

# Southill Star

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

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## RENTS SELLOUT

Most local authority tenants in Southill and throughout the country support the principle of a strong national organisation to speak and act on their behalf. The whole question of the need for such a body has once again come into prominence with the decision in June this year by the Minister for Local Government to increase local authority rents. The introduction of these increases was delayed while the Minister and the National Association of Tenants' Organisations discussed the new proposals.

Many people believed that N.A.T.O. would be in a strong position in the negotiations. After all, had not the Association pledged full support to the National Coalition just before the 1973 General Election and called on all local authority tenants to support the Fine Gael/Labour alliance? As a further gesture of support for the Coalition, N.A.T.O. called off its "national rent" strike and offered to co-operate with the new administration. After this tenants in all parts of the country were, naturally enough, expecting a better and fairer deal from the Government.

But anyone with a full inside knowledge of the situation knew otherwise. N.A.T.O. in throwing in its lot with the National Coalition also threw in the towel. The so-called "national" strike in 1972-'73 was more a farce than a strike and was anything but national. The Department of Local Government stated that only 5% of local authority tenants were involved in the dispute and it is certain that only a slightly larger number were actually on strike. This fact did not prevent N.A.T.O. from repeatedly making all sorts of dire threats about "national" and industrial action. Needless to say, none of these empty and extravagant threats were ever carried out. The Department and the Minister were well aware of the true situation and ignored all the bellicose noises.

So N.A.T.O.'s "deal" with the National Coalition was more a last, desperate and opportunistic manoeuvre than a principled agreement made from a position of strength. Why, therefore, did the National Coalition enter into the agreement with N.A.T.O.? Fine Gael and Labour knew that if they were to win the 1973 General Election they needed a big urban vote. By leading local authority tenants to believe that the Coalition was more sympathetic to their case than Fianna Fail, they hoped to swing a decisive section of urban voters. The tactic paid off and the new Government came to power.

Having successfully exploited N.A.T.O. and local authority tenants in the election success, James Tully, the Minister for

Local Government took stock of his position. Soon it emerged that N.A.T.O. and the Coalition were not, after all, equal partners in the agreement. The Government was in power for five years and the realities of capitalist economic policies began to bite. The recent rent increases are a clear indication of how these policies operate in spite of all N.A.T.O.'s "deals" and bluster.

When the proposed rent increases were announced in June many tenants believed that N.A.T.O. would institute an immediate debate among its members, branches and affiliated organisations. But no such debate took place. No general meetings of members were held in Limerick or in other provincial areas to consider the increases. Above all, no national vote of members was taken to give the N.A.T.O. leadership a mandate on the question. Instead, the new increases were accepted by a few people in Dublin and the Annual Conference of delegates was merely asked to sanction this action. This kind of procedure should be repugnant to any organisation calling itself democratic.

So the rent rises have been achieved by the Minister and the various City and County Managers without even a token paper struggle by N.A.T.O. And what of the increases themselves? Up to now tenants were broadly divided into working tenants and unemployed tenants. Under the Minister's new terms there is to be a further category. The following example of how one of the changes will effect the unemployed offers an insight into the basic philosophy behind the increases. If a tenant who was unemployed before September 17th takes a casual job for a few weeks, he is assessed at full rent when he reverts to his unemployment benefit. Thus, over a period, most of those unemployed people who are now assessed on half their social welfare benefits will go on full rent unless they remain permanently unemployed.

The whole rents fight for people on social welfare benefits has, thereby, been conceded by N.A.T.O. "because of circumstances". At the recent Annual Conference it was cynically claimed that the agreement was "the best package N.A.T.O. could negotiate". By the undemocratic manner in which it has concluded this deal and by the "non-political" policies of its leadership over the years, N.A.T.O. has brought about widespread apathy and disillusionment among 100,000 or more local authority tenants. It is obvious that these tenants will have to seek better working class and political leadership in future.

# REMEMBER, REMEMBER .....

BY TOM CONSIDINE.

Remember, remember, the 13th day of November,  
The Southill people came to meet,  
To clear the horses from off our street;  
The event was covered by T.V.  
And we saw ourselves on R.T.E.  
Reporters came from the Press  
But the horses made their usual mess.

Remember, remember, the 13th day of November,  
Speakers came from Fianna Fail,  
And managed to say sweet . . . . all,  
More came from Labour,  
To do us all a favour,  
There were promises from the Fine Gaels,  
But the horses still raised their tails.

Remember, remember, the 13th of November,  
The politicians came to the 'Hill,  
To show us their talking skill;  
Coughlan stood up, his eyes afire,  
"I think", said he, "we'll go higher,  
In the Dail I'll introduce a Bill,  
To drive the horses from Southill".

Remember, remember, the 13th day of November,  
O'Malley, the Fianna Fail man spoke,  
"These horses", he said, "are no joke,  
All this talk is too slow  
To Paddy Cooney I'll have to go";  
But nothing further have we heard,  
And even the horses think it's absurd.

*DID SOMEONE SAY SOMETHING ABOUT  
WANDERING HORSES?*



Remember, remember, the 13th day of November,  
When next the politicians knock on your door,  
Don't let them fool you any more,  
Just tell your East Limerick T.D.,  
Whether it's O'Malley or Bookie Stevie,  
That all of you have had your fill  
Of horses and T.D.'s in long-suffering Southill.

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# the other side of ....

STONE WALLS DO NOT A PRISON MAKE  
— OR — HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER?

# ....the hill

by JACK CANTILLON

You have all probably heard of the notorious "Great Wall of China" and the years it took to build and the hundreds of thousands of slaves who died working on its construction and were entombed within its massiveness. The wall still stands today as one of the "wonders" of the world and a monument to slavery in pre-Revolutionary China — a sort of Chinese Belsen.

Now I wonder how many of you have heard of the Great Leddin Wall at the house of Frank Leddin's near where the Roxboro Road turns into Janesboro. I'm sure you all know by now who Frank Leddin is. I realise he is rarely seen in our area but you must have read about him from time to time in the local papers. Frank has great "pull" with certain local journalists, especially those who phone their stories to foreign newspapers at such times as the Herrima kidnapping and other incidents.

Anyway, Frank decided he needed a bigger and stronger wall to maintain his and his wife's privacy and to keep at bay the marauding vandals who are now (according to his brother Tim) breeding at an alarming rate in working class areas around Limerick. Now that's all very well, but walls are very expensive luxuries to build in these inflationary times, with concrete blocks, lime, cement and sand costing as much as they do. So what does our enterprising Frank do? He heads down to St. Anne's School of Building near Barrington's Hospital and, with the help of a labourer and a Nelson-like "blind eye" from Mr. Tom Earlie, the Principal of the school, Frank loads up all the blocks and cement he needs to build his wall.

At this point I must remind readers that Councillor Frank also happens to be Chairman of the local Vocational Education Committee (V.E.C.) so it may be that he feels that using ratepayers' property is one of the perks of his job. This however leads to a slight complication. You see, Frank's brother, Tim, speaking as a true unionist and delegate at the last Fine Gael Ard Fheis, became very moralistic and told the Conference in the plainest and most unequivocal language just what should be done to all criminals and disturbers of the peace. In short, there should be no mercy. They should all be beaten and flogged. "The present fines-and-admonish policy is no policy and if not changed will only bring on our community greater disaster", declared Tim Leddin. He also advocated the setting up of an auxilliary police force. "Their duties should include the patrolling of streets, the checking of

premises and property, the reporting of any and every untoward action", he said.

Fine words. But would Tim Leddin be prepared to back them up with action? Would he be prepared to report his brother, Frank, and his accomplice, Mr. Tom Earlie, for misappropriating ratepayers' property? And, when convicted, would the moral reformer Tim volunteer to carry out the flogging on his delinquent brother and Tom Earlie? Come on, Tim Leddin — show us what you're made of!

Some readers might be a little puzzled as to why a man in Mr. Tom Earlie's position should risk so much by handing over school property to Frank Leddin. The reason is not hard to find, however. Mr. Earlie aspires to better things than running a building school. Like the Principalship of the new Regional College of Technology at Moylish. And being on the very best terms with the Chairman of the V.E.C. might help. After all this "local influence" has already deprived two highly qualified Britons of the jobs in question on the quite silly pretext that they could not speak Irish (neither can ninety per cent of Irishmen!). Tom Earlie is known to staff and pupils alike as an insidious toady and arse-licker and he thinks that a few concrete blocks should not be allowed to obstruct his progress to Moylish or to anywhere else. Maurice (Mossy) O'Kelly, the Fianna Fail-appointed C.E.O and the right-hand man of Gerry Collins the former Fianna Fail Minister, knows the story but is playing his usual "wait and see" game.

The Southill Workers' Council are not going to demand that the Leddin wall be pulled down and the materials returned to St. Anne's School of Building. We think the wall should be allowed to stand as a monument to the corruption of the Limerick "Labour" Party. Perhaps after the revolution (when the people who produce the wealth will also own the wealth) we might even have a plaque on the wall to explain its significance to future generations. Meanwhile, go and see the wall for yourself. It is the best memorial we can think of to represent the bogus punditry of Tim Leddin and the weakness that has characterised the career of his brother Frank.

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# TAXIES AND TOURIST BUSES

BY SEAN WATERS

One recent Sunday during the very fine weather I was approached by a woman in Southill; she wanted to know if there was "any bus to Plassey"? She wished to give her family a day out by the river Shannon. I had to tell her that there was no bus service available for her. The best I could suggest was that she could go to Corbally.

The woman said she could get a Speedi-Cab for £1 to take her family to Plassey. Between us we estimated the bus fare to Corbally for herself, her husband and four children (all over 3 years of age) — 48p from O'Malley Park to City Centre, with a change-over to Corbally service for another 48p. When one allows for the cost of the return journey, it will be readily understood why the family had to cancel the bus trip. They just could not afford to spend so much on bus fares.

C.I.E. executives are supplied with staff cars which are also made available to them and their families at week-ends. The delights of the Clare and Kerry coast are theirs for the taking. But do these officials realise that the privileges they enjoy are paid for by the people of Limerick area who use C.I.E.'s services?

Many of C.I.E.'s services are not suitable or attractive for workers and their families. Is it not time that C.I.E. introduced family tickets for, say, 50p for a family for a Sunday on City services? This would enable the less fortunate mortals to enjoy the nearer to home and less expensive areas, such as Plassey and Corbally.

When one looks at the efforts of the C.I.E. tours department to ensure that our visitors from the U.S.A. and other countries enjoy their trips around Ireland, a different picture emerges. Special touring coaches, special uniforms for the crews who operate their tours, and even familiarisation courses for the crews to ensure that they know where they are going and what they are doing. All are regular features of C.I.E.'s V.I.P. treatment for the foreigners. Compare this to the 11 o'clock service to O'Malley Park and ask yourself if you are getting value for your money.

While most people will appreciate the need to increase employment through the tourist trade and to treat tourists in a proper way, why should there be one code of treatment for the seasonal foreign visitors and another for the all-the-year-round native Irish?

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## Letters to the Editor

On June 15th I reported a broken lock of the door of my house to the new Limerick Corporation Depot, near Krups' factory. Some days afterwards a carpenter came and looked at the door. He fixed the lock on a temporary basis and said that he would replace the broken lock with a new one on the following day. Two further weeks passed, without any sign of the carpenter, and the lock fell totally apart.

On my way to work at 2.05 p.m. I again called to the Corporation Depot to report the broken lock for a second time. I stated my case to an official but was told to "— off". When I then asked this man for his name, he told me to "— off and mind my own business". At this stage I realised the futility of getting any kind of satisfaction from the official concerned and went to see the girl employed by the Corporation at its rent office at the Roxboro Shopping Centre. The girl informed me that she would "see to the matter".

I next wrote a letter to the Corporation but still I waited for my broken lock to be repaired. I then withheld my rent for two weeks and was told by the rentman that "I could find myself in trouble". What I would like to know is this: why are Corporation officials, whose wages are largely paid by the rents and rates of tenants, allowed to ignore legitimate complaints and abuse people in this manner?

Finally, in exasperation, I contacted the officers of the Southill Workers Council, who, I understand, got in touch with Councillor Jim Kemmy. Within a few days a carpenter arrived at my house and repaired the lock. Should it be necessary too to all these rounds to get the Corporation to do a relatively simple maintenance job?

PETER CLARKE

I would like to comment on some aspects of the article entitled, 'The Bus Service', which appeared in the August edition of the *Southill Star*.

In the first instance, it is wrong to suggest that the Trade Unions concerned allow their members to be forced to overload buses. In fact, the Trade Union which I represent, the National Busmen's Union, have told their members that they should not overload buses. It is both illegal and dangerous, to do so.

The real problem with the Southill buses lies with the people who use them, and more especially with their public representatives. Did you ever see a T.D. on a bus? While the people of Southill remain apathetic, C.I.E. will never provide a proper bus service, because this would mean a double-decker on the Southill run. The bosses in C.I.E. don't give a damn, because, like your T.D.'s, they never use buses either. They have company cars which the people of Southill are helping to keep under them. The Unions are tied to an agreement which states that any new service may be operated without a conductor. This means single-decker buses and people left behind. So people of Southill demand a proper service. The busmen are on your side.

TOM CONSIDINE,

Chairman Limerick Branch, National Busmen's Union.

## BROKEN MARRIAGES

I just want to make a point on so many broken marriages in Limerick. I often wonder why some men can turn their backs on innocent children and just forget they ever existed. They just walk away leaving their wife and children penniless without any care. But I think that some women also contribute to the cause of these broken homes. If every woman refused a married man's offer, then it would not be possible for a marriage to break up because of another woman. Why so many married men would want to ask other women to go out with them I'll NEVER KNOW. But they do and marriages continue to break up. Women can help one another and keep our marriages secure by saying NO to these thoughtless men.

MARY McCANN