

THE

IRISH PRISONER

THE LINEN HALL LIBRARY
POLITICAL COLLECTION



VOICE OF REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PRISONERS AID No. 1 30p OR DONATION

Dec 1990

NO TO EXTRADITION!

Dublin republican, Dessie Ellis, became the first citizen of the 26 Counties to be extradited to Britain after his appeal was unanimously rejected by the Supreme Court on the 14th of November. He was on hungerstrike for 37 days in a bid to prevent the extradition of himself and other republicans whose cases are pending. He is now to be tried in a British court on



vague conspiracy charges which by their nature are impossible to disprove, and expects to be sentenced for up to 25 years.

The Irish Government are responsible for this major assault on democratic rights. The Minister for Justice could have used his powers to release Dessie Ellis under Section 50 of the Extradition Act but refused. It was the Fianna Fail Government which introduced this legislation in 1987 which leaves 26 County citizens with fewer rights than citizens of any other state in Western Europe. If this treacherous Act is not defeated then Irish citizens will be the most easily extradited in Europe. The Irish Government has sunk to new depths in its servant master relationship with Britain.

There is considerable opposition to extradition in Ireland as indicated in recent opinion polls. The Irish Anti-Extradition Committee is urging people to intensify pressure on the Dublin Government.



REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PRISONERS AID



Since the foundation of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement in 1974, the Movement has been engaged in the struggle for national liberation and socialism. As a revolutionary socialist organisation the IRSM is aware of the international implications of the struggle and regards it as part of the worldwide fight for the emancipation of working class people. An independent socialist state based on the history, traditions and cultural identity of the Irish working class would be an inspiration not only to the British and European working classes but to oppressed peoples everywhere.

British economic and strategic interests in Ireland can only be guaranteed through its continued military and political presence and through the maintenance of partition. Partition has been the instrument through which the working class of Ireland has been divided for the last seventy years. Recognising this fact the INLA has engaged in armed struggle against the British forces of occupation in the North in an effort to bring about an end to partition and to the British military occupation of the 6 Counties. The IRSM recognises that the presence of British troops in Ireland is but one manifestation of the imperialist presence and must be seen in the context of the overall relationship between Britain and Ireland.

Many members of the IRSM have been killed by the military forces of imperialism, the most recent being INLA Volunteer Alex Patterson who was assassinated by the SAS in County Tyrone. Many comrades have been captured and incarcerated in both Irish and British jails. Since the British withdrew political status in 1976 Irish POWs have engaged in many forms of protest and actions, culminating in the hungerstrikes of 1981 (in which three republican socialist POWs died) which finally destroyed the criminalisation policy which Britain tried to implement. Today the POWs are recognised internationally as political prisoners.

It may come as a surprise then to learn that many POWs belonging to the IRSM are not supported by Green Cross and therefore do not receive the weekly parcel they are entitled to. In addition to this they need new clothing, books and political literature. The responsibility for providing these necessities falls onto the Irish Republican Socialist Party. In October 1987 the IRSP issued an appeal to socialists and anti-imperialists in Britain to help the Party discharge this duty. The response to this appeal was very heartening and prisoners support groups were established in Britain which have lightened the load the IRSP bears on behalf of the prisoners. However support is still needed and to this end Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid was formed.

The aims of Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid are to establish a means of providing secure financial assistance for republican socialist prisoners and their dependants and to campaign on their behalf in Britain. The Irish Prisoner will play a vital role in helping to publicise the conditions and treatment that Irish POWs are subjected to in both British and Irish jails. We urge our readers to get involved in their local R.S.P.A. group and provide practical solidarity with the prisoners.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PRISONERS SUPPORT GROUPS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND WHICH ARE AFFILIATED TO R.S.P.A. IF YOU WANT TO CONTACT OR JOIN YOUR LOCAL GROUP WRITE TO:

R.S.P.A.,
PO BOX 239,
Glasgow G3 6RA.

REVIEW BOARD PROCEDURE IN THE 26 COUNTIES



In December last year, the Free State's Minister for Justice disclosed that a sentence review board was to be formed which was to review long-term sentences. This "Review Board" is non-statutory in character and works according to the principles of clientelism, a system which pervades the Free State's various bureaucracies.

Chairman of the Review Board is none other than T.K. Whitaker, the infamous scribe of the Free State penal system's biggest contemporary non-event "The Whitaker Report". Besides Whitaker the board consists of four others who are chosen from a panel of persons believed to be suitably qualified.

Basically the ambit of the Review Board is to assess prisoners who have served seven years or more of a long or interminate (ie, life) sentence. The Board then offers recommendations to the Minister for Justice in relation to the release or continued detention of prisoners. Continued detention consists of a knock-back of up to three years and release is of course conditional. The final decision on release lies with the Minister for Justice which highlights the 'advisory only' nature of the committee. It should be noted that the Review Board has nothing to offer prisoners convicted of capital offences, as recent legislation has ruled out any interference with the forty year sentences meted out for capital offences.

The Review Board procedure is initiated by the prisoners writing to the Review Board secretary. This highlights the 'You must come to us' patronage of the clientel system and is a difficult one to swallow for people who have been suffering long years of psy-ops, at the hands of prisoncrats. This carrot and stick scenario is further reinforced by the qualification that a prisoner can opt out of the process at any stage, which for a lifer means the trauma of facing the process again in years to come i.e. no choice but to continue.

Once the prisoner indicates his availability for assessment, the process moves into the first of three stages. This first stage takes the form of an interview with a senior probation officer who outlines to the prisoner the Minister for Justice's statement on the Review Board, and then asks a series of questions about the prisoner, his family situation, his offence and his community.

This preliminary interview is followed by the second stage of the process which consists of a series of interviews with a welfare officer. The questions in the second stage seem to be directed towards building a profile of the prisoner based on the questions in the first stage. This profile is further added to with visits by the probation/welfare people to relatives of the prisoner and persons prominent in the prisoner's community.

The culmination of both these stages is a comprehensive file on the prisoner which is submitted to the Review Board along with reports from the prison governor, the prison staff and the trial judge. Having completed the first two stages, the prisoner is brought before the Review Board itself and interviewed again for their assessment. This assessment will then conclude with the Review Board's recommendation to the Minister for Justice.

To conclude, the Review Board provides a convenient mechanism for 'on the job' prisoncrats to distance themselves from decisions which must be made in regard to long-term prisoners. Also it highlights its role in the clientelist system whereby any political capital to be gained from releases can be immediately attributed to the local TD of whichever Party's minister for justice happens to be doling out patronages.



Statement From Crumlin Road Jail

We, as Republican Socialist P.O.W.s would like to take this opportunity to let you, our comrades overseas, know what we have to endure within the confines of Belfast's Crumlin Road jail.

At present, and for the last ten months, we, with the much appreciated help of our comrades on the outside, have launched a campaign to end the Northern Ireland Office's intransigent stance of forcing integration between ourselves and Loyalist prisoners within the jail.

This policy of forced integration which is backed by John Cope and his cohorts in Stormont Castle is aimed at suppressing us as republicans by having us integrate with loyalist prisoners. The irony of this situation is that most of the loyalists in the jail are here for divulging information on republicans to loyalist paramilitaries.

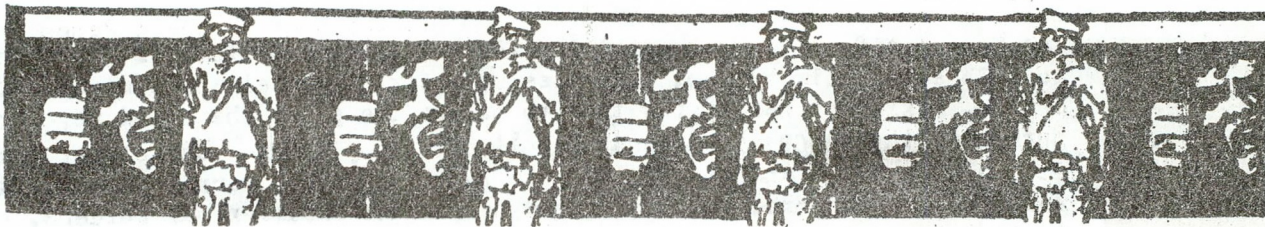
The campaign to date has resulted in the destruction of furniture and fittings by prisoners of both sides and, although we have toned down our campaign awaiting the verdict of a judicial review taken by two republicans on the policy of forced integration, we have continued in our campaign.

Tension in the jail at the moment is at an all-time high with confrontations between ourselves and loyalists taking place whenever we meet. A few weeks ago saw the latest confrontations when a republican going on a visit was severely beaten by four loyalists when they met on a landing. This resulted in the republican in question being taken before his visit, to the prison hospital for treatment for lacerations to his face and upper body.

The next day two loyalists sustained injuries in an incident with republicans. As a backlash to this incident, the loyalists damaged the dining hall on A Wing, landings 2 and 3. They also threw liquid, namely urine out the bottom of their cell doors for four continuous days. As a result of this behaviour, republicans were also denied canteen facilities, even though they took no part in these disturbances. We therefore had to eat all our meals in our cells. The meals were distributed on a trolley pushed by a screw wearing wellington boots as the floors were soaked in urine and there was also urine dripping from the landings above. The food we received was cold as these trollies have no hot plates to keep the food warm.

During these four or five days the wing was on, as the screws term it, 'controlled movement'. So not only was the food being distributed in unhygienic conditions, but our cells were also in a bad condition as we were not permitted to wash or to slop out. We therefore had to eat our food with utensils unwashed between meals, amidst unemptied urinal pots and rubbish bins. The government, when confronted, laughed at our complaints about personal hygiene, saying under the circumstances there was nothing they could do.

With this policy of forced integration, we the prisoners have had to endure more hardship than is necessary. It has resulted in us operating a form of segregation to keep us apart from loyalists.



This means that we only have association every two days and at least two meals per day are eaten in our cells. We term the days we have association our jail days. These days work on the basis that we take our breakfast and lunch in the dining hall and we have one hours exercise in the yard between these meals. We are then locked in our cells all afternoon before we take our association between 5.00 and 7.00 p.m. that evening.

The days in between our jail days we have termed our bail days. These days we bring our breakfast and lunch back to our cells to eat and we get one hours exercise in the yard - no association in the evening. We have to rotate days with loyalists as the screws have admitted that they couldn't cope if we tried to take meals, exercise or association with loyalists.

Due to being locked up on average 22 hours a day and to the lack of internal sanitation, prisoners are forced to urinate and defecate in their cells. They defecate on a bag which is then dropped out of the cell window. These bags often lie outside the cells for upwards of a week continually giving off a stench which comes back through the cell windows. This degrading practice is the result of cell doors being locked from 7.00 p.m. until 8.00 a.m. the next morning.

So, comrades, as you can see from what we have to endure with this policy of forced integration, we as Republican Socialist P.O.W.s would like to call for your support and backing through our political movement, the Irish Republican Socialist Party. Go raibh maith agat.

Prisoner's Statement for Supporters in Britain

On behalf of the Republican Socialist Prisoners of War, I would like to thank you for your continued support of us, and by extension, the cause we embrace. Although that cause is much more important than our present incarceration and though we readily accepted the possible personal risks of our involvement in our people's struggle, nevertheless, in common with people enduring confinement and oppression anywhere, we do experience times of low spirits, whether for personal or family reasons, or if the struggle outside is stagnating or undergoing a temporary reversal.

The morale-boosting impact of your continued support, your letters, visits, books, money etc. is greatly appreciated by us and should never be underestimated by you, especially at such times.

Comrades, being in prison has consequences other than our confinement and deprivation; it puts a great burden on our families and on the Republican Socialist Movement. This can have the effect of making prisoners feel like a useless burden to those nearest and dearest to them, especially if they are serving long sentences. For example if a person is imprisoned who is the breadwinner, so to speak, in their family, it places a tremendous burden on those left to carry on, not only on an emotional level, but also on economic and everyday-life level.

continued on next page.

The Movement feels a responsibility to that person and to their dependents to help ease their burden. This ties up their personnel and limited resources, making it harder for them to pursue the goals they, and we, swore ourselves to; hence the pressure applied to people like yourselves, Noraid, etc. by the state and its appendages. By volunteering your time, efforts and resources, therefore, you are indeed helping to shoulder our burdens, our families' and the Movement's, so that we are more able to pursue the goal of national liberation and socialism for our people.

Without wishing to sound over-sentimental, our prisoners do feel a comradely bond with you; not only with those they are personally involved with, but with each and every one of you. Just as we are part of a movement which is part of a struggle more grand than us or our movement, so also, in a very real sense, are you part of this great process by way of your efforts and contributions and we are glad to call you comrades.

In closing, therefore, we would ask you as friends and comrades, to co-ordinate more fully and effectively in all your efforts and to thank you most sincerely for any and every assistance you have given or can yet give to us and to our movement. We would also like to take this opportunity to express the thanks and appreciation of our families. What's left to say, except 'keep up the good work'.

P.R.O.

Republican Socialist P.O.W.s

Letters

A Chara,

The recent removal of the 'political exemption clause' from extradition cases can be seen as a direct result of the ill-fated Anglo-Irish Agreement. The present extradition legislation (the 1987 Amendment Act) was brought in under the auspices of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Yet there are still EIGHT countries which refuse to extradite their own citizens and TWELVE countries which reserve the 'political exemption'.



We should remember that Belgium refused a British demand for Father Paddy Ryan's extradition on the exact same conspiracy type charges facing Dessie Ellis.

Extradition also incorporates a question of fundamental human rights under the Irish constitution, which Dessie and his family will be denied if he is handed over to the British. Dessie Ellis will become a 'subject', a subject of the British crown; all his rights as a citizen under the Irish constitution will be stripped-away and he will be entitled to the same unconstitutional treatment as all other Irish subjects under British Imperialism.

Recent history stands testament to the psychological warfare declared on Irish political prisoners and their families by the British state apparatus. Too often we have heard the heart-rendering tales of families travelling to Britain only to find that they are unable to visit their loved-ones because they have been 'ghosted' to another prison hours before their arranged visit. Or worse again, to find that on their arrival in Britain they are arrested under the P.T.A. and subsequently excluded from entering Britain.

Continued on next page.



This hunger-strike evokes emotive memories of our comrades who died in the same manner during the Hunger-Strikes of 1981 and no doubt some of you will remember the effort and resolve shown by all the people who fought and helped out. We would again call for your solidarity and support. Everyone of us must ensure that Dessie Ellis does not have to endure the living hell of a British prison regime which murdered Guiseppe Conlon.

The Republican Socialist POWs say NO TO EXTRADITION, because it is an extension of Thatcher's criminalisation of our struggle; We say NO TO EXTRADITION, because we are against collaboration. We call on anti-imperialists and political activists everywhere to organise against this British imperialist assault on the Irish people.

Smash extradition, Smash collaboration, Smash imperialism.

Republican Socialist POW's
Portlaoise Prison.

HELP TO PREVENT ANOTHER EXTRADITION

Write a letter of protest to Ray Burke TD, Minister for Justice, Dail Eireann, Leinster House, Dublin, Ireland. Better still get your trade union branch and MP to write to him. You could also write to the newspapers as well as supporting anti-extradition activities being organised in your area.



Funds urgently needed: The campaign against extradition is urgently in need of funds to publicise the case of Dessie Ellis and other citizens facing extradition. We are also in need of office equipment. Donations and offers of help can be sent to LAEC, 29 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.

News and Comments

Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid (Glasgow) recently held a very successful benefit social in a pub venue in the Gorbals area of Glasgow. The 150 people present enjoyed an evening of rousing Irish songs performed by The Bold Bhoys and The Blarney Pilgrims who generously gave their services free of charge. £137 was raised for the prisoners. R.S.P.A. wishes to thank everyone for attending and asks you to support our next benefit evening.

The Grand Draw organised by the Glasgow branch of R.S.P.A. raised £112. Thanks to everyone who supported this. Also, congratulations to Gerry K. for winning a wallet that was made by the late Michael Gaughan.

SPONSOR A POW



There is a general misconception that all Irish political prisoners benefit from the Green Cross (the prisoners dependants fund). This is not so! The truth of the matter is that the majority of Republican Socialist prisoners sentenced during and after late 1984 have been completely and utterly denied this benefit. At present there are many prisoners, both married and single, in gaols in Ireland and Britain who are receiving absolutely no help at all from those people who purport to represent all Irish Republican P.O.W.s. Therefore, the onus is on our movement to ensure the upkeep of these men and women, and also to alleviate the financial strain presently burdening these prisoners and their families. But, since we do not have hundreds of thousands of dollars flowing into our coffers, as others do, we must find another alternative. Sponsorship is that alternative.

Each prisoner is entitled to at least one food parcel per week (it varies from gaol to gaol). The parcel usually consists of three newspapers, three shampoos (sachets) and 2lb of fruit. There are a few other 'luxuries' allowed, such as books and magazines, but a prisoner who is not receiving Green Cross realises that his/her family have enough financial worries and will therefore go without such 'luxuries'. It may be hard for some people to believe that such a meagre amount of money can cause such hardship and worry to the prisoners and their families. But the hardship and worry DO exist. As well as the price of a parcel each week the family must also pay the bus-fare to and from the gaol at least once a week. Again, this is a small amount, or may seem to be to someone who is not trying to run a home, feed and clothe themselves and their children, and all on thirty odd pounds a week. If a prisoner can be sponsored a lot of strain and worry will be lifted off his/her shoulders, and a lot of financial worries off the shoulders of the family.



If you undertake to sponsor a prisoner, you mustn't take the decision lightly. You must be willing to finance the prisoner for as long as he/she remains in gaol. It will only cause more problems if the sponsorship money is paid to the prisoners family erratically. Therefore, we are appealing only to those who have the commitment and dedication to see this task through. Having said all this, the price of sponsorship can in no way be called exorbitant, £8 per single prisoner and £10 per married prisoner per week. Correspondence between the prisoner and his/her sponsor will be encouraged. As you can see, the money is not a lot to ask for, but the commitment and dedication must be genuine. Anyone who is interested in sponsoring a prisoner should write to me at the following address; Prisoners Welfare Officer, I.R.S.P. 392 Falls Road, Belfast Bt12 6DH; N.Ireland.

Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid extends its sincere sympathy to the family, friends and comrades of I.N.L.A. Volunteer, Alex Patterson who was slain by British gunmen at Victoria Bridge in County Tyrone on the 13th of November. "They may kill the revolutionary but never the revolution." - Che Guevara.

REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST POWs



"They (prisoners) are among the most valuable and precious of our people... they will make the most dramatic statement about our future that has ever come out of Ireland." FATHER WILSON...



Name	Town/county	Prison	Sentence	No.	Birthday
Pat McPhillips	Dungannon	Maghaberry	15yrs	Lagan 4 A1113	Mar 28
John Cennaway	Belfast	Magilligan	3yrs		
Martin Doran	Newry	Magilligan	14yrs	H.3, A633	May 15
David Holden	Derry	Magilligan	15yrs	H.1, A835	Sept 15
Sean McLaughlin	Belfast	Long Kesh	Life	T.8, 1633	Aug 30
Sean Braniff	Belfast	Crumlin Rd.	Remand	A Wing A5490	
Geno Gallagher	Belfast	Maghaberry	14yrs	Lagan 2 A688	Dec 12
Dermot Kearney	Dublin	Long Kesh	14yrs	H.7, A755	
Martin Creagh	Dublin	Long Kesh	14yrs	H.7, A754	
Willie Gallagher	Strabane	Long Kesh	20yrs	H.3, A1121	
Damien Byrd	Dundalk	Portlaoise	15yrs		
Seamus McShane	Dundalk	Portlaoise	15yrs		
Gary O'Neill	Limerick	Portlaoise			
Dominic McGlinchey	S.Derry	Portlaoise			
Eddie McClelland	Armagh	Long Kesh	Life	H.4, A154	
Joe Russell	Downpatrick	Long Kesh	6yrs		
Roddy Fitzsimmons	Downpatrick	Long Kesh	9yrs		
Pat McLaughlin	Derry	Cartree	Life	L43740	Dec 25
Peter Jordan	Bristol	Full Sutton	14yrs	H22338	
Andy Gallagher	Strabane	Long Kesh	20yrs	A1111	
Andy Connolly	Strabane	Crumlin Rd.	Remand	A Wing, 3868	
Davey Clinton	Downpatrick	Crumlin Rd.	Remand	A Wing, 4516	
Dessie McCleery	Craigavon	Crumlin Rd.	Remand	A5489	
Damien McKeever	Belfast	Crumlin Rd.	Remand	A5491	
Gerry Burns	Dublin	Portlaoise	4-yrs		Oct 7
Brian Cillen	Antrim	Long Kesh	17yrs	H.4, A1215	Dec 1
Francis Curry	Portadown	Long Kesh	Life	H Block	
Tony Gallagher	Strabane	Magilligan	4yrs		
Geordie Lafferty	Derry	Maghaberry	20yrs	Foyle, A1123	
Jimmy McCafferty	Strabane	Crumlin Rd.		A Wing, A3877	
Cary Adams	Antrim	Portlaoise	10yrs		

We urge our readers to show solidarity with the P.O.W's by writing to them at every opportunity and by sending cards at Christmas and birthdays etc. When writing please use the prison number. Below are the prison addresses;

HMP Maghaberry, Moira, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland.

HMP Maze (Long Kesh), Lisburn, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland.

HMP Magilligan, Magilligan, County Derry, N. Ireland.

Crumlin Road Prison, Crumlin Rd, Belfast, N. Ireland.

Portlaoise Prison, County Laois, S. Ireland.

HMP Cartree, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 7RP, England.

HMP Full Sutton, York YO4 1PS, England.



support republican socialist prisoners

Christmas Appeal

We urge our readers to support the prisoners and their dependants this Christmas, by sending donations large or small by cheque or postal order. Please make them payable to the I.R.S.P. and send to ; Prisoners welfare Department, I.R.S.P., 392 Falls Road, Belfast Bt12 6DH, N. Ireland. All donations will be gratefully acknowledged. Thank you.

