

REPUBLICAN NEWS

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THE VOICE OF
REPUBLICAN ULSTER

ALL KILLINGS AND TRAGEDIES STEM FROM BRITISH INTERFERENCE

Despite the bombing incident at La Mon House in Comber last Friday night, which led disastrously to the deaths of 12 innocent people, the Republican Movement in the ghettos of the occupied north has maintained its integrity. In a statement of admission they said:

"The Irish Republican Army admits responsibility for the bombing operation in La Mon House in which twelve innocent people died. There is nothing we can offer in mitigation bar that our inquiries have established that a nine-minute warning was given to the RUC. This was proved totally inadequate given the disastrous consequences.

"We accept condemnation and criticism from only two sources: from the relatives and friends of those who were accidentally killed, and from our supporters who have rightly and severely criticised us.

"Abroad and at home the British Government have had a field day with its unchallenged version of events, and that peace lies in the destruction of Irish Republicanism.

"It has been the disastrous presence of British interference in Ireland and that continuing armed presence in the six counties which is the root cause of unrest in our country. All killings and tragedies stem from British interference and their denial of Irish sovereignty.

"The Irish Republican Army will continue to resist the British with all the might that we can muster."

Inside Republican areas it was clear that the wrath of the Republican population ("who had rightly and severely criticised us") reflected moral responsibility, unlike the orchestral hypocrites inside the loyalist population who always remain silent at deliberate loyalist atrocities. (For example, when a few years ago a Catholic was crucified naked upside down for two days and pin-pricked and

sliced to death; or more recently, after last Sunday's murder of Mrs Smith and ten-year-old Michael Scott).

BRITS MOBILISED.

The British Army checkpoints every 600 yards throughout Republican Belfast on Saturday, Sunday and Monday were to complement the RUC's distribution of leaflets bearing a horrible and gruesome picture of one of the La Mon victims. The RUC was hoping to couple the revulsion, which people naturally felt, to a political collaboration of "informing", and the checkpoints were meant to catch a flow of IRA weapons as sympathisers became hostile.

But the people stood by the Irish Republican Army, and their staunchness, despite the emotionally distressful and what the RUC though were *exploitable* deaths, bears testimony to the indomitability of our struggle for nationhood.

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MARCH IN SUPPORT OF PRISONERS

A march will take place from the Busy Bee, Andersonstown to Belfast Sinn Féin Headquarters on Sunday 26th February to show our solidarity with the men in H Block Long Kesh, and the women in Armagh, who are protesting over the loss of their Political Status.

The march will move off at 2.30 p.m. and will be joined at points along the route by marchers from Turf Lodge, Ballymurphy, St. James, Beechmount and Lower Falls.

Speakers from Sinn Féin, RAC, IRSP. All those anti-Imperialist groups who have expressed concern over Political Status are invited to participate in the March.



SKETCHES
DRAWN
INSIDE
H-BLOCK

(See centre pages.)

COLLAPSE OF THE BRIT 'PEACE PEOPLE'

It is now seventeen months since the hypocritical 'Peace Movement' took off the ground in August '76. Then it was borne high on the crest of a huge wave of emotion following the tragic deaths of the three Maguire children. (In sharp contrast the death of Danny Lennon was nearly totally ignored.)

Many people, especially mothers, naturally deeply sympathised with Mrs. Ann Maguire at her terrible loss of having her young family virtually wiped out in one cruel blow.

Thus in the very early days of the movement many thousands of people (including some from nationalist ghettos) took to the streets in an emotional display of public sympathy for the Maguires, and to show their spontaneous opposition to 'violence which destroys innocent children'.

QUESTIONS DUCKED.

As was shown by the movement's initial support any such 'peace' demands can be very powerful, especially if pitched just right; for few people can ignore what they see as a genuine call for peace, especially in the wake of innocent children's deaths.

The important questions of how to really get peace, and what kind of peace they were talking about, were always ducked in the early days of the 'Peace Movement'.

Now at that time the Republican Movement was still recovering from some of the bad side-effects of the '75 Truce; and neither its strength nor direction were as clearly shown as they are today.

Also the fifth anniversary of internment had just been commemorated with some over-enthusiastic hijacking and burning of vehicles INSIDE the areas; opening up the road for a possible backlash against Republicans from some quarters.

IDEAL WOMAN.

Against this emotional and political background the dead children's aunt Mairead Corrigan proved to be a real 'find' for the mass media, especially the T.V.

She provided a perfect figure-head for a women's 'Peace Movement' to be built around. For she easily personifies the characteristics which the 'ideal' woman is meant to possess: being very pretty with a bright smiling face, being totally 'innocent' and being the very picture of humanitarian concern.

In fact she is painted as everything women are told they ought to be, down to the finest detail of a weepy, over-emotional female who really needs a strong man to lean on.

In sharp contrast the 'used' and battered image of Betty Williams has proved a continual propaganda handicap. Nevertheless

she has been able to play the role of the older woman, who has seen it all, placing a much-needed guiding hand on the shoulder of the 'giddy' younger woman.

IRA BLAMED

As the 'Peace Movement' was born, pro-Brit forces such as the mass media and the church hierarchy quickly realised the reactionary value of such a movement if it could be directed essentially against the revolutionary struggle of the IRA. (And particularly in Twinbrook the Sticks provided some of the early organisers of the movement as they eagerly seized an opportunity to slander the IRA.)

So despite the fact that the Brits were directly responsible for all four Finaghy Road deaths (having shot dead volunteer Danny Lennon) the IRA were blamed for the deaths of the Maguire children.

And the self-appointed leaders of the 'Peace Movement' quickly went on to show strict selectivity for whose violence they were willing to openly condemn.

DEAFENING SILENCE.

Following the fatal shooting of 12-year-old Majella O'Hare, Betty Williams said to reporters at the first big 'Peace march' on the Saturday:

"This highlights what this demonstration is all about. The gunmen have struck again, and we have to root them out."

When it became clear (despite continued British lies through the mass media) that the Brits had murdered Majella O'Hare and that the IRA had in no way been involved (even in cross-fire) then there was a deafening silence from the 'Peace People'. (And sympathetic journalists removed Betty's blunder from their copy.)

Then again when the young Dempsey family were burnt to death following a Loyalist petrol-bomb attack on their North Belfast Hillman Street home there was another deafening silence from the 'Peace People'.

GLORY-SEEKING.

Such cynical two-faced opportunism quickly became the hall-mark of the

glory-seeking 'peace leaders'.

Then when Brian Stewart was shot down with a plastic bullet the 'PEACE leaders' at first refused to condemn the shooting. However, when he died six days later, and they realised the wide extent of the angry sentiment within Turf Lodge they sickeningly tried to use his death to boost their standing.

They went uninvited to a protest meeting at the local community centre (where they were thrown out by the mothers and young people) and they publicly condemned the murderous action of the Brits. A day later they retracted their statement under Loyalist pressure, thus sticking true to form as a pro-Brit 'peace' force.

PEACE WITH JUSTICE.

By then (mid-October '76) any initial emotional support they had from within the areas had withered as their devout self-seeking hypocrisy became more openly exposed. Their calls for peace were in fact increasingly being seen as calls for surrender by the nationalist community and for the restoration of Orange rule with the sectarian RUC back in the areas.

On the 23rd October the 'protest' battle lines were drawn on the Falls Road. Claran McKeown forecast: "We will have 30,000 marching on our side. We will outnumber the Provisionals at least 10 to 1."

On the day, less than a quarter of McKeown's expected number marched behind the banners of the 'Peace Movement'; and their Catholic support was increasingly drawn from the clerical-oriented 'respectable' middle class and aspiring middle class.

At the same time more than ten thousand people mobilised from the nationalist working class ghettos of Belfast for 'Peace with Justice'.

FIRST CONTRADICTION.

The longer the 'Peace Movement' carried on, the more its contradictions became vividly exposed.

The first major contradiction was quickly shown up: that of trying to build bridges at the grass-roots level across the sectarian divide; of trying to maintain a base of support amongst both nationalists and Loyalists. They tried this by a combination of deceit and ambiguity, e.g. using such verbal devices as referring to 'Derry/Londonderry'.

Like various other short-lived (political) movements

before them, in practice they failed to build any cross-sectarian unity on anything other than an anti-Republican platform.

In the end they settled for just a Catholic base (amongst the clerical-oriented middle-class and aspiring middle-class). For they could not, as a supposed 'Peace Movement' too openly support the viciously repressive and rabidly sectarian Loyalist demands necessary for a Protestant base; for whom in any event the three 'leaders' being Catholics made the movement unacceptable.

SECOND CONTRADICTION.

The 'Peace People's' second major contradiction was to claim they condemned all violence; while in practice they only spoke-out against the IRA. (Just within the last couple of weeks they have totally ignored the Brit/Loyalist shooting of 2-Year old Kevin Hanna-way and the fire-bombing to death of 70-year-old Mrs Mary Smyth and her 10-year old grandson Michael Scott.)

Now even if the 'peace leaders' had been more evenly balanced in their condemnation of individual acts of violence then still they would have been totally misguided. (Although at least then they

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would have shown some signs of honesty).

They would have been misguided for real peace can only come through the Republican armed struggle and thus the morality of the violence of the liberation forces cannot be equated with that of the foreign invaders and their loyalists.

The 'Peace Peoples' political framework of accepting the 'normality' of partition, and the 'status quo' of Brit rule has relentlessly driven them in a purely anti-Republican direction and towards denouncing the IRA as the root cause of ALL violence. Their partition-thinking has made them turn the real picture upside down so that they fail to see that the Brits are the root cause of ALL violence.

Their whole project of establishing a 'Northern Ireland' identity, for us all to become NIP's (N.I. Persons), dictates the suppression of republican resistance and the restoration of some form of Stormont.

Their naive belief that British imperialism operates on the ideals of universal justice means that they have backed-up the Brits self-projected role as peace-keepers. They have even demanded that the RUC come back into the areas. Only last week Mairead Corrigan claimed that the RUC having learnt from its past mistakes is now potentially 'one of the best community police forces in the world'!!!

So their banner of 'peace' has progressively become a cloak of support for British and Loyalist violence.

Over the last six months since the two 'leaders' were presented to Elizabeth and they personally pocketed their Nobel blood-money, although still parading under the banner of 'peace' the movement has now become reduced to a hard core who have dropped all pretence of being anything other than totally pro-British and fanatically anti-Republican.

FALLS ROAD FLOP.

On Wednesday afternoon two weeks ago (following the Maghera bombing of a UDR man and the accidental killing of his daughter) the 'Peace People' attempted to picket the Falls Road Sinn Féin office.

On a day when they thought they were going to make some good anti-Republican propaganda they failed miserably. Angry local women

told them what they thought: "Hypocrites and touts!" were the cries. People came from everywhere, taxis stopped and women laden with shopping got out to help drive them off. The picket lasted two minutes. One old granny yelled, "Hold my gloves! Let me get at them!" as she went into battle.

Now following recent Brit repression directed at Sinn Féin and the raids on advice centres and the press centre this picket was a clear attempt by the 'Peace People' to get the Brits to close down our office and ban our public political organisation.

Having failed in their publicity stunt to point an accusing finger in the Falls Road the 'Peace People' then organised a protest last weekend outside the Sinn Féin offices in Dublin.



LAST SATURDAY IN DUBLIN, A WOMAN SHOWS WHAT SHE THINKS OF THE 'PEACE PEOPLE', WHO WERE 'PROTECTED' BY SCORES OF GARDAI. TWO MEN AND A WOMAN WERE ARRESTED FOR VOICING THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE PRO-BRIT HYPOCRITES.

DEFEAT.

But last Saturday afternoon only about 600 wretched 'Peace People' sullenly straggled the few hundred yards up the street from St. Stephens Green to the 'peace rally' just beyond Sinn Féin Head office in Lower Kevin Street.

Defeat clearly showed through the haggard blotchy features of Corrigan and Williams despite their occasional smiles (doubtless prompted by the £40,000 each now have in their pockets) as they lead the remnants of their movement up the street.

Desperately hoping to cash in on the twelve deaths at the La Mon House the night before, Williams had visited the scene of the disaster. Betty Williams is always 'there' for Republican violence but never 'sees' the hundreds of everyday incidents of the Brits harassing the people, breaking down their doors, lifting wee lads and their systematic jack-boot violence of batons, bullets and Loyalist bombs.

But despite their sick stunts the 'Peace People' have failed to rekindle the emotional support they once enjoyed.

TOUTS

Last Saturday Corrigan could not even find the enthusiasm to turn on her usual water-works. But both she and Williams gave really vicious little anti-Republican speeches to the assembled ranks of 'respectable' middle-class hypocrites.

All 'peace' pretence is now dropped.

The message from Corrigan was clear: "TELL WHO THEY ARE, no matter if it is your son or father or brother, tell on them". She went on, "The IRA have no community support in any Catholic area" (despite her own sharp experience in the Falls Road ten days previously). She finished up with the empty challenge: "It is now

a battle between the IRA and us and we will not stop going". Williams re-inforced the message.

"We now have to use a dirty word," she said, "that is: INFORM. If my son takes up the gun then I will inform on him."

Thus have the 'peace leaders' travelled the grimy road from supposed emotional concern to touting for the Brits; they now stand condemned as self-confessed recruiting agents for touts (who could end up dead as a result of Betty Williams) and as conscious tools of the Brits in their vain attempts to smash down the people.

It is these frauds and hypocrites who have no support in the nationalist areas. In fact the people bitterly hate them because they are seen to be cruelly playing on the tragedy of the Maguire family and other people's subsequent losses.

They seek to use people's personal grief for their own personal, political and financial gain.

CLEAR MESSAGE.

The 'peace puppets' Betty and Mairead were very much an artificial creation of the mass media used by the Brits to try to support their war-machine in its drive against the Republican people.

But in reality the grotesque spectacle of the 'Peace People' has helped to clarify the political situation and to sharpen the awareness of the Republican people. For never again will a Brit 'Peace Movement' be able to project itself as did this one.

The clear message to the Brits and to their 'Peace Movement' will come from the people on the streets of Belfast next Sunday when many thousands will march to say that 'Brits out' is the only road to peace with justice; and that armed struggle is a necessary part of this road.

ALL KILLINGS AND TRAGEDIES —STEM FROM— BRITISH INTERFERENCE

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STRUGGLE IS BEYOND 'RETRIEVABLE' POINT.

Republican supporters while critical are, however, politically mature and remain solidly behind the armed struggle. Historically, this struggle now entering its tenth year has passed beyond any 'retrievable' point, for either the Brits, Clergy, SDLP, or 'Peace' People.

We have suffered far too long. The Republican people, as the native Irish, see in the context of this struggle the historical suffering of the Irish people VERSUS the historical occupying enemy in its modern persecuting form.

The population armed through the revolutionary Irish Republican Army realise for the first time that they cannot be defeated.

There is no lying down. The Brits can be defeated, will be defeated and humiliated and Ireland can be redeemed - the sufferings of the Irish People will not have been in vain. It is morally right and correct to resist the Brits and to fight the Brits.

STRATEGY.

To defeat the might of the interfering British Government the nature of their presence here dictated the method of struggle to be an economic bombing campaign and military operations - like that in Crossmaglen which saw Lt. Col. Lloyd's ego trip and helicopter plunge into the south Armagh fields.

Had there been no bombing campaign all those Brits concentrated in city

and town centres and manning road checkpoints throughout ALL suburbs would be redeployed in repressing Republican ghetto areas. In damages the campaign has caused the Brits hundreds of millions of pounds. The death toll has been high, both among civilians and IRA personnel (over 60 Volunteers have been killed-in-action).

But the political effects of the bombing campaign have been productive. It has created insecurity and confusion among Unionists and helped break up the loyalist monolith, brought down Stormont, made and makes the Six-Counties internally ungovernable and has made government under British direct rule difficult and often impossible. The world hears about the Six-Counties and knows it is not normal.

WE WANT PEACE.

The Irish People do not like war. We want peace. While we have had British interference in our country we have never had peace. Time and time again the Interfering British Government has been

asked to go. Not only do they refuse to go but in staying they have armed the loyalist population and guaranteed, a built-in racism of Protestant superiority.

Far in advance of Jack Lynch's diplomacy, or the blatherings of Irish intellectuals in Journalism, is the activities of the Irish Republican Army and the just war which it wages.

If it wasn't for Easter Sunday and the lesson of the War of Independence (and the six assertions before that), and if it wasn't for the sectarian history of the Six-Counties, and if it wasn't for the very real experiences of suffering of the nationalist people in the north right now under British dictator-

ship, then the Irish Republican Army wouldn't have the support it has to maintain the guerrilla war.

When we accidentally spill blood the British are quick and sure about invoking 'morality', and 'in God's name', and 'in the name of humanity'. We are struggling in a fashion that we have been reduced to by force of circumstances. We are struggling for something which we fervently believe can deliver us a lasting peace and coexistence with the loyalists.

The blood which we have spilt can be measured. But there is no measure which can cover the bloodshed of the Brits or their allies in Ireland.

FREE DERRY NEWS

FOCUS ON THE BRANDYWELL

The two boys you see pictured, wreathed in smiles of childhood innocence, and looking delighted with themselves and life, are two of the Brandywell's most valued assets: its children. Understandably, their mothers are proud of them, whether covered with mud after a game of street football, as shown here, or in their best clothes on Sunday. Naturally, too, their mothers are looking for the best future for Stephen and John pictured here—and the same is true for the rest of the Brandywell's parents and children. Yet the question they ask themselves, and the question we ask you, is what kind of a future can be assured for these children under the present system?

The Brandywell is one of the highest unemployment black spots in Derry, an area of massive unemployment for generations. When Stephen and John are ready to leave school, what sort of a future will await them? One possibility is the government training centre in the Springtown estate—although many have been sorely disappointed in the training offered—joins teaching a class in plumbing, etc. For many who "train" there, it seems a waste of time, and just a temporary stopgap in long years of signing on the dole. If Stephen and John are lucky, they can either find an apprenticeship, go on for further education (but boys coming out of St. Columb's College also end up on the dole queues in Derry, don't forget), or find some other work right away. But their chances of keeping a job once they find it are slight: firms are always closing down in Derry, and we have had a history of factories closing down and then another firm operated by the same businessmen opening on the same premises

later after having declared bankruptcy.

The present system of allowing foreign investors to come in and run a factory feeding materials to the "parent" plant in another country holds no future for boys like Stephen and John. The present system of allowing foreign businesses, both North and South, to strip away our natural resources—such as in mining—and exporting them to their own countries for development and processing, leaves the Irish workers and the Irish nation poor and often unemployed.

Allowing even native businessmen to go in and do anything they like in business as long as there is a quick profit to be made, and justifying it to the people by saying there are a few jobs for the moment to come out of it, must also be banned, for that is a path of pure exploitation of the Irish nation and its workers.

It does not either safeguard nor develop jobs for the future. As soon as this particular operation shows a drop in profit, the firm closes down, and in the case of foreign investors, they withdraw quickly as soon as there is pressure from the home country from unemployment: naturally enough they are more vulnerable to pressure from home.

Sinn Féin policy as stated in Éire Nua sees this entire picture very clearly. Sinn Féin realises that if we are to get jobs for our youth, we need our resources, and this means keeping them out of the hands of foreign exploiters, and developing them for the Irish people. Rather than send all our ore, for instance, out to Canada to be processed and buying it back in final finished form if we want it back—which is what we do now—our policy of nationalising resources would keep it in

Ireland. Wealth & jobs would come not only from the ore itself, but from processing it and manufacturing it into finished products.

Sinn Féin plans for the development of the Derry industrial scene include a steel production plant for Derry—now that would be a man-sized job for the two boys pictured here!

The same is true of other natural resources. In the meat industry, for instance, Ireland produces a high proportion of Europe's meat supply, yet we have very few bacon and beef processing factories. The reason is not the lack of beef and pork to kill, but the fact that current EEC policy forces us to send nearly all our animals out of Ireland alive, to be killed abroad and processed there as well. Only recently, a major bacon packing firm was closed down in the Six Counties, and only at Christmas time was the Derry abattoir shut and moved further off, with the usual loss of jobs, to Lisahally.

Our fisheries are another example: surrounded by an ocean filled with fish, we nonetheless cannot protect our fish supply from foreign trawlers: Ireland, divided, has no Navy to speak of and is unable now even to get an exclusive 50 mile fish-

ing limit and a 200 mile general fishing limit.

As a result, the big ships, such as the Russians, fish our waters and are large enough to process the fish in factories built right on board the ship. Meanwhile, we fish out of small boats. Anyone who's ever been down to Killybegs realises there is no question of Irish fishermen putting a factory to process their catch aboard any of their boats!

The result of all this and much more, for these examples are only a few of many injustices in the economic system which Britain and the Free State encourage in our island, is that jobs and futures for children such as Stephen and John are never assured. The British solution to Irish problems, including employment, has always been advantageous for Britain and disastrous for Ireland. The British government's "solutions" as offered now are truly laughable: a "factory complex" being set up in one town, which has four factories employing ten men each; another factory announced in a

town of high unemployment which produces arts and crafts.

The futures of boys like Stephen and John will never be provided for by factories producing arts and crafts. How any British government thinks the people are going to swallow this nonsense is nothing short of amazing. In a deprived country as Ireland is after centuries of exploitation, work must be geared to producing the necessities of life, not luxuries. Small craftsmen will always flourish in any healthy economy, but unless there are solid jobs for the rest of the people, both craftsmen and factory workers will end up having to emigrate.

Sinn Féin has the policies to provide a workable and flourishing economy, with work for all, in a New Ireland: a federal, democratic socialist republic.

Literature explaining our policies for this New Ireland will be available from the Brandywell Republican Information Centre, opposite Our Lady of Lourdes Hall.

M. MhicGhill Aoláin.



PHOTO BY B. MacGill
Aoláin
SMILES Courtesy of John and Stephen.

RESOLUTION AT ULSTER EXECUTIVE February '78

At the monthly meeting of the Ulster Executive of Sinn Féin the following resolution was put to the delegates, proposed by the Newry and South Down Comhairle Ceannair of Sinn Féin, requesting the support of the Ulster Executive:

"That this Comhairle Ceann-

tair resolves to continue the struggle until all our demands are met in full. We pay no heed to Jack Lynch's utterances, bearing in mind his proven treachery and his lying promises not to stand idly by. Glacaidh as an run seo gan cur ina aghaidh"

The resolution was seconded by Maire Moore, Ard Comhairle, and passed unanimously by all those present at the meeting.

Patricia Davidson, PRO.

COUNTER DEMONSTRATION AGAINST CORRIGAN

Mairead Corrigan of "Peace at any price-fame" (£80,000) is to speak at a meeting in the Central Hall, Corporation Street, Birmingham at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st March. The theme of the meeting

is "Give peace a chance". Looks like its "crying time again" for Mairead because there will be a picket outside the hall against the visit, organised by Birmingham UTM starting at 7 p.m.

LONDON MEETING

Support the Demand for Prisoner of War Status. Meeting Conway Hall Red Lion Square London. Friday March 3rd 1978 At 7.30 p.m.

Speakers from Provisional Sinn Féin Prisoners Aid Committee. Relatives Action Committee (Belfast). Organised by Ad hoc Committee for Republican P.O.W.

ALL THE ARTICLES ON THE FOLLOWING FOUR PAGES WERE WRITTEN AND COMPILED IN H-BLOCK, LONG KESH. THEY HAVE BEEN SMUGGLED OUT TO US WRITTEN ON MINUTE SCRAPS OF PAPER ALONG WITH THESE EXCELLENT PEN DRAWINGS. WE CANNOT MENTION THE NAMES OF THE AUTHORS OR ARTIST FOR FEAR OF THE PRISON REGIME TAKING DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST THEM.

HEALTH ON THE BLANKET

Today is the 1st February the shortest month of the year. But for those of us on the blanket in H-Blocks 5 & 3 Long Kesh and B1 Crumlin Road Gaol, it will be as long as any of the previous months.

It was seventeen long months ago that the first Republican prisoner of war refused to wear a criminal uniform or do prison work. Since then over 260 Republican prisoners of war have done likewise. The withdrawal of political status by the British Government will be two years old on March 1st. According to the British Government when political status ended so did the prisoner of war. When the first 20 or so Republican prisoners were sentenced in late '76, they like the first man Kieran Nugent refused to be criminalised. But Mr. Mason and his cronies immediately issued false and misleading statements, referring to these men as criminal hard cases who had refused to conform to criminal status, but who eventually would! Mr. Mason's weekly head counts always mentioned a small handful of non-conformers. But for obvious reasons these types of statements soon stopped.

Now its February 78 and there are over 260 Republican prisoners of war on the blanket protest. Each man has followed the example set by the man before him, refusing to allow himself to be criminalised in any form or manner. Therefore everyone of us are held naked in total solitary confinement, never being allowed to leave our cells. This means we never receive exercise or fresh air. After a few months like this your health deteriorates steadily, after a year or in many cases seven or eight months you suffer from a multitude of complaints. But mostly your legs are pained and heavy, due to no exercise. You continually suffer from blinding headaches, which are possibly caused by being stuck in a small, stuffy cell with no fresh air, except that that can get in two small windows.

The most common complaint of all is the common cold, as we are held completely naked with only a blanket for warmth. We are very vulnerable to the cold. When you catch a cold it is very difficult to get rid of, it just stays with you; there are hundreds of medical complaints that men suffer, which have been brought on by the inhuman conditions in which we are kept in.

EXAMPLES

Number 1.

I came onto the blanket on the 2nd of June 1977 and until then my eye-sight was okay. After a couple of months I started to get headaches. I was on tablets, on and off for weeks, the doctor examined me and said it was migraine, caused by looking at the white walls of the cell which hurt my eyes, and made them blare and water. The lights in the cell also hurt and annoy my eyes: my eyes water when I am reading and writing my letters. These headaches would last all day at times and ordinary pain killers would do no good. Finally I had my eyes tested and found that I need glasses for reading and writing. I still have the headaches but not as often as before.

Secondly, I went out with a pain in my chest and when I had it I found difficulty in breathing inwards, as it hurt. The doctor said it was muscular pain. It has recurred a couple of times since and the pain is in the middle of the chest and more frequently it seems to go under the right rib cage and lung. It lasts for a couple of days at a time. I also suffer from pains in my arms and legs - supposed to be from lack of exercise. Sean Fitzsimmons H-5.

Number 2.

Since I've come on the blanket, I've been having a lot of trouble with my breathing due to a very bad pain in my chest. When this occurs I find it very hard to move and over these last few weeks it's got worse with the pain moving

down both my left arm and leg. I've been out at the doctor about this. He got me a heart test, on some, small heart machine and after a few days he said I was alright and that it wasn't my heart! Up until now I haven't had any medical help with the pain and it seems to be getting worse. Jimmy Conway H-5.

Number 3.

Before coming on the blanket in January '77 I had perfect eyesight but after 6 months I began to get bad headaches. I saw the doctor and then the optician. He told me that I needed glasses. This was caused by being locked up in a small cell 24 hours a day which has a bright ceiling and walls which greatly reflect the light.

Maurice McGibbon H-5,
H5 HEALTH COMPLAINTS

Bobby Sands-Pains in legs, continual cold and cough.

Pat McCann-Pains in chest and legs, shortage of breath.

Seamus Keegan-Pains in legs.

Tony McCaughey-Pains in legs.

Paddy Loughran-Pains in joints of elbow and knees.

Gerry McConville-Pains in arms & Legs, continual cold.

Billy McDonagh-Continual cold. Seamus Finucane-Cold in nose & Throat, and chest, pains in arms and legs.

Micky Loughlin-Pains in ears and arms, legs.

John Thomas-Painful Ulcer.

Jimmy Burns-Severe abdominal pains. Also chest pains after gunshot wound in abdomen.

The pains cause numbness to lips and chest and large lump below rib cage. One rib either broken or out of place which causes severe pains. (N.B. not receiving proper medical treatment).

Frankie Doherty-Pains in legs, severe pain below lungs, stomach trouble.

Pat Livingstone-Pains in chest & Legs.

Brendan McGahey-Pains in Chest & Legs.

Finbar McKenna-Pain in ankle which should have been removed in May 1976, but has

been refused medical treatment to get it removed because he is on blanket protest. Took blackout in January '77 in cell and fell to floor, bruised back, arm and cut ear and head, was refused medical treatment again because he was on blanket!

Billy Campbell-Arthritis in legs, something wrong with chest.

Micky Kelly-Pains in chest and feet.

Paul Creelman-Pains in joints, stomach pain.

Eugene McCormick-waiting three months to see dentist. Suffers from piles.

Tony O'Hara-Pains in Chest, sometimes stomach.

Cornac McCarty-Recently had a rash, waiting to go to Hospital for tests on stomach.

Jim McCann-Has been suffering from attacks of diarrhoea and stomach pains since Oct. 1977. I have seen doctor 4 or 5 times. He prescribed course of tablets which have done little to alleviate pain. I have been waiting two months to see specialist.

Sammy Miller-Chest & Leg pains.

Pat Prigent-Eyesight suffering.

Paul McGlinchey-Eyesight deteriorating. Recurring headaches.

Drew Forbes-Eyesight terrible.

Kieran McKeown-Pains in Legs.

Liam Carlin-Eyesight trouble.

E. McCallion-Severe headaches, pains in legs.

Gerard Hodgson-Migrain headaches, pains in shoulders.

Peter Campbell-In need of Medical attention for old complaint.

Desmond Armstrong-Had to get glasses.

D. Hutton-Had to get Glasses.

M. Ferguson-Waiting 10 months to get glasses.

Benn Lynch-Has had to get glasses since coming on blanket.

Gerry McConville-Has had to get glasses since coming on blanket.

Sammy Dines-Cramps in legs, arms, needs glasses.

Paul McNearney-Pains in Chest.

Kieran Smyth-Pains in Chest, needs glasses.

These are only a portion of the complaint suffered by men on blanket in H-5. This does not include everyone, or the men in H-3.

Last week three men broke out in a strange rash which sent the prison medical staff into a panic. The three men concerned were treated by the

prison doctor who would not say what might be the cause of it. But it came to us as no surprise as we felt that someone would eventually catch something like this living in the conditions that we live in. The conditions are such that we have blankets that have not been changed for well over six months and are now filthy. We use them for our bedding and we have one wrapped around us during the day. Another hazard is the chamber pots which lie in the cell all the time. There is an evil stench from them most times.

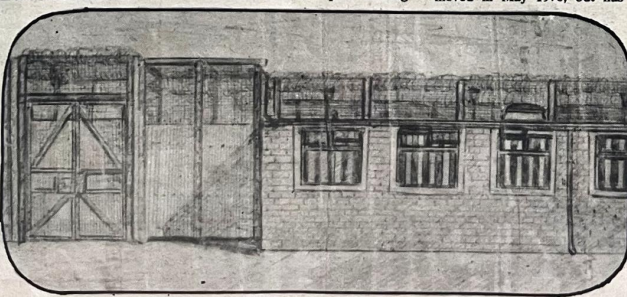
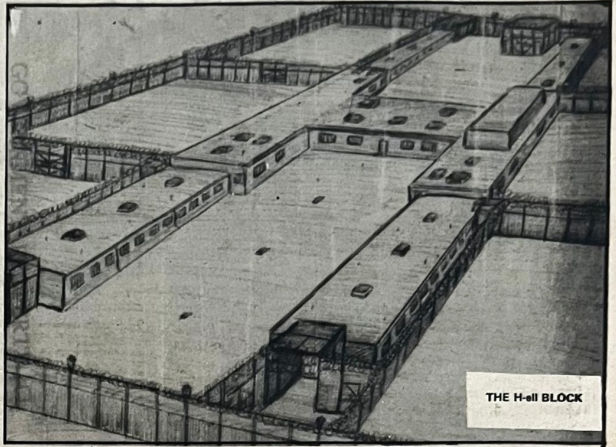
A lot of men have trouble with their eyes, many of them have got or are waiting on glasses. Most men blame the complaint on the strong light which reflects off the white walls. This light can be dimmed but it is still strong. There are quite a few men who require hospital treatment and who have been waiting many months for it without any luck. Some of these men are indeed in pain. But the prison authorities use this to put men under duress by telling them that they won't receive hospital treatment until they come off the blanket protest.

Recently we have been told that we must see the prison doctor before we can receive a tablet for either a headache or toothache. This means a man could suffer a whole day and night before he can get a pain killer. This is geared to get the men to wear a pair of prison trousers to leave their cell and see a doctor. They will not let us go in a blanket, so it is a case of suffer or conform under duress.

ON THE BLANKET

Could the relatives of all those who are "on the blanket" send details of their names, sentences, and dates of arrest and convictions to the Relatives Action Committee. Also send any other facts which will highlight the plight of the prisoner, especially reports of attacks by screws.

Details should be sent to The Central RAC, c/o Sinn Fein Advice Centre, the Celtic Rooms 65B Falls Road, Belfast 13.



THE PRISONERS ONLY VIEW OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD FOR MONTHS ON END.

THE EARLY DAYS

How many times have you heard the phrase "You can adapt to anything" on hearing it, did you ever stop to think about it? Well I have to admit it never meant anything to me until I came into H-Block on the Blanket. I remember while on remand in H-1, asking the priest among others, "Is it really as bad as you read in the Republican News?" "What's the reception committee like?" "No, I don't think it is, they don't get beat up. It's just now and again they get a slap across the face, no more than you'd get at a Christian Brothers' School." (Aren't I glad I never went to St. Mary's after all!)

There were six of us that day. I was the only one who got a haircut, 4 of the others were over 21 and the other had short hair. We were undecided as to whether or not we should carry the prison garb up to the block, but we brought it up in the end. We were told to stand between the grills on entering the block and we were brought into the circle 2 by 2. There were about 15 screws in the circle plus one white shirt. They ordered us to strip naked and brought us round to B Wing.

On the way round one of the Screws asked me a few questions, e.g. "What is your name, what are you in for?" I answered alright but after I'd answered each question he'd say "What?". A couple of times I knew they were messing me about but I didn't realise they were expecting me to answer each question with "Sir". They put me into an empty cell, just a bed and a big grey locker. I started to walk up and down the cell, I was still naked but there was no sense of embarrassment. I was too worried about what was coming. I hadn't too long to wait. After what was about 5 minutes or so, a Screw opened the door and said "Here's one here".

A large English Screw came in, "What's your name son?" I told him. He knocked me on to the bed with a right hook. "Answer 'SIR' when speaking to an officer". He asked me again as I was getting off the bed and he knocked me on to it again but he followed it up and punched me several times about the head and back.

He asked me again, again I refused. He laid into me again but my mouth was bleeding inside. I could feel no pain just numbness. He asked me once more and I told him there were no 'Sirs' to me. He stopped at this, looked at me and walked out with a sort of puzzled look on his face. I sat, "Phew!" some Christian Brothers!!! And I thought the worst was over. Ah well, that's what happens when you start being presumptuous!!

They opened the door again. Two Irish Screws came in this time. "What are you in for?" "Possession."

Dig in the stomach, fell on the bed. Got back up. The one that hit me said "What are you shaking for? Are you nervous?" "I'm nervous because you are going to hit me again." Whack! The other Screw standing on my right hit me a left that caught me on the jaw and lifted me right up off 'my feet. I came down on the bed. Got back up again. "Possession, eh, what off?" "Rifle".

"Now what were you going to do with a rifle?"

"I was going out to shoot soldiers".

At this the English Screw came tearing back into the cell and knocking me on to the bed proceeding to severely punch me about the head. He stopped after a few minutes, and walked back out of the cell without saying a word. I got up once more.

"So you'd shoot soldiers, eh? Would you shoot staff?" (Pointing to himself and the other screw.)

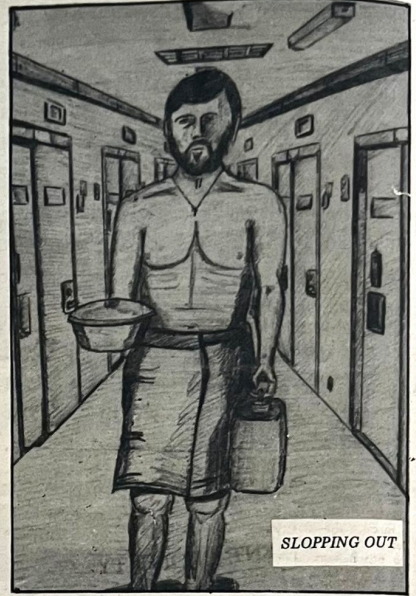
"I'd shoot whoever I was told to shoot."

"So you're admitting to being an IRA man then?" Thump. Back on to the bed. "He says he'd shoot staff"; the other screw held him back "Come on that'll do him for now!"

Half an hour later a screw opened the door, "Right get all your gear together. I know you're going to this other wing". As we were walking across the wing, "Hey don't I know you? You were in Compound 2 weren't you?"

"That's right". "Well kid, I never thought I'd see you back in again. By the way it's 'Sir' now! Things run the same in here as they did up there. We don't mess you about, you don't mess us. Here, this is your cell, put a blanket round you." He then went into the cell next door and slapped the victim about for a full 15 minutes to make him call him "Sir". He didn't do it. Yes, I could see there was little difference between the blocks and the cages!! They allowed me to go for a shower later on. Thinking back on it I remember the main thought in my head at the time of the beating: "You're completely alone, at their mercy" and I thought of my girlfriend and wondered if I'd ever see her again as the girl I know and loved or would she be plump, coming on to middle age when I next held her close!

After I was finished the shower I examined my face for a minute while rinsing my mouth. Face swollen but no marks except for the lip; yet it was very difficult to open my mouth because of the sore jaw. Then I was locked up again. At this stage I could remember neither the day of the week nor the date. I had a faint idea that there was to be Mass the next day but I didn't know. After a while in the cell I heard a shout "Unlock" and thought they were letting us out for exercise or our tea or something, but no. It was the shout to let the 'crims' (criminals) out. We were being allowed to go down to the canteen naked, with all the 'crims' sitting eating their



SLOPPING OUT

grub, lift ours off the hot-plate and then back up to the cell. We got slopped out about 6.30 p.m. got our supper, a cup of tea and 2 rounds of

bread. The Screws called "Lock-up" about 8.00 p.m. and that was us for the night. They woke us up next morning banging doors "Get up! Make your bed and don't lie on it today again."

They opened up to allow us to slop out. We were in the nude any time we came out of the cell. Whether for grub, slop out or wash, we were naked. After slop out, we were allowed to collect our breakfast from the canteen. Again you walk naked past the Screws who were standing joking and giving abuse about your nakedness. You had to try to laugh it off but it hurt. When you walk into the canteen, if you're new, all the eyes lift from the plates and stare you up and down examining, then it's back to the cell.

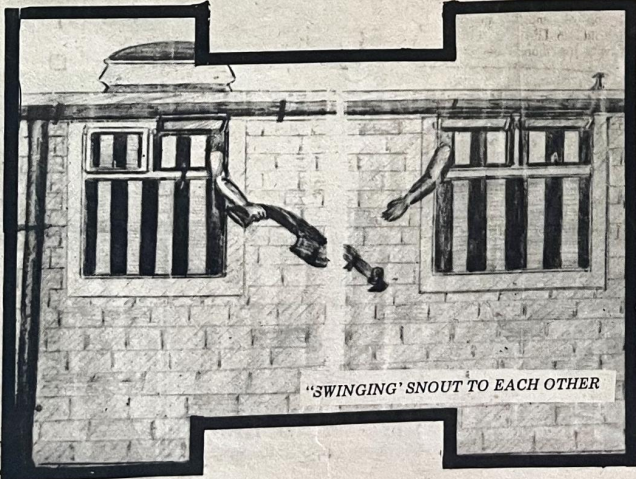
After I finished my breakfast and got a bit of a wash (standing naked in the wash room) I was taken into the class office and the Screws asked me a lot of questions about my parents and other relatives. I was told I'd get a shower every 2 days, except when I was on C.C. (cell confinement). They locked me up again and as they were doing so they asked me if I was going to Mass, and that if I was I had to put on the trousers.

The Mass itself was pretty rough. Everyone was made to sit in single file in 4 lines down the middle of the canteen with the Screws walking up and down making sure we didn't look round us never mind speak to one another. After Mass, it was straight back to the cell. So life went on. Slopping out twice a day, coming out for your meals and getting a wash once a day. Any talking that was done was on a very low level on-the-pipes after lock-up. The rest of the day, it was you completely on your own with nothing for comfort only a Bible.

The next day I was called out to the doctor and then the governor. I was walked into the doctor and he asked me was I fit. I told him I thought so and that was him finished with me. The govern-

H-BLOCK

DEFEND
POLITICAL
STATUS



"SWINGING' SNOUT TO EACH OTHER

HELP BRING
TO ITS
DEM



BEDDING AND MATTRESSES IN CORRIDOR WHILE ON C.C. (Confined to cell).

or was a different story. When I walked in he asked "What are you doing here?" "I got 10 years for possession". "I know that, but why are you streaking?" (This is the authorities term for on the blanket). "I'm here because I refuse to wear prison garb or do prison work. I'm protesting for political status." (All the while the P.O. and S.O. were shouting into my ears "Answer 'Sir' to the governor")

"You were in before from '73 to '76. Haven't you learned your lesson?" "This is it". "What do you mean by that? Don't you know that there is no 'status' no 'special cat'?" You're going to sit here naked in a cell till your realise that you're fighting a losing battle and losing remission. The sooner you wise up the better". "You see, it's just that I can't understand that I got

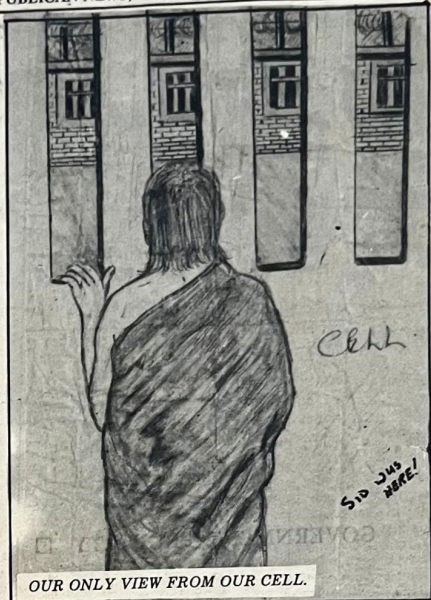
political status for armed robbery and possession for the IRA in '73 and I don't get it for possession in '76. I can't see any difference in what I did then and in '76."

The governor lost the head at this and shouted "Get him back to his cell." As I was leaving the PO whispered in my ear, "We'll have to pay you a visit later on, sunshine". So I went back to my cell. Later on that day the governor came round to adjudicate me and take away my 'association, letters, parcels, visits and earnings, plus 2 weeks' remission and confined me to cell for 3-days. He asked me had I anything to say. "You mentioned all those privileges I lost; would I be allowed to get a picture in, you never mentioned that?" "Look son, you've lost all privileges".

"I didn't think a photo was a privilege". "The position you're in now, breathing is a privilege!" He walked away with a smirk that was like a cheshire cat's and the Screw slammed the door. The next day I was moved back across to the other wing.

There were only a couple of orderlies and no other 'crims' in the wing. But there were more of us over in it and at night we could get up for a waffle out the doors. After a couple of days in the wing our officer commanding pulled the Screw one morning and told him that from now on we would be refusing to leave the cells naked, that we'd only leave if we were wearing a towel round the waist. The word was sent round to the other wings to follow suit. The Screws told us that we would not be moving from our cells then. We said that suited us and held fast. So they brought basins to wash in, a trolley with the grub on it and a bucket to slop out into. Life went on like this for a few more days then the over 21's were moved from our wing and 'crims' were moved in, to take their places. We went on as before for about 3 weeks then the Screws had a meeting and decided to put the pressure on us. They told us if we didn't walk out in the nude and empty our pots down in the slop-house then we wouldn't get emptying our pots at all.

So they let us lie in our cells for 3 days trying to force our hand. The governor pretended not to notice the urine overflowing on to the floor. In the end they told us that we'd be getting a large towel and that we'd be coming out once a week for a shower. We'd be slopping out once a day and every day for a wash. Life continued like this for another few weeks till one day a fella was moved to our wing from the other wing. That



OUR ONLY VIEW FROM OUR CELL.

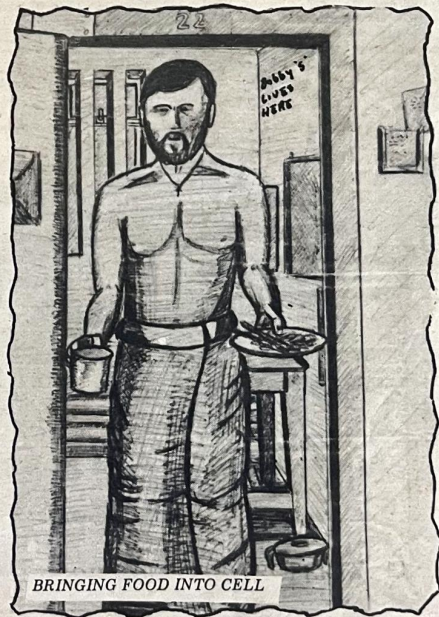
night he was talking to his mate down at the other end of the wing. He talked for about half an hour then went to bed. Round about the middle of the wing a fella was whispering to his next door neighbour on the pipe. The Screw lifted the flap and just looked at him. He thought no more of it till the next day after coming back from Mass. Three screws came into the cell pulled the blanket from him, "Who's Jo-Jo then?" "Say 'Sir' to an officer!" Then they battered him about the cell for 15 minutes. When he fell to the ground he was kicked on the back. When they were satisfied they left and went in, in turn, to beat the other 2 fellas. All the while this was going on the rest of us sat shaking in our cells. I remember thinking "Look don't let it break you. Imagine you were in Castlereagh and they were trying to force you to sign a statement", but I knew there was no comparison.

What was 7 days compared to 10 years? I knew that this time next week, I'd still be sitting on that same chair, looking at the same 4 bare white walls. But they only beat the 3. It's impossible to remember now the relief I felt at that time. During all this period we were being denied medical treatment because we refused to go out naked to the surgery. But the fella who got the first beating had to put the prison gear on to go up to the prison Hospital. He had a suspected haemorrhage, but it turned out in the end to be a busted blood vessel in his ear and there was no permanent damage done.

Life continued without further incident until one day we were told to get our gear ready we were going to H-5.

The first phase of the blanket protest was over. All the blanket men in the blocks were moved to H-5.

SINE.



BRINGING FOOD INTO CELL

K IS CRUMBLING

SUPPORT
THE
PRISONERS

ING THE FINAL BLOWS
S DESTRUCTION
MONSTRATE!

THE PUNISHMENT BLOCKS

The following two statements are short accounts from two men who spent 16 days and 5 days in the punishment block. One on a petty charge the other on a framed charge designed simply to harass and break the spirit of the blanket men! These two statements are typical of the treatment and conditions which Republican POW's on the "Blanket" are subjected to. As these facts were being compiled more men were being shipped off to the punishment block, one man has been there, for over two weeks and no one has heard a thing about him. One man was kept there one time for over 40 days just to break him. The punishment block in Long Kesh is a torture block where men are very vulnerable to the brutality of the sadistic Screws who run the punishment block. The prisoner can not run away; he has no escape except to go against everything he stands for and put on a prison uniform. This he will not do, so he must endure the torture, brutalities, degradation, and indignities that face him in the punishment block of Long Kesh.

16 DAYS.

'I was sitting in my cell in H-Block 5 when a Screw opened the door and came in. He stared at me and then he simply said "You called me a stupid c." I was totally astonished and could only stammer "I didn't." He immediately started shouting at me and swearing. Before I could say anything he struck me.

I asked to see an M.O. and when I saw him he made a report of what I told him. When I got back to my cell I was charged with a breach of prison discipline i.e. "swearing at a prison officer". Also, I was charged with "making false allegations against a prison officer", because I reported to the medical officer that I had been struck by a screw. I was taken to the punishment cells. I remained there for 16 days during which time I was not allowed to go to the toilet. I had to use the chamber pot in the cell for a toilet. Sometimes it was overflowing before the Screws brought a bucket to the door to allow me to empty the stinking contents.

I was freezing the whole time that I was there as I had only a blanket to cover me; I was threatened two or three times by the Screws and I heard them threaten several other lads who were in the cells near me. I was brought before the governor in the

nude as I do not wear prison clothes. When I got back from the punishment block I was exhausted and totally shattered. Before I left there the Screws told me if they ever saw me down there again they would do me right.'

5 DAYS

'I was coming from a visit and was caught with a few cigarettes. I was taken to the punishment block. As it was just past dinner time I asked for my dinner as I had none yet. I was told that that was too bad, dinner was over. I was put in a cell and given a strip search during which I was made to turn round several times. When the Screws left the cell I put a blanket round me. The Screws came back again and put a water gallon, Bible and a pair of felt slippers into my cell. (The slippers were filthy. I left them in the corner and did not wear them at any time. An assistant governor came round to see me that afternoon, he asked me had I any complaints. I told him that I never got any dinner that day - he said "all the dinners had been given out and that there was none left for me" and that was that.

The next day I was to be brought in front of the governor. After dinner two Screws, came to my cell and told me to put on the prison trousers, to go out to the

office to see the governor. I refused to put on the trousers. They then told me to march out naked. I refused to do this also stating that I would go out with either a blanket or a towel. One of the screws came into the cell and pulled the blanket off that I had around me and shoved me towards the door. I put my hands on the wall and pushed myself back into the cell. The Screw who was in the cell grabbed me by the arm and twisted it up my back, another Screw came into the cell and grabbed me by the hair and twisted my other arm up my back. The two of them lifted me off the ground with my arms still twisted up my back and carried me down a few feet. They then let me down

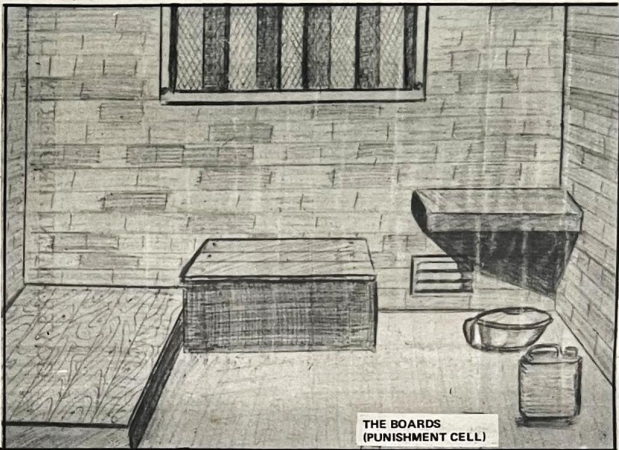
and ran me the rest of the way up the wing punching me as they did so.

Before they brought me into the governor one Screw started to dig me again saying that I was to call the governor "Sir" and that I was to stand to attention. (I did not do either of these things). When I went into the office the governor found me guilty and sentenced me to 3 days in the punishment cells and the loss of so many days remission (I forget how many). I was brought back to the cell and the mattress and bedding was taken out. While I was there I asked to go to the toilet - but I was told if I wanted to go to the toilet I would have to put on the prison trousers or go naked - I refused both offers. I couldn't go to the toilet in the cell as they only gave me a tissue of toilet paper 2 inches square. The Screws laughed at this thinking it was a great joke. I refused food the rest of the time I was there. I had to slop my chamber pot into a bucket. I had to keep doing exercises to keep warm. When I started to sing to myself, the Screws battered the door with batons telling me to keep quiet or they would shut me up right. Before I left the punishment block my chamber pot overflowed once and the filthy contents were left lying on the floor. The screws said that they would be in to see me before I left. They said for me to tell the rest of those f... streakers (meaning us blanketmen) that this is what they can expect down on the "Boards" (meaning the punishment block) but I never saw them again. I was brought back to H-5.

THE FOLLOWING MEN HAVE HAD SIMILAR EXPERIENCES:

J. McHugh 3 days
S. J. Walsh 3 days
D. Armstrong 5 days
B. Lynch 4 days & 3 days
G. McConville 4 days
J. McNullan 7 days
E. Bradley 3 days
P. McGlinchey 3 days
G. Docherty 5 days
K. Campbell 3 days
L. McKewen 3 days
G. McAreavy 3 days & 3 days
M. Ferguson 4 days
D. Forbes 3 days
K. Smyth 6 days
P. McNearney 8 days
B. Campbell 5 days
M. Kelly 7 days
C. McArt 15 days & 4 days
K. Carey 15 days
P. McCann 5 days & 4 days
T. McCaughey 10 days
J. McCann 2 days
T. O'Hara 5 days
J. Burns 3 days
K. Nugent (Now on Boards) & 4 days
J. Nixon (Now on Boards) & 15 days
P. Laughran (Now on Boards) & 2 days
T. McIlwre 3 days
J. Connolly 3 days
P. McDonnell 11 days
P. Brennan 2 days
S. Lennon 6 days
T. Kelly 5 days
S. Moore 4 days.

Most of these men were treated very bad, some not so bad, one or two had no complaints, but the majority were very badly treated. It is not possible to mention all cases and complaints or beatings. This does not include H-3, Just H-5.



Letters to the editor

THE ROLE OF WOMEN



A Chara,

I read with interest your short extract reprinted from 'Liberty' entitled 'The slaves of slaves' because even though there were limitations of space it did nonetheless manage to raise some very fundamental questions about the role of women and the part that they play in the struggle to achieve a free, united socialist Ireland. Having said that, I did however find myself in some disagreement with the underlying assumptions on which it was based. In particular there were 2 things.

The first concerns the role of women within Sinn Féin. The author asked the question why is it that women within Sinn Féin do not participate fully in formulating matters of policy, given that they have a sympathetic audience from their male comrades. The second concerns the fact that (and I quote) "the women and men of ideals who would be working to change the conditions of women are of necessity engaged in the struggle to get the Brits out."

It is in this last point that the nub of the matter lies. The struggle to get the Brits out cannot I believe be seen separately from the struggle to achieve freedom and equality, for as the author points out that when we say Victory to the People we must remember that half of them are women. Why then should one half of the population wait for their freedom until the other half secures their first? For in subordinating the whole issue of the oppression of women to the struggle for independence this is precisely what we are doing. It is a false division.

The 2 struggles are not separate, nor is one more important than the other. Both are deeply related. In fact they are the same struggle, for both have the same ultimate objective - the establishing of a society where all people, men, women and children will be able to control their own lives, free from the rotten corrupt system that thwarts their potential to develop as creative, equal and fully active human beings, regardless of their sex. To do that it is necessary to revolutionise the material conditions under which the majority of people live. In other words we must rid our country of British imperialism, in all its forms - military, political and economic. That is the root cause of all our oppressions, though the way in which it affects the sexes is different. What we need is a greater understanding of the different ways in which we as men and women suffer under the might of imperialist domination, which is the first step toward overthrowing it. (The similarities need no mentioning). Perhaps then we will be able to see why women do not participate fully within the community or even within Sinn Féin. One of the first critical awakenings of an oppressed people is that they begin to understand how and in what ways they are oppressed and in doing so raise their voices and cry out against such oppression, thus reclaiming their lost confidence in the fight to overthrow the tyranny which keeps them in subjection.

Imperialism it must be remembered also colonises our minds as well as bodies, and makes us feel inferior. It divides us - men against women - and prevents us from seeing our common fight. For if women continue to be oppressed how can men even be free?

IS MISE,
DEIRDRE O'NEILL.

THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND THE FIGHT FOR POLITICAL STATUS

Dear Friends,

In an interesting and detailed article 'The armed struggle and the fight for political status' (Republican News, 4th February), you say that the clock cannot be turned back to a 'New mass resistance' comparable to that of the Civil Rights Movement and you infer that this is the position of the Peoples Democracy. This is in fact not so.

Because of the importance of this debate for the whole anti-imperialist movement we would like to briefly outline our position. We agree with you that the political alliances and demands represented by the Civil Rights movement cannot simply be re-created after ten years of struggle. We would not accept your argument that this is because of a higher level of political awareness in the general population - we see as one of the failures of the anti-imperialist movement the lack of such a general awareness. However, in the ten years of struggle the curtain of Stormont has been torn aside and the struggle has become a direct confrontation with imperialism. This is why "Troops out" must be a central demand of any new mass resistance. It also means that the struggle has become more difficult and complex and that there is a necessity to organise in all 32 counties.

So we both agree that we can not simply re-create the civil rights movement with the same demands after ten years of struggle. However, we believe that the same methods of mass demonstration and organisation are the necessary way forward.

In our analysis of mass action we do not draw as

sharp a distinction as you seem to do between force and political action. In responding to even the most non-violent Civil Rights march the British were responding to the threat of force that the movement itself would use greater force or more importantly that the passively sympathetic southern masses would become actively involved.

In order to build mass action it is necessary for revolutionaries to show an open willingness to work with a wide spectrum of political opinion. Inside such a movement they must carry out a patient explanation and education to show that reformist solutions are not possible, bring forward demands for the smashing of imperialism and the building of a workers republic, and teach new methods of struggle leading to a dual power situation when the people take over control of the factories and of the areas they live in.

Throughout this struggle the mass movement poses the threat of force in order to limit the aggression of the Brits. They and their allies use force continuously in an effort to break the movement. For this reason we unreservedly support the right of the anti-imperialist population to hold arms for their own defence. We also support the right of military groups to react against British violence. But we do not accept that a military group, small in proportion to the total population, can win freedom for the whole Irish people. At the end of the day it will require the mass force of the Irish people to remove imperialism. Our present task is to win the support of the people, not to substitute ourselves for them.

The present situation contains many dangers as well

as many opportunities. The mass of the Irish people are becoming aware that the British have no solution to the Northern struggle except that of greater and greater repression. The opportunities are there to build mass resistance on a 32-county basis. But it would be foolish to believe that if we miss or ignore these opportunities the British will not eventually succeed in silencing all political opposition.

Protest in Letterkenny in support of prisoners

300 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE PROTEST WHICH TOOK PLACE IN LETTERKENNY A FORTNIGHT AGO. THE SPEAKERS INCLUDED, MARY WARD, ANTHONY O'MALLEY DALY, SEAN KEENAN, AND JOE O'NEILL.



East Tyrone Commemoration



THE NATIONAL GRAVES ASSOCIATION, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EAST TYRONE COMHAIRLE CEANNTAIR SINN FEIN UNVEILED A MEMORIAL TO VOLUNTEER DENIS GUINN AND VOLUNTEER DESSY MORGAN ON SUNDAY 12th FEBRUARY. See photos above.

can by itself win these demands. This is a dangerous confusion. Mass united action against repression can not be built where one of the major anti-imperialist organisations holds doubts about its effectiveness or relegates to it a subversive position in the struggle.

Yours fraternally

John McNulty
For the P.D. Central Committee

INTERMENT WITH TRIAL

Internment without trial as it appears on the British statute books ended in December 1975. Since this date, and despite an overall deterioration in the situation in the occupied area the British Government has been very reluctant to reintroduce this repressive measure. Internment, as it operated from August 1971 to December 1975 brought about the total alienation of the Nationalist community from the British administration. When the last internee was released in December 1975 it was obvious that the British could no longer endure the adverse global publicity that internment without trial provoked.

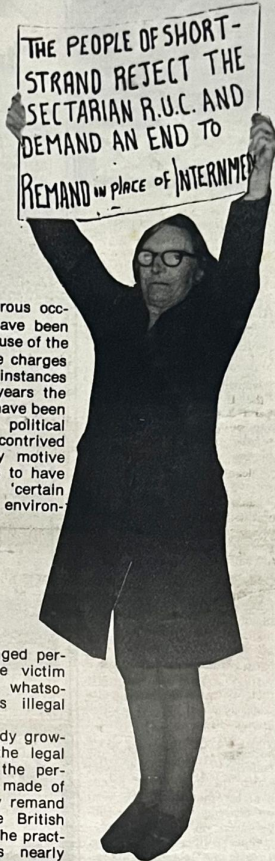
However, the British have now side-stepped actual internment, and have perfected internment by another name, remand in custody for prolonged periods of time. At the present time literally hundreds of political prisoners are being held under remand in custody. The vast majority of these can expect to spend up to 18 months in jail without trial. A significant proportion can expect charges to be dropped on the day of their 'trial'. Many of these can expect to have applied

for bail on numerous occasions, only to have been turned down because of the seriousness of the charges etc. In many instances over the past 2 years the flimsiest charges have been brought against political activists, contrived charges, the only motive for which appears to have been to remove 'certain people' from the environ-

ment for a prolonged period of time. The victim has no redress whatsoever against this illegal practice.

There is already growing disquiet in the legal profession as to the perverted use being made of the internment by remand technique by the British Judicial system. The practice now involves nearly as many prisoners as were affected at any one time during the height of internment.

We condemn unreservedly this heinous practice, recognising it as yet another play in the British War game of de-



feating the liberation struggle.

PATRICIA DAVIDSON,
PRO ULSTER
EXECUTIVE
(COMHAIRLE CHUIGE
ULADH) SINN FEIN.



ENOCH POWELL AND THE KU-KLUX KLAN RIDE AGAIN

Enoch has predictably found even Orange bigotry a bit tame for his liking and he has now turned back to his old concern: immigrant baiting in Britain. His power base in the Loyalist parts of the Six Counties is clearly insufficient for someone who would like to be the Brits answer to Napoleon Bonaparte. Hence he has turned to profiting racist policies and aiding the National Front in their pernicious propaganda against black people.

In the last few weeks, Powell's old seat Wolverhampton, has seen the rise of gangs in Ku-Klux-Klan type hoods who have embarked on a campaign of terror against young black people. These KKK thugs roam around black areas at night and lay into solitary passers-by with knives and clubs. The police have not surprisingly come up with any of these terrorists but then we are used to collusion between the RUC and the UDR, with the UDA etc. At the beginning of the month around



POWELL

which tries to make the blacks in Britain the scapegoat for their economic problems. Much as Catholics are made responsible for unemployment here, because they "don't want to work". One group, the knights of the KKK has been recruiting in Britain since 1971 and its leader, David Duke, claims they have branches (or Klaverns) in London, Coventry, Birmingham and Brighton.

By Michael Michelson.

three hundred black youths decided to clean out a National Front pub. Naturally the cops arrived to protect the NF and in the clashes which followed seven blacks were arrested but at least five of the boys in blue were injured. It was after this incident that the white hoods of the KKK came out in the open.

Now, we know how the National Front attempted to set up a base in Belfast two or three years ago and the talks they had with the UDA, the UVF and maverick Loyalist thugs. They were not taken too seriously at the time although the link up between Orange and racist reactionaries was warned against. Powell, now supported by the Tory Leader Thatcher it would seem by recent speeches, is well placed to stir up a racist, even fascist fever in Britain and link it up with the extreme Loyalists in the north of Ireland.

In the meantime, the Ku-Klux-Klan is coming over from the American Deep South to discuss tactics with the National Front and recruit new members. The KKK, like Powell are pleased with the publicity aroused in recent months by the Front's racist propaganda.

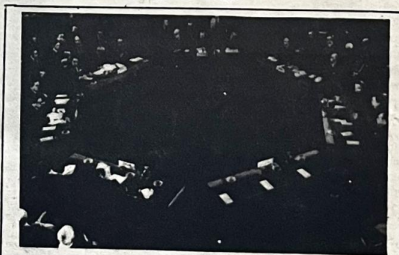
Interviewed recently this racist thug admitted that they worked closely with the NF — "We support the current efforts of the pro-white groups such as the National Front and the National Party. We are a guiding force for white supremacy and the ideals (sic) formulated by the original Klan". And he went on: "We feel the white racial ideal has a greater chance in England than anywhere else in the world. The racial heritage is under attack and severe strain. Britons are fresh to the battle". No comment!

There is clearly a need to link up the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland with the struggle against those who turn to racism and fascism in England to make up for the end of the Empire. Irish communities in Britain are well placed to aid the struggle against the NF-KKK in Britain which as we have seen are closely linked to the thugs in the UDA-UVF with "brains" like Powell keeping the fraternal links strong. Support given to the fight against racism and fascism in Britain is support gained for the war of national liberation in the north of Ireland.

HYPOCRISY OF BIG NATIONS

At a time when world attention is being focussed on the question of violation of human rights, nearly 300 Republican prisoners are being held in sub-human conditions at H Block Long Kesh, in the 6 British occupied counties of Ireland. The 'big' nations appear to go overboard to relate the stories of atrocities in places like Russia, Chile, Argentina, condemning as they do practices such as sensory deprivation, solitary confinement, brutality to political prisoners. The fact that these self-same practices are being carried out against Irish political hostages by the British Government is ignored by these countries pretending their concern over such human rights' violations. The conferences at Helsinki and Belgrade would appear to have been just so much hot-air.

The British Government is one such power, criticising on the one hand, the Chileans, South Africans, and Rhodesians, while her backyard is teeming with battered Irish



DELEGATES AT HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

prisoners-of-war. The issue of the Irish political prisoner is not going to diminish, no matter how intransigent the British become on the issue and the men and women who endure the subhuman conditions produced by the British war machine are more resolute now as we approach the 2nd year of their protest as they ever were. The primitive barbaric tortures

(an apt psychiatric description of H Block) are in themselves the epitome of the whole Irish freedom struggle, and like the struggle for political status this will not go away until a victorious conclusion has been achieved.

PRO
CLONARD MARTYRS
CUMANN, SINN FEIN.

NOTES FROM THE CAMPUS



THE VOICE OF
REPUBLICAN ULSTER

"many self-righteous bodies, who claim to speak on behalf of the student masses, turned a blind eye to the blatant harassment of the 'VOICE OF REPUBLICAN ULSTER'."

The recent action taken against the offices, Paper and staff of Republican News by frustrated British military elements has received comment in student circles. Of course many self-righteous bodies, who claim to speak on behalf of the student masses, turned a blind eye to the blatant harassment of the 'Voice of Republican Ulster' and the futile attempts by the British to silence a risen people and its mouth-piece. But recently a Dublin student news-sheet has been circularised carrying an article entitled "Freedom of Speech". Rep. News is mentioned and the action taken to disrupt it is seen as a deliberate denial of the democratic right to free speech.

Meanwhile the newspaper of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) carries a four page pull-out on the crisis situation in the occupied six counties. By far the most significant section of the article deals with the denial of basic civil rights in the North and the alarming stepping up of British torture and brutality.

It is emphasised that although the legislation in the North is known as "Emergency" there has in fact been an "emergency" since the inception of the corrupt statelet in 1922. The Diplock courts are seen as a reversal of the basic principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

On the issue of Brutality the article quotes case histories. Brian Stewart murdered by a plastic bullet fired at point blank range, Bernard O'Connor tortured by the RUC almost to breaking point, and Leo Norney shot dead in cold blood by British soldiers.

In a report on the recent USI annual conference it was noted that the major debates on the North related to the continuing torture carried out by the RUC, particularly in Castle-reagh barracks. A specific motion condemning the RUC brutality was carried unanimously. USI also called for an independent system of complaints relating to the Gardai.

BRIT SPIES IN SCHOOL

Over the past few months there have been several breaks in the schools of Twinbrook. These were blamed on school-children and young vandals but now these breaks have taken on a more sinister aspect.

During last week there was an exhibition of Poul's work held in St. Colms to which parents were invited. While this was taking place a teacher tried to enter a room which appeared to be blocked by a heavy object, when he forced his way in he found the door was being held on the other side by a Brit Soldier.

There were six, who with night-sights on their rifles and faces blackened had set up observation and firing positions on the Thornhill Part of our estate. Upon being surprised they forced the teacher to spread-eagle against the wall but when they realised who he was they told him to get out, shut the door and in five minutes they would be gone.

It had already been brought to our notice that the Brits had approached St. Colms with the view to setting up an observation post on top of it and it now is clear they are already using our schools and perhaps the chapel for this purpose and covering up the fact with vandalism.

As concerned parents we have the right to know how the headmaster of St. Colms treated this serious matter and are the children of the school being placed in danger.

As concerned Republicans we would ask why Mr Watson who as Headmaster of St. Colms is well known in the area for his commitment to Peace, kept this matter quiet so that it received no publicity? How he reconciles his policies with a military presence in the school? What steps did he take when he learnt of this? We would remind him he has our children in his care.

As concerned Residents there are other disturbing questions arising from this. Is Twinbrook and Thornhill in particular to come under attack by 'unknown' marksmen? Are we to see here repetitions of the type of murderous attack that took place in Clonard, when a baby was shot in his father's arms while British Agents sprayed the whole family with bullets?

We are entitled to know all the facts and would ask Mr Watson to explain directly his actions and attitudes. He can contact us via the Republican Press Centre, 170 Falls Road. Unfortunately though Sinn Fein is a 'Legal' organisation we cannot use a Twinbrook address because of harassment by the forces of British Law and Order.

CEN CHAOI.

LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL CALLS FOR BRITS OUT

At a meeting of Leitrim County Council on Friday, 10th February the following resolution was adopted.

"In order that lasting peace may be established we demand that the British Government renounce all claim to sovereignty over any part of Ireland and that as soon as practicable, but in any case before the 31st of December 1982, they withdraw their troops and entire administrative institutions from the six-counties of Ireland they at present occupy.

This Council also calls on the Government of the Irish Free State to implement their declared policy on the Six-County problem by making a serious effort to reunite our country".

In moving the motion Mr John Joe McGirl stated that the organisation Meitheal Naisiunta or National Co-operation

are not a front for the Provisionals, or Sinn Fein, but an independent organisation, whose members approached him and a member of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael on the Council to have their motion brought up. The only way to lasting peace is such a declaration of intent said Mr McGirl. In 1918 the Irish people elected a Republican Government and that Government declared to the nations of the world, that Ireland no longer accepted British Rule, but Britain refused to accept the right of that democratic Government and under threat of war imposed Partition, the cause of all our troubles to this day.

The motion was seconded by Mr Peter McKeon, Fianna Fail and several Council members spoke in favour of it; it was adopted unanimously.

STROKESTOWN LAND MEETING

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Land Structure reform report is very close to the bid Manshold Plan which aimed at the abolition of small farms, it was stated at a Sinn Fein meeting on farming in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon.

Mr. Des Croghan, joint secretary of the National Land League, said it constituted a danger to the livelihoods of a large number of people engaged in agriculture particularly in the North West of Ireland.

The meeting agreed that aliens should not be allowed to buy land, measures be taken to curb the purchase of land by business and professional men, Upper land limits be lowered and the Land Agency should give priority to small farmers in the distribution of large estates.

Other issues discussed were drainage, land reclamation, credit facilities and the E.E.C. Milk Levy. It was also agreed to prepare a policy document outlining the views of the small farmers in the area.

ROSCOMMON PROTEST

A call to Strokestown, County Roscommon, people to protest to T.D.'s and local councillors about the early morning arrest of Mr. Dermot Mullooly, was made by Mr. Ruairi O Bradaigh, President of Sinn Fein, to a packed meeting in the town.

Mr. Mullooly, a local farmer, was arrested and later appeared in the special court in Dublin charged with membership of an "illegal" organisation.

He was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, despite making an unsworn statement denying the charge.

Mr. Mullooly's wife was not told where he was being taken after his arrest and it was hours before she traced him to Mountjoy Prison.

Other speakers at the protest meeting included councillor John Joe McGirl of Leitrim, and Mr. P.J. Kearney, a member of the Sinn Fein Ard Comhairle, from Sligo.

THIS PHOTO WAS NOT TAKEN, AS YOU MIGHT THINK, ON THE FALLS Rd., OR ANY OTHER ROAD IN BELFAST. IT WAS TAKEN AT HIGHGATE Rd., MOSELEY, Birmingham, AND WAS SENT TO US BY OUR 'TROOPS OUT' COMRADES IN ENGLAND.



BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND
RELEASE ALL IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS

IRA
PROVDS

NATIONAL GRAVES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL EASTER COMMEMORATION

will take place on
EASTER SUNDAY (26th March)
Parade will assemble at
CLONARD STREET
(Please note change of Assembly Point)
at 1.00 p.m.
Parade will move off 1.30 p.m. sharp
All National, Cultural and Trade Union movements
invited to attend
A special place has been reserved in the Parade
for all ex-prisoners
Honour Ireland's dead
wear an Easter Lily



Please Note - Not in Beechmount Avenue this year.

On Sunday January 29th at Trinity Episcopal Church an Interfaith service was held in remembrance of those killed on Bloody Sunday. For the occasion a banner, a gift from Derry Sinn Fein was prominently positioned at the altar. The Rev. Tom Dowling sallied forth with a sermon that was in essence and in a nutshell decidedly anti-Brit.

Next day Monday 30th leaflets detailing the events of the Derry massacre were distributed at noon in the city's financial district. That evening an orderly but vociferous picket was effected before the British Consular residence. Michael Mac Diarmada addressed the crowd.

It has been noted that Brit Ambassador Peter Jay will soon visit our fair city. This chap shall no doubt find himself at the receiving end of the customary San Francisco welcome afforded all visiting Brit dignitaries, à la the Prince of Wales. Enough said!

SAN FRANCISCO SCENE BY SEAMUS DOCKER

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

DOHERTY.
Birthday Greetings to my Son Robert on his 18th Birthday on the 23rd February.

The hands that fought the heat that broke in old immortal tragedies. These have not failed beneath the skies their childrens head refuse the yoke. We salute you and your comrades. God Bless you Son.

Your loving Mother Father and Brother.

DOHERTY.
Birthday Greetings to my brother Robert on his 18th birthday on the 23rd February. We salute your courageous stand, by you and your comrades in H Block 3 and S. God Bless you all.
Danny Ann and the Kids

DOHERTY.
Happy 18th Birthday Doc, comrade, from ZACK HS.

DOHERTY.
Birthday greetings to Robert on his 18th birthday from all the Smyth family, Dan & Deborah.

McCANN
Birthday Greetings
To Edward McCann. From Lurgan.

In H Block Long Kesh from his Wife Mary and Daughter Sinead

McCANN.
Birthday Greetings
To Edward McCann From Lurgan
in H Block Long Kesh from Mother Brothers, and Sisters.

IN MEMORIAM

MARTIN FORSYTHE SINN
FEIN CUMANN

the Political work of Sinn Fein and to live up to the ideals of the Republican Movement.

PAUL BEST 2nd Anniversary.

On Sunday 19th February, the members of the above Cumann and a group of people from Turf Lodge held a Commemoration ceremony at the grave of Paul Best (R.I.P.) Sinn Fein organiser in Andersonstown. A decade of the Rosary was said, and an oration given by a member of the Cumann. The member recalled how dedicated Paul had been and asked all members present to pledge themselves to carry on with

PAUL BEST (R.I.P.)

(Second Anniversary)
In proud and loving memory of Paul. St. Paul of the Cross, pray for him. It's not those who inflict the most, but those who can endure the most who will prevail.

Always remembered by Martin Forsythe Sinn Fein Cumann, Turf Lodge.

ONE YEAR ON BLANKET

Solidarity

Greetings

JOHN BRADLEY

A WING H. 5

Your fight we shall remember
Though you're in that prison cell
And we shall think and pray for you
'Til you are home and well.

From Mother, Father and Family.

AGNES FERGUSON OBITUARY

The death took place recently of Agnes Ferguson, a well known Republican from Belfast, at her home in Shannon, Co Clare.

As a child and young girl she played her part both in the rising and afterward.

During the forties her home in Whitecroft Gardens was always open to the Republican Movement where "the boys" were always sure of a meal and comfort.

She was a member of the Terence McSweeney Sinn Fein Cumann in Shannon and was an inspiration to us all the last

number of years. She was mostly confined to her wheelchair but it never kept her from attending functions and never missed the bus to Bodens-town.

Her life long wish that the Tricolour be draped over her coffin was carried out by her friends in the Cumann in Shannon.

She was interred in Milltown Cemetery in her beloved Belfast as was also her wish.

Inserted by The Terence McSweeney Sinn Fein Cumann Shannon.

CAPTAIN NERVEWRECK

Part 6

by Cormac

WOWEE! I'VE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE S.A.S.!!



MM-H - BETTER CHECK MY NOTES ON HOW TO MIMIC THE ULSTER DIALECT...

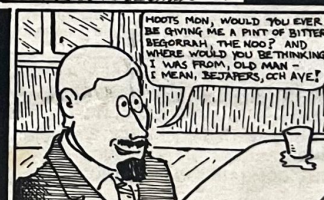
AN YES - HERE WE ARE - "THE ULSTER ACCENT" IS A CROSS BETWEEN AN IRISH BROGUE AND "THE SCOTS DIALECT"



AND NOW IT'S DOWN TO SOUTH ARMAGH FOR A FEW LOW INTENSITY OPERATIONS



I'LL NIP INTO THIS QUANT COUNTRY PUB TO TEST MY DISGUISE AND MY ACCENT ON THE LOCAL TENANTRY!



HOOTS MON, WOULD YOU EVER BE GIVING ME A PINT OF BITTER BEERORAN, THE NOOD? AND WHERE WOULD YOU BE THINKING I WAS FROM, OLD MAN - I MEAN, BEJAPERS, OCH AYE!



OH, THAT'S AN PRIDDYNE ACCENT, IF EVER I HEARD ONE!



ARDOYNE ACCENT! EVEN BETTER THAN I HAD HOPED! I KNEW I COULD FOOL THEM!



ON THE OTHER HAND, I DON'T fancy the look of their PANTS OF BITTER!