



SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1970

FAIR PLAY?

THE ANTI-SPRINGBOKS bandwagon is gathering so much momentum that it is in danger of careering out of control. Obviously a lot of the trouble is caused by overloading. The controversial visit of the South African rugby team has provided a perfect cause for every rebel without one. There is no shortage of volunteers to rally round the "Ban the Boks" flag.

TRADER UNIONS are to the fore. The Irish Transport and General Workers Union, for instance, has officially recommended its members to boycott the games in Dublin and Limerick and to withhold services related to them. The Post Office Officials Association has threatened to "black" the Bray hotel at which the all-white rugby party are to stay. And broadcasting of the matches may be stopped by union action.

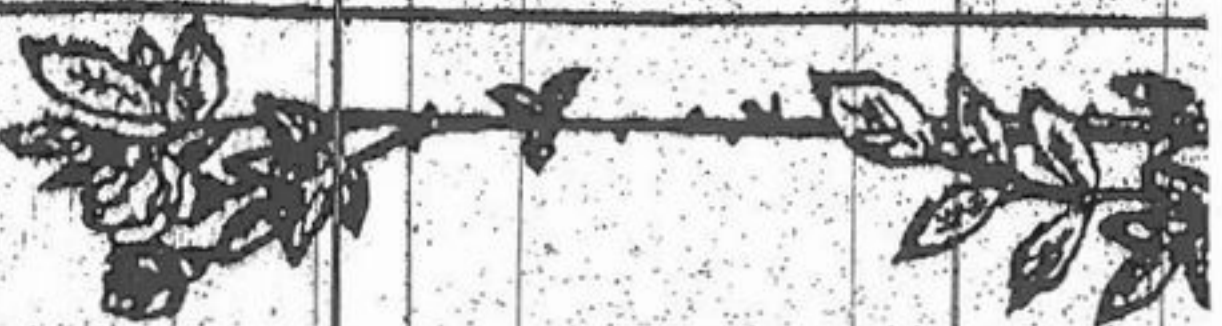
MANY TRADE unionists are self-styled "liberals". In fact some of them — particularly certain members of the trade union hierarchy — are more like arch-conservatives. Beating their breasts, they proudly proclaim how representative they are of the Irish people. Yet they do not consider the Irish people mature enough to make personal decisions about a game of football. Instead they wield the weapons of censorship and victimisation.

APARTHEID IS indefensible. But so is a system which needs the Berlin Wall to preserve it. Does anyone seriously suggest that any "politically suspect" player — and hence a potential defector to the West — would be selected to play for an Iron Curtain team here in Ireland? Does anyone seriously suggest that any of the persecuted Jews of the U.S.S.R. would be chosen by Russia's little Hitlers to kick football over here? Of course not. For what goes on in Eastern Europe is Apartheid in action — if not in name.

NO IRISH trade union, however, advocates an end to sporting contacts between communist countries and Ireland. Indeed, several trade unionists are in favour of strengthening links between them and us. So much so that not so long ago Irish and Russian trade unionists were seen sipping cocktails at Limerick Town Hall. That is at it should be — mature men of differing backgrounds fostering mutual understanding in a friendly atmosphere. So why not give the Springboks fair play?

DANGER SIGNAL

THE ADVISABILITY OF...



Out in the open

NO QUESTION about it. This year saw the smallest number of wrenboys' bands ever and if the numbers of the bands were small so were the numbers in the bands. The music too was far from being as enjoyable as other years and the costumes were not what they should be. This leads me to believe that the bigger groups of wrenboys and the established groups no longer comb the countryside collecting money for nights or for division amongst themselves. Instead they prefer to wait for the competitions and championships which are now an established part of the social set-up in West Limerick and North Kerry.

A wrenboy's itinerary can be a long and arduous one if his band is to make enough to have a worthwhile night. The weather is often downright unpleasant so that most bands have now taken to cars when they want to get from one area to another.

The biggest reason for the drop in the number of bands is of course the difficulty in getting a house for the night. The house must have a large kitchen if there is to be dancing and nowadays nobody seems to be willing to offer a house.

"They go into the beds," one woman told me, "and they won't come out when you ask them. When it's time to go home they won't go for you and 'tis often one o'clock the following day before the last of them are shifted. The younger ones are too fond of fighting when they get the drop of drink inside in them and no one is safe when a row starts. Never again," was her final comment.

So it would seem then that the traditional wren night is on the way out.

Another wrenboy told me: "We are no match for the organised social where they can serve hot turkey and ham.

"What chance has the pig's head against the turkey?"

Another nail in the coffin of the wrenboys' night would seem to be the changing tastes of the younger women and girls. No longer are

they content with the suppers wine which satisfied the mothers and their grand mothers. Now they want vodka and bitter lemon, gin and toni Scotch whisky and brandy. No outfit could afford to purchase these items.

The traditional order for Night always included three bottles of weak port or sherry. Also as well as being weak it had to be cheap. The accent was on porter and minerals. There was always an order for six dozen of minerals.

On the other hand it would seem from watching the various championships from the All Ireland down that the number of wrenboys is on the increase. Whether it is or not one thing is certain.

As far as the traditional Night is concerned things will never be the same again.



LOOKING back on the old year there were many significant changes, mostly for the best, and while I do not wish to single out any places or persons for special mention no one will deny that the revival of Glin carnival was an event of paramount importance.

The fantastic efforts of the Abbeyfeale people to get a factory is well worth mention and no doubt their efforts are being rewarded.

A bouquet too to Henri Weber, managing director of Jowika, Listowel, for his unsparing efforts to lure young girls away from the emigrant ship. His idea of introducing a minibus for transporting these girls to work from all over West Limerick and North Kerry deserves a special mention.

Another outstanding event in the year just gone was the belated appearance of one Jack Wilberforce Faulkner on our television screens. It is to be hoped that Newsbeat, Seven Days and Feach, to mention but a few, will follow the example of Gay Byrne and give the Irish public another opportunity of seeing the great traveller.

ALL TO

Western Civilisation, many intelligent observers assure us, is disintegrating right before our eyes. By Western Civilisation is meant that Graeco-Roman civilisation that, in the course of time, was to adopt the Christian religion, a step that would ultimately lead to Western Civilisation becoming synonymous with Christianity itself.

modern writers and commentators, we are now living in a vital a constituent of our civil-

produced more terrible savages, even in this 20th century, than any group of warriors who ever danced a war dance in the depths of the jungle.

SELECTIVE JUSTICE

War is a suspension of, or rather, the rejection of civilisation—innocent peoples are of course frequently forced into war.

There is a danger that the head...