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Atlantis-New Revolutionary Force in Ireland?

Most people (quite rightly) associate 'therapy', whether "alternative" or not, with a kind of bourgeois morbid introversion, a last-ditch stand for hopeless neurotics, or a narcissistic indulgence for rich American housewives.

ATLANTIS Primal Therapy Commune really is something else. What we are about is contracting and nourishing in the shortest possible time the tremendous power which lies at the centre of each individual and freeing ourselves from all taboos, inhibitions and terrors which hold us down and prevent us from realising our full revolutionary potential in the world. I always reckoned that the greatest threat to any Status Quo is vibrant, exuberant joyfulness -that's why kids are put down so much in any dead and nasty system, be it school, church, family and any anti-life political regime (that's most of them).

Well, now it's no longer theory since we came to Eire. Here, the oppression is so simple, so linear and unsophisticated that the facts of life in an organized society - which in England, for example, seem so complex and confusing with a hundred loopholes and avenues to investigate, a million issues to get hot about - here hit you in the belly and between the eyes.

Especially if you live at 'Atlantis'. For this community really has everyone in a tizzy: the local priest warns parents not to let their kids play here, the local rightwing MP tries to get Parliament moving to get us out, the local and Northern Ireland IRA threatens us and abducts young men living with us who once were living with them. We are labelled 'dangerous' by Lord Janov himself (who reckons he invented Primal Therapy - he didn't, people's bodies did); the British pacifist paper 'Peace News' now feels it their duty to warn people against us as they have heard we are not the least bit pacifist or tolerant towards each other's shit; 'Titbit' did a masterpiece of smear work against us for such crimes as 'not educating our children' and various women's liberation and leftwing groups damn us (without knowing us personally) because we don't automatically join the latest Thing of accepting mono-sexuality without a murmur.

But police drug-raids, harrassment from local drunks in the middle of the night, attacks on us for being un-Catholic from frustrated local ladies, and smear articles in left and right-wing press are nothing to what we have to combat inside ourselves when the IRA get 'we-don't-like-the-colour-of-your-eyes, watch-it-or-we'll-kneecap-you' tactics. It brings up every shade of grey in our faces and every horrendous nightmare from our early lives; but we don't grit our teeth and pretend not to be afraid, and we don't go weak in the leg-joints and give up the ghost before time. We explore our fear down to its roots, clear out every bit that doesn't belong to the Here and Now, and then stand firm, grinning. The irony of it is that

most of the Englishers and Irish people living here have a basically pro-Catholic, anti-British bias, and many of us, myself included, had romantic ideas of the Irish Republican Army - all that History, those songs, the bravery, the cause, real hillside and street revolution, the nearest thing we'll get to Che and Fidel.

It isn't like that; I wish it was. What it's like is a painfully twisted and unhappy country - this village could be any in Ireland - where the torture is self-imposed; where everyone knows at the age of eight what's wrong: you're getting beaten up every day at school and every evening at home; at the age of fourteen, everyone knows even more of what's wrong: god obviously doesn't exist, yet everyone has to pretend he does; sex obviously does exist, though mum and dad and the priest and the school-teachers are putting everything they've got into pretending it doesn't.

By the time you're eighteen, you've nearly forgotten: you're learning to drive, you smoke and drink along with the men, dad can't beat you up anymore, you're coping somehow with that sexual misery, the worst days are over, you can take it out on the little kids, keep them in line, the church mafia doesn't really matter, we all know where the local priest is at, mum and dad are getting on now, no point in leaving home at the first possible moment as you always planned; no the Enemy must be Out There somewhere. You know you feel really angry, you like to fight and drive your car like mad, and you'd like to screw those stupid women - above all, you've got to Take It Out on Someone.

Well, round here, there aren't any British soldiers to take it out on - and any good leftie can sympathize with popping off a few of those twits. So all that's left are a few oddballs, people who don't quite fit in, a few IRA chaps who tried to live their own lives, a fellow or two with Protestant connections from the North, a bunch of hippies not taking life seriously enough, not bowing down under the same yokes.

So, one of our young lads has been 'executed' (we can't prove it), another has had to leave in terror of what They'll do to him - and us - if he stays; a third had just been given notice to quit or else. Last year we were all threatened with being kneecapped and blown up if we didn't pander to this or that whim; two of our men were threatened simply because they *spoke* to the local priest - or attempted to before he called the police - about his 'anti-Atlantis' sermon.

Well, we won't shut up and we won't go. Most of us are prepared to die in order to live here. Because what we are doing here matters as much as life itself: we are claiming back our lives, returning each person to his or her full man or womanhood, giving a real childhood back to our children, tending and caring for the earth (and incidentally replanting it with trees that the British destroyed) and not chopping up our animals. We are proving for ourselves each day that politics really *is* about people, individual people and that if you run before the tide and go theorizing about 'political situation in Ireland' from the safety of a big English city, you've died already. To all people in England who can't make head or tail of the news from Ireland,

just like I couldn't, I say: you're in touch, stick to your confusion, because you're right: there *is no* truth about the real situation coming from either side. British interest we expect of course not to tell the truth, that's their profession, but the 'revolutionaries' don't tell it either, because they haven't recognised it. If they had, they'd be fighting oppression where it really is: in their rotten family system, where kids are being destroyed daily, in the fascist schools where one day's average beatings would cause a national scandal in Britain; they'd be fighting the crippling, suffocating stranglehold of the church and the sexual misery its frustrated policemen perpetuate. There'd be a revolution overnight in Ireland if the IRA put some of their enormous influence and resources into say, importing barrel-loads of contraceptives into the country instead of guns, canvassing the churches to tell young people,

'It's OK to stand up for not believing in this crap', into organizing the kids to stand up against the brutality of priest and lay teachers, into encouraging teenagers to breakaway from the age-old family rules, get away from home and organize themselves, into organizing women to stand up for themselves and giving support when they do.

As it is, they don't do a single one of these things. But it just happens that a strange after-effect of this weird primal therapy scene at Atlantis is that so much energy is released in our people that they just *have* to do something with it, and the immediate urgent direction it usually takes is *back to where they came from*, back to where they suffered and got fucked up in the first place: and so we have young Irish men and women returning to their schools and convents and walking in front of classes and exposing the teachers in front of the kids and then coolly walking out again; we have had young people here feeling the pressing need to walk right back into those stiff taboo-ridden families they come from and talk about sex, or confront parents with the violence that they meted out, or to provide younger siblings with all the information and the support they want.

Blatancy and colour and outrageousness and flamboyance and joy and devilry and cheek and humour and real bravery and real daring are returning to Ireland, and Atlantis is the spawning ground. Our power lies in our openness and lack of organization: real anarchy rules OK. We invite the priests or the IRA or the northern protestants or the kids or the old people to sit in our kitchen and see our house and join in our way of life if they like. We tell them absolutely anything they want to know about us, and we tell them the truth. All of it. The result is a kind of energy bombshell. There's not a person in Eire who hasn't heard of us, and they'll be hearing a lot more yet.

I am writing this in fear and trembling, and joyous expectation.
