



LIFERS

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INTRODUCTION

MOVES to discredit and undermine the Republican Movement are not rare. From time to time, attempts have been made to harness the emotion-ism relating to imprisonment and use it against the Republican Movement. Attempts of this sort, most recently highlighted by Fr Faul's 1985/86 campaign of selective releases leading to 'peace', involve the cynical manipulation of republican POWs, their families and relations.

It is against this background that the political hostages have decided to present their analysis of the current situation.

This is the analysis of the republican prisoners; no-one else has a mandate to speak on our behalf. The Republican Movement is the only channel through which the opinions of the prisoners are voiced.

The stand we take is unequivocal and unapologetic: it allows for no exceptional cases and leaves no room for political manoeuvring by political opportunists or individual egotists, no matter what flag of convenience they fly, be it church, Free State, SDLP, or whatever.



OUR PREDICAMENT as republican POWs allows the British and their Irish collaborators the opportunity to use us as pawns in their political hostage game. The necessary first stage of this game is to present a complete reversal of roles in order to make it seem as if it is the Republican Movement and not the British government that are our jailers.

The phasing out of internment was a classic example of such a strategy, when releases were tied to the climate of the IRA's military campaign. During quieter periods in the war there would be a steady stream of releases, but as the level of operations increased, all releases would halt or slow down to a trickle. The obvious aim was to start a clamour among the relatives of internees for the IRA to cease operations, at least until *their* relative was released.

Hunger-strikes, protests and escapes have proved to the British how potent a weapon prisoners can be. Having learned that lesson well, they are trying to use this weapon against the Republican Movement. Consequently, prisons have been a frequent feature of British counter-IRA strategies as in 1974, when William Whitelaw, the first direct-ruler, openly invoked the hostage factor, objecting to the repa-

triation of POWs to the six counties on the grounds that it would deter others from taking the war to Britain.

THE LONDON-DUBLIN AGREEMENT

The London-Dublin agreement is only the latest example of a counter-IRA strategy in which the prison issue will again figure. The tactics have become much more subtle, but the game is still the same. Now, instead of releases of internees, we have a piecemeal and deliberately prolonged system of selective and conditional releases of SOSPs (those held under 'the Secretary of State's Pleasure' — a euphemism for the equivalent of a life sentence for those under 17).

"We have signed an agreement with the prime minister of Ireland which has, in fact, accepted that for all practical purposes... there will never be a united Ireland." — Tom King.

The aim of the Hillsborough deal, as attested by Tom King, is to stabilise British rule in this country. The Dublin government has given its approval to legitimise partition. The deal recognises that, to achieve this, republican resistance will have to be smashed. This, of course, will require major repressive measures which, as things stand, could not be implemented without alienating a large body of nationalist opinion in this island.

The role of the collaborationist nationalist politicians in this deal will be to ensure the acquiescence of nationalists during this period. To this end, and heavily aided and abetted by the establishment media, they will highlight and exaggerate Dublin involvement in the administration of the six counties, through the London-Dublin conference and secretariat, and the accompanying (mostly imagined) benefits to nationalists.

The *Flags & Emblems Act* (which should never have been there in the first place) may be abolished. Nationalists will be granted the 'right' to have street names in Irish. And there will also be mutterings of a 'more sympathetic' hearing for the 'forgotten prisoners'.

To further the aims of the London-Dublin accord, we believe the British are willing to respond to overtures from the SDLP which would allow certain *selective* – though well-publicised – releases. Suggestions have already been made about the possibility of raising the cases of individual long-term prisoners through the London-Dublin ministerial conference.

FR FAUL'S CAMPAIGN

The above scenario is close to the position held by Fr Denis Faul for some years now: that the IRA can be defeated through its prisoners. In the belief that his tactic of dividing republican families had succeeded in bringing the 1981 hunger-strike to an end, he is now pursuing a similar tactic around the emotive issue of long-term prisoners. This time he would go one step further and, by dividing republican families, his aim is to divide and smash the Republican Movement. Families are naturally concerned about the length of time served by their sons or daughters and so, he reasoned, they could be induced to exert pressure on the IRA to end the war, believing that this would result in the early release of their relatives.

The shallowness of Fr Faul's concern for prisoners is easily seen, especially in the light of his calls to inform on anyone engaged in republican activity.

In this last year or so, Fr Faul has introduced a new dimension to his anti-republican campaign, adapting the old British tactic of criminalisation to suit his own ends. He has categorised republican prisoners into different brackets, from the 'hard ones' down to 'misguided youths' – the latter to be released, the former to remain incarcerated. (Repeated requests have failed to elicit from the crusading priest what criteria he uses to differentiate the 'hard ones' from the 'misguided youth'. Perhaps families may care to enquire of him to which category their relatives belong.)

Not only does such categorisation (no matter how ridiculous) ensure that some prisoners remain in jail longer than others but it also absolves the British of blame and clouds the real issue. The fundamental truth is that the war in the North is a consequence of British rule and the

injustices of the sectarian statelet which was set up and maintained by the British government. Many young men and women are presently serving long periods in jail simply because of their resistance to that injustice.

THE POLITICAL REVIEW

All republican POWs are hostages of the British government and their release is often dependent upon the political advantage which can be wrung from them. Witness, for example, the early release of prisoners in 1975 through the device of increasing remission from one third to one half at a period when the British were trying to wean support away from the Republican Movement. This cynical use of prisoners as political hostages is yet more starkly evident in the case of 'lifers' and those sentenced to SOSP.

In January 1985, in response to increasing criticism of the life sentence review procedure, the NIO issued a booklet entitled *Life Sentence Prisoners in Northern Ireland: An Explanatory Memorandum* which purported to detail a major revamping of the procedure. Changes, however, were minimal, amounting to no more than the opportunity for a prisoner to make a written submission to the review board and the presentation, if the prisoner wished, of a report to the board by the probation service.

That the NIO felt it necessary to make even cosmetic changes in the procedure is explained by three factors. Firstly, few republican prisoners were taking part in the reviews. Secondly, it was patently obvious that the review procedure was never designed for, nor could it cope with, the cases of political life prisoners. And thirdly,

**LIFE SENTENCE
PRISONERS IN
NORTHERN
IRELAND**
AN EXPLANATORY
MEMORANDUM

Northern Ireland Office
Prison Department
Dundonald House
BELFAST

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it was becoming even more difficult for the British government to justify the inordinate length of sentences in the North's jails, given that the average life sentence in Britain is less than nine years.

The British government realise that in order to appease its critics among the SDLP and clergy, as well as outside observers of the Irish scene, some releases would have to be made at the end of the day. Hence the gesture in the direction of reform.

REVIEW MAKE-UP

A number of points in reference to the present review procedure need to be made. Much weight is given to reports compiled by the prison staff (i.e. prison officers and governors). Since the prisoner concerned is not entitled to see the reports, we can only speculate as to their contents. On the other hand, there need be no speculation on the nature of their authors, for we know only too well what sort of people they are: the same people who directed, planned and carried out a systematic campaign of brutality against republican POWs throughout the years of the blanket protest and beyond. The majority of them are sectarian bigots. At best, their background is pro-British, and, more usually, extremely pro-loyalist – in any event, they're always virulently anti-republican. What kind of 'assessment' can a republican hope for in such circumstances?

Similar considerations apply to those who sit on the review board itself: 'respectable', professional people – i.e. definitely non-working class and usually from an overwhelmingly anti-republican background. Also consulted in the later stages of the procedure is the trail judge – a member of the Orange judiciary, who sits in a no-jury court and who accepts the words of paid perjurers as the sole evidence to sentence large numbers of people to prison, often for life. Judge Maurice Gibson, commended the RUC murderers of three unarmed republicans for having brought them, as he put it, before "the final court of justice".

Mention must also be made of the part played by supposedly independent groups, such as the probation service, part of whose brief is prison welfare, and the

Northern Ireland Association for the Care & Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO).

Their officers endeavour to establish contact with the prisoner and his/her family, putting themselves over as the caring side of the system and of being on the side of the prisoner. They often try to win the confidence of the family to persuade them to encourage their relative to work with the system.

As 'evidence' of the dividends this complicity can pay, they cite the cases of the tiny number of (much-publicised) lifers/SOSPs who have been given release dates. They pressure those weak or naive enough to listen to their patter and induce them to participate in this futile, farcical process which invariably causes heartbreak as the false hopes which have been raised are dashed. It is a most degrading experience. We must be aware of the insidious methods of these charlatans.

'SURRENDER YOUR CONVICTIONS'

A major object of the review procedure is, in the words of the Northern Ireland Office document, to determine the prisoner's "attitude to his crime (sic) and sentence", and to ascertain if "he has entirely given up his affiliation to the organisation to which he belonged when arrested."

In plain language, a life or SOSP prisoner, in order to be considered for release, must prove to the review board that they are sorry for their actions, and must also convince them that not only have they cut all links with the Republican Movement while in jail, but that they will never have any connection with it in future.

As republican POWs, we make no apology for our past actions to rid Ireland of the British presence, nor are we prepared to bargain away our republicanism for a vague promise of release.

Even were we to do so, the NIO document makes it plain that that is not enough: "Particular problems arise where the organisation concerned is still perpetrating acts of violence." The message from the British is clear: prisoners are hostages for the good behaviour of the nationalist community. Little has changed since 1975, when the British army GOC, Frank Kiney, said, "Use internees as

political hostages, as a drive encouraging good behaviour by the IRA." And that message has been eagerly seized upon by Fr Faul and his like who cynically build up the false hope that a quick release is possible in certain circumstances and thereby seek to create among prisoners' families the belief that the Republican Movement is the body responsible for their relative's continued imprisonment.

REVIEW SYSTEM OFFERS NO HOPE

After much debate, the overwhelming verdict of republican POWs is that the review system is degrading and dehumanising, and offers no hope.

To conclude, we wish to reiterate a few points.

We state loudly and clearly: the responsibility for our continued imprisonment lies solely with the British government.

The main issue as we see it is not 'release the prisoners'; the real issue is to defeat British imperialism.

If all the prisoners were to be released tomorrow and imperialism was to remain untouched, we would merely be swapping prisoners. The jails would surely fill up again. The real solution is a socialist Ireland free from British interference.

But lest there be any doubt, let us clarify our position to families and friends. If we are offered freedom without the strings the British are attaching to it at present, we will seize it with both hands. But we will not accept the hostage/ransom syndrome of political releases for shelving or postponing resistance. We are prisoners; we are not the cause of the problems in our country, nor can our release be the solution. As Nelson Mandela said:

"Prisoners cannot negotiate. Only free men can."



SALUTE

We salute our families and relatives.

We ask nothing more of them than to stand with us and to resist the bribes and false promises of those who are partly responsible for our continued imprisonment. We offer you no false promises or false hopes, we predict no quick release dates, but when we achieve our freedom we won't have bargained away our dignity for it.

A special tribute is due to the families of our fallen comrades who have helped us to attain the strength and unity we have today. Let us maintain that unity to ensure victory, when we shall see the day the hostages come home for keeps.

BELOW is a list of those republican prisoners in the six-county jails who are serving life sentences or are held on the Secretary of State's Pleasure

NAME	AREA	DOB	DATE OF ARREST
Paul Baker	New Lodge	30.10.57	13.9.77
Frank Barbour	Derry	11.11.58	7.1.81
Sean Bateson	Ardoyne	28.3.56	5.77
Sean Bonnar	Belfast	6.6.55	29.5.73
Seamus Bradley	Magherafelt	28.1.56	8.77
John Burke	Derry	27.11.58	16.1.77
Jimmy Burns	Belfast	26.5.48	6.6.78
Paul Butler*	Belfast	—	—
Eugene Byrne	Crossmaglen	11.8.57	11.7.79
Barney Campbell	Tyrone	—	1984
Adrian Carlan	Derry	28.5.59	23.9.76
Kevin Carey	North Belfast	12.10.56	29.8.76
Billy Chillingworth	Turf Lodge	19.4.54	13.1.77
Gerard Clarke	Ardoyne	10.10.59	8.11.76
Joe Corey	South Derry	2.2.56	9.8.76
Paul Creighton	New Barnsley	18.6.54	13.5.76
Cathal Crumley	Derry	15.9.59	—
Michael Culbert	Andersonstown	17.7.49	6.5.78
Dennis Cummings	Tyrone	20.8.52	12.10.77
Bernard Curran	Derry	10.5.57	14.5.78
Francis Curry	Portadown	18.9.50	30.3.78
Kevin Deehan	Derry	5.4.58	24.5.79
John Devine*	Clonard	24.1.56	13.3.76
Gerard Dillon*	Keady	9.5.60	20.4.79
Seamus Dillon	Coalisland	28.10.58	11.80
Sam Dines*	Short Strand	7.9.58	7.6.76
James Doherty	Derry	7.4.51	5.11.82

NAME	AREA	DOB	DATE OF ARREST
Willie Doherty	Derry	2.5.55	19.6.79
Brendan Donaghy	Cappagh	11.4.65	21.4.84
Michael Donnelly*	Belfast	11.2.57	1.9.75
John Doran	Belfast	—	1977
Gerry Fearon	Armagh	25.11.57	10.5.77
Liam Ferguson	Beleek	27.4.40	2.11.79
Pat Fitzpatrick	Markets	13.10.61	25.4.82
Denis Gallagher	Derry	29.11.57	26.10.76
Joe Gibson	Andersonstown	13.10.56	3.7.76
Billy Gorman*	New Lodge	11.9.59	22.10.79
Michael Gorman	Falls	1.1.55	-4.77
Francis Gormley	Co. Armagh	27.9. .	10.9.80
Leo Green	Lurgan	22.11.53	26.2.77
Peter Griffin	Derry	31.8.60	23.5.79
Paddy Grimes	Tyrone	—	1984
Sean Grogan*	New Lodge	22.8.63	17.5.81
Noel Halfpenny	Short Strand	18.12.44	9.3.81
Peter Hamilton	Ardoyne	24.9.53	18.8.75
Eddie Harkin	Derry	20.12.51	31.1.77
Martin Keany	Derry	31.5.49	-4.76
Ian Heggarty*	Co. Armagh	26.12.60	17.10.77
Dutch Holland*	Ardoyne	12.2.57	5.5.74
Michael Hone*	Dungiven	—	-72
Martin Kavanagh	Turf Lodge	19.9.-	6.6.76
Adrian Kelly	Derry	18.1.62	13.10.82
Martin Kelly	Derry	—	-79
Robert Kerr	New Lodge	9.1.56	10.3.78
Breny Lillis	Clonard	3.9.51	17.11.76
Pat Livingstone	Belfast	10.12.51	14.9.76
Barry Llewellyn	Downpatrick	9.5.58	10.11.83
Tom Loudan	Unity Flats	5.8.54	16.1.77
Gerard Loughlin	New Lodge	26.9.55	23.11.81
Thomas Loughlin	Unity Flats	13.9.57	19.9.77
Matt Lundy	Turf Lodge	25.3.60	5.1.77
Pat McCabe	Clonard	3.7.58	6.6.77
Raymond McCartney	Derry	29.11.54	2.2.77
Harry McCavana	Ardoyne	1.4.35	-5.78

NAME	AREA	DOB	DATE OF ARREST
Gerard McClafferty	Ardoyne	8.10.57	2.2.79
Brendan McClenaghan	Ardoyne	-10.57	-11.77
S. McConkey	Belfast	9.4.54	30.1.82
Anthony McCooley	South Armagh	31.7.55	13.12.76
Eugene McCormack	Derry	28.12.57	23.8.76
Emmanuel McCrory	Turf Lodge	21.5.-	2.2.78
Malachy McCrossan	Strabane	25.2.57	20.9.77
Tommy McCrystal	Tyrone	16.7.51	13.1.80
Phil McCullough	Markets		7.77
Robert McDaid	Strabane	17.3.29	21.9.77
Eamonn McDermott	Derry	2.11.57	31.1.77
Alphonse McErlean	Portglenone	-5.57	20.5.77
J. McErlean	Toomebridge	3.1.50	1.6.83
J. McFadden	Falls	19.12.58	-12.81
Art McGeown	Keady	28.2.55	10.10.78
Sean McGlinchy	South Derry	31.5.55	28.7.73
Thomas McGrath	Tyrone	25.7.56	10.6.77
Michael McGrath	Coalisland	7.3.56	-11.77
Frank McGreevy	Falls	30.5.-	2.2.76
Francis McIlvenna	St James'	16.9.54	18.5.73
Anthony McIntyre	Twinbrook	27.6.57	27.2.76
Tommy McKearney	Tyrone	7.9.52	19.10.77
Brian McKenna	Castledawson	15.12.54	1.5.76
Paul McKenna	Falls	3.7.55	-8.77
Lawrence McKeown	Randalstown	19.9.56	2.8.76
Charlie McKiernan	Belfast	-	1981
Paddy McKinney	Belfast	-	1979
Patrick McLaughlin	Strabane	7.11.56	17.6.83
Jackie McMullan	Andersonstown	17.5.56	-5.76
Michael McMullan	Andersonstown	3.7.51	8.6.73
Kevin McNally	Keady	19.6.58	4.10.78
John McVeigh	Lurgan	-	-74
Michael McVey	South Derry	21.8.55	9.8.76
Edward Maguire	Ballymurphy	-	-9.74
Brendan Mailey*	Ardoyne	9.5.54	9.8.73
Brendan Mead	St James'	10.4.58	6.6.79

NAME	AREA	DOB	DATE OF ARREST
Ian Milne	South Derry	12.4.55	1.8.77
Gerry Moore	Derry	14.5.58	13.1.77
Thomas Moran	Turf Lodge	20.3.-	13.10.77
Kevin Muigrew	Newington	5.10.55	-11.81
Pat Mullian	Omagh	16.10.52	13.10.77
Ciaran Murphy	Lurgan	6.3.58	22.6.84
Robert Murphy	Turf Lodge	9.11.57	22.5.80
Harry Murray	Andersonstown	21.3.48	6.5.78
Eamon Nolan	Ballymurphy	11.8.56	-10.79
Eddie O'Connor	Keady	10.1.59	9.10.78
Pat O'Dowd	Lurgan	21.2.62	-84
Feilim O'Hagan	Lurgan	27.6.53	2.8.77
Gerard O'Halloran*	Ardoyne	6.4.59	7.11.76
P. O'Kane	Andersonstown	27.11.57	6.7.77
Kevin O'Neill	Coalisland	17.8.62	-12.82
Owen Roe O'Neill	Cappagh	20.4.59	14.4.84
M. O'Prey	Falls	4.8.62	-5.83
Neil Patterson	Strabane	-	30.11.81
John Pickering	Andersonstown	24.9.55	25.8.76
Gary Roberts*	Andersonstown	30.11.58	6.4.76
Eamon Scott	Andersonstown	26.5.53	17.6.80
Gary Smyth	Andersonstown	31.7.57	24.4.78
P.J. Traynor	South Armagh	11.1.53	14.7.79
Joe Watson	Andersonstown	30.5.54	6.6.77
Peter Whelan	Derry	9.12.57	11.1.78

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Jerry Boyle*	Strabane	25.11.56	10.4.78
Jim Campbell	Derry	1.9.55	5.12.74
Tony Catney*	Belfast	29.5.58	31.12.74
Billy Clinton	Belfast	8.1.57	3.3.76
Martin Corey	Lurgan	2.9.56	10.3.73
Robert Crawford	Ardoyne	11.10.57	26.6.75
Malachy Crilly*	Armagh	-	20.8.73

NAME	AREA	DOB	DATE OF ARREST
Kevin Crossan	Andersonstown	11.5.52	25.3.76
Alex Crowe	Andersonstown	24.11.40	12.6.73
John Cunningham*	Markets	22.6.56	5.7.76
Martin Cunningham	Newry	30.11.56	11.11.74
Willie Doherty	Derry	16.8.56	9.11.74
Liam Duffy*	Derry	16.8.57	11.6.74
Aidan Feeney	Derry	29.8.56	10.11.75
Hugh Feeney	Andersonstown	31.3.51	8.3.73
Paul Fleming	Derry	26.1.56	6.6.74
Dermot Fox	Glengormley	2.6.53	27.1.74
Noel Gaynor	Lurgan	23.12.56	13.8.76
Norman Hardy*	Ardoyne	18.2.58	22.8.75
Patsy Hickey	Beechmount	18.6.51	26.6.72
Liam Holden	Whiterock	17.10.53	15.10.72
Joe Lynch	Ardoyne	12.3.41	19.1.72
Gerry McClelland*	Armagh	19.7.56	3.3.75
Sean McGrady	Belfast	11.2.57	13.10.75
Noel McKeown	Lurgan	19.12.52	20.7.74
Paul McManus*	Armagh	21.3.56	20.8.73
Brian McReynolds*	Belfast	29.3.58	3.3.76
David McTasney*	Newtownabbey	8.11.58	31.12.74
Peter McVeigh	Lurgan	1.3.50	24.3.73
Billy Massey	Beechmount	16.5.57	24.4.76
Bill Meehan	Co. Tipperary	31.1.48	10.3.73
Joe Melarkey	Derry	1.6.54	1.78
Michael Morgan	Dungannon	12.12.47	-11.75
Thomas O'Hagan*	Derry	12.4.57	18.10.74
Noel O'Hara	Falls	19.12.55	24.11.75
Malachy O'Kane	Dungiven	31.10.48	9.3.73
Billy Page*	Derry	31.5.57	9.9.74
John Pagne	Newry	3.9.55	7.2.75
Umberto Scappaticci	Dundalk	18.4.56	7.2.75
Jim Short	Andersonstown	4.8.55	23.3.76
Pat Thompson	Crossmaglen	13.4.54	17.7.75
Paul Toal	Armagh		20.8.73
John Todd*	Belfast	22.1.57	23.8.75
MAGHABERRY			
Alice Taylor	Falls	23.5.60	20.5.82

For further information contact

Prisoner of War Department: 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast. Tel. 223214.

Sinn Fein Head Office: 44 Parnell Square, Dublin. Tel. 726932.

An Phoblacht/Republican News: 44 Parnell Square, Dublin. Tel. 747611; and 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast. Tel. 246841.

IRIS, the republican magazine: 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast. Tel. 246841.

Belfast Republican Press Centre: 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast. Tel. 230261 and Telex. 747523.

Republican Publications: 51/53 Falls Road

BELFAST

New Lodge Road. Tel. 751593
Ardoyne; Tel 740168
Short Strand. Tel. 731297
Ballymurphy. Tel. 230755
Beechmount. Tel. 230390
Andersonstown.
Tel. 618939/619719
Falls. Tel. 230227
South Belfast. Tel. 221495
Turf Lodge. Tel. 622112

CORK

Tel. (021)311389

DERRY

Cable Street, Bogside.
Tel. 268926
Creggan. Tel. 268422
Shantallow. Tel. 59747
Waterside. Tel. 49540

EAST DERRY

Gullaghduff, Knockloughrim.
Tel. 43814

DUBLIN

5 Blessington Street.
Tel. 308783/308664
2 Church Street, Finglas.
Tel. 343752
60 The Coombe,
Liberties. Tel. 531749

FERMANAGH/SOUTH TYRONE

Enniskillen. Tel. 26854
Lisnaskea. Tel. 21268
Dungannon. Tel. 25776
Coalisland. Tel. 48689
Omagh. Tel. 41438

LAGAN VALLEY

Twinbrook. Tel. 612153

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104 Lr Main Street. Tel. 22984

LURGAN

North Street, Lurgan. Tel. 6795

MID-ULSTER

Creggan Road, Carrickmore. Tel 744

MONAGHAN

21 Dublin Street. Tel. 82917

NEWRY/ARMAGH

Camlough, Bessbrook. Tel. 838465
Newry. Tel. 68538
Crossmaglen. Tel. 861948

SLIGO

Sligo. Tel 62912

TRALEE

Moyderdewell. Tel. 24339