

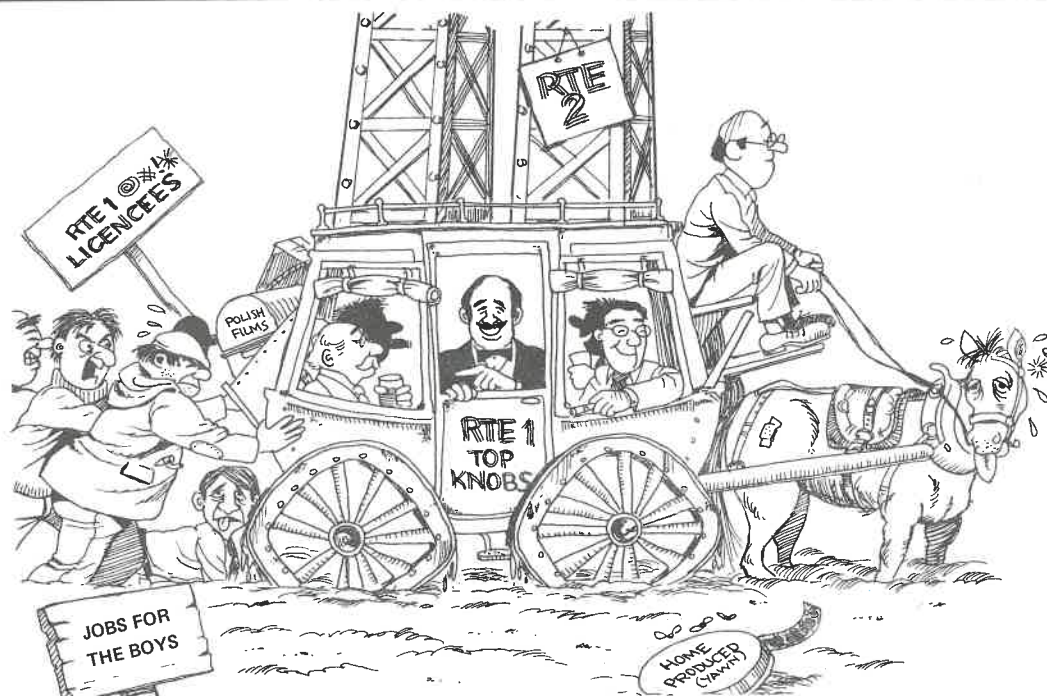
Southill Star

Has Limerick then so barren grown/Of manhood's spirit,
blood and bone? — Michael Hogan

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MULTI-CHANNEL NOW!

The Southill Workers Council believes that the people of Limerick and of the other single-channel areas are entitled to full access to multi-channel television. There is no convincing reason why, with the experience of other countries and the benefits of modern technology, the existing multi-channel facilities could not be extended to the remaining parts of the country. (At present, about half the population, or the people living in Dublin, the East Coast, Donegal, etc., receive British television programmes).

During a recent City Council meeting, Councillor Jim Kemmy stated that he had yet to meet one Limerick worker who favoured R.T.E. 2 over multi-channel. It is clear from public reaction that the vast majority of people living in Southill would agree with this statement. Despite this situation, however, a mini-referendum was carried out on behalf of the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs to find out whether people wanted B.B.C. 1 or R.T.E. 2. This bastardised ballot could be said to be a typical Irish double-think, in so far as the majority of people who took part were already enjoying B.B.C.1 and all the other British channels as well!

It later emerged that only 15 Limerick people had taken part in the mini-referendum — a smaller number than the members of many individual families living in Southill! And, according to the Minister, the results of this bogus ballot are going to determine the television viewing of Limerick people for many years to come.

This is not good enough. There is no reason why mere geographical location should continue to deny some Irish people their right to multi-channel viewing. The proximity of our island to Britain provides us with this natural opportunity. The fact is that R.T.E. cannot ever hope to provide a service comparable to B.B.C. or I.T.V.; it will always be the poor relation. It costs almost as much to provide a good T.V. service

for 3 million people as it does for 30 million. Britain, with twenty times the population of this country, will always have more money and resources for television and it is pathetic for R.T.E. to even try to compete in this league.

At present, the Irish licence fee is the highest in Europe, given that we have only one channel, that we are paying to be afflicted by commercials, and that more than 60% of R.T.E. output consists of cheaply-bought canned programmes from abroad. Many of the home-produced programmes are also of a very poor quality. Multi-channel television is the only way to eliminate this present imbalance.

The advantages of multi-channel viewing are many. Besides providing more and better children's adult education and news programmes, the British stations have greater freedom of expression and are less hampered by the heavy hand of censorship. The three essential ingredients of Irish life for over fifty years — Gaelic revivalism, republicanism and clerical control over politics — are now irrelevant and meaningless for most people, especially for the working class.

It is vital for workers in the single-channel areas to give leadership in demanding multi-channel television. A new national referendum of all people living outside the multi-channel areas must be held as soon as possible. In this connection, the Southill Workers Council wishes to announce that it will be carrying out its own referendum over the next month, in the Southill area, on the attitudes of the people to R.T.E. 2 and multi-channel. The Council invites the assistance of the Limerick Multi-channel Committee and all other interested people in completing this project. The results of this referendum will be published in our August edition. The findings should make interesting reading — especially for the people who conducted the Minister's mini-referendum.

THE FIGHTING CHRISTIANS

According to a statement made by P.R.O. of the Southill Community Council to the Limerick press, the "Christian spirit was very much in evidence" during the "Community Week" recently staged in Southill. He stated that "hundreds took part in the May Procession and also attended Benediction". By now, however, most people in Southill are aware that the "Week" was held to promote more than just the "Christian spirit" and that other spirits were also very much in evidence during the period.

The Southill Workers Council is willing to give whatever support is possible to those who work to improve people's economic and social conditions, but it believes that it is also important to distinguish between genuine effort and stunts designed to further personal political ambitions. Many such stunts took place during the "Community Week". While the P.R.O. publicly admitted that the venture had lost over £700 of the Southill people's money, far more damage was done to the cause of community solidarity by the overall effect of the "Week".

It is accepted that many well-intentioned members of the Community Council work hard in carrying out their various activities. But, to read the Limerick press, one would get the impression that only one member of the Council ever does any work. The so-called "Big Clean-up" carried out during the "Week" offers a typical example of the gimmick-man in action.

This stunt was performed with the open connivance of the Christian Brothers. After school, about 35 schoolchildren, led by a Brother and the P.R.O., began to stuff some scattered papers into black plastic bags. Of course, Eamonn O'Connor, the R.T.E. cameraman, and a local press photographer were already lined up to "snap" the performance. The P.R.O. soon moved off with the cameramen in an effort to grab more publicity, leaving the, by now, grimy children to work away in

the showery, blustery weather. The "Big Clean-Up" made little impact on the rubbish piled around Southill during the "go-slow" by the Corporation's Cleansing workers, but all this dirt was cleared by the workers in less than one day, without fuss or publicity, on their resumption of full working.

Every item in the "Week's" programme was lavishly publicised — except one. The gala closing of the events was to have been provided by a special community dance. But, on this occasion, the "Christian spirit" took on the appearance of a battlefield. Even the babbling P.R.O. was unable to "explain" the bellicose behaviour. Tucked away in a small paragraph of page 5 of the *Limerick Leader*, under the heading, "Gardai Investigate Riot at Dance Hall", the following information was given:

Gardai at Edward Street are investigating reports of "riotous behaviour" at a dance in the Community Hall in Southill on Friday night last. It is believed that a hatchet and other blunt instruments were to be seen during the fight. Other reports say that a clergyman received a black eye and that some women were assaulted.

So, to the background accompaniment of breaking glasses and bottles, the overturning of tables and chairs, the crunching of the hatchets and other blunt instruments, the terrified screaming of women, the use of some colourful language and the arrival of squad cars, the dance broke up in wild disorder. This grand finale also brought the "Community Week" to a gory finish. Did someone say something about a "Christian spirit"? With supporters like these battle-scarred Christians, the Community Council certainly needs no enemies. Maybe there is a lesson in this shambles for the Southill Workers Council, should it ever decide to organise a community dance. To ensure peace and success for this venture, perhaps the Council should bar all fighting Christians and confine attendance to placid, practising pagans.

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THE QUALITY OF IRISH LIFE

I was approached last week by a young mother of five children (and another on the way). She was in a very distressed state as she clutched a summons in her hand.

"Jack, can you do anything for me? I'm to appear in Court next Wednesday and I'm frightened that they will evict me. I owe twenty pounds rent and I have no way of getting it. I'm frightened to tell my husband because there would be murder in the house. Between the repayments at Cavendish's and Sloan's and everything else, I can't seem to make ends meet".

After I had calmed this woman down by convincing her that the summons would be withdrawn if she agreed to pay so much a week off her arrears, I headed off to City Hall. There I met Billy Crowe, the rents investigation officer, who pointed out to me that the lady in question had a bad rent record and that they intended pursuing the summons. However, after a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that if the lady undertook to pay £2 a week off her arrears and another £5 monthly out of her children's allowance and did not default on this agreement the summons would not be proceeded with.

As I set out on the journey back to Southill, I could not help reflecting on this insight into the "Quality of Irish Life". Just about two miles beyond Keyes Park where the lady lives, are situated the vast, beautifully groomed greens of the Limerick Golf Club. Cost per person to join: £100 per annum. Number of members: 800. Yearly income: £150,000 approximately. Of course the lady in question would not be aware of the financial or other goings-on at this capitalists' haven. Her only concern on this bleak morning was where to get £20 to keep a roof over her children's heads.

It probably never dawned on the lady that the people who daily pass her house in their big Mercedes and Rovers are on their way to spend more money on one morning's golf and drinks than she can afford to spend on food for her family for a whole week. As a good Christian it would be a "sin" for her to think in these "selfish" terms — especially when many of the people in these flashy cars are themselves the epitome of Christian virtue, and some even have dog-collars to prove it! (But let us not be too unkind. It is a well-known medical fact that fat, lazy, brandy-swilling golfers, with all that excessive weight in their equally fat wallets, are prone to heart attacks. And it is therefore very useful to have someone in the clubhouse to administer the last rites!)

I wonder if Denis (the Silent Councillor) Broderick has ever observed these society leeches (or, to use his own term in reference to some to the working classes, "dossers") as they stand around their elegant clubhouse sniffing and sipping large brandies, whilst Broderick's hateful Corporation workers sweat and toil to clean our streets and empty our dustbins?

Ah no, Denis. Southill is more than just a political

....the hill

by JACK CANTILLON

launching pad for Kennedy yes-men and would-be Coughlan hacks. Regrettably, for the time being there is not much the people can do but suffer the consequences of having you and your likes representing them on the Limerick City Council. So, Denis, keep up your good work in supporting Alderman Pat Kennedy — the same despicable man who campaigned for the release from jail in 1972 of that notorious organiser of carnage and sectarian murder in Northern Ireland, Sean Mac Stiofan (born John Stephenson, in London), and who is now campaigning for more jails for our children.

Or perhaps, Denis, both you and Kennedy should support Coughlan in his ambition to have Mungret College turned into one huge concentration camp for the children of the workers! (Coughlan's proposal could be likened to cutting off a patient's head to cure a toothache).

Or, as the ubiquitous Councillor Michael Crowe so glibly put it: "A lot of the responsibility rests with the parents". Of course it does, Michael. Not enough "Christian love" in the home! But then again, some expressions of love actually cost money. Like shoes to wear and food to eat and recreational facilities to keep the children of the poor "off the streets". And to get this money, quite a number of caring mothers are compelled to go scrubbing floors for the more well-off; to go cleaning in some hotel; or to do eight hours a day on some factory assembly-line. And all to avoid having to hand over their much needed children's allowance to the rent collector. And, Michael, they can hardly be expected to take their children to work with them! The surprise is that the average working class mother is able to make the heroic effort to preserve all the love she does have in a society which hands her out so much abuse.

But the workers of Southill are waking up to this totally fraudulent society of ours, and its days are numbered. The discontent which has been manifesting itself in so many ways in the recent past can only lead to a truly just society in which the word "democracy" will no longer be debased and in which the people will be represented by their own instead of by the self-seeking hacks of the present political machines.

The fog of deception is lifting, and the view from "The Hill" is becoming clear.

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FAMILY PLANNING EMERGENCIES

Nowadays one would imagine that with so many thousands of women on the Pill, hospitals would be in a position to cope in the event of an emergency arising in connection with the improper use of this Pill. But, alas, no.

Last month in Limerick a three-year-old male child swallowed thirteen Pills (yes, we know they should have been out of reach!). As soon as the mother discovered what had happened she rushed her child out to the Regional Hospital for treatment. She related her story to the nurse in charge who promptly buzzed the doctor on her personal intercom (only the most modern equipment is in use at the Regional!).

When the doctor arrived and was informed of the situation he was quite flabbergasted. He did not know what to do! He phoned some hospital in Dublin for advice on this emergency and was informed that as the child was a male the Pills would

not cause him any harm. But if the child had been female, then there would have been repercussions.

So much for all that modern equipment!

Perhaps if our doctors were trained in Family Planning methods (which is part of the medical curriculum in all European countries) then they might be competent to handle an emergency such as the one mentioned above.

LEGAL NOTE: In the Republic of Ireland the Pill is described, rather euphemistically, as a "cycle regulator". It is illegal for a doctor to prescribe the Pill as a "contraceptive". The time has surely come for our quaint "criminal" laws in this field to be repealed and for basic human rights to be granted to us all.

The editor of the *Southill Star* would welcome readers' views on this subject — not necessarily for publication.

CRIME - AND PUNISHMENT

Local politicians have been quick to condemn the "anti-social" activities of some young people from Southill and other areas. All too often, the deeds of young offenders are roundly denounced, but seldom is there any attention given to the background forces which, in many cases, dictate that young people will become involved in petty crime.

It is easy for the Mayor, Cllr. Thady Coughlan, to be "alarmed and frightened", by the massive jump in juvenile crime. He never had to face an empty table. His childhood was cushioned by his father's bookmaker's and T.D.'s income by the comfort of Crescent College. The Coughlan's have a large house in Wellington Terrace, so what would Thady know about sprawling Corporation housing schemes and the lack of basic amenities?

The Limerick Corporation might acquire Glin Reformatory School or else use Mungret College as a detention centre, according to the *Irish Independent*. But what do most

Councillors know about living in a Corporation scheme? When Southill was built there were precious few facilities. And the tenants will have to continue to demand and agitate before the Corporation will take action in providing even elementary social and sporting amenities.

To-day, the Corporation is reaping the rewards of its own short-sighted policies by paying malicious damages claims. And the only solution the City Council can come up with is "Detention". It is this so-called solution that is "alarming and frightening". The Limerick Corporation has good reason to be alarmed and frightened: it is the Corporation and society itself that are guilty of social irresponsibility and criminal negligence in discharging their duty to the people of Southill and other deprived estates — and not the young victims of the neglect.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

WANDERING HORSES

Every day on the greens of Southill we see herds of horses. In O'Malley Park, Keyes Park, Kincora Park and Carew Park, these horses do a great deal of damage by going into people's gardens and ruining them. But we shouldn't blame the horses for this damage: it is their owners who are responsible by letting the horses run free.

Many Southill people protested about the wandering horses to the Limerick Corporation last year but very little was done to improve the position. Then, to add to the worry, some boys started to gallop the horses up and down the greens. Smaller boys also chased these horses and a few got kicked by the frightened animals.

A man named Jack Cantillon spoke on the television programme, *Newsround*, about the dangers being caused by the horses. He and other men called a public meeting about the matter. Members of the Corporation, the police and a big crowd of Southill people attended. But, again, nothing happened.

It is not good enough to say that we do not want the horses wandering around our houses. We have to find a permanent solution to the problem. In spite of Jack Cantillon's great efforts, it seems like the horses are going to be with us for a very long time. Now, with many of the horses in foal, the position is even worse. Why have the people of Southill to suffer so much inconvenience? One thirteen year old boy would like to know the answer.

Eamonn Waters.

EILEEN HICKEY

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