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The Voice of Republican Ulster

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As peaceful protests continue

REVOLUTIONARY FORCE USED TO HIGHLIGHT STATUS ISSUE

Throughout the occupied Six-Counties comrades of the men in H-Block, Long Kesh Concentration Camp, last Monday mounted over one hundred and twenty operations in a co-ordinated strike to highlight conditions for those denied political status - 14 men in Long Kesh and two girls in Armagh Gaol.

The South Armagh countryside was cut off within minutes of the IRA mobilisation and the railway line between Newry and Dundalk was blocked as were all main border trunk roads in the area. The IRA in Crossmaglen has threatened to block the railway and all the roads permanently if the political status issue is not resolved. Such action would cripple north/South communications at its most direct point and would bring to a halt all heavy-goods trade.

North Armagh IRA also played an active part in the mobilisation; again the rail track was blocked and bobby-trapped, commercial vehicles were used as barricades across main thoroughfares and at the M1 roundabout two RUC men were injured by a bomb in a planned operation. In County Fermanagh outside a customs post on the Enniskillen to Swanlinbar road a suspect bomb caused havoc for several days. Another suspect bomb on a bridge at Silverwood, near Lurgan, closed the railway line at another point.

At Bellaghy in County Derry an active-service-unit planted four bombs in an operation mounted shortly after 6 p.m. Some roads in Derry City were blocked by commandeered buses. Derry Brigade IRA claimed responsibility for the fatal shooting of Sapper Howard Edward, 21st Engineering Regiment, the

previous Saturday.

The heaviest concentration of IRA activity was in Belfast where nine bombing operations were carried out and dozens of hoax bombs and hoax bomb warnings disrupted the commercial life of the city and its suburbs. In two of the bombings a hotel was destroyed and a bus depot attacked. Claiming responsibility, and explaining the attacks, the Belfast Brigade, Oglaiigh Na h-Eireann said in a statement:

"Today's operations, whilst intensifying and contributing to the continuing struggle to bring to an end British imperialist involvement in Ireland, have been co-ordinated with our comrades throughout the occupied Six-Counties, to highlight the intolerable conditions in H-Block, Long Kesh and the issue of political status.

"For 11 weeks now sentenced Republican prisoners in H-Block have been held in solitary confinement naked, in insanitary conditions, and forbidden to attend Mass all because they rightly refuse to accept criminal status."

The next part of the Belfast Brigade's statement was censored by the British media:

"These conditions under which captured Irishmen are subject to in their own country were legislated in an English Assembly, without protest from the English public, impassive to the torture and brutality carried out in their name.

"The inconvenience to the bourgeois business-class means little to us in comparison with the plight of our prisoners and the unceasing harassment of our people. Christmas to the working class people of Republican areas means continued harassment, raids, arrests, beat-

ings and torture."

The peaceful protests of the last three months, which united thousands of genuine people demanding the retention of political status have been ignored. Thus the Irish Republican Army's display of revolutionary force to highlight this issue.

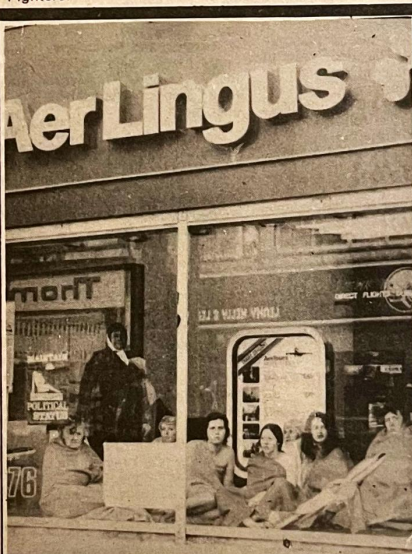
Other IRA operations throughout the week resulted in a soldier being seriously wounded beside the Whiterock reservoir. A hoax-bomb planted outside Fort Monagh Army base in Turf Lodge caused panic among the Occupation Forces who were then fired on by a hidden Volunteer. Last Saturday two bombs were placed at the homes of the former Police Authority chairman, Sir Ian Fraser, and the British Army G.O.C. David House, in the bourgeois Malone Road area.

And on Tuesday, Volunteers in Keady, Co. Armagh, hijacked a van and mounted an attack on the local Army-RUC base three miles out of the town. The gentlemen returned the van to its owner after the attack.

The essential street protests and demonstrations in support of political status must continue. The Irish Republican Army's show of soli-

darity with the prisoners will definitely increase morale, not just among the isolated prisoners, but in the hearts of the revolutionary people who now see the striking capabilities of their Freedom Fighters.

The burning shell of the luxurious Lansdowne Court Hotel which was destroyed by an IRA Active Service Unit as part of the offensive mounted against the British economy on Monday last.



Free State owned premises in Belfast were occupied this week in solidarity with the men in Portlaoise, (story page 4)

nollaig shona daoibh

Ice covers the yard, icicles hang from the huts and the frost has built its own venetian blinds on the wire. They turn the fences into dull grey shimmering walls. Looking straight at the wire you can see only one expanse of fuzzy optical wall. Looking at it from the side, through the shutters of ice the football pitch with its watch-towers comes into focus. The whole camp is white-washed in frost and only the drip, drip, drip, of it's thaw breaks the silence.

At the front gate a few measly sparrows hoke among the bins, a robin flaunts its red-breast and a pair of pied wagtails patrol their territory between the cages. Screws, wrapped in their winter great coats huddle in watch towers, miserable reflections of all they survey.

In cage 10, An Madra Rua pulls his box of dinner scraps into the yard. He waits for the sea-gulls to arrive. They wheel in as if by appointment, squealing and screeching, in great flocks, one hundred or maybe two hundred birds. It reminds you of Bangor, Ardglass or, in a place like this, of Duncrue Street. The odd pair of rooks flap in, among the sea-gulls, and from his vantage point on the cage fence, a solitary grey-hooded crow, glares disdainfully at his ill-mannered relations.

To my left the searchlights above the H-Blocks, crane high over it all. In cells young POW's can be found, sitting or lying on the floor, always in a corner. At half-past seven this morning breakfast was left in ...

"The cell door opens to let fresh air in. Everyone raises his head for a look at the sky. Free spirits haunting the sky of liberty, do you know your own kind are languishing, in prison?"

The POW sits, wrapped in a blanket, as far from the pisspot of stale urine as the small cell permits and eats the mush from its

The governor and doctor make their rounds. Both stand in the doorway, look, nod, comment on the weather and leave - the POW's health will never be mentioned - as long as he continues to breathe.

At half seven the breakfast is removed and the dinner is left in. At 4.30 the dinner is removed and the tea is left. The cell is searched every day - a bare gerrybuilt dungeon with a naked man in one corner but it is searched anyway. Last night, as every night, a Screw checked it at least once every half hour.

This time last year Frank Stagg lay in a similar cell, lay alone and hungry, alone - waiting for death.

Last year prisoners in the Crum, Armagh, Long Kesh Magilligan, Portlaoise. The Curragh, Mountjoy and Limerick prepared for Christmas.

Last year in Hull, Wormwood Scrubs, Wakefield, Albany, Strangways, Long Lartin, Gartree, Winchester, Winston Green, Parkhurst, Durham, Walton, Leicester, Bristol, Aylesbury, and Perth prisoners made ready for the festive season. This year they prepare themselves once more.

"In the cold winter night, without blankets Lying with back curled round and legs Folded up close, I try in vain to sleep. The moonlight on the windows increases the sense of Cold, And through the window bars, The Great Bear draws up alongside and looks in."

In homes throughout Ireland and England families await the coming of Christ's birthday. In many homes, Christmas this year will be a mere memory of Christmas's long gone. A home is a family. Without the family a home is a memory.

With only memories to sustain it, Christmas is a lonely time. But then ... memories keep us together,

Memories of the past provide us with the determination needed to endure the present and to be ready for the future.

Shane O'Doherty has endured 14 weeks with only a blanket to cover him. Kieran Nugent is four months in solitary wrapped in a similar blanket. No Christmas cards, holly, mistletoe or turkey.

No tinsel or Christmas tree. Santa Claus is forbidden to visit prisoners. The materialistic side of Christmas is locked out.

But a finer thing, a better thing, a holier thing is locked in. In cells everywhere the spiritual presence is imprisoned. Prisoners, forbidden every-

— brownie

thing else, cannot be denied the rewards, the quiet happiness and the spiritual freedom which self-sacrifice and deprivation bring. Prison bars can never contain the mind which wishes to be free.

"In jail we also celebrate the Christmas festival. For us the winter moon and wind hear a flavour of Sadness. Being deprived of freedom to enjoy the birth of Christ Our hearts wander after His star on her course across the sky."

In cage 10, Madra finishes feeding his birds. A young sea-gull greedier than his fellows, kites in for a final morsel. He strikes the top wires, panics and falls screeching into coils of razor wire.

A quick hysterical flutter and he is caught fast, wings hooked to the bars. Tiny flakes of ice, dislodged spiral to the ground. The sea-gull thrashes about, regurgitates and tiny specks of red blood stain his breast.

An Madra Rua approaches. He goes off and returns with a table. A young comrade follows close behind with a chair. Together they erect a make-shift platform. The younger man scrambles on top. The sea-

gull resisting, the barb tearing flesh, the sea-gull struggling again ... One final tug. It is free, hanging unceremoniously at arms length. Then, a slow clumsy flop to the ground.

Madra waves his arms. The sea-gull flies off. Slowly and awkwardly. It clears the fences. We watch as it disappears, limply, over the H-Blocks.

I return to my chair in the study-hut. All is quiet once more. The camp settles uneasily into its wintering over Christmas. Our thoughts are with the prisoners, naked in soli-

BRIT BULLY BOY TACTICS IN ARDOYNE

On Tuesday morning the Brit Army carried out an intensive search of Ardoyne Sinn Fein Advice Centre. When they realised the Centre was operating legally and was offering an essential service to the people of the area they became annoyed and in order to "justify" their search, they confiscated

him. They fight a short duel. Madra gives advice and holds the shaking table.

The seagull quietens. the young man grips it's neck and pulls a wing free. I can see the razor

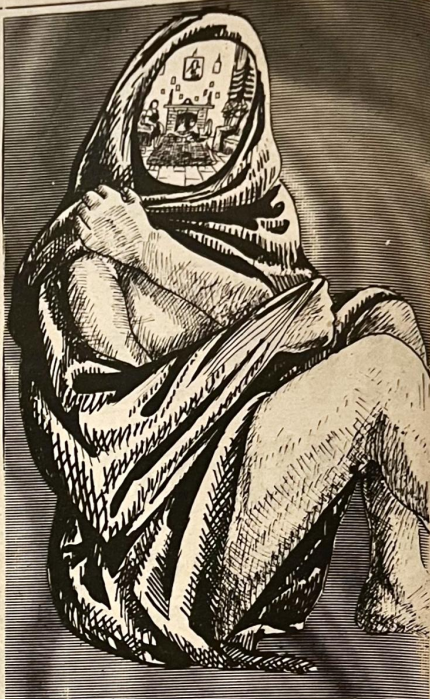
tary. To them we extend comradely Christmas greetings. You may wonder why such things happen.

"Yule-logs spreading warmth. Light reflected on cheering glass. Jesus, how humanity hath died, Indifference, nailed it to a cross."

To Political Prisoners everywhere, to oppressed people and to those who have lost friends or relatives we extend Christmas greetings.

"Nollaigh Shona Daoibh."

Is mise BROWNIE POW Long Kesh.



WHAT IS OPTION TWO?

As forecast in the columns of this paper the subject of "negotiated independence" has become a focal point of discussion over the past number of weeks, the debate encompassing many different shades of political opinion.

What was once a subject of ridicule has now become a potential political platform for many 'respectable' politicians and various individual politicians.

The question is, why? Firstly, it is the opinion of the author that the present discussion is a political manipulation of a realisation by those involved that the British government has committed itself to a policy of physical withdrawal from Ireland.

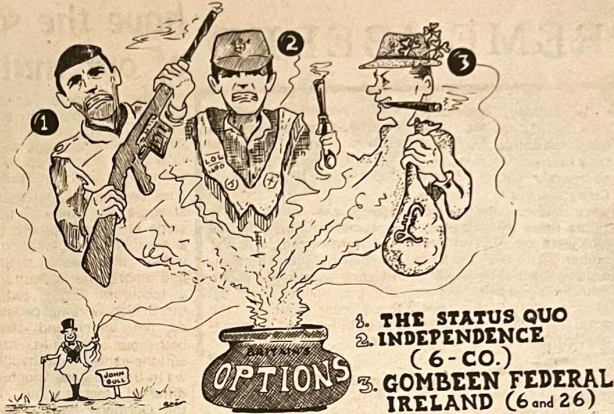
Secondly it is quite possible that by allowing such speculation and discussion without combatting them with convincing denials the British government has indirectly made its declaration of intent to withdraw. A wide spectrum of political opinion has now confirmed the repeated claims of the Republican Movement that the British are withdrawing, and in the wake of this confirmation, a radical political realignment is taking place throughout the 32 counties of Ireland.

This realignment is based on the three options open to the British government which will seek to leave behind structures of government by which it can continue to exert political and economic control in Ireland as it did through the "Free State," agreement of 1922.

Its first option is to remain as an occupying force in the 6 counties, its second is an "Independent Ulster" co-operating with the Free State, and its third, and best option, is a 32 county Free State based on a structure of neo-colonial Federal government, (26 and 6).

In either case one of the main priorities would be the elimination of the Republican Movement, its members and its supporters. The first option is no longer viable for the British government because of the military, political and economic cost. The encouraged discussion of "Negotiated Independence" therefore represents a phased movement towards the second of the British government's three options. (The discussion is being encouraged because it is not being discouraged by a firm and credible commitment from the British government to remain).

The recent 'policy' document from the loyalist paramilitaries, the weekend "talk-in" at Corrymeela, and the 'exchanges' between members of the SDLP and ULCC are all indicators that "option 2" has now been well and truly launched. (That those engaged in the "Negotiated Independence" discussions are concerned about the attitude of the Republican Movement is illustrated by the fact that one of the major participants at Corrymeela made a point of securing a copy of Vindicator's last article "Negotiated Independence and a New Identity" before going to talks).



1. THE STATUS QUO
2. INDEPENDENCE (6-CO.)
3. GOMBEEN FEDERAL IRELAND (6 and 26)

by Vindicator

The one remaining piece of the jigsaw to be fitted is the Republican Movement. If its participation could be secured and the scope of the discussion limited to a 6 county "Independent Ulster" the British government would be well on the way to securing "Option 2" and a positive movement towards "Option 3." The preparatory work for "Option 3" began back in 1973 with the mythical "Boal plan," which was Desmond Boal's conception of a Federal Ireland with an Ulster province of 6 counties. Since then credibility to such a solution has been given by Prof. John Robb, Jack Lynch and surprisingly Fr. Desmond Wilson.

The reality of the present situation is that various political groups and individuals who now recog-

nise the withdrawal symptoms of the British government's policy, are 'doctoring' the policies of the Republican Movement to secure future positions for themselves under "Options 2 and 3" of the British government's withdrawal strategy. As was pointed out on the front page of last week's "Republican News" now is the time that the Republican Movement should be organising the people behind its basic policy of "power to the

people," as personified by the "People's Assemblies." The sad fact appears to be however that the political benefits of the Republican Army's successes seem to be reaped by those outside the Republican Movement, and that unless the Movement expands its policies beyond its present local confines, we may well be facing a 1922-type settlement with Chilean-type implications for the Republican Movement.

GREEN CROSS

This year families, through no fault of their own, will spend Christmas without a father or a brother, a mother or a sister. It will be a dismal and sad Christmas, and for many of these families it will not be the first one spent this way.

On top of these worries come the financial ones which Christmas inevitably brings to everyone - but the majority of these families are living on social security benefits. In these times of economic recession this means that the real value of this money is constantly being eroded in other words the same amount of money does not buy the same amount of goods that it did last year.

These families are faced with the double worry of trying to give those incarcerated in prison a few luxuries as well as trying to bring some warmth into their homes at Christmas. Internment may have ended but the innocent families of men imprisoned for political crimes still

suffer the same conditions of misery and loneliness that those of the families of the interned did. It is in trying to alleviate some of the problems generated by the 'troubles' that GREEN CROSS '75 steps in. At Christmas we try to give these families a 'little extra' to meet the extra expenditure and to try to compensate for the misery of these families at a time that is traditionally supposed to be one of Joy and Peace.

To give this little extra 'Green Cross' has to turn to you and ask that you go into your pocket a little deeper and give just a appeal. All these families buy the same amount of feel lonely - they need to feel that someone cares. Show them, as you have done many times before - that you do care by giving generously, once again, to the innocent mothers and children of this war.

GREEN CROSS '75.

NEW LODGE WOMEN JOIN THE FRAY

The campaign by the women of the Republican areas, in defence of political status, has been escalating at an amazing level. Every area of Belfast has support groups from various Sinn Féin Cumann and Relatives' Actions Committees taking part in the now familiar 'strip' protest. As related elsewhere in this issue the news of the women's brave stand has made the newspapers in many parts of the world.

(Left) A group of brave women from the New Lodge area who have joined in the protest.



MANCHESTER MARTYRS REMEMBERED

On Sunday, November 28th, 1976, in the forenoon, the annual Manchester Martyrs Commemoration was held at Moston Cemetery, and wreaths were laid on the graves of the three Irish patriots, who were executed on November 23rd, 1867 by Irish organisations including Sinn Féin and other wings of the republican movement. At the monument erected to their memory,

and recently partially destroyed by fascists, an oration was delivered by Mr. Fionnbarra O' Dochartaigh, [Bogside,

Derry] who was formerly a prominent figure in the civil rights struggle in the North of Ireland. The commemoration ended with two minutes silence for all those who died in the struggle for Irish independence.

ORATION

A Chardí Gael, Here in the city of Manchester towards the end of July 1867, a convention of 300 delegates of the Fenian Movement elected Captain Thomas J. Kelly as their Chief of Staff of this international organisation. Kelly, who had been sent from the American wing of the movement to plan a rebellion against British domination in Ireland, was arrested within a few months. On his way to Salford prison on board a locked van, an attempt was made to free him by his comrades. The result of the action was that a prison guard was accidentally killed, while endeavouring to remove the locks. A number of Irishmen were later arrested, and three were hanged on November 23rd. In this city. These men, William Phillip Allan, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien became popularly known as the Manchester Martyrs. For this

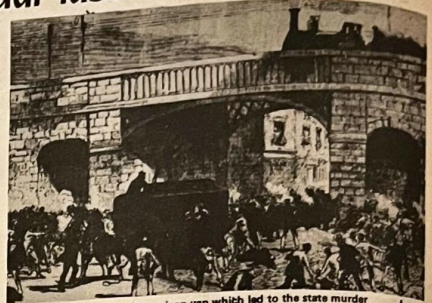
reason we are gathered today at this historic spot, where their mortal remains have been laid to rest, to remember their brave stand at the agony of facing the gallows, which helped swing Irish sympathy behind the Fenian Brotherhood in those days.

Manchester, at this period was the headquarters of the Fenian movement and from this city preparations were being made for the overthrow of impartialist rule in Ireland.

Fenianism had strong links with other revolutionary groups throughout the world, and had sworn members in all the major capitals of the continent. North America, - and Australia. Its policies were directed at trying to make a better life for our own people, and encouraged progressive groups, including the Trade Union Movement here in Britain and

■ We say to British workers, we are not your enemies, but rather we have the same enemy, the exploiters of our mutual labour....■

overseas. Many a Fenian played an important role in the struggles of the British working class and in a great many ways the workers of both our countries understood that their struggle was one and the same struggle, namely to end capitalist exploitation within the sweat shops and among the agricultural labourers. Today, sadly the British working people do not understand that both our struggles are still the same, even though we in Ireland have adopted different tactics, but if the Germans had landed and occupied Britain, would not the young men of this city, be engaged in warfare. Would not the women of Britain join in the struggle, and together drive out the invader. Above all, we are fighting for a new social order based on equality. We are fighting for a democratic socialist republic; and when that day dawns our peoples will have established a much greater degree of



The attack on the prison van which led to the state murder of the Manchester Martyrs who were hung as a reprisal.

liberty and fraternity. We say to British workers, we are not your enemies, but rather we have the same enemy, the exploiters of our mutual labour, the speculations of land and capital, who place profit above people, and the needs of both our peoples. Let us together struggle for that new society, but our unity can only be achieved when the army of the ruling class

is withdrawn from our country. It is not the workers army, for the day will come when they will turn their armour against the workers of Liverpool, London, and Manchester.

For a just and lasting peace, British working people must now demand, "Troops Out Now" and self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.



Free State offices in Belfast occupied in solidarity campaign

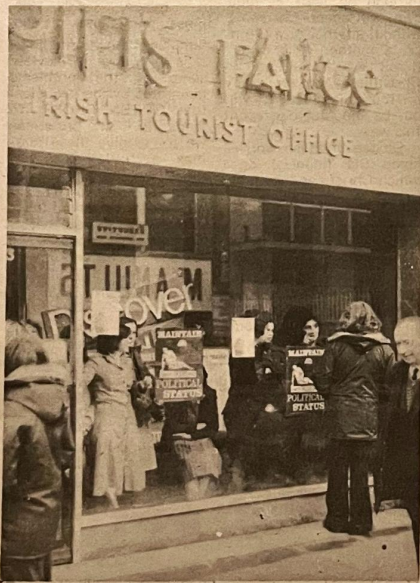
The escalating campaign for the retention of political status was developed this week when a large group of women occupied the Free State tourist and travel offices in Castle Street, Belfast. Oifig Failte, the Northern headquarters of the 'Irish' Tourist Board and Aer Lingus were taken over by the group comprising relatives of Republican Prisoners-of-war and supporters of Sinn Féin.

The takeover happened with such speed and precision that British soldiers and RUC personnel standing a few yards away were unaware of what was happening.

When the 'penny' dropped a group of Brits rushed to the premises but found the doors locked in their faces. All that the bemused Brits could do was stand and glare as the protestors bedecked the office windows with

'Political Status' posters. A member of the protest group told the Republican News, "We felt that the plight of the men and women in Free State Jails could only be highlighted by bringing our protest into Free State property."

Like their comrades in H-Block, Long Kesh, the prisoners in Portlaoise, and the rest of Cooney's jails, are going through Hell."



ARRIVAL OF PARAS HERALDS NEW WAVE OF REPRESSION

From the arrival of the paratroop Regiment in the Falls, there has been a sharp but subtle rise in harassment. It is now almost an hourly occurrence for residents to be stopped in the street and screened, many of them being asked foolish questions.

Members of the local cumann witnessed a young girl aged about 7 being stopped by a foot patrol, and questioned. School-girls of 14 and 15 years are being stopped and asked to open their coats to be searched. In one incident a man was stopped and accosted by a foot-patrol as he knocked his brother-in-law's door. He was accused by a Para of using a secret knock, the next day the brother-in-law's house was raided and he was arrested. The Paratroop's favourite method of patrol is in open jeeps and in the spell of foggy weather recently they roamed our streets with no lights,

screaming at residents in their cars to put their lights out. The dangers in this type of activity are obvious with the dramatic rise in road deaths in the past 2 weeks. Last Sunday several women coming out of Clonard Monastery were almost run down by a jeep, after which the Brits hurled verbal abuse at the women.

Our investigations of other areas indicates that the same pattern of harassment is going on. These soldiers are stopping people informing them that they have seen nothing yet. We take the view that something sinister is afoot for the Nationalist people in the introduction of this particular regiment to the 6 counties. Paratroopers are patrolling Belfast from Divis Flats to Suffolk, every area in between, they are also in Derry, Armagh and Dunganannon and we have no doubt that there will be an unparalleled increase in arrests, intimidation and murder in the weeks ahead.



A Para patrol commander hurls abuse as his Land Rover passes a young man near the Clonard Street junction with the Falls.

STAGGERING FIGURES RELEASED BY BROWN

In the wake of the IRA's onslaught on the already shaky British economy comes the news that the cost of keeping the Brit army in the Irish war zone is costing Westminster a staggering sixty three million pounds this

year. The figures were given by Britain's Army Under-Secretary Robert Brown in answer to a written question in the House of Commons.

It was revealed that the figures are £3 million up on last year.

VICTORY FOR THE PEOPLE

The Irish people with the help of their international working-class allies last week won a major victory when the five judges of the Supreme Court in Dublin quashed the death sentence on Marie and Noel Murray. They had been sentenced to death by hanging on the 8th June, six months ago by the Special Criminal Court in Dublin. They were the first persons ever to be sentenced to death by this notorious court and should Marie Murray be hanged she would be the first woman to be hanged since the 26 county state was set up.

But the fight for Justice for Noel and Marie Murray has only begun. The judges of the Supreme Court were only agreed on one thing on Thursday 9th December when they handed down their judgement. That was that the Special Criminal Court had mishandled their trial in the first place and that the Court of Criminal Appeal had also misdirected itself. This overwhelming condemnation of the Repression Courts which was set up especially to deal with Republicans in the first check to Repression in the 26 county

state. And it is a political response to public opinion at home and abroad which was shocked by the details of the "trial" the Murrays had expressed its revulsion by protests from Tokyo to Madrid and from Limerick to Derry.

The campaign for reprieve of the Death Sentence on the Murrays was a straight fight between the Garda Representative Body with all the support it could command in the Free State government and the media and the ordinary people who hated injustice and repression. The Murray Defence Committee had no hidden backers, it could command the support of no establishment. The 26 county daily papers, radio and television were closed to it and when it resorted to putting up posters in Dublin four of its members were charged with "threatening and abusive behaviour to a member of the Garda Síochána." Yet every one of the Supreme Court judges have agreed that Marie Murray should be retried for Capital Murder. They have made a start towards the Murrays central demand for a retrial. Yet the contempt of court cases are still pend-

ing against Hibernia and the Association for Legal Justice for daring to criticise the Special Criminal Court.

But the Campaign for Justice for the Murrays is only beginning and the Murray Defence Committee will not rest until Capital Punishment is totally removed from the Dublin Statute Book and there is an impartial enquiry into the working of the



choice Fathers Faul and Wilson and this was in defiance of Canon Law. But as they fought the good fight for the oppressed working class when they were free so they

only a partial one. The campaign for Justice for the Murrays and the exposure of the whole rottenness of the 26 county establishment will continue. Our need for funds is urgent

STATEMENT BY THE MURRAY DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Special Criminal Court. The demand is for a retrial by jury for both Noel and Marie Murray and the full exposure of the torture under which statements were extracted which it then attempted to use as "evidence" with which to hang them.

Though they were tried by the "political" Special Criminal Court, Marie has not had political status as a prisoner. Though they were both in 'the death cell' for six months they were denied ordinary access to visitors, parcels, mail and association with other prisoners. Neither was visited by a spiritual advisor because Cooney refused to allow them see the councillors of their

fought and exposed the contradictions of the Special Criminal Court despite their handcuffs and their isolation. Their case highlights the awful conditions in which Irish prisoners are held and the importance of the issue of political status.

This is a victory but

to get the best legal advice for Marie and to see that Noel wins his case for assault against Detective Inspector Ryan who beat him up whilst interrogating him. We hope to let the world know of the hypocrisy, injustice and corruption that passes for 'Law and Order' in Ireland.

In Memoriam

In proud and fond memory of Staff Officer David Kennedy, 2nd Batt. North Armagh Oglagh Na h-Eireann, who died on 10th December 1975 (RIP). Far greater the grave of the prison, Luminated by one patriot

name. Than the trophies of those who have risen, On Liberties ruins to fame. Always remembered by the Republican Movement North Armagh (comprising) Oglagh Na h-Eireann, Na Fianna Eireann, Sinn Féin, National Graves Association and Republican Political Prisoners.

WHISTLES OF SUPPORT



Several hundred people took part in the protest march that took place in the Short Strand area on Sunday night December 12th. The march was the climax to a week of protest in the area in support of political status. During the week women had carried out a vigil protest, they had been naked except for blankets to cover them, this protest was to draw attention to the conditions of the prisoners in H-Block Long Kesh and women prisoners in Armagh prison, who are refusing to wear prison clothes as part of the campaign to defend political status.

After the march a meeting took place. Representatives of the Republican Movement, Short Strand R.A.C. and the women who took part in the vigil spoke.

The speaker on behalf of the R.A.C. stressed, that the struggle for political status was to establish that there was a struggle for liberation been waged in the 6 Counties, and that the Republican prisoners were prisoners of war, not criminals.

ULSTER EXECUTIVE LINE UP HOT SERIES OF PROTESTS' FOR BRITISH

The Annual General Meeting of An Comhairle Cuige, Uladh (Ulster Executive) took place on Sunday 12th December, 1976 in Monaghan, the new officer board being duly elected. The following statement is issued from the new body:

"On the 1st March 1976, Merlyn Rees removed 'political prisoner status.' He further qualified this removal by declaring that this would affect those prisoners convicted offences committed on or after the 1st March, 1976.

Those convicted of offences committed up to 29th February are not affected by the removal of this status. This has since been compromised by the

fact that a rider charge of membership of the IRA has been applied to some prisoners after this date. This is all part and parcel of the double-think, divide and conquer policy of the British Government. It is part of the Kitsonian type undermining tactics in that the British are attempting to destroy the tremendous morale among imprisoned Republicans, by setting one section of prisoner against the other within the prison system. Those prisoners who will be affected by this removal will be forced into prisons cells, forced to wear prison garb, forced to do penal servitude.

"We will resist, and are resisting this type of jack-booting of our prisoners. We are now assuring the British Government that

they are in for a long, hot series of protests from Sinn Fein on the issue of political status. The men and women in prison throughout Ireland and England are there as a direct result of resistance to British rule in Ireland.

The war at present is a political one, designed to bring about freedom of the Irish people from the yolk of British imperialism. Those men and women captured by the enemy are victims of this war, and are political prisoners.

Those men and women captured by the enemy are victims of this war, and are political prisoners, held captive by a foreign army and government, who have no right to be in Ireland in the first place.

ORGY OF DISTRUST

Sunday 12th December 1976 witnessed the gravest orgy of destruction and abuse by the 74 Battery Royal Artillery against both dwellings and residents of Unity Flats.

Considerable damage was caused to many front and rear doors of flats as a result of being kicked-in by British Army personnel. These soldiers then vandalised the street lighting system. Acts which once more through their sheer brutal and destructive content highlight to everyone that it is the presence in areas, such as Unity Flats, of British troops that remains the primary obstacle to a true and lasting peace.

The voice of the residents of Unity Flats resounds loud and clear for a complete withdrawal of the British and all the ills they represent through these continued acts of 'hooligan-rampaging' and harassment. The residents

now stand united in opposition to the presence of the uniformed thugs of the Royal Artillery, and wish to air their disgust at certain incidents that took place during this pre-planned assault on the area. Rubber bullets were fired at children in the age group of 5 to 10, and three young men were assaulted at the time of their arrest and during interrogation in North Queen Street Barracks. As well as this harassment the home of an 80 year old woman was ransacked, and she was subjected to both verbal and physical abuse. These incidents by the Royal Artillery have strengthened people's resistance towards the Brits, and now the people louder than ever demand BRITS OUT - PEACE IN. Finally we congratulate the womenfolk on their courageous display of opposition to these criminal thugs.

AN SIOPA EALAÍNE

85, BÓTHAR NA BHFÁL, BÉAL FEIRSTE

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VISIT BEFORE
CHRISTMAS!

THE 'NON-POLITICAL' POLITICAL PRISONERS

by R. G. Mc AULEY

A few weeks ago two young Derry Republicans were sentenced by a Diplock Special Court to 16 years imprisonment each. Their 'offences' were possessing weapons and being members of the IRA. Because their charges related to an incident after March 1st, the deadline set by Merlyn Rees while he was Secretary of State for the 6 counties for the ending of Political Status, these two men knew that they were going to be denied 'Special category.' In forthright and determined statements from the dock they informed the 'court' that they were, regardless of what the British said, political prisoners, and as such they intended refusing to wear prison garb and do prison work.

greatly. Once a prisoner arrives in that area and refused to wear criminal clothes he is stripped naked and locked in a single cell.

As a result of his refusal to behave like a criminal, prison officers continually harass him, the food is either inedible, cold or insufficient in quantity, the heating is turned up full and then off in order to create the maximum discomfort, his visits, letters etc., are stopped, and to all intents and purposes he is completely alone.

Over recent days we have received reliable information about an increase in repression in the H-Block. This repression which is occurring in many ways but in particular through physical abuse, has been born of an increasing desperation on the part of the N.I.O. to break the resistance of these Republicans. The numbers of men on protest are increasing daily as more men pass through the Special courts; at the time of writing this article 26 Republicans are being held in H1 and H2 and there are in the region of 200 more awaiting 'British Justice.' In Armagh, 2 girls are now on protest action and as with the men there are many others awaiting 'trial.' For the British to successfully tag our comrades with the label 'criminal' they must do so now while the numbers are still small enough for them to retain reasonable control of the situation. Repression therefore is the order of the day.

As a result of their decision they joined the other Republican POWs here because of their insistence on being treated as political prisoners and not criminals are being kept at this moment in solitary confinement, naked except for a blanket.

We in this end of the camp have witnessed since the first man Kiernan Nugent was sent to the cells, a definite hardening in the attitude of both the prison administration and prison staff.

Not only have we been subjected to increased harassment on visits and during searches but the prison administration have been deliberately slow to respond in carrying out vitally necessary repairs to huts which presently accommodate men but which a recent news paper article revealed that under the EEC statutory requirements farm animals would not be allowed to be kept in. In a report published 3 weeks ago the N.I.O. claimed to be spending £14 million this year alone on prisons; where I would like to ask is this money going? because here in Long Kesh it would appear that they cannot afford to buy half a dozen panes of glass.

Conditions however in the H-Blocks where our comrades captured after the 1st of March are being kept are infinitely worse



T hundreds of people have turned out in all areas of the North in support of the 'non-political' political prisoners languishing in H-Block and Armagh.

We need the support of everyone to defeat this attempt by the British to brand Republican POWs as criminals. Give it now.

Encased in silence, total absolute
Your walls one door small window
Enmeshed in colourless shades of grey
Bare cell solitary figure
Sitting huddled, naked on the floor
Blanket wrapped firmly about them
Isolation - the quiet of

the womb
Without its warmth and comfort
No sound to break the silence
Nothing to read, no one to talk with

Surrounded by walls of concrete and steel,
The non political, political prisoners wait.

THE 'NON POLITICAL' POLITICAL PRISONERS

Surrounded by walls of concrete and steel

TEN MONTH OLD BABY ARRESTED BY BRITS IN CITY

Raids, arrests and harassment continue to increase in the New Lodge area. Almost everyone walking along the Street are stopped and checked by the British Army. Within the past week 30 arrests have been reported to the Sinn Fein Centre. Most of these have been held for up to four hours supposedly for 'screening' but in some cases they were held in Crumlin Road Interrogation Centre for three days. Two young girls from the area are constantly being harassed by the Brits. These two girls have been arrested five times in the last few months and are stopped

and checked almost every night. On Saturday afternoon the two girls were in the town shopping. They had a neighbours 10 months old baby with them in a pram. In Castle Street they were stopped and arrested. The baby was also taken with them to the Grand Central. They were released about an hour later and the Brit Officer informed the baby's mother that they hadn't realised that the baby was also in custody.

A Brit Army foot patrol attempted to arrest a Sinn Fein member on Wednesday night. The man was walking towards the

Centre when he was accosted by the Brits. They asked him to step into the entry until they checked him out. He refused and walked into the Centre. The Brits attempted to come into the Centre after him but were prevented by one of the female members. The Brits then remained outside for about half an hour waiting for the man to come out. Local men and women came out from the nearby clubs and the Centre was packed with people. It was only then that the Brits moved off. They obviously weren't so brave when there was a crowd about.

C. P. ATTACKED AT MIDDLESEX POLYTEC' MEETING

The London Sinn Fein Secretary and PRO, Michael Maguire was invited to address a meeting of Middlesex Polytechnic Student recently. After outlining the Republican perspective on the struggle in Ireland, the speaker then gave a short but effective history of the collaborationist role played by the Communist Party in Ireland with the forces of sectarianism and Imperialism. This was in reply to a Communist Party member

who declared that the only progressive movement in the North of Ireland was the Trade Union Movement! He was evidently unaware of the high proportion of full time Trade Union posts occupied by C.P. members who have done nothing positive to combat sectarianism and discrimination in Industry. The meeting agreed that in the N.

Ireland context, "The Better Life For All Campaign" really meant a "Better Life for Some."

Middlesex Polytechnic has a good history of solidarity with the Republican Movement, following the death of Frank St. A. Students Union voted to send a wreath and telegram of condolence.

TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION IN LURGAN

TORCHLIGHT procession in Lurgan on Wednesday 22nd December at 7.30 p.m. Assembly Point, Sinn Fein Premises North Street.
Demand Political Status for Political Prisoners - they need your help - (Organised by Sinn Fein and Relatives Action Committee Lurgan).

'SOCIALIST WORKER' REPLIES TO RACIST 'JOKE' ARTICLE

In our 'Notes From Nowhere' column recently reference was made to behaviour of a member of the band playing at the East London 'Rock Against Racism' concert, who made an anti-Irish 'joke' from the stage. Laurie Flynn of the 'Socialist Worker' and the PRO for the RAR ad hoc committee have asked us to publish the following reactions.

Dear Comrade,

The banner of the Socialist Worker has never been in the gutter of anti Irish racism, nor of any other kind of racism. And anyone who reads the Socialist Worker will know that.

So far as the incident you mention at the Rock Against Racism concert the RAR organisers did no more and no less than their duty when they forcefully argued the issue with the musician responsible for retelling an anti Irish 'joke'.

As for Socialist Worker it is no exaggeration to say that our paper has led the fight against the terrible resurgence of racism over the past months. From 'They're Welcome Here' through 'Class not colour divides us' to 'Powell: the Politics of the Gas Chamber' we have gone after the enemy

without quarter. What's more, in the course of our uncompromising and continuing 'Campaign against Racism with the Socialist Worker' we specifically drew the anti Irish dimension of racism into our line of fire.

On 7 August this year we published an article headlined 'Have you heard the one about the Duchess who fell out the window while ironing curtains' and subheaded 'Of course not. But you've heard countless "jokes" like it about Irishmen. WHY?'

Fraternally,
LAURIE FLYNN

... AND RACIST 'COMEDIAN' LEAVES BAND AFTER VOCALIST REFUSES TO PLAY ALONGSIDE HIM

Dear Comrade,

We apologise to those who were present at the RAR gig in East London who were subjected to an anti-Irish 'joke' from a member of the band. We appreciate that a mistake was made in allowing this to happen unchecked.

We feel, however, that your scout was less than honest in the impression he gave you of the evening. The Band volunteered to perform free for Rock Against Racism. The environment in which it happened was not as simple as the report makes out. (Socialist's hire musical comedian who cracks anti Irish jokes to the approval of a pub packed with S.W. supporters)...which seems to be the implication.

The incident happened in the chaos of a 200 watt disco blaring out, a band on stage warming up, half the audience at the bar, half the organisers on the door - we're

sure you'll agree the last thing anyone expected at such a benefit was for a musician to come out with an anti-Irish 'joke' ... but it happened, and almost immediately the band began to play. When the lead singer, Carol Grimes, came on stage (unaware of the musician's stupidity) she opened the show with a toast to RAR's first gig. Perhaps those who actually heard the racist 'joke' should have stopped the whole night there and then - we didn't. Afterwards we asked the musician, how can you crack anti-Irish 'jokes' at a RAR benefit - it defeats the whole object you come here to perform free for, do you see that? No - he didn't. And a whole row ensued.

To cut a long story short, the row continued over the next few days in the band, and the issue split them. Carol Grimes refused to play anymore with the particular musician, and he left the band,

accusing her of being a 'Red'.

So the outcome seems to be that RAR really make musicians look at politics, racism and themselves. And we have learnt from one mistake that we won't let happen again.

A point we should clarify is that IS does not control RAR. Rock Against Racism is an ad hoc committee which of course has SV supporters in its ranks, just as Troops Out has SW supporters in its ranks. Also RAR has Troops Out supporters in its ranks who are right now helping us organise a RAR Irish night in North West London, in the early spring.

We hope you will feel able to support our activities in your column, Notes from Nowhere.

RAR is against all racism and that obviously includes anti-Irish 'jokes'.

Yours fraternally,
ROCK AGAINST RACISM
RAR ad hoc committee.

WOMEN MAKE NEWS THROUGHOUT WORLD



4 ΚΡΑΤΟΥΜΕΝΕΣ ΑΠΕΡΓΟΥΝ...

Τέσσερις γυναίκες κρατούμενες - στις φυλακές Μαρίλ, της Ιρλανδίας - ηλικίας από 24 έως 60 ετών - κήδευσαν άπνεγία πείνης, ζητώντας την άλλαξη των συνθηκών κρατήσεως των άδελφών πολιτικών κρατούμενων στις ίδιες φυλακές. Το κίνημά τους είναι να προσαρμόσει άρκευσιάζους της ζωής των συγκαταυμένων τους άδελφών.

The stand of the women of Turf Lodge, in defence of their menfolk in Long Kesh's H-Block has captured the imagination of people throughout the world. Paper clippings from German, French and American dailies have been arriving on the desk of the Republican Press Centre for weeks now. We were, however, taken back a little when the clipping (reproduced above) arrived. The news of the struggle seems to have made the media in Greece sit up and pay attention.

CLONARD MARTYRS CUMANN STATEMENT ANOTHER CASE TO BE SWEEPED UNDER THE CARPET

The high court awards this week to 4 men from Tyrone who were brutalised and ill-treated by the RUC are just four of the many, many such cases. In making these awards it must firstly acknowledge that an offence did take place, and it must be appreciated that the British

Government does not pay out unless guilt is proven. That these men were tortured and injured during RUC interrogation is therefore beyond doubt. It is not reasonable now to expect the torturers to be charged and tried for these crimes, or will this case like so many countless others be swept under the carpet as a necessary act of war. The British Government have been found guilty of 'ill-treatment' of arrested persons at the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg and the innocent victims of this 'ill-treatment' have been compensated financially by the British, but what of the perpetrators of the ill-treatment, what of the criminals whose action caused the British Exchequer to pay out large sums of money. When can we expect action to be taken against the RUC and British Army for their crimes against the Irish people?

Some 9,000 complaints have been lodged against the RUC and British Army in the past 7 years, yet not one actual conviction has been secured. However, it must be considered that such complaints are 'investigated' by the RUC and their partiality must be questioned.

NOTES FROM NOWHERE

A SELECTION OF CHRISTMAS GAMES

No. 20!!

THE SENSATIONAL NEW GAME FOR TOUTS! "EARIWIGGING"

ALSO FOR TOUTS....

FOR BOOK LOVERS - A COLLECTION OF SILLY THINGS THE MEDIA HAVE SAID ABOUT THE 'PEACE' LEADERS

MYKEOWNS GENERAL AIR OF FRAGILITY MAKES HIM MORE LIKE A WAYWARD POET OF THE 18TH CENTURY THAN A HARDWORKING JOURNALIST

HEH! HEH!

BLISS TELEGRAM 17.11.78

FOR BRITS: "MILITARY FUNERAL"

OH BOY! IF I THROW A FIVE I GET TO "COLLECT FALSE PAPERS AND DESERT TO SWEDEN!"

A WONDERFUL TOY!!! THE CLOCKWORK BRIT!!!

WIND IT UP AND WATCH IT MURDER CHILDREN!!!