from abroad. The fact that the home station is conventional, unexciting, technically defective and a real horror for human disbandment is almost, but not quite, beside the point.*

*Leonard gives some comparisons between R.T.E. and the B.B.C.*

*We should be that have our grounds and then we, the extra licence we are too late to hand forward and demand that old-fashioned and how stable commodity, value for money. What is truly alarming however is that Dr. Cruise O'Brien has declared that the increase in fees is necessary to save R.T.E. from economic collapse. In short, we are being misled, not to improve standards, but to maintain the lack of them; we are being obliged to buy tickets for a sinking ship. The promotion of administrative staff employed by the B.B.C. who were actually involved in production is 15% in R.T.E. with its single channel the ratio is 17% — it would be interesting to know the number of screen-hours produced per capita. Dr. Cruise O'Brien might, at any one, conceivably putting his own house in order before impoverishing the houses of others.*

*R.T.E.'s children's programmes and its Irish language policy are next commented on by the departing critic:*

*Consequently, R.T.E. has been neglecting its most important and distributing eleven children, who are fed off with mindless rubbish like Gump, Flipper or Disney films in the apparatus of Barrett dialogue is reached a crisis of "Get, Look, follow — a case" in contrast to B.B.C. programmes like Blue Peter, which attempt to win children's hearts, minds, and geographically, R.T.E.'s domestic output is confined to top-down like An Glebe Og, which runs on the tradition of linguistic overkill: not because anyone in Montrose really*

*wants programmes in Irish, any more than does the majority of viewers, but because it is easier to give it to pressure groups than to fight them. One wonders, in fact, how many Irish language shows are produced, not because we want to see them, but because some parasitical proponent of double-think believes we ought to watch them.*

*Writing earlier this year in the magazine Aquarius, Leonard, the most interesting and entertaining of Irish television critics, looked at some other R.T.E. shortcomings:*

*The function of any self-avowedly national television service is not merely to reflect, but to comment upon, the society for which it speaks and I see "comment" in the implicit sense in which it is present in any creative process. It is possible that in the area of drama and light entertainment R.T.E. has failed almost utterly to show us what is happening, or what should be happening within our society. In the field of direct comment, such as current affairs, there is not so much an attempt to mould public opinion as there is to intrude it more firmly behind Establishment precepts. A campaign of interference waged by the Government, advertisers and the hierarchy of R.T.E. itself has effectively muted programmes like 7 Days and Report to the point of silencing them only the occasional time, and then only at strangers.*

*In the same article Leonard states that "where it came to believe that a strong Pro-oriented element exists in the N.U.J." and goes on to describe one example of distortion in R.T.E.'s television news coverage:*

*In fact, the inaccuracies perpetrated by the R.T.E. News Division were not always intentional. An R.U.C. officer, interviewed while stating none of his men in a Derry hospital, said: "From what I have seen here today I have every reason to be proud of my men." When the film was transmitted, the officer's words were heard, not by the original text, but apparently in defence of police brutality in the Bogside. In short, R.T.E. had deceived its public with a cold-blooded and inflammatory lie.*

*Few people will challenge the accuracy of Hugh Leonard's criticisms. Unlike Leonard, however, most people living in the Southern and Western parts of the Republic cannot simply cry "Ungawa" to R.T.E. and its programmes. The nation's crisis has important implications for workers and their families living in these areas, and socialist must lay bare this crisis if working class opinion is to be mobilised on the question of R.T.E.'s future.*

*R.T.E. is in a perilous state for two main reasons: (A) It is not financially viable. (B) It is the tool of political and cultural (nationalist) establishments. The obvious signs of this are: (i) dub, droney news and feature coverage, very little newsworthy film, etc. (ii) Little original drama or film. (iii) Vast quantities of "various", second-rate American material. (iv) Thirty-year old movies.*

*R.T.E. difficulties are concerns to small*

countries and their development. These countries can be independent in economic and cultural terms only if they wish to remain underdeveloped and poor; as Southern Ireland was during its period of economic and cultural protectionism which ended in the early sixties. If such a country seeks some degree of affluence, it must accept economic dependence, verging on neo-colonialism.

Problems become evident when such small countries with their own airlines, steamship lines and broadcasting systems strive to compete in the new free trade situation. This is a particular difficulty for the Irish Republic. Irrevocably locked, as it is, in an economic love-hate relationship with the United Kingdom. And since, for more than a decade, the country's economic and political leaders (and most of the electorate, led by the "Republican" farmers) have been hellbent on consumer-capitalism and integration with international imperialism as any price, a form of group-Schmittism has been self-inflicted on the country by those people who want both affluence and cultural parity. This basic conflict expresses itself in R.T.E.'s failure to develop a coherent philosophy.

The fact is R.T.E. cannot hope to provide a service comparable to British B.B.C. or I.T.V. It will always be a poor relation, unless the Irish home-owners are prepared to pay vastly increased fees. It costs almost as much to provide a good T.V. service for 3 million people as it does for 30 million. "Good" T.V. (e.g. a film or play, a documentary, a musical or light entertainment) costs anything between £50,000 and £400,000 an hour. This is why British networks show as much "ranted" American material as they can get away with.

The cheapest television shows are those where the costs are largely overhead and have to be paid whatever is on the screen. The long-running and successful Late Late Show is very cheap (relatively speaking). Gay Byrne gets an inclusive producer's fee for a "game" fee (usually £25) is paid to those who appear on the panel (most of these panelists usually want free publicity anyway to plug shows, books, films or just themselves). The studio set, the lights, cameras and studio all have to be paid for anyway.

Sports coverage is also cheap. Just the Outside Broadcast Unit crew (who are already on the books) and a one-off fee to the club or association. Of course, economic restrictions can be advantageous to the political censor. If the funds are restricted for filming news and current affairs programmes it is unlikely that very much investigative T.V. journalism will take place. Film is the most expensive element in a news operation, particularly if film units are being sent abroad. At the same time, film, because of the portability of cameras, etc. and the plasticity of the editing operation, is the most effective medium for investigative documentary reporting.

R.T.E., as Hugh Leonard stated, is also saddled with providing an Irish language service. However, when so few Irish people actually speak and understand Irish, the consequence is an expensive P.R. gesture. But, of course, the biggest problem for R.T.E. is its proximity to the wealthier, better equipped British services. For advertising purposes, I.T.V. estimates that one half of the Republic's population (Dublin, the East coast and Donegal) receive British commercial T.V. transmissions.

If, as has been suggested, the Republic goes over to multi-channel (cable) T.V., R.T.E. could not remain viable in commercial terms. Cable T.V. is only economic in relatively densely populated areas. The cost of looking up rural areas, at present-day prices, would be beyond the pocket of

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# SALAD DAYS AT SHANNON . . . OR RABBIT FEED AT R.E.T.O.S.

The old man shook his head sadly, as he spoke with the experience of a long lifetime:

"Did you hear about —? He's better off ... At least he had guts if he had nothing else ... We have nothing and we're finished" the old man trailed off.

"They found his clothes on the bank ... They're still dragging the river for him", a voice adds.

"What do you think of the grub here", a forgotten farmer's son asks.

"Rabbit feed, you mean", the old man replied tersely, and, with what was left of his dignity, he nobbed out his last Woodbine.

"That was a great victory by the Limerick team", he continued, as he tried to shift the topic of conversation.

"Nonsense, 'twas only a bishop's bonfire". This interjection came from a young Clareman, obviously still a trifle jealous. He is afflicted with epilepsy.

A popular recording of a trumpet solo blazed over the intercom. A few well-known trumpet-players had their names bandied about. However, it was the title of the musical piece that really caught our fancy.

One young fellow suggested that "it sounded like the last post". Another chap thought "it could be reveille". Finally, one bright boy hit the jackpot. "Maybe", he said, they're sounding the retreat".

This conversational by-play was abruptly interrupted by the approach of the manager.

"Quick, boys, here comes the governor". The manager passed.

"Will you buy a shirt?" I'd seen this man before. "I'm selling a shirt", he continued. He was about fifty and nerve-wrecked.

"How much?" we chorused in unison.

"Fifty pee", came the quick reply.

"Why don't you wear it yourself", a voice seriously questioned.

"Well, I'm saving up for a headstone", the shirt man replied solemnly. The old man nodded understandingly.

"Do you know what he did in the chapel one Sunday?" The speaker was a young woman who

had befriended me. From Co. Limerick, with crudely cropped hair.

"That's him smoking his pipe", she elucidated.

"Well?" I ventured cautiously.

"Brigid was sitting next to him and ..." She paused in confusion.

"Anyway, I can't tell you, 'tis too dirty. The Mass was on an all ... I'd better not tell you, 'tis too dirty".

While I was pondering on all this trying in a manner of speaking, to separate the chaff from the wheat, my thoughts were shattered by the sounding of the lunch-time siren (Sorry about that, "siren" is not a nice word ... Let's try another ... How about "horn"? ... No, that won't do. My apologies once again. Let me see ... I've got it. "Hooter". That's better ... a sort of harmless, neutral word. Yes, "hooter" will suffice).

We sat down to our lunch and my mind drifted back to my work and my daily life ... Getting up in St. Joseph's Hospital at 6.30 a.m., ... in time to catch the 7.15 a.m. bus to Shannon ... Work starts at the factory of the Re-Employment Training Organisation (R.E.T.O.S.) at 8.00 a.m., and the management is strict on time ... Meeting my fellow-workers who also come from St. Joseph's, or from a hostel at Shannon ... Mental cases all (sorry, "psychiatric patients"), men and women, young and old.

Our jobs? To do some of the dirty, tedious menial chores charitably given to us by the other factories at the Shannon Industrial Estate ... cleaning out tubes, cones and pipes ... sorting screws ... for E.I., S.P.S., Lana-Knit, etc:

Our wages; A natural question. Would you believe £3.23 for a 40-hour week (It used to be £1.50, but we're in the Common Market now)... Only one consolation ... Like the farmers, we don't have to worry about income tax ... We must be grateful for small mercies, at least ... There are spaces provided on the pay packet for bonus payments, shift allowance, travelling time, etc, but on £3.23

Hunger begins to nag around 9.30a.m. and a ten - minute break for a cup of tea is allowed (no food) ... Notices abound ... On canteen door states

that the canteen is out of bounds except during breaks ... Another commandment on the factory notice board says that men must shave daily before going to work ... No notice yet on the Colgate ring of confidence ... A pity ...

The hunger is still around at 12.30p.m. when the lunch is served. (many of the workers keep going on pills and sedatives). Lunch is the day's highlight. There is little danger of anyone going astray ... one's place is given and fixed in the canteen, with each name printed on the appointed table. The lunch is cold and is already on the table. It is usually made up of the following: lettuce, tomato, a hard-boiled egg, with sometimes some crisps, diced vegetables or some brawn or perhaps luncheon meat. This is supplemented with two slices of bread and is followed by a sweet, which invariably consists of well-watered jelly and ice-cream

Another break is allowed for tea between 3.20 and 3.30p.m. Again, one cup of tea, with no bread. At 4.45 work finishes. Some of the workers return to St. Joseph's in Limerick; others go back to their Shannon Hostel and a few fortunate ones go to their own homes. As they leave, yet, another notice reminds them not to wander anywhere.

The bus journey to Limerick can often be eventual. However, few of the bored middle - class ladies who sit on the board of the R.E.T.O.S. would know anything about this. Frequently shouts of "Here are the workers from the Mad Factory" greet the R.E. T.O.S. workers as they go into the bus. These workers are also often called on to sing songs for the entertainment of the other passengers on the journey to Limerick.

But the return to work call broke in on my thoughts. I downed my cuppa and moved back to my work — bench. The stains of canon Sidney McEwan's well-worn tenor voice floated over the intercom as he sang "Suffer Little Children To Come Unto Me". A well-packaged commercial song, with a suitably angelic children's chorus. And I thought about my former workmate who had the guts and for whose body they were now dragging the river.

## O'BRIEN'S DILEMMA

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the average householder. However, if all the densely populated areas were taking I.T.V., R.T.E. would soon go out of business as an advertising medium. The majority of T.V. advertisements are for mass-consumer goods and services: foodstuffs, sweets, petrol, etc. Many of the "commercials" on R.T.E. are British made with Irish-accented voices "dubbed on". And advertisers are hardly likely to pay twice to get at the same audience.

It seems as if the most sensible (though not the most politically acceptable) solution is for R.T.E. to concentrate its resources on running a good envelope service of news, current affairs, local

interest and cultural programmes, educational material and to take, via suitable deals, programmes from the United Kingdom and elsewhere via the European link (Eurovision). Clearly there would be resistance to this from politicians, the Catholic Church, the Irish language lobby, etc. on the grounds that the country's culture was being eroded, etc. However, unless the Republic is prepared to spend a great deal more on its television service there is no other way out.

Another aspect of the financial problem facing R.T.E. is the rapid obsolescence of expensive pieces of equipment. Most electronic T.V. gear must be written off over a few years. Each new electronic break through means higher unit costs and high write-off rates. Colour T.V. has increased operating costs by a factor of 3 to 5 and made much of the old equipment obsolete.

It has now become obvious that R.T.E. cannot

afford to run a service comparable with B.B.C. 1 or 2 or I.T.V. It is pathetic for it to even try. Faced with this situation, it would be logical for R.T.E. to recognise its limitations and adopt a policy of selectivity in programme production with an extension into co-production with Britain and other countries.

This, then, is the dilemma confronting the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien and his Department. But has he the political weight and skill to bring about the necessary changes in Irish television? The time is opportune for Irish workers and their trade unions to join in this debate in demanding a better and more open television service. The Minister clearly needs some strong indication of the people's wishes. In this area the work of the multi-channel lobby needs to be supported and broadened if anything effective is to be achieved.



## THE CATHOLIC POET

In 1871, O'Donnell's second book, *Memories of the Irish Franciscans*, was published by James Duffy. In his Introduction, O'Donnell describes how he came to write the book:

*The origin of the following ballads is directly traceable to two sources of inspiration. When a lad, it afforded me an ever fresh, if subdued, delight to wander through the roofless and deserted cloisters of the Franciscan convents and oratories, whose venerable remains stud the broad fields, and cast their shadows over the legend-haunted rivers of Munster. With their story at the time I was but vaguely and remotely acquainted, but I at least knew that those ruins were the monuments of an Order which had rendered Ireland noble and abiding service in evil and calamitous days. Years, and perhaps distance, served only to deepen the impressions which I experienced while meditating amid the desolate beauty of Adare, or finding some reliable traces of the great Franciscan house which, according to local tradition, once dominated the Limerick flank of Thomond-bridge. Later on, the Rev. C.P. Meehan's scholarly and delightful book, *The Franciscan Monasteries*, came upon me like a revelation, and lighted up those grey chanel and slender arcades, not only with the cold illumination of fact, but with the warmer light of pathos and imagination as well. It was not until I had read Mr. Meehan's work for the fifth or sixth time that the notion of throwing into ballad shape the ecclesiastical and secular incidents which he so admirably dramatised, presented itself. I could not enhance the sterling worth of his labors, but, by using verse, as a popular vehicle, it might, I thought, be possible to render those labors better known and more universally appreciated.*

As in his first book, O'Donnell concludes his Introduction on a modest note:

*The result belongs to the future, and I am neither vain nor sanguine enough to attempt to anticipate it. I cannot claim a very high character for the following ballads, in as much as they naturally involved the manipulation of a serious mass of details, and that in treating these, fancy, imagination, and digressiveness had to be subordinated to the necessities of historic truth. At all events, I can honestly say that I have done my utmost to make the book what it pretends to be - the story of the Irish Franciscans enlarged into English verse from the nervous and fluent prose of the author of *The Fate and Fortunes of the Earls of Tyrone and Tirconnell*. May I be excused for indulging the hope that the volume will find sympathising readers in the ranks of my young countrymen, and be at the same time an act of tardy justice to the illustrious Order whose services and sufferings it feebly commemorates.*

O'Donnell repeats these sentiments in poetic form in *THE FRANCISCANS* the first poem in the book:

*Then to St. Francis and his brown-robed sons  
I dedicate, with love and reverence,  
This little book; and crave their benisons,  
Wishing it bore a higher, deeper sense  
Of what my heart would utter. May they spread  
And fill the land with their sweet influence;  
With loving labors vivify the past;  
Proclaim that ignorance is crushed and dead,  
Scatter those vapors ominous and dense,  
Till enmity shall kiss their feet at last.*

The writing in the collection of verse is not among O'Donnell's best work. The book contains some interesting poems, including one titled, *Limerick*, but the mixture of religion, history and poetry is not always successful. "Owen Roe", writing about the book in *The Shamrock* of February 24th., 1877 commented: ... "Memories of the Irish Franciscans, although open to the charge of being "dry", are nevertheless interesting;

## In search of . . .

JOHN FRANCIS  
O'DONNELL

Part Six

by Jim Kemmy

and may in some years to come be the only series of poetry by which our poet may be known."

Many more of O'Donnell's poems contain religious references. In the last verse of *Adare* he places his complete trust in religious belief and turns his face against rational and scientific progress:

*Heaven knows it all. We blindly move,  
Seeking solutions of our fears  
Ah, nobler consolations fall  
In rains of penitential tears,  
Through those thick hazes peace appears.  
We would be wise, we would be good,  
We would have heaven our single hope  
And yet insult that single trust  
With crucible and telescope.*

Another insight into O'Donnell's religious thinking is to be found in a letter written by him to Father Matthew Russell, S.J., on August 14th 1873, less than a year before the poet's death. This letter was published in the *Irish Monthly* of which Fr. Russell was editor, in 1888 in its sixteenth yearly volume. For some reason the priest had tackled O'Donnell on his Christianity. Father Russell gives the letter, though, as he states, "it mentions some sufficiently private concerns":

*7 Victoria Road, Holloway,  
August 14th 1873.*

*My Dear Fr. Russell,*

*You say, "I hope you are a good Christian". Well I have not ceased to be a Catholic. I go to Mass regularly; I do not neglect confession; my little girls (two) are at school with the ladies of Notre Dame de Sion; my eldest boy, of whom I have great hopes, goes to a Catholic school within a few doors of us, and I can answer for my wife that never better Catholic breathed.*

*Perhaps at this stage of my life such a protest as I am about to put in may sound ludicrous. Here it is, however. I have never - and heaven knows what inducements there were to the contrary - penned a line which, dying, I would be anxious to blot. That is the record of my life since you have known me. I am not ashamed of it, and I can imagine the pleasure which such a retrospect must - here is egotism run mad - give a priest of the Society of Jesus.*

*Believe me dear Fr. Russell,  
Gratefully yours,  
John F. O'Donnell.*

O'Donnell frequently links religion with death in his poetry. In one of his finest poems, *Last moments*, he slowly but skilfully builds up an eerie atmosphere of gloom and sadness inside and outside the death-room. Here are O'Donnell's descriptive powers at their best:

*"Plead for a Faith dismantled, not o'erthrown,  
Plead for a race not broken, if 'tis bent  
Plead for a cause not lost for evermore".  
(THE FRANCISCANS - J.F. O'Donnell).*

*The twilight thickens; and, forlorn,  
The hawk across the lattice flies;  
The purple-throated finches scream;  
The peacock from the paddock cries.  
The wind blows chilly from the west,  
Through tracts of orange vapour rolled;  
And broken lines of cattle stream  
Across the bleak, abandoned wold.  
Hark to the bell! 'tis curfew time;  
Kindle the night lamp. God! how grey  
The light gleams through the closing lids -  
Moon-lighted lilies. Let us pray.*

*At times, great footfalls labour slow  
Along the arched corridors;  
Old portraits beckon from the walls,  
Quaint faces gaze from open doors.  
In minute calms of rain and wind,  
The swallows whistle in the thatch;  
The chimneys roar, the gables groan;  
Trice shakes the weather-rusted latch.  
Abroad, amid the cloudy air,  
One star shines faintly down the bay.  
The angel of her spirit leans  
Across the threshold. Let us pray.*

*A blaze of amber splendour streams  
Around the couch from yonder cleft  
Of shadows cirqued before the sun;  
Her pulse is still; her soul is left.  
Chilly and white but glorified;  
The dead face from the curtained gloom  
Gazes, instinct with after life,  
Across the bright, wainscotted room.  
Put out the light; quench all the fires;  
Strew roses on her virgin clay.  
The presences of angels fill  
The house with terror. Let us pray.*

Like his nationalism, O'Donnell's strong religious feelings can be traced back to his Limerick childhood. During a controversy about the exact birth place of the poet in the *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, which also spilled into the *Limerick Chronicle*, in May 1905, Patrick Fitzgerald, 21 Richmond Street (now St. Joseph's Street), Limerick, who claimed to be O'Donnell's "nearest relative living", wrote a letter to the *Evening Telegraph*; This letter, which was reprinted in the *Limerick Leader* on May 29th, 1905, stated:

*Seeing by your paper of the 20th instant the dispute about the birthplace of John Francis O'Donnell, I, as his nearest relative living (being his first cousin) can give all the information required about him. Limerick is really his birthplace. He was born in Cornwallis-street. His father was a painter by trade, his mother being my aunt, and he was an only child. He and I went together as boys to Leamy's School, Hartstonge-street. His father died when he was very young. At the age of fourteen he entered as a clerk in Mr. O'Donnell's leather store. He showed a taste for poetry from his earliest years. He became a member of the Catholic Young Men's Society, which was got up by Dean O'Brien in Brunswick-street. Owing to some verses of poetry he wrote while in the society he came to the notice of Dean O'Brien, who had him sent to the Diocesan College, which was then in the Crescent, to be educated. Mr. M. MacDonagh was making inquiries about him from me about ten years ago, and I gave him all information he required at the time. I possess an old photograph of John Francis O'Donnell and his wife.*

Here we have many clues to the formation of the religious and nationalist character of the man.  
(To be continued)



# THE BANISHED

**'THERE ARE NO FANCY WORDS... ONLY THE REALITY'**

FRANK HAMILTON LIMBERS UP  
AMONG THE DOWN-AND-OUTS

It is not every day that a Limerick worker writes a play and succeeds in getting it publicly presented. Frank Hamilton, the twenty-three-year old reporter, who formerly worked as a messenger boy and factory worker, had his first play *The Banished* staged at the Royal George Hotel, on Monday, September 24th. The play, described as "a social commentary in dramatic form," was given a directed reading by the College Players.

The action is set on a derelict site near the Simon Community Hostel in Limerick, and describes the disillusionment of a young reporter. Hamilton uses the play to expose the hypocrisy of the forces of capitalist society in their treatment of the "Simon boys". The reporter, who appears to be based on a cross between the author himself and Peter O'Malley, a former *Limerick Weekly Echo* journalist, goes to the derelict site to find out what makes people drop out of society. John, a social worker, replies:

*Well, a lot come from broken homes, state institutions and more have mental problems ... many of the people have a history of being in prisons, orphanages and industrial schools .. and they cannot cope with the pressures of a highly industrialised society.*

The reporter asks if "the economic system is a contributing factor," and the social worker concedes: "Well .. unemployment causes many problems .." Following an interview with a priest, the reporter comments: "I can see one thing ... the Church tolerates the Establishment ... because the Church is part of it ... we are all part of it .."

The reporter next talks to "Solo," a young drop-out whose main aims are to drink and sing, and asks him about social workers. "Solo" replies: "... they're so confused by their University degrees in sociology and psychology that they haven't a clue .. they're like parasites ... living on the problems of people .. "I notice that social problems increase every year," is all the reporter can say without explaining why this is so.

Some exchanges between Cath, a "communist" social worker, and the reporter follow. "A priest told me that the Church was against exploitation ... but are women who go to Bingo exploited .. are children left hungry ... or is the rent unpaid?" the reporter asks. "Priests don't talk .. they preach at you as if they have all the goodness," Cath replies.

A policeman comes on the scene looking for "Solo," and the reporter questions him about his attitude to the "Simon boys." "... they're more harm to themselves than anybody else .. we get a

few complaints about begging in the streets .. One man (was) fined £2 for being drunk, but considering that it took two Gardai to lift him into the Patrol car you can write it down as a waste of taxpayers money," the sergeant states.

The next exchange has a topical ring as Cath tackles the reporter: "why don't you ask him about the winos who are beaten up in the Station," "If people have complaints against the Gardai there are procedures laid down .. it is possible that some of these drunks could give trouble ... and many of them can be dangerous,..." the sergeant counters.

And, inevitably, the frequently heard local response is once again aired when a passing man states: "That bloody place should be burned down ... Its brought but winos and bobos into Limerick ... we never had any of that until it opened ..."

Act three of the play is obviously based on the Newenham Street eviction of March 1973, when four old women were evicted from their home and the two local papers were "pulled" to keep the story out of their pages. The two off-stage voices used here are thinly - disguised versions of the one of the solicitors and one of the editors concerned.

The failure to publish the story leads to a clash between Cath and the reporter. Cath says: There are no fancy words ... only the reality ... and the reality is that the status quo will always be protected ... and it will never be challenged with bastards like you around" ... In his reply the reporter describes the role of the press in capitalist society:

*They fester on hypocrisy until they cannot be challenged and the irony is that we find ourselves protecting ... protecting false values for our very survival .. you whore of journalism .. you beguiling bitch ... we dramatise our minor tragedies .. and suppress our scandal ... we must protect the lies ... There is no freedom .. they .. them .. the order of things ... could not allow it ...*

The play ends with the drop-outs sitting around a fire on the derelict site. No political solutions to their plight nor to the problems of society as a whole are offered. The author appears to accept the inevitability of the present system.

After the play, a discussion panel and the audience engaged in dialogue about the play. The first speaker from the panel was Tom Keane, a former volunteer at the Simon Community Hostel. He said that the characters in the play were not confined to the type of people being helped by Simon but were typical of the many other people who were the victims of a society which exploited human dignity, and they could be encountered all

over Limerick city and throughout Ireland. He called for the "re-structuring of society" to alter this situation and said "the system must be attacked."

Bobby Hamilton, father of the author, then spoke from the floor and asked Tom Keane to explain the type of society he wanted. This contribution was an instinctive working class response and was the most relevant question of evening.

Tom Keane did not wish to be pinned down on his definition of a restructured society and merely answered that he wanted to see "a just society." Fine Gael, the major party in the present Government, also says it is seeking a just society. Before the author's father could press for a more detailed answer to his question, the uneasy chairman, Tim Lehane, skilfully steered the discussion on to a less difficult topic.

Most of the other speakers from the floor praised the play and condemned the treatment of the drop-outs. It was symptomatic of the prevailing paranoia that when the author, Frank Hamilton got up to speak he declared that he "was not a communist". When asked for a suggested solution to the ills of society, some of which he had described in his play, he stated that it was "up to each of us to do our own little bit".

Engels described the condition of most of the speakers and also the play's message when he wrote: "It is the essence of bourgeois socialism to want to maintain the basis of all the evil of present day society and at the same time to abolish the evils themselves". And the play itself? "*The Banished*," with all its faults of construction and cardboard characters, is a notable achievement. Frank Hamilton has exposed the ugly under-belly of capitalism, and the manner in which the press is used to serve the system. The claim of Arthur Quinlan, editor of the *Limerick Weekly Echo*, however, that Hamilton is a Limerick Sean O'Casey is an inflated one at this stage.

The author is weak in creating female characters. Nell, the prostitute, looked and sounded more like a Legion of Mary woman than a Dock Road dolly. Cath, the "communist" social worker, was completely unreal and behaved like a middle-class Presentation Convent teacher. Communists want to change society not to prop it up by confining their activities to "social work". All the cast worked hard, and Bobby McMahon, who played "Solo," achieved the best and most credible performance of the evening.

Seamus O' Cinneide, who reviewed the play for the *Limerick Leader*, stated: "If there had been a spokesman for the Establishment of the discussion panel .. it would have ginged up the discussion - and exorcised the general adulation of the author tone that prevailed ..." But what the panel lacked was not yet another speaker from the establishment to add to all the other establishment figures on the panel, but someone to give the socialist alternative. In the absence of a working class viewpoint, one of the present Simon volunteers might have contributed more than any of the other panelists.

Down - and - outs, apart from the general nuisance caused by their begging and petty pilfering, pose no threat to capitalism. Most of the Simon volunteers, who are usually well intentioned but politically naive young people, who invariably leave Simon after a short time, also pose no threat to the system.

When Frank Hamilton breaks through to a full political realisation of the labour/capital conflict he should write a better play. He might also atune his ear more closely to Limerick working class language. In this context, he could apply his own phrase, "there are no fancy words .. only the reality" more rigorously to his future writing efforts. Meanwhile, "*The Banished*" is an impressive first attempt, and much more will be heard of Hamilton as a writer in the years ahead.



Chile

## Nixon's Way With Allende

By P. O. Feithile

The killing of Chile's president, Dr. Salvador Allende and the overthrow of the country's democratically - elected Government has provoked widespread comment throughout the world. It seems that Allende was killed in the fighting during the siege on his place of residence by forces of the Chilean army.

When the history of the military group is written, it is certain that some, at least, of the credit for its success will be laid on the steps of the Pentagon and in the headquarters of the C.I.A. Since Allende came to power, the American Government has used sabotage, espionage, internal political agitation and economic pressures to bring about his fall. In the light of this background, Allende's overthrow cannot be considered surprising or even unexpected.

Dr. Salvador Allende was a far cry from the popular image of a South American revolutionary. A short stocky man in a conservative suit wearing thick horn-rimmed spectacles, he looked and was a child of the bourgeoisie. It was only in appearance that he was conservative: underneath the pin stripe beat the heart of a socialist reformer.

He was born in Valparaiso in 1908 and excelled at the school of medicine of Chile where he was active politically. He became a Marxist, believing that socialism was needed to cure the social evils of the country. He was jailed many times for his part in student protests and practised medicine. He soon found, however, that socialist doctors are not too popular in the medical profession.

He was elected a deputy in 1937 and in the following year managed a successful presidential campaign for a candidate of the popular front, after which he was made Minister of Public Health, a post which he held until 1940. In 1942, he founded the Chilean Socialist party and became its general secretary. He was an unsuccessful presidential candidate in '52, '58 and '64. In 1966, he was elected president of the senate, becoming the second highest - ranking political figure in the government, and in 1970, as a candidate of The Popular Unity, he was elected president. He came home on a Chilean Socialism platform, playing down his Marxism. He called for an end to an inflation and unemployment, nationalisation of

monopolies (such as the I.T.T. - owned telephone system) and of natural resources, extensive agrarian reform, reforms in the judicial system and the setting up of a People's Assembly to replace the two houses of Congress.

From the beginning, he knew he had not the support of all of Chile. "I am not the president of all Chileans", he was wont to remark. And he was right, he had won the implacable hatred of the upper middle - class. These he did not pretend to represent; his heart was with the squatters, the

In January 1971 Nixon declared of the new Allende government: 'We recognise the right of any country to have internal policies and an internal government different from what we might approve of ... I haven't given up on Chile or the Chilean people, and we're going to keep our contact with them.' As it happened, the two statements were mutually exclusive: by 'not giving up on' the Chilean people, the US government can claim a large measure of responsibility for the bloody destruction of Chilean democracy. An event which is being greeted with quiet purrs of satisfaction in official Washington and broad grins in corporate boardrooms.

The State Department insists that there was absolutely no US government involvement in the coup. Given the well-documented records of Washington's past interference in Chilean affairs, the burden of proof remains on them. But even if it is true that there were no bands of Howard Hunts running round with telephone salesmen, Washington certainly accepted one of the 'least exotic' of ITT's suggestions outlined in a 1970 ITT memo and repeated endlessly to top Nixon Administration officials by all sorts of businessmen thereafter: 'A more realistic hope among those who want to block Allende is that a swiftly deteriorating economy will touch off a wave of violence leading to a military coup.'

New Statesman 21 September 1973

unemployed, the workers and it was their lot he was determined to change. He nationalised hundreds of companies large and small and carried out the most extensive agrarian reforms on the continent. To set up a just society it was necessary that the petit-bourgeoisie tighten their belts and waive some wanted luxuries for the good of all. This they were not willing to do.

The American government made trade with the rest of the world almost impossible. Chile found it impossible to raise loans or purchase equipment. The U.S. cut off all direct or indirect aid, as did the United Kingdom, bastion of free speech and democracy. During his election campaign I.T.T. offered money to the C.I.A. to prevent his election. Their involvement in the lorry owners strike and walk - outs by various sectors of the middle class will not be known for some time. What is known is that they had a detailed plan, called "Plan Centaur", for his fall which had been in operation for two years. The U.S. also maintained a close relationship with the Chilean army which it supplied with military equipment.

On Tuesday September 11th tanks and planes moved in on the Moneda palace in Santiago. Regis Debray, the French intellectual and a personal friend of Allende, says that the president had known his fate for some time. He refused to arm the masses hoping to avoid a civil war. His enemies were not squemish. The fighting in Santiago was fierce. The exact number slain cannot be accurately given but runs into thousands; at least 5,000 have been imprisoned and a witch - hunt is on for all left-wing sympathisers and supporters. Everything indicates that a new fascist state has been born.

There is a lesson here. International capitalism, spearheaded by the Americans, will sabotage and seek to destroy any democratically - elected government hostile to its interests, even Allende's watered-down socialist one. And the fact that militantly sectarian organisations like the Provos continue to raise money and buy arms in America, the home of imperialism, for their "anti-imperialist" war in Northern Ireland is worthy of some consideration.

The killing of Allende and the overthrow of his Government once again shows that capitalism has lost none of its ruthlessness and determination when its survival and profits are even marginally threatened.

## MINES AND MONEY

The decision of the government to tax profits on mining operations, thus ending the mine companies' tax holiday and producing additional revenue for the State of, perhaps, £6 million a year for the next 20 years, was announced on September 26th. The fact that this announcement was made just three days before the Irish Congress of Trade Unions met to consider the question of another National Wage Agreement has already been commented on.

A brief look at the situation will put the matter into perspective. The Irish republic possesses the world's largest lead/zinc mine at Navan, the largest underground zinc mine in Europe at the Silvermines, the largest lead-producing mines in

Europe at Tynagh, one of the most important sources of magnesite barytes deposit in the world. The facts are not in dispute.

What is in dispute are exploration costs and profits. The mining companies are vague on profits; The Resources Study Group place the figure at £50 million. Exploration costs range from the companies' figure of £45 million over the past eighteen years to a figure of £6.5 million if the government nationalised the mines now. Companies inflate figures for the obvious reasons and development in the field of exploratory devices and techniques is conveniently overlooked. A popular misconception credits foreigners with the discovery of the mines: 6 out of 8 major mines were discovered by national bodies.

The mining concerns are understandably worried about the impending action by the Government. They bought seven pages of advertising space in "The Irish Independent" of August 30th in which articles written by executives of the companies appeared under the title of a "special survey". This is a particularly effective type of advertisement in that the reader is unaware that an article is an ad. The general theme was that mining was financially risky and not very rewarding. The effort was not unlike the "Save Green Shield Stamp" campaign.

It was pointed out that 2,000 men were employed (a factory work force). The average wage was given at £44; the R.S.G. put the average miner's wage at £27. These wages are taxed, profits are untaxed. The untaxed profit per worker per week ranges from £125 to £1431. It was noted that employment was in rural areas where alternative employment was lacking. State nationalised mines would provide the same employment at least. They will leave two developed ports, Foynes and Mornington and railway lines to the ports - mementoes of plunder. Mr. M.V. O'Brien of Tara assures the taxpayer that he has been lucky to be saved the cost of governmental exploration while being able to "share in the benefits of successful mining". About 2.5% of the wealth generating potential over the life of the known mineral deposits will enter the Irish economy. Elsewhere an anonymous correspondent states that "only a clear cut State policy on mining developments" will encourage foreign investment. But even by capitalist standards the Irish Republic is being short-changed.

The same correspondent refers to "a small sound industry" but in the article also states that "with proper encouragement it could well rank second to agriculture as one of the most important



**MINE & MONEY** *continued*

industries in the country". Important for whom? Like capitalism itself, mining is nothing more than a massive confidence trick to enrich a few. An

advertisement showing two begrimed miners with the caption V.I.P.s. could double for a cartoon and carries an ironic truth.

It is obvious that the mining corporations will be happy to settle for taxed royalties. Many

Labour Party members are looking to Justin Keating — a potential party leader — to do something. But Keating is not going to rock the Coalition Boat. The best that can be hoped for is a slightly better deal within the present capitalist set-up.

But instead of looking to Keating for some sort of socialist solution, Irish workers should be cutting out their own work in this field. Workers employed at the mines should agitate for a greater say in the economic policies of these undertakings. Workers at the mines must insist on the introduction of industrial democracy from the bottom of the mine shaft upwards. Only through this approach — and not through futile appeals to Justin Keating — will a start be made towards bringing about a change to a situation where the mines will be used for the benefit of the people and not for the profit of the few.

ECHOES FROM

— THE —

**BOTTOM DOG**

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the "Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

**THE BOTTOM DOG**

NO. 23 23rd March, 1918

**THOUGHTS OF A WORKER.**

All down the ages the worker is engaged in one long struggle for existence, and the continuance of this war has increased the burden almost beyond endurance. The ruling class aims at riveting the chains of slavery more and more firmly on the limbs and minds of the working class—to keep on forever the system of master and slave, to break their spirits with never-ending drudgery and to cripple and becloud their brains with false doctrines. The workers of Ireland must realise their position; they must organise in one solid mass, demanding the right to live and a fair share of the things they produce by their labour. There must be access to the land for all the people who live on it and to all the mineral wealth and means of life it contains; these must be used by the people for the people in order to abolish serfdom and wage slavery and to end forever the so-called civilization which crushes the worker on every side to-day.

cottage yearly he went his way, but when the 'other Contractor' called 'it was alright,' the money was drawn, little work done and in 16 years no gravel. An honest Contractor once took the cottages to a certain district, and Joe persecuted him into retirement. People thought 18 months ago the swindle would end, and it was then Joe wielded the magic wand and got the Council to swear their allegiance and 'prove' no gravelling should be done; but Joe had given away the show by spreading it when the fraud was challenged. The public regarded it as a plea of guilt to prevent the enquiry and following the Local Government Board Inspector's report, that body demanded that the wrong payments should be accounted for; that was the time for Mr. O. Rahilly to force the fight but he funked it. If Mr. J.P., the Spirit Retailer, had stuck to fight, t'woudn't be such a failure, and Joesey O'Malley, the shad(y)ing engineer would not now boss The Council, who all shout, 'Hear, Hear.'

**THE DROMBANNA STRIKE**

After seven weeks the men on strike are as determined as ever to continue the fight to a successful finish. Financial support continues to pour in; the public is wholeheartedly behind the men, and if the Committee, who appear to be under the control of the Manager, Paddy Lynn, do not see justice done very soon they will only have themselves to blame if the Creamery is forced to close down and they have to foot the £4,000 odd over draft due to the National Bank. Ford, the Belfast Blackleg, junior partner in Wall and Ford, has not yet given up scabbing. Wall was responsible lately for taking a crowd away from a workers' meeting in Bruff. When he goes up for County Councillorship the workers won't forget this. He advocates cheap potatoes for Bruff workers and seeks to starve Drombanna workers into submission. Ford is now up against stronger opposition than the 'man with the terrible left.' The engineers at the Creamery Supply Co. are still on strike owing to the firm supplying a handyman to do engineer's work at Drombanna Creamery Proprietors, please note: John Crowe (or Jack Daw) is shoeing the Creamery horse, work which B. Halpin used to do. Halpin is no 'daw', hence the change of blacksmith by Lynn. Shareholder Mc Cormack, like his distinguished namesake, is a man of note and boasted at a supper party that his influence would keep him from honourable mention in the 'B.D.' we are sorry to disappoint him, but the 'B.D.' cannot be bought like the Limerick Press which Tim Hennessy got to keep his name and conviction out of the report of the Limerick Petty Sessions.

**LOYALIST NEWS****"Chilly Winds in South":**

"Reading through Southern papers one finds that they are more 'open' than ours. They do not hesitate to get to the bottom of political scandals, parochial though they may be, and, taken against the smug conservatism of our local papers, they call a spade a spade. One aspect of journalism in the South is that it brings to the surface the whole unhealthy atmosphere that one gets in a State dominated by one particular religion ... Indeed reading the Southern papers and their views on morality, politics and life in general, one cannot help feeling that prostitution, violence, drugs, homosexuality etc., are symptoms of a society which is vainly trying to throw off the chains of a seventeenth century religion. It is as if, after all these years, the people have just realized there is a world outside ... The future of Eire may well be marked by a tremendous social upheaval in the near future as the "captive" people strike for the true liberty which is every people's birthright. That is the liberty of personal conscience under the law, a law which is not favourable to one particular interpretation of conscience, but which provides for all".

**BACK NUMBERS**

MANY readers have written in seeking copies of back editions of the LIMERICK SOCIALIST. A limited number of copies of each issue, excluding Vol. 1, No. 4 (April, 1912) and Vol. 2, No. 8 (August, 1913), can be obtained at the rate of 10p per copy (post free) or £1 for 12 copies. Orders for back numbers should be handed in to any newsagent in which the LIMERICK SOCIALIST is sold or sent to the:

LIMERICK SOCIALIST,  
33, Greenhill Road,  
Garryowen,  
Limerick.

**THE BOTTOM DOG**

No. 25

6th April, 1918

Price ½d.

**LIMERICK NO. 1 RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

Since the bursting of the Local Government Board bombshell at the last meeting of the above the B.D. is now on the trail of further vagaries, showing that Joe O' Malley's one-man-show is run on a system of his own, which has created a sad history and prospect for some three thousand souls who live in those 800 cottages which they never now can own. Joe first finds a way to remove the independence of the Councillors and then defies Local Government Board and people. If a Contractor did not know how to 'stand in' with Joe, his work was kicked down and done by Joe at his expense. If he did 'stand in' a propped up job was passed followed by a maintenance contract and special repairs which according to the Local Government Board, swallowed up the rent. It is on the specification for the maintenance contract that Joe shows most brains and least conscience; he got the Council to fix £1 per year per cottage (at present £1.10p) and when an honest prospecting Contractor called to Joe's office and saw the specification included two tons of gravel to each

No. 26

13th April, 1918

Price ½d.

**DROMBANNA CREAMERY DISPUTE.**

The 'B.D.' was honoured by being produced in Court at the hearing of Ryan's claim for compensation. Ryan got £500, so the 'B.D.' must count for something. This ought to enable Davy Ryan to live without scabbing. Conscription looms large in the Irish horizon and if it is put into force farmers' sons who can be spared from the land to blackleg in a Creamery will surely be the first to don Khaki, Davy Ryan can make a present for his new suit to some poor relation.



08925

DEDICATION.

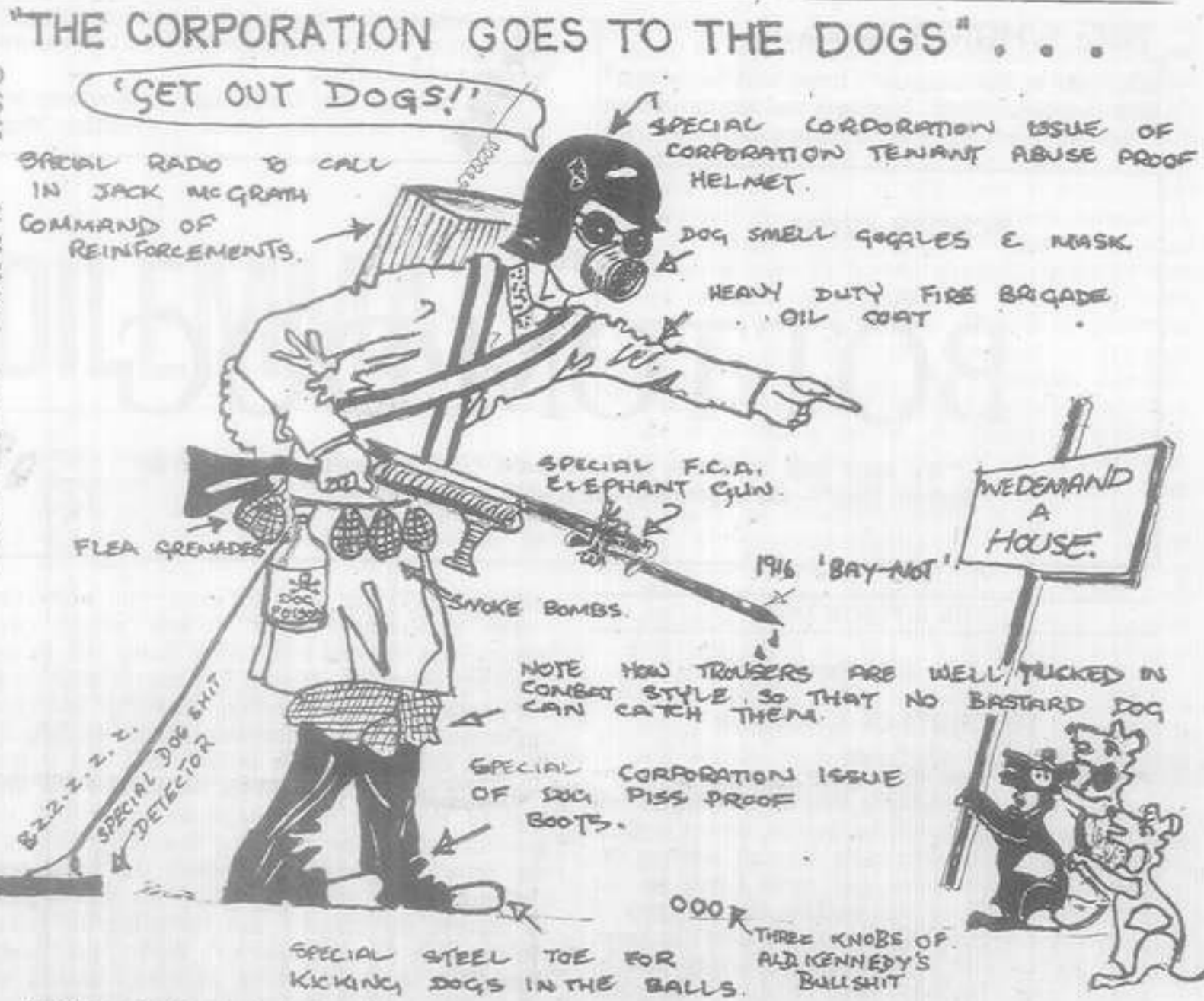
THIS CARTOON IS DEDICATED TO ALDERMAN PAT KENNEDY, LIMERICK'S ONLY HUMAN (ALMOST) BORING WOOD-LOUSE.

The egocentric Alderman had, obviously, not heard of the attack by the Corporation Housing Maintenance Department on the mad, teeming dog-house at St. Ita Street when he made the following remarks at a City Council meeting on September 25th.

This Department (Maintenance) is almost non-existent... The people are not getting a proper service. I heard of a widow of over 80 years of age who can't get a new cooker and she would have to go on a waiting list for a second hand one... Chutes and fascia boards are in a disgraceful condition. This lack of repairs and maintenance hits hardest the widow and the tenants on small incomes.

EVICITION AT THE CORPORATION DOG HOUSE AN EXCLUSIVE MAN BEATS DOGS STORY

During mid-September, two unsuccessful efforts were made by Limerick Corporation maintenance workers to gain entry to a house at 90 St. Ita Street, St. Mary's Park. The attempts were rebuffed and the workers driven off by a pack of wild, savage dogs, which had taken possession of the house. But Christy O'Dwyer, the Corporation's determined Housing Maintenance Officer decided to tackle the problem single-handed. Armed with a stout stick, long overcoat and a strong pair of Wellington boots, he strategically reconnoitred the dog-occupied



dwelling. Putting duty before danger, and taking his courage as well as his stick in his hands, he fought his way forward, beating off the attacks of the unruly hounds. A dozen dogs, including two

litters of pups, were routed and rendered temporarily homeless in the operation, but the Corporation had regained possession of the house. The incident inspired the accompanying cartoon.

THE MONTH'S MIND

THE MAYOR'S BALL.

After the publicity bonus picked up by the Mayor on the wings of the County's All-Ireland hurling victory, Limerick political circles were pleasantly surprised this week when Alderman Lipper announced his plans for an annual Mayor's Ball. The news was made public at a special press conference held in Angela Conway's newly painted bar in the 'Parish'.

The choice of venue surprised the assembled newsmen. 'We must all be ecumenical these times,' said the Mayor, flashing a thin smile. Later Alderman Lipper let it be privately known that his choice of Angela Conway's was determined by his desire to win political support from the local 'rugby crowd'. 'I'm well in with the soccer and hurling boards and I must now try to crash the rugby barrier,' said the Mayor.

Alderman Lipper said he hoped the proposed Mayor's Ball would be the gala social event of the year, as he wiped some of Angela's new paint from the sleeve of his coat.

'So it will be all balls from now on,' said Leader reporter Cormac Liddy. Another reporter, the long-haired, trendily-dressed Frank Hamilton from the Weekly Echo, muttered softly to himself, 'More balls for the Iron Man,' as he absentmindedly flicked a ten-penny piece into the air in a effort to stick it to the newly painted ceiling.

In reply to questions the Mayor said he hoped the Ball would be supported by all religions, sporting and political bodies. 'As first citizen I want to make it quite clear that no matter what code is concerned I will always keep my political

eye on the Ball,' he declared. When asked if arrangements for the event would interfere with his normal duties, the Mayor stated: 'Don't worry boys I'm on the ball and I intend to stay on it.'

'That's the greatest load of old balls I ever heard,' shouted Cormac Liddy as he admired the contemporary paintwork. Later a row broke out between two reporters about who should have the right to phone the story to the News of the World.

To-day a Corporation spokesman disclosed that 'the whole disgraceful exhibition has been just another political ball-hop.' He said: 'Lipper is making a right balls of the Mayoralty and it is about time he started kicking to touch.'

THE BAWLS OF GARRYOWEN

The City Manager has drawn up a secret plan titled, The BAWLS OF GARRYOWEN, designed to attract more tourists to Limerick. The existence of the document became known following a Town Hall investigation of people suspected of leaking information to the LIMERICK SOCIALIST.

The plan has been hailed by Shannonside Tourism and Shannon Free Airport Development Company as 'a bold and imaginative breakthrough in tourist promotion,' and its most dramatic feature involves the eviction of the Mayor and his family from their Garryowen Corporation house.

Members of the City Council have been given supporting roles in the drams. Jack Bourke, because of his considerable theatrical experience, was appointed stage and publicity manager. Ted Russell, silently hoping for another Chipperfield's Circus bonanza, had secured the contract for the

supply of bread and buns.

On the strength of his recent performance as a ghost-writer, Tom Tobin had been drafted to write the script. And to further emphasise the importance of the venture, top award-winning cameraman Eamonn O' Connor was commissioned to film the event for distribution to T.V. stations.

The first scene had been arranged to show the forlorn Mayor, surrounded by his wailing family, being served with a Notice to Quit by Housing Officer, Patrick D'Arcy. Special stands were to be erected around the Garryowen house, and visiting American tourists were to be charged £10 a head to watch the action.

A special 'Sarsfield' train had been laid on to bring the Americans from Bunnratty via Ballynecety to watch the 1973 simulated Siege of Limerick. It was hoped that a few drunks would automatically wonder on to the set and would respond by abusing the Corporation officials. This altercation would enable the Gardai to intervene to add a further touch of realism to the affair. A genuine Irish baton-charge would then be staged to a chorus of hushed tones from the suitably impressed Americans.

However the best laid plans... Following Limerick's All-Ireland hurling victory, the tourist season received an unexpected late boost, with thousands of sentimental Irish-American ex-hurlers returning to bask in the long-awaited glory. And to further confound the confusion, it later emerged that Mayor Lipper had taken advantage of the hurling hysteria to slip quietly down to the Corporation Rent Office to pay up his arrears.

Confronted with the Mayor's stiffed bawls and the hurling team's golden balls, the City Manager backed down. Shannonside officials have, however, persuaded him to keep a copy of the secret plan in his safe...just in case next year turns out to be a bad one for local tourism.