

The CAPTIVE VOICE



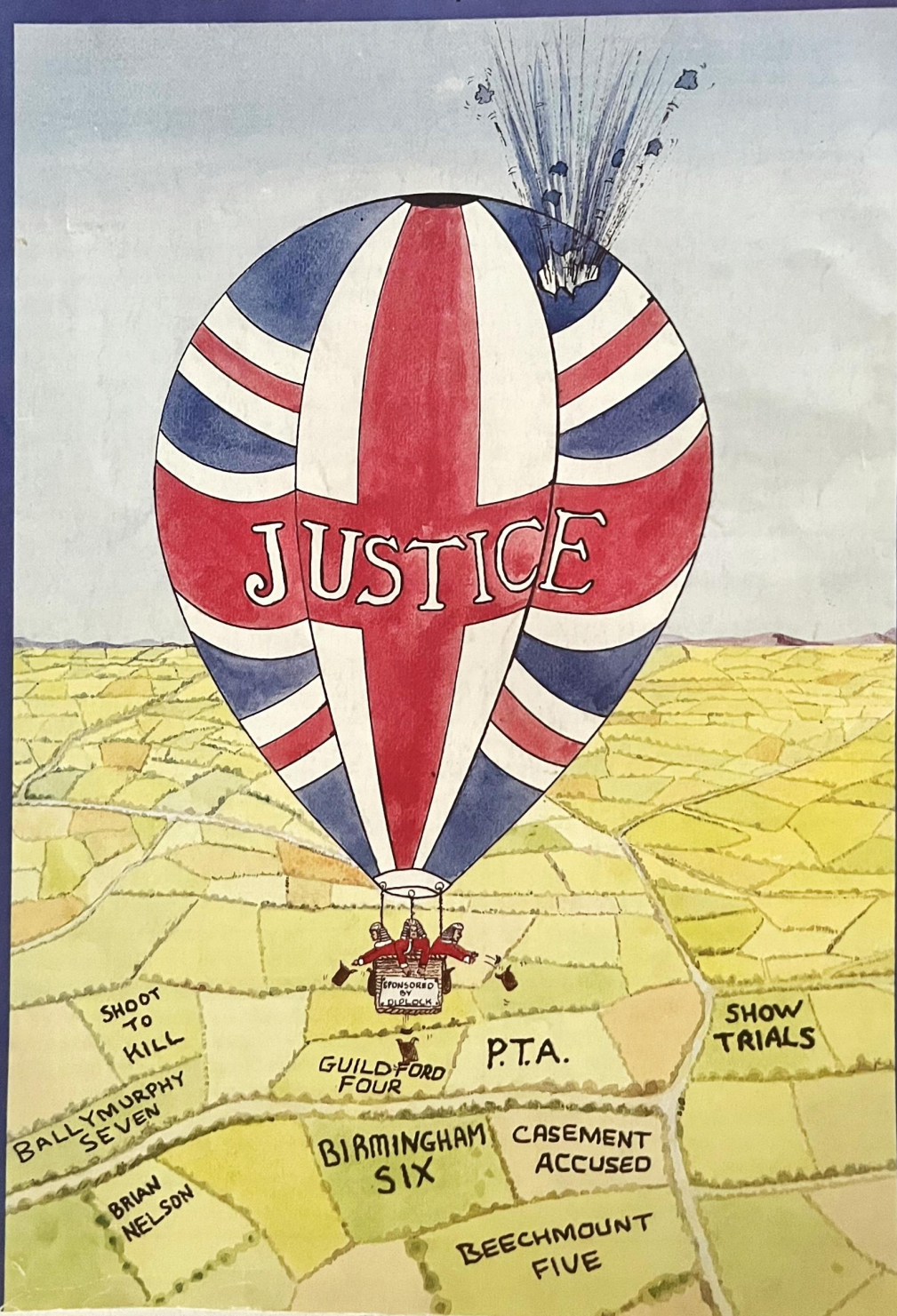
An Glór Gafa

Vol . 4 No. 3

Winter 1992

£1/\$5

The Voice of the Irish Republican Prisoners of War



The CAPTIVE VOICE

An Glór Gafa

The Captive Voice/An Glór Gafa is a quarterly magazine written in its entirety by Irish Republican POWs currently being held in Ireland, England, Europe and the US. It is published by Sinn Féin's POW Department.

Irish Republicans have always recognised that resistance to British misrule does not end upon their arrest. The battles to be fought and the tactics to be employed may change but the enemy remains the same. In the words of our comrade Bobby Sands:

"The jails are engineered to crush the political identity of the captured Republican prisoner, to crush his/her resistance and transform him/her into a systemised answering-machine with a large criminal tag stamped by oppression upon his/her back, to be duly released on to the street, politically cured — politically barren — and permanently broken in spirit"

The establishment of this jail journal is a tribute not only to our families, friends and comrades, whose strength and support have been inspirational to us all, but also

is a clear recognition that we are what we are — political prisoners, unbroken in our deep-rooted desire for freedom.

The Captive Voice affords us a platform and an opportunity to present in print our views on those topics and issues which affect daily life both inside and outside of the jails. The magazine contains political analyses of current national and international affairs, culture, short stories, poetry and the latest updates on prison-related campaigns and issues. Satire and humour can also be found within the special features, cartoons and artwork illustrations.

We have been pleased and greatly encouraged by the response to the magazine. It is hoped that the sharing of our feelings and experiences through the pages of *An Glór Gafa* will be both beneficial and enjoyable for all our readers.

We are determined that our message and our *Captive Voice* shall be heard by many.

— The Irish Republican
Prisoners of War ■

Make sure that you 'hear' *The Captive Voice* each quarter by taking out a subscription.

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Six Counties, Wales, Scotland and England:	£5.30
26 Counties:	£6.10
Europe (airmail):	£6.70
Australia:	£9.50
Elsewhere:	£8

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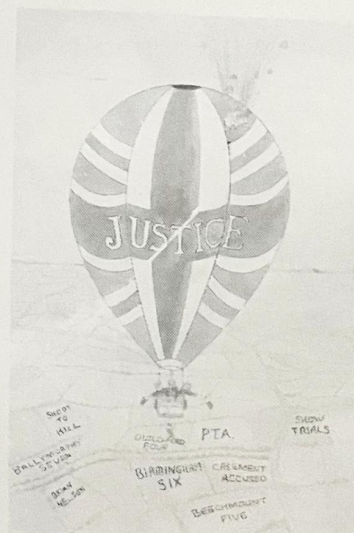
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Cover illustration:
JUSTICE



■ By Martin Gough
(Long Kesh)

We welcome correspondence with ideas, suggestions or comments on the contents of *Captive Voice/An Glór Gafa* or on any subject of concern to prisoners

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The

CAPTIVE VOICE



An Glór Gafa

THE EVIDENCE of Britain's declining economic power has been vividly exposed this autumn. More than 13 years of Thatcherite policies during which the rich got richer and the poor got kicked in the teeth have made British industry not lean and fit but weak and emaciated. In the 26 Counties similar free market solutions have produced the highest unemployment rate in the EC. These and other economic trends are important for republicans to understand and organise against.

Economics not only stands behind politics; it follows it around and oversees everything it does. Economics impacts very clearly on our struggle. The economy in the Six Counties is in an atrocious state, sustained only by the swollen apparatus of repression (RUC, RIR, courts, prisons and so on) and government contracts and jobs. The costs to the British exchequer of maintaining their colony and prosecuting their war in Ireland is rising relative to their level of prosperity. While it is not on a scale likely to push the British economy into bankruptcy, it is a constant and growing irritant which may one day help to override Britain's political reasons for occupying the Six Counties and point them towards the option of disengagement. Also, an IRA attack like that on the Baltic Exchange in the City of London, which caused £800 million of damage must give British policymakers further pause for thought.

But just as important if our struggle is to bring about a fairer society in Ireland is how we respond to these economic trends. Capitalism in general, but British capitalism in particular, is going through a severe crisis. The 26 Counties, caught in the turbulent wake of Britain's economic problems, is adding to the misery of its people by trying to hang onto the coat-tails of the central EC economies.

Mass unemployment, homelessness and the many tragedies of poverty are afflicting working-class people to a degree not seen for many generations. More cuts in areas such as health care, house building, education and social security benefits are in the pipeline and they threaten to be even more severe than those inflicted in the 1980s.

Economies are ordered for the benefit of a prosperous minority and on a world scale this economic system is directly responsible for much of the misery in the debt-laden countries of the Third World.

The Republican Movement has long stood in support of those who have suffered at the unseen hand of the free market. The millions of Irish men and women over the years forced to emigrate, driven off the land, stuck in low-paid jobs or on the dole are the people of no property among whom we have campaigned. At this time of social crisis we must be ready to give a lead.

Just as socialism began as a movement in opposition to capitalism, so it is renewing itself in the same way. Our opposition to a system which impoverishes so many people and which lurches into regular crises is clear-cut, but we must translate that into support for local and national initiatives which defend people's right to dignity and a livelihood. We can say that we believe economies should be run for the benefit of people, but we must define that in terms of policy and action.

The economic depression we are now living through is the worst since the 1930s. It is essential that we are at the forefront of those demanding a better way.

PINE RIDGE APPEAL

■ Terry Boyle
(Long Kesh)

IT WAS A PLEASANT JUNE MORNING and the Indian settlement was quiet and peaceful after a long night of thunderstorms and tornadoes. Just before noon two government agents moved into the hollow below the camp. A shot echoed through the trees, sending warriors running for their guns as women and children fled to safety.

The Indians exchanged fire with the Special Agents, wounding both, and within minutes the two white men lay dead, shot from close range by one or more unidentified assailants. Despite being surrounded, some of those involved in the gun battle managed to escape, sparking off what is said to have been the biggest search operation in FBI history. The year was 1975.

This autumn the events of that day will again be scrutinised when Leonard Peltier, serving two life sentences for killing the FBI men, begins his third appeal since his conviction in 1977. But who exactly is this Leonard Peltier and how, if his claim of innocence is true, has he found himself in such a situation?

Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota is one of many pieces of land 'granted' to Native American peoples through treaties with the US government. It was here that Leonard Peltier, a 'Sioux' Indian, was born in 1944.

At age nine, like many native children, he was sent to

boarding school where he was disinfected, had his hair cut military style and was subjected to 'frequent beatings'. His first taste of prison came when he was caught trying to steal diesel fuel to heat his home and was sentenced to two weeks jail. He was 13.

In those days the US government was pursuing a policy of 'termination' — the relocation and integration, by force if necessary, of native people into American society. This was seen by Native Americans as an attempt to destroy Indian culture and heritage, and was resisted by many. Peltier's involvement in this resistance introduced him to political struggle.

Later, the native peoples began to organise themselves in the cities. They highlighted issues such as unemployment, police brutality and the forced sterilisation of Indian women and men. Their protests led to the occupation of Alcatraz island in 1969, which lasted for over 18 months. The American Indian Movement (AIM), formed a year earlier, came to promi-

nence during these protests and was soon to make its presence felt.

AIM was formed as a radical alternative to what many regarded as the corrupt leadership of the tribal councils and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Described as "an insurgent organisation that fused a reverence for Indian tradition with a political agenda for improving the lives of native peoples", AIM confronted the US government and the multinationals over land rights and conducted sun dances and other outlawed spiritual ceremonies. It was this mixture of the spiritual and social which attracted Peltier, and he joined the organisation as a 'warrior' in 1971.

Around that time the FBI, aided by the BIA's 'Goon' (Guardians of the Oglala Nation), began a campaign of counter-insurgency against AIM and its supporters. Native people on the reservations complained of constant oppression from FBI agents, and members of AIM were regularly arrested. Informers infiltrated the movement and prominent members, including Peltier, became prime targets for harassment. This situation persisted and, in 1973, the hamlet of Wounded Knee hit world headlines.

Wounded Knee first came to public attention after a mas-

sacre there in 1890. A group of Dakota men, women and children led by Chief Bigfoot, were slaughtered by the Seventh Cavalry in what many believe was a belated act of vengeance for the rout of Custer's forces at Little Big Horn 14 years earlier. An estimated 300 Indians were killed.

It now became news again when AIM, in response to complaints of killings by Goons and of illegal land deals, decided that enough was enough and occupied the hamlet. The siege which ensued lasted 71 days and pushed the war of attrition into a higher gear.

Two years later AIM responded to an appeal for help from Indians on the Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota, where it was alleged that Goons had been responsible for the murders of 60 dissidents since the time of the Wounded Knee occupation. The National Chairperson of AIM, John Trudell, commented that "life on Pine Ridge was no different in 1975 than in 1890 — it was the Wounded Knee massacre all over, except that they were taking the people out one at a time".

AIM set up camp and went to work. They held discussions with tribal elders and counselled those with drug and alcohol problems, all the time aware of the overt FBI presence. In June the situation deteriorated.

William Jankow, a future governor of South Dakota, was quoted at this time as saying: "The only way to deal with the Indian problem in South Dakota is to put a gun to the AIM leaders' heads and pull the trigger." Shortly after, Russell Means, an AIM leader, was shot by BIA police. Then the Oglala elders passed a resolution of sovereignty. A showdown was looming.

The arrival of agents Jack Coler and Ron Williams at the AIM camp on that morning of the 26 June brought events to a head. No one admits to having fired that first shot, but the evidence points towards an FBI set-up as a heavy back-up operation was already under way when the shooting took place.

After escaping from Pine Ridge, Peltier became a wanted man, and in 1977, he was extradited from Canada to stand trial for murder. In between, however, two other Indians, Dino But-



■ Illustration by Terry Boyle (Long Kesh)

ler and Bob Robideau, had been captured and charged with murder, but they both walked free on the grounds that they might have been acting in self-defence when engaging the FBI men. There was nothing to connect either man with the subsequent executions.

The case against Leonard Peltier was similar to that brought against the others, but prosecution evidence has been altered from the previous trial to suit the charges

against him. He was found guilty on both counts amid much controversy.

In 1978 and 1985, Peltier appealed the verdict and lost. The 1985 appeal uncovered new evidence in Peltier's favour and Judge Heaney agreed that the original jury might have acquitted him on that information. However, the convictions stood.

In 1991, that same judge appealed to George Bush to free Peltier because "*the US government... had escalated a political conflict into a mili-*

tary one... and had used improper tactics in trying the Peltier case". A Mr X has also been interviewed on *60 Minutes* (a networked TV current affairs programme) claiming to have executed the two FBI men. When asked if he knew about Mr X, Peltier replied: "*In any struggle you don't turn informer against your brother. Besides, the government wouldn't mind having two convictions instead of one.*"

In 1979, Peltier took part in an ill-fated escape in which one

of his comrades, Dallas Thundershield, was killed. Another prisoner alleged that he had been asked by the FBI to set up Peltier so that he could be killed trying to escape.

Leonard Peltier has spent the last 15 years in jail, much of it in the 'hole', and claims that he has suffered constant harassment and maltreatment. No one can visit him unless they knew him for five years before his arrest. He has been recommended for parole in 2023. He will then be 79 years old. ■

A FAREWELL

■ Cno (Long Kesh)

Because of a mix-up in our last issue, the last few paragraphs of 'A Farewell' were missing. Below we print it in full.

THE SHORT TRIP from reception to the block was one of foreboding. It was April 1977. I had been sentenced two days previously and was about to join the blanket protest. The layout of the H-Blocks was not unfamiliar to me as I had spent two of my nine months on remand in H-Block 1. I was returning as a sentenced prisoner and was well aware of the conditions the blanket men experienced.

I stepped into the circle of H-Block 2 and in no time at all I had the full attention of six to eight screws.

Right," one of them said, "Over there, face the wall and take your clothes off." This I did obediently enough, down to my underpants. "Get those fucking pants off, streaker. You want to be a fucking streaker, don't you?" I was aware of the craze in the early mid '70s of people stripping of their clothes and 'streaking' in public, but this was the first time I'd heard the term used to refer to those refusing to wear prison uniform.

I was told to turn around and the next few minutes were filled with verbal abuse, threatening looks and posturing of

various sorts. I was waiting for the physical assault which was then the norm — but it didn't come.

Cell 16 in C Wing was where I ended up that evening and the journey to it is still very fresh in my mind. The wing held conforming prisoners (that is, those wearing prison uniform and doing prison work) and as I entered the wing life was going on as would be expected. I was the only oddity. I had walked from the circle through three grilles and a hallway, past the jeers of more screws, stark naked, to bring me into the wing. Now I had to walk past prisoners in the wash house, those in the canteen eating their sup-

per and those standing on the wing, naked.

It may seem strange but the thought in my head was, what should I do with my arms? Should I cross them in front of my genitalia? Fold them behind my back? Or swing them? The loss of clothes meant the loss of pockets to put my hands in and I was extremely awkward with them.

The next morning I was taken back out to the circle to see the governor. Naked of course. I was charged with an offence against prison discipline, refusing to wear prison uniform or do prison work — and my punishment read out. Loss of all privileges for two weeks. Having carefully rehearsed my lines while still in the Crum, I now gave them out: "As a republican prisoner of war I refuse to wear prison uniform or to do prison work and demand to be treated as a political prisoner." The governor didn't even look up but waved his hand in a dismissive manner and said "return this criminal to his cell". More naked strolling.

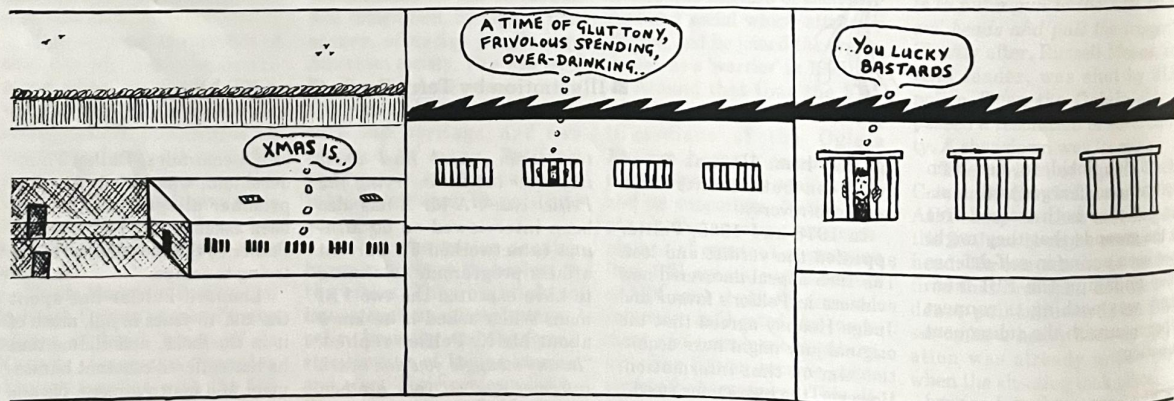
I spent the next ten days in isolation before being moved to H5, a block housing blanket men. Hearing familiar names,

shouts and friendly voices upon entering it was like being released!

That was in 1977. Much occurred after that. The beatings finally came. And much too often. So too did the scaldings, the forced washes and the starvation diet. We plodded on, through summer, autumn, winter, spring, another summer, then the cycle began again. It culminated in 1981 when those who had laughed, joked, raged and felt the same pain and fear as us died over a seven month period.

In a few days time I'll walk free from the H-Blocks. I'll carry with me many memories, some of them so clear it's as if they happened only yesterday. I'll leave behind me friends and comrades who are a large part of those memories. Some of them are soon to be released also, others have several more years to do and yet others have just returned to jail, some for the second or even third time.

To all of them I say farewell and thanks. Thanks for the cups of tea and coffee we shared, for the dander round the yard together, the debate, the jog, the understanding look at a time of sorrow, the smile at a shared joy. Slán a comrádaithe agus n-éirí libh. ■



■ Illustration by Davy Glennon (Long Kesh)

Intercellular Travel

■ Gerry McGeough
(New York)

A Day or so in the life of an extraditee

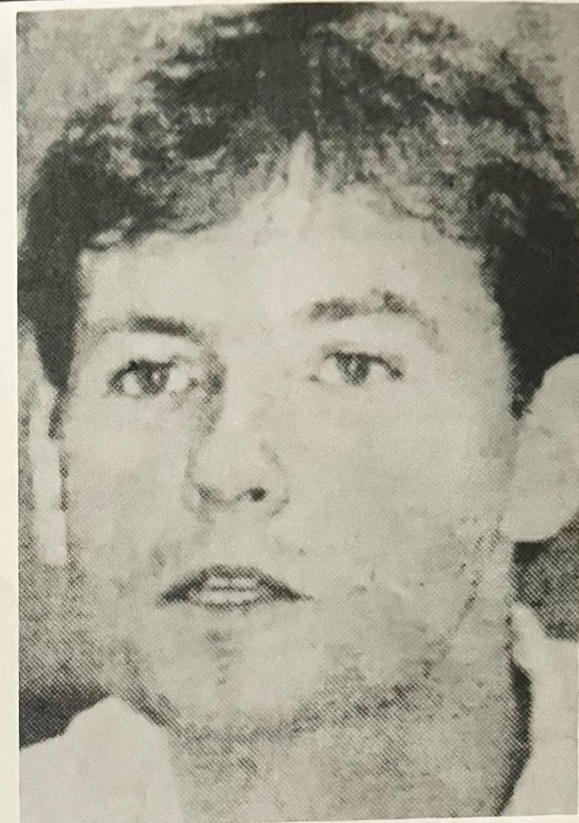
THE PROCESS OF CHANGE IS, by its very nature, slow and often arduous. The paradox is that the transition from one set of circumstances to another, that which actually constitutes change, often occurs in a sequence of events both rapid and bewildering in their pace.

That thought occurred to me in relation to my recent extradition from Germany to the US. Over three and a half years spent in German maximum security prisons and, in particular, the 21 gruelling months spent on trial in the semi-underground Dusseldorf 'bunker' court had begun to take on the air of an endless Kafkaesque nightmare when a series of legal conspiracies ended in chaotic collision, giving rise to the subsequent transformation of my lot.

As with my compatriot and co-defendant, Gerry Hanratty, the German authorities were pursuing a two-pronged strategy in my case. If they could not appease the British by having us imprisoned long-term within their system — as a consequence of the longest trial in

history involving Irish republicans — then they'd see to it that we were not released in Germany by ensuring we were extradited elsewhere.

In accordance with this, an application by the US for my extradition on the basis of an arrest warrant dating from 1982 was, despite its many discrepancies, granted by the Germans during the course of the Dusseldorf trial. The extradition warrant came into effect in late March of this year, once the arrest warrant underlying the last serious charge against me in Germany was lifted. Under the complex German legal system, which obliges the court to hear all the evidence — regardless of its continued relevance — before the court can reach a decision, the trial was set to continue for approximately



another two months. In the meantime, I could be held in custody only on the basis of the American warrant. At this point an unforeseen situation arose.

Under the terms of the German/US extradition treaty, I would have to be handed over to the American

authorities by 20 May, otherwise the Germans would have to release me on the understanding that I'd attend their trial on a voluntary basis thereafter. However, to be extradited to the States before the end of the Dusseldorf process would entail not receiving an official sentence; an unthinkable heresy for the German legal bureaucracy.

In spite of intense wrangling at the highest level, every attempt by the Germans to speed up their trial and/or delay the departure deadline failed, and they were left with no option but to deliver me to the Americans on the appointed date and hand their sentence in the form of judicial suspended animation.

The outcome of all this was that at 4.00am on 20 May, the designated date for the extradition, I was awakened in my isolation cell at Dusseldorf jail and told to prepare to move. A little over an hour later, in leg-irons and with my arms deliberately handcuffed into an uncomfortable twisted position, I found myself part of an autobahn convoy of secret police and prison



● The German authorities wanted to appease Britain by extraditing Irish republicans, if they themselves were not imprisoning them



● Joe Doherty — endured long-term incarceration with dignity

vehicles making a high-speed dash from Dusseldorf to Frankfurt international airport. On arrival, additional vehicles joined the security train and we all snaked our way from the civilian terminals to the nearby US Air Force base. There, I was taken to the military police depot to await the arrival of US marshals.

By this time security had increased significantly, and not only was I surrounded by an assortment of German police and prison personnel, not to mention American military, military police and various others, but I was manacled into two sets of handcuffs at the same time.

Eventually, the marshals arrived, and with that my erstwhile hosts, the Germans, took their leave. In preparation for my trip to the land of the free, I was obliged to undergo a detailed strip search after which I was re-manacled, this time with my arms handcuffed to a chain wrapped

around my waist. The official handover to the Americans took place, incidentally, just a little over two hours before the time scheduled for my release by the High Court at Zweibrücken dealing with the extradition, a fact which may explain the air of urgency apparent among the Germans.

In any event, by noon I had been shifted to the runway where the C-141 cargo plane on which we were to make our transatlantic flight was being loaded up for departure. With the freight in place, I was finally moved on board and, complete with chains and handcuffs, strapped into a rack seat running along the fuselage; most of the strenuous nine-hour flight was spent bound in this position. Mercifully, someone stuck some plugs in my ears before take-off, thus allowing me to retain my sense of hearing — these flying buckets are notoriously noisy.

During the flight, I received my first significant meal of the day: a ration pack consisting of

a couple of ham rolls, a Pepsi and some peanuts, which I was obliged to consume in a doubled-up position given that my arms were chained to my waist. The high altitude refrigerated conditions in the aircraft were made bearable to some degree when one of the Air Force personnel very kindly draped a blanket over my shoulders. In fact, I was conscious of a certain level of sympathy from the Air Force people, which I appreciated at the time.

In due course, we arrived at Dover base, Delaware, and shortly afterwards I was experiencing the sauna-like temperatures of the back of a marshal's vehicle which was sealed with a perspex screen. In this I spent the three-hour dehydration drive to Manhattan Correctional Center, New York. By the time I arrived at the famous MCC, I wasn't simply tired and hungry after the somewhat stressful trip — I was absolutely exhausted.

Nevertheless, long hours had to be spent going through the

prison processing machinery. Categorised as a 'high-profile' prisoner on the grounds that I was an Irish republican, I was consigned to the punishment block where I was taken by elevator, this time with my arms handcuffed behind my back: in fact, apart from anything else, 20 May will be remembered by me as a date renowned for the spectacular variety of handcuffs I encountered.

Having gone through the mandatory strip search on entering this block, familiar to some, perhaps, as 9-South, I was led to my cell. At no time was it considered 'safe' to allow an Irish republican to be unhandcuffed outside of his cell, apparently, and I was amazed to note that there were even slots in the door through which a prisoner, once in his cell, must place his arms, in backward fashion, for handcuffing and unhandcuffing.

By this time, I was almost 24 hours without sleep and therefore in no mood for the silly game-playing which followed, when I had to go through the security procedure again in order to be 'viewed' by the guards, amid yells and insults. A sojourn in MCC is another story, of course, though suffice it to say I have only the greatest admiration for Joe Doherty and the other Irish republicans who have endured, with dignity, long-term incarceration there.

And so, after years of stagnation and strain within the sadistic German legal machine, I found myself catapulted, within the space of 24 hours, into a completely new situation. I was the latest in a growing line of Irish nationalists to be shuttled as 'cargo' from one foreign jail to another, under the guise of extradition. That this extradition policy has nothing to do with 'justice' goes almost without saying, it is yet another British tactic aimed at enlisting the co-operation of nonchalant governments in the English establishment's war against the Irish people. It is a tactic which will be thwarted, however; a policy which, like their war, the English will lose in the end.

● Gerry is now free on bail awaiting trial in New York.

A Doggy Tale

■ Rosena Brown
(Maghaberry)



■ Illustration by Davy Glennon (Long Kesh)

DURING A CONVERSATION on the wing recently one of the girls asked what a lurcher was. I, being a bit of a know-all, piped up and said, "Oh, that's a hunting dog, a cross between a greyhound and a Suzuki". The reply was: "Jesus, that must be the fastest dog on two wheels."

What I meant of course was a saluki, a type of high-bred, expensive foreign dog. At least that's what my husband told me the night he paid half my housekeeping money for one.

"Look at that lovely brindle

coat," he said, "sure he's worth his weight in gold."

"Well, I wouldn't bloody like to pawn him," I said, "he looks like a bag of bones to me".

He then had the cheek to tell me that it would pay for itself in a few weeks. "When I get him up

them mountains he'll catch every rabbit in the land, and think of all the money you'll save on grub then." The nearest it ever got to the mountains was a bus ride with me and the kids to Ligoniel Park.

As the time passed I became very fond of the owl mutt and his daily exercise was a trip to the shops, his lead tied to the handle of my big pram. One day as I was in the bakery I saw a few of 'Ardoynes' famous doggy men' standing over him.

I would have to admit that he looked pitiful compared to the beautiful lurchers they were sporting and I felt my face blush with shame. I only went into the bakery for a bap, but rather than face them I spent half an hour choosing a dozen buns. When I saw the coast was clear I made a hasty retreat towards home determined that I was going to make him into a showpiece if it cost me every penny I owned. Not that I intended entering him at Crufts or running him at Dunmore. I just didn't want to feel inferior or to be laughed at.

As I turned the corner I spotted the doggy men sitting on a wall and knew that they were waiting for me because they immediately blocked my path. I felt my fingers stiffening on the handles of the pram but I straightened my back and braced myself, prepared to defend my mutt against the insults about to be hurled at him. Well I couldn't have been more wrong. They were really very friendly and said they knew my dog when he was a pup. One of them told me that my dog was a brother to one of his, but that mine was always a faster runner. I felt more relaxed by then. I lied and said that my husband took him hunting in Donegal every weekend. I knew they didn't believe me but were kind enough to make no comment.

Then one of them said, "There's not much of a gloss on his coat love but I'll tell you what to get for that: black treacle." I thought he was having me on but they all nodded in agreement and away they went. Well who was I to argue with such reputable doggy men as these? So, armed with this advice I went to the nearest shop and purchased a tin of the said substance.

Imagine the look of horror on my husband's face when he came home from work and found me in tears and the poor mutt covered from head to tail with pieces of paper and fluff from the carpet stuck on clumps of thick black treacle. Sure how was I to know it was supposed to be mixed in his food? Needless to say he was packed off to the brother-in-law's over the hill (the dog that is, not the husband). ■

Costas na gcluichí ag baint an loinnir as an ór

TA MÉ CINNTE DE gur beag an brón a bheidh ar chuid mhaith daoine anois go bhfuil an maratón críochnaithe. Níl mé ag trácht ar na lúthchleasaithe a rith sa mharatón ar ndóigh ach ar lucht féachana na teilifíse agus an fiormharatón a d'fhuailing muid ar feadh 16 lá le linn mí Lúnasa. Ach, fiú mura bhfuil dúil agat in aon sórt spóirt, an bhféadfá a rá, gan smid bhréige, nár ghéill tú do tharraingt na teilifíse nuair a bhí an seó is mó ar chlár an domhain ar siúl.

Má thit an cathú sin ort, bhuel, thabharfaidh an fhaisnéis nach raibh tú i d'aonar, beagan sólais duit is dócha. Duine as na mílte milliúin de lucht féachana ar fud an domhain a bhí ionat agus is beag an t-ionadh é mar sin gur amharc muid ar na lúthchleasaithe agus na méain chumarsáide ag déanamh a seacht ndícheall aird an chine daonna a chur faoi dhraíocht. Is é tomhas a n-íarrachtaí gur íocadh \$600 milliúin as cearta craolaithe do na Cluichí Oilimpeacha i mBarcelóna na Catalóine — agus sin nua-éacht Oilimpeach nár chuala muid ar an bhosca. Níl sa \$600 milliúin sin ach infheistíocht ámh, agus sa mhéid sin tá leid dúinn nach mbíonn na coimhlinteoirí is cumhachtaí faoin spótsolas na ag glacadh páirte sin iomaíocht os comhair an tsaoil. Cé nach mbíonn siad le feiceáil i measc na lúthchleasaithe, bíonn na comhlachtaí ilnáisiúnaithe agus na gnólachtaí móra i láthair.

Is doiligh an t-am a shamhailt nuair nach raibh baint in aon chor ag an lucht gnó leis na himeachtaí móra agus go háirithe leis na Cluichí Oilimpeacha. Ach ní raibh an bhaint sin chomh lom soiléir is atá sí ar na saolta deireanacha. B'fhéidir go bhfuil an cónasc sin doscartha anois agus fiú dá mbeadh sé ar chumas aon duine an cónasc a scor, is cinnte go mbeadh an gnáthduine spóirt thíos leis an laghdú ar chaiteachas.

I saol an láe inniu, brathann marthanais — agus déarfadh cuid daoine, b'fhéidir caighdeán

— an spóirt ar an urraíocht a cuirtear isteach ó na comhlachtaí móra éagsúla. Greim thachta atá ag na tíortha is saibhre ar na Cluichí Oilimpeacha nua-aimseartha gan amhras. Mar sin de, tá an lámh in uachtar ag lucht an airgid agus de réir dlí gheilleagar an tsaormhargaidh tá an seanfhocal *"Is fearr an tsláinte ná na táinte"* bun os cionn ar fad. Leoga, tá beart ag lucht na fógraíochta cheana féin, le breis agus dhá uair an tsuim airgid a caitheadh ar fhógraíocht na gcluichí '92 a íoc as na Cluichí Oilimpeacha in Atlanta '96. Ach ní chreidim féin gur ionann sin is ag rá go bhfuil caighdeán na lúthchleasaíochta ag dul i bhfeabhais, agus is deacair a chreidiúint fiú go bhfuil a leithéid a dhéanamh ag an lucht gnó ar mhaithe le spiorad maith an spóirt agus cothrom na féinne a choinneáil beo san iomaíocht Oilimpeach í féin.

I mbliana ghlac breis agus 15,000 iomaitheoirí páirt sna cluichí. Ina measc bhí réaltaí leadóga Boris Becker, Stefan Edberg, Steffi Graf et al a bhfuil an-chlú agus na milliúin dollair tuille acu agus iad ag imirt ar an chiorca idirnáisiúnta. Ní hiad na réaltaí leadóga amháin a bhí ina n-imreoirí gairmiúla ach oiread. Chonaic muid *"The American Dream Team"* ag siúl gan stró tríd an chomórtas agus ag tógáil an bhoinn óir. Foireann cispheile atá ann agus níl duine ar an fhoireann sáraithe sin gan phingin ina phóca ach oiread. Ní déarfainn choíche nach bhfuil an caighdeán maireachtála a théann leis an

stadas gairmiúil tuille go maith acu go léir — ádh mór orthu — ach más é sin comhartha an ruda atá i ndán dúinn, is oth liom a rá gur tús an deiridh i lúthchleasaíocht amaitéarach, ar an tsuim idirnáisiúnta, a bhí os ár gcomhair i mBarcelóna na Catalóine.

Anois go bhfuil méadú ar ghnóithe spóirt á dtabhairt isteach, agus imreoirí gairmiúla san áireamh, is beag an baol nach mbainfidh na Stáit Aontaithe leas as an deis, beagan ar bheag, chun rath a chur ar an tír in 1996. Cé gurb é rath i gcursáil airgid an rud is tábhachtaí do na comhlachtaí ilnáisiúnacha, caithfidh siad an rath sin a thaispeáint do mhuintir na tíre i slí eile. Mar shampla, nuair a bhí an bua ag an t-Aontas Sóivéideach in aghaidh foirne cispheile SAM i

Seoul 1988, athraíodh na rialacha ionas nach dtuiseadh an rud céanna amach arís. I mbliana bhí an *Dream Team* i ngníomh in ionad na gnáthfhoirne amaitéaraí agus, ar ndóigh, d'éirigh leo.

I mbliana fosta, theip ar an fhoireann Meiriceánach in aghaidh na gCúbach i gcluiche náisiúnta na Stáit Aontaithe. Mar sin de, ba léir nach ndeachaigh an t-athrach deireanach fada go leor ar chor ar bith agus más mian leis na Stáit Aontaithe bheith fíorchinnite ar an bhua, agus iad ag imirt ina gcúlchlós féin sna Cluichí Oilimpeacha atá romhainn, ní foláir dóibh *Dream Team* eile a fháil. *Dream Team Baseball* a bheidh i ngníomh an uair seo ar ndóigh — beidh na Poncáinigh sa ríach dá mbeadh an bua ag na Cumannaithe athuair. ■

"We'd be pleased to supply translations of our Irish language articles as requested by JM Williams of Dyfed if he/she would send us his/her address."

Foclóir

ag baint an loinnir as an ór — taking the glitter out of the gold maratón — marathon lúthchleasaithe — athletes lucht féachana na teilifíse — television viewers gan smid bhréige — without a word of a lie nár ghéill tú do tharraingt na teilifíse — that you didn't succumb to the attraction of the television cathú — temptation beagan sólais duit — a wee bit of consolation to you na méain chumarsáide — the communications media tomhas — a measure cearta craolaithe — broadcasting rights nua-éacht Oilimpeach — new Olympic record infheistíocht — investment coimhlinteoirí — competitors iomaíocht — contest comhlachtaí ilnáisiúnacha — multinational companies gnólachtaí móra — big commercial firms lucht gnó — business people lom soiléir — blatantly obvious

cónasc — connection doscartha — inseparable laghdú ar chaiteachas — reduction in expenditure marthanais — survival caighdeán — standard urraíocht — sponsorship greim thachta — strangle hold dlí gheilleagar an tsaormhargaidh — the economic law of the free market lucht na fógraíochta — the advertising body cothrom na féinne — fair play réaltaí leadóga — tennis stars ar an chiorca idirnáisiúnta — on the international circuit imreoirí gairmiúla — professional players gan stró — no problem foireann cispheile — basketball team an caighdeán maireachtála — the standard of living stadass gairmiúil — professional status lúthchleasaíocht amaitéarach — amateur athletics gnéithe spóirt — forms of sport rath — prosperity SAM (Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá) — USA

Learning the hard way

■ Declan Moen
(Long Kesh)

IT IS OFTEN ASSUMED that Southerners are able to speak Irish or, at the very least, with the help of wild gesticulations, get their meaning across. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. The majority of students leave school after twelve years of intensive instruction with the bare bones of the language: a few prayers, "hello", "goodbye" and crucial social comments like "kiss my arse". Sadly, only certain ubiquitous phrases remain with them.

No one who has studied Irish will ever forget the terms *timiste bóthair* (road accident) or *lá cois farraige* (a day by the seaside), because you were under strict instructions from your teacher to include them in each and every essay. Other phrases linked to the national psyche are *sméara dubha* (blackberries) and *uachtar reoite* (ice cream) — in essays these two items were invariably eaten too quickly and made you sick.

Irish youngsters never simply ran; they ran ar nós na gaoithe (like the wind), presumably to get to the toilet after the feed of blackberries and ice cream at the seaside. (Of course, they never made it because they were run over by a bus.) I have no doubt that some people's talent for talking the least amount of sense with the maximum amount of effort stems from those days when they were expected to produce an original essay every Friday afternoon using these standard phrases.

I myself was unfortunate enough to be around in an era when children were taught by what can only be described as old fashioned techniques, where a second knowledge of child physiology was considered more important than an acquaintance with psychology. Areas of particular interest to teachers were the *lugis infammatitis* (ear hole), the *canus interruptus* (knuckles) and the *Jesus Godhelpus* (back of the head). With hindsight you can only admire the dedication to duty of these pedagogic specialists. Each teacher was recognised by his or her trademark; chalk dust on your jumper surely meant that you had been banged on the head with a chalk duster (must be where it got its name from) while a small red welt on your arm was a sign that you'd been viciously stabbed with a biro.

All this was accepted with an air of wearied tolerance. I used to think that these teaching methods had no long-term effect on young people but years later, upon receiving a sly box to the ear while being interrogated in Castlereagh, I had to bite my tongue to prevent myself blurting out the conditional tense of the verb "to be".

Nowadays in certain circles it's fashionable to talk about amending articles of the Irish Constitution. I must admit I am all in favour of amending Article eight (which proclaims Irish to be the official language of the State) to include a statement declaring that this must only be achieved through non-violent means.

So why the acceptable level of apathy towards Irish in the South? Even the most dedicated of teachers admit to a distinct lack of credibility, for the language carries a middle class stigma it certainly doesn't deserve. In the North the opposite is the case. Irish has become a badge of identity, and its growth is linked to its acceptance amongst working-class communities as something lively and robust. The language also suffers from the myth that it is somehow puritanical and staid, yet a glance at the centuries-old Irish classic "The Midnight Court" is proof of its earthiness. The eroticism there in would make a bishop blush, although perhaps these days that's not saying much.

One of the chief characteristics of Irish is that it can be so

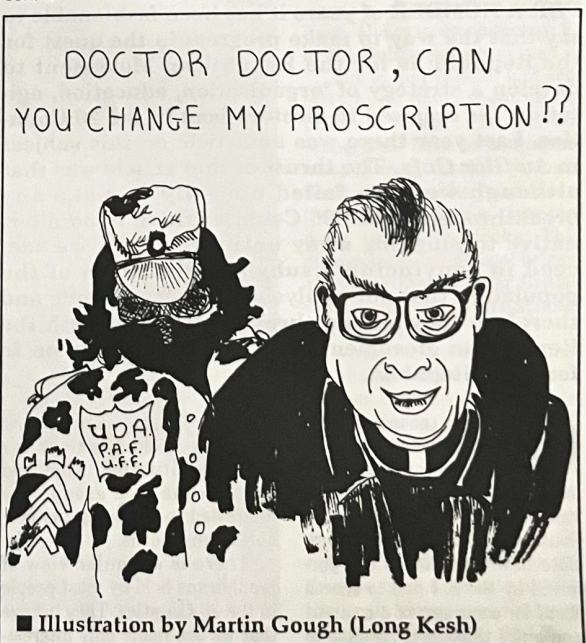
ambiguous and flexible that several meanings may derive from the one word or sentence. What teenager wouldn't appreciate a language his or her parents couldn't understand? Think of the advantages. With a bit of practice it should be possible ostensibly to announce, "I'm away to me bed", while in reality you're after declaring to the world your intent to drink stout in the bath with your girlfriend/boyfriend. If only the unionists were aware of the possibilities of this vagueness. With a wee bit of crafty translation Articles Two and Three could be transformed into a strident denunciation of Papism and all its works.

Such inventiveness did not impress our English visitors over the centuries as they systematically ensured that never again would Irish rise above the status of Official European Language. In a few rare cases the English language assimilated Irish terms, a topical example being the much maligned Tory (a member of the militant wing of the Conservative Party, I presume) which derives from *torai*, the name given to a particular brand of Irish guerrilla from centuries past.

Staunch loyalists would faint in horror if they realised that every time they fell into a sheugh or told someone to shut their gob, they were giving tacit approval to the forbidden tongue.

Here in the Kesh our own teachers thankfully don't subscribe to the maxim that a little pain never hurt anyone. More emphasis is placed upon spoken as opposed to shouted, mumbled or stuttered Irish. Grammar is conveniently ignored and the awkward boundaries of time and tense stretched in a manner which would confuse Stephen Hawking. Well, initially anyway. Progress can be rapid — Leinster House standard Irish is achieved in nine minutes, while within weeks the dizzy heights of Presidential Irish is attained. In some cases a complete cultural metamorphosis occurs: shell suits are abandoned for woollen sweaters, modern music is treated with haughty contempt (and by modern I mean anything less than 150 years old). People who a short while before confused the Chieftains with the Indians, and thought Sean Nós was a GAA commentator, now know the name of every blind harper who ever fell into an Irish pothole.

The more moderate Irish enthusiast avoids the fundamentalist approach and is content to learn at his or her leisure. It's enough to have broken away from the old teaching techniques and to approach Irish from a more rewarding and enjoyable angle. In the long run POWs can play vital role in the continued revival outside. But be warned — times have changed, you might even enjoy yourself. ■



■ Illustration by Martin Gough (Long Kesh)



● Will a campaign on Articles Two and Three present the opportunity to mobilise around British withdrawal?

The Lowest Common Denominator

■ Séanna Walsh
(Long Kesh)

FOR A NUMBER of years it has been fashionable to say that the way to make progress in the quest for the Republic is for the Republican Movement to develop a strategy of 'organisation, education, agitation' (as opposed to electoralism) in the 26 Counties. Last year there was an article on this subject in *An Glór Gafa*. The thrust of that article was that although we have failed dismally to make any breakthrough in the 26 Counties there is no alternative to plugging away until eventually we succeed in convincing a substantial section of the population that our analysis is the correct one and therefore they should throw in their lot with the Republican Movement and together we'll go on to forge the Republic.

On reading the article I felt there was something fundamental missing. I believe it is a lack of understanding of the people in the 26 Counties and a failure to appreciate how republicans are perceived by them. I had to search about for some sort of a comparison and I think it is possible to

use the comparison of how unionists in the Six Counties view the situation. They see republicans as a group only interested in removing the border, by any means.

There is a similar view of republicans held by most people in the 26 Counties. They believe that we are really only interest-

ed in forcing the Brits to withdraw, they don't seem to see anything else about us, at least nothing positive. And if any progressive republican does manage to win confidence and support in a local area on issues other than partition it usually isn't perceived as the Republican Movement being involved. Rather it's just that individual who also happens to be a republican, or maybe despite the fact that they're a republican, they're OK.

As long as partition exists as the gaping wound in the body politic of this island I don't believe it will be possible to bring about the necessary change in attitude that would help lead to increased action and support in the 26-County state for the Republican Movement. We will continue to be viewed as a one issue party. Having said that, I am in no way despondent or lacking in hope for the future. I don't believe that we first have to succeed in winning a substantial section of people to our cause by agitating around social issues before we can organise for "Brits Out". Time and again the majority of people in the 26 Counties have declared in favour of a British withdrawal. It is up to us to help initiate a

coalition which gives expression to that aspiration.

We should develop a strategy on two fronts, one which is straightforward and aimed at bringing about a Brit-less Ireland in the medium term. The other will be more complex and less straightforward but will entail involvement in that vast array of issues — social, economic and cultural — which will hopefully lead to a socialist republic in the long term.

As regards the armed struggle, it's not enough for the authors of the article to say that it poses no problems for the people of the 26 Counties. It certainly does and we must be very careful in how we conduct the struggle.

So where does this leave us? In the short to medium term we are back at the stage where all the elements — individuals, organisations and forces — which oppose the British presence in our country must be harnessed into one broad loose entity which has a common purpose and rallies around the lowest common denominator, 'Brits Out'. Perhaps a campaign in defence of Articles Two and Three would present an opportunity to mobilise this combination of people.

Meanwhile, on our long-term strategy of striving to create the New Ireland, we have to keep plugging away, convincing, arguing, developing our case and fighting our corner, on the shopfloor, in strike committees, on tenants' associations and community groups throughout the rural villages and sprawling housing estates of the 26 Counties. This is part and parcel of being a republican and increasing our constituency and support base in the country. However, the constraints on resources, both human and material, sometimes mean that choices must be made. In that event our shorter term goal should always have first call.

With the resultant realignment of political forces in the wake of British disengagement it may just be possible to forge a radical political alliance. Until then, keep our sights on the ending of partition and its related campaigns — the lowest common denominator. ■

LEGAL SKULDUGGERY

■ Joe Doherty (Long Kesh)

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE that I have been in the H-Blocks for six months. The half year since my political deportation from the USA has done wonders for my ever-fading New York accent. The lads in H3 made sure of that.

Much has happened. The NIO rewarded my return by refusing to honour my nine years spent in US prisons, which incidentally were at the behest of the British Foreign Office. Sir Patrick Mayhew at the NIO recommended that my US time could be considered when I come before the Life Sentence Review Board (LSRB), in 2001, my 19th year. After that date... well!

I shouldn't say 'when I come before the LSRB' because we lifers are not present at the board nor do we have any dealings in the decision-making process. We are not afforded that right. Behind closed doors an amalgam of prison officials, politicians and security representatives discuss and determine the lifer's release based upon political considerations.

A life friend was recently informed by the LSRB that although enough time was served in retribution he would nonetheless be refused release based upon those secret and unapproachable reports.

Another increasingly common development has afflicted a number of lifers. They are recommended for release by the LSRB and their case passed to the judiciary and the NIO for a final decision. This was once a formality but is now a second political obstacle put in a lifer's path. Six to eight months after the LSRB decision a verbal yes or no is received from the NIO via the No 1 governor. One lifer was knocked back for a further two years with no explanation given. Those who are told yes are released within days. It is

cruel brinkmanship for lifers and their family and friends.

The inequities of those back-room special courts include non-access to secret reports, no legal representative or rebuttal of alleged charges, and no written or explanatory statements on denial of release.

But I shall concern myself with that problem in 2001. My immediate concern was settling in H4, the block to which I have been moved. Most prisoners must endure half-yearly forced block moves. My turn came last week.

The last weeks in H3 were unsettling, as was adjusting to the environment of my new block. Physically, the block move was annoying, to say the least, as I packed and unpacked, refitted photos, sorted out books, clothes and all the other assorted republican POW junk. I was exhausted.

I did give a sympathetic glance to Bik McFarlane and Tom McAllister, two Red Book men in H4 who are forced to endure this ordeal every six weeks. While I acknowledged the burdensome feat of these block moves, only the Red Book men could understand the psychological stress of these regu-

lar and arbitrary moves.

It was good to meet up again with Beaky McKee. The last time I saw him we were doing our Sebastian Coe impressions running up the Crumlin Road, screws in hot pursuit. Since then Beaky has been involved in some of his own legal entanglements. Sir Patrick Mayhew gave him a flinthearted reward similar to my own and refused to honour his time spent in Portlaoise Prison.

Beaky was arrested in Dublin in 1982 under an extra-territorial agreement — the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act — for the Crumlin Road escape. After serving a ten-year sentence in Portlaoise Prison for the escape, he was rearrested upon release and served with a British extradition warrant for his original Belfast charges. Released on bail, Beaky fought his extradition on the grounds that the charges were political. He eventually won his case.

During the hearings in Dublin the NIO and RUC stated for the court record that Beaky's years in Portlaoise would be credited to his original Belfast sentence and that he would only face a remaining 16 months if extradited.

Beaky won his case in the High Court and came back to live in Belfast with his family. He was arrested shortly afterwards and was taken to Long Kesh. His case was later upheld by the Dublin Supreme Court.

But lo and behold, and contrary to its commitment on the public record, the British reneged on their stated agreement to credit Beaky's years in Portlaoise. Now he must face a further eight years of imprisonment in the H-Blocks. This disingenuous act of legal betrayal follows that of other British violations of international agreements.

While Beaky and I discuss the circumstances of this deceit, another Crumlin Road escapee, Angelo Fusco, awaits the outcome of an extradition case in Dublin and may face, yet again, a similar act of legal skulduggery. What will the Dublin government do in protecting the rights of Angelo and what will they do to remonstrate against the gross violations of international agreements? Guess! ■



● Beaky McKee — flint hearted rewards

My Daddy

Where is your daddy?
Does he not live with you?
Is he away?
Or, are the papers true?

Has he gone to 'That Place'
For a couple of years?
I remember when he left,
I saw you shed some tears.

Yes! He's gone to 'That Place',
But I just call it jail.
Now sit down here
And I'll tell you the tale.

He was framed.
The cops did it — you see,
They wanted him in jail,
And not to be free.

My mother fought hard,
For his innocence to be claimed.
But all that they wanted,
Was for him to be framed.

I didn't hide my head,
I was proud of him — you see.
Because I knew one day,
That he would be with me.

Now think of the story,
Which I had just told,
Because I know one thing,
I'll remember it when I'm old.

■ Aisling Murray aged 13 (Fermanagh)

■ Barry Murray, Aisling's father, was framed by the RUC (see The Mysterious Disappearing Notes on page 17) and is now serving an 18 year sentence in Long Kesh.

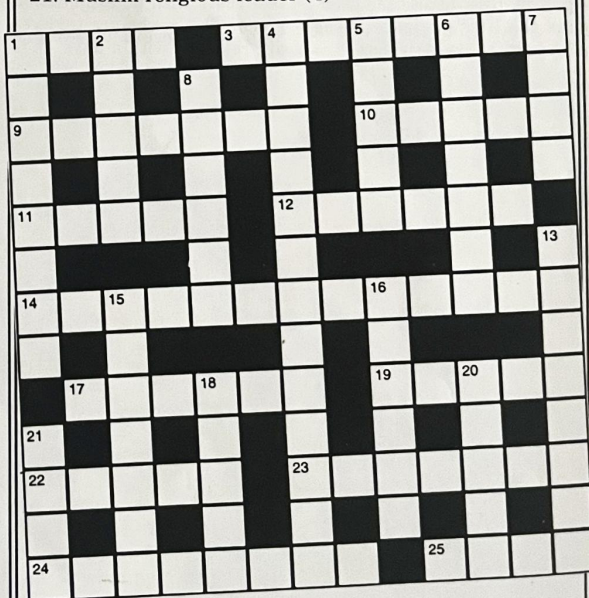
Crossword

Across

1. 23 across has only one (4)
3. Applaud an ambush? Nonsense! (8)
9. Pasta dish (7)
10. Exaggeratedly modest person (5)
11. Small island (5)
12. Native of Middle Eastern country (5)
14. Deserving reproof (13)
17. Sew (6)
19. Fold in cloth (5)
22. Damp (5)
23. Mythical creature (7)
24. One who disobeys orders (8)
25. Shout (4)

Down

1. Cross-country runners (8)
2. Adversary (5)
4. Parliament building (8,5)
5. Pay him and call the tune (5)
6. Plant usually eaten for dessert (7)
7. Victim (4)
8. Small beard (6)
13. Nestle in around the guard (8)
15. Wee Patrick before the disturbance is the country's hero (7)
16. Infected with blood poisoning (6)
18. Greek god (5)
20. Wear away (6)
21. Muslim religious leader (4)



ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1. Horn; 3. Claptrap; 9. Rawloli; 10. Prude; 11. Islet; 12. Syrtan; 14. Reprehensible; 17. Stitch; 19. Pleat; 22. Pleat; 23. Uni-corn; 24. Mutineer; 25. Yell.
DOWN: 1. Harriers; 2. Rival; 4. Leinster House; 5. Piper; 6. Rhubarb; 7. Prey; 8. Goatee; 13. Sentinel; 15. Patriot; 16. Septic; 18. Titan; 20. Erode; 21. Imam.

Traffic Control

Gerry Hanratty was recently extradited from Germany (after spending three and a half years in jail there) to the Six Counties. Here he describes his arrival at the Crumlin Road Jail.

GETTING OUT of the RUC van in Crumlin Road's courtyard I thought of my mother walking across the same stone cobbles in August 1942 to visit a young republican who at the time was sentenced to death. The cold exterior of the Victorian façade has changed none since then.

Strolling into the reception area I saw wall-to-wall POs and SOs (Principal Officers and Senior Officers) and I thought, "Jesus, they must think me a special delivery". But no, it was only my first sight of material changes since I was last here, eight years ago. Then, only POs and SOs wore fancy white shirts, now every screw wears one.

In reception I thought I'd touched for a clatter of decent screws as there was none of the usual barked orders and sectarian small talk. But from the reception to the base in D Wing the pattern was the same with all screws.

"Alright mate? You'll see some changes here."

"Just leave your bag there and we'll get you grubbed up."

Everybody being polite and civil made me more paranoid of the screws' motives. Something is seriously wrong here, I thought to myself. Leopards don't find it easy to change their spots, so why are screws being nice?

After two of what I'm told are interviews and a two-day spell in what I'm told is an assessment unit, I'm on my way to what I'm told is A Division Paramilitary Wing. The journey from D to A Wing left me dazzled because of the professional manner with which the screws carried out the job of traffic control (these guys have obviously the job qualifications for employment in any major airport traffic control department).

"D Wing airlock, one RC coming through for A Division."

"OK, sign him in and go ahead."

"Circle, one RC for A Division."

"No, hold him, we've mixers moving from C Wing."

One minter later: "OK, send him on."

"A Division circle gate, one RC for A Division."

"Hold him, I've three Prods moving from visits."

One minute later: "OK, take him through."

"A Division airlock, I've one RC for you."

"That's a hold, we've Prods at the doctor."

"A Division, I've gotta get this RC in as I've two Prods from B Division going into visits."

"OK, send that RC in."

And so on, right up to the top of A Wing. There the Class Officer (the ordinary grade screw in charge of a landing) takes me directly to a cell and tells me: "Grab your cup and

■ **Gerry Hanratty**
(Crumlin Road)

knife, fork and spoon. Your crowd are in the canteen".

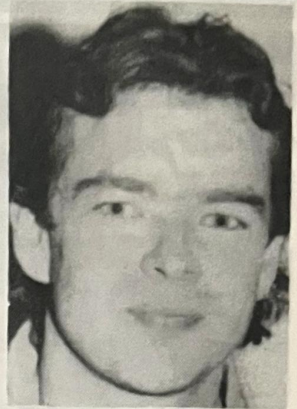
I meet and greet a guy from the Murph (Ballymurphy) at the hotplate and he tells me to come into the canteen with him in case any of the men think I'm a loyalist.

Friendly faces — faces I know — hugs and greetings. "How are ya, Gerry?", "Fuckin' flabbergasted mate, that's what I am."

But I'm home and it feels like release to be among so many comrades. I'm home and the screws are no longer openly sectarian bigots — they have developed into a breed they themselves term "piggies in the middle" — they have also mastered the art of cop-out excuses.

I'm home and the pageants, plays, singsongs and high morale of the republican community is a gift to me — a gift stolen from prisoners overseas.

I'm home and the body of Tom Williams, who was executed and buried within the prison in 1942, lies thirty yards from where I write. I'm only here some weeks and already I know Governor Semple is defeated in his attempt to force integration



● **GERRY HANRATTY** on the political prisoners here. He doesn't understand the development of our courage in the revolutionary way forward. He doesn't know of our understanding that the word and not the icon came first — he and the traffic controllers can't fathom how we are protected by our trees of poetry, our books and wealth of love in what we believe and love. They don't realise that Donncha, Pauline, Donna and Pat lie in German jails as we lie in this, our protected, Irish, islands, rocks that are unbreakable, just as the words of Tom Williams 50 years ago and the proud step of generations who have tread the unchanged prison yard to visit loved ones is unbreakable. ■



● Revolutionary courage has defeated forced integration in Crumlin Road Jail already



Miscarriages of Justice

FOLLOWING THE well-publicised cases of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Maguires, Judith Ward, the UDR Four, and Nicky Kelly, a lot of people must have wondered why there were no similar cases among the nationalist community in the Six Counties. Within the community that has borne the brunt of repression and seen so many of its men and women go to jail, can it really be true that none of them has been framed? Have none of them been convicted on the basis of false and perjured evidence? Have they never been forced to sign concocted statements?

Of course there are innocent people in Jail in the Six Counties. Many of them. Within the RUC there appear to be a few qualms about fitting up an

innocent nationalist. A 93% Protestant force is well used to mixing sectarianism with a desire to clear their books. If that also strikes fear into the nationalist community, so much the better. Allied to that is the often repeated claim — based on RUC disinformation — that the RUC “*knows exactly who the terrorists are*”, leading to the false assumption that the right people have been convicted, even if the evidence against them is less than convincing.

Why then has there not been

a confusion of headlines championing a Strabane Two or a Falls Road Five? There are a number of reasons.

The first link in the chain of injustice is the closed society of the RUC. If a group of detectives swear that a suspect made a verbal admission there is no one going to break ranks and expose the perjury. No Diplock judge in the Six Counties — without exception — is going to disbelieve an RUC witness, and that often when the evidence against him/her is entirely clear cut.

Virtually no lawyers will speak out against the morally and legally bankrupt system because they are not only ideologically wedded to the defence of the state but they can recognise a lifelong gravy train when they see one. Those who do speak out are liable to be set up by the RUC and British Intelli-



gence in the same way Pat Finucane was.

The standard of evidence required to secure a conviction in a Diplock Court is much lower than in a court in Britain. Diplock Courts allow for "a degree of oppressive questioning" (in other words, brutality) unacceptable in a non-Diplock Court.

Suspects are not allowed access to a solicitor until 48 hours after their arrest.

There is of course no jury and the judge is politically opposed to nationalism and to republicanism (some Diplock judges are former prominent members of the Unionist Party).

A suspect has no right to silence. If he/she remains silent when being questioned by the RUC and/or does not give evidence in court, the judge may draw an inference of guilt. Why should someone have the right to remain silent? Because if a court can infer guilt from someone's refusal to answer questions, the rule that the state must both bring and prove the case becomes a nonsense. It brings to an end the presumption that someone is innocent until proved guilty. Also, historical experience shows that to compel answers to questions

leads to injustice, repression and, in some instances, to tyranny.

The Diplock system is a counter-insurgency process. With a corrupt and brutal police force, a lower standard of evidence required and a case-hardened judge sitting without a jury, a conviction is much easier to obtain in Diplock Court. And it is therefore much more difficult to prove a convicted person innocent.

In order for a conviction to be overturned an innocent person must furnish new evidence or discredit the evidence on which they were convicted. This has proved a difficult problem. For example, in 75-80% of cases it is estimated that the prosecution case has depended wholly or substantially on confession evidence. While it has been shown — from the 1970s to very recently — that the RUC uses ill-treatment and torture to secure confessions, not one nationalist has had their conviction overturned on that basis.

However, over the last few years a number of events have come together to change the climate for those campaigning against miscarriages of justice and to give new hope to innocent people languishing in jail.

The first of these was the emergence of ESDA testing.

ESDA — Electro-Static Document Analysis — is a forensic technique which allows a scientist to read indentations on paper. It is possible for a person to write on the top sheet of a writing pad and for a scientist to read the indentations on the sheets underneath. It is therefore possible to determine whether RUC interrogation notes have been fabricated or parts of them rewritten some time after the interrogation. ESDA testing helped secure the release of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the UDR Four.

A number of prisoners in Long Kesh have asked the RUC to release their original interrogation notes to be ESDA tested. The replies have been devastating to the credibility of the RUC and point towards a massive cover-up (see box).

The second climate-changing event was the incredible list of innocent people (mainly in Britain) released over the past two years. After years of often demoralising work by many dedicated campaigners, the judicial system finally had to own up to miscarriages of justice. No longer can campaigners be dismissed as crypto-Provos who tell outlandish lies when they say that British justice jails innocent people. The case of the UDR Four convinced many sceptics that if it could happen to them, it could certainly happen to nationalists.

One major lesson from these successful campaigns is that each case must be fought inch by inch. Even though the system is ultimately at fault, overturning a conviction is a painstaking legal task in each individual case. What is also clear, however, is that while the Diplock system remains in place, miscarriages of justice will continue.

A large number of cases from the Six Counties have been taken up by civil liberties groups and on the following pages we highlight a selection of these miscarriages of justice.

There is a need for public support and widespread publicity for those wrongly convicted.

Gone are the days of behind-the-scenes influence and cocktail party contacts favoured by figures in the Catholic Church, the SDLP and the nationalist middle class. The Birmingham Six and others know the bankruptcy of that approach. Only through maximum support and publicity will justice be done. Everyone in the Six counties has an interest in seeing innocent people released. It is no exaggeration to say that they or someone close to them could be a victim one day.

As we write, five young men from the Beechmount area of Belfast face trial after being forced to sign false confessions in Castlereagh interrogation centre. They weren't born when the Diplock Courts came into existence, but their cases show that a familiar pattern is being repeated and Diplock's miscarriage of justice is set to reach into a new generation. (See footnote at end of article)

Case No 1

Name: Patrick

Livingstone

Charge: Murder

Sentence: Natural Life

In December 1975, Pat Livingstone was arrested in Dundalk in the 26 Counties for an alleged assault on a Garda. While being held in Dundalk barracks before a court appearance he was told he had visitors. He was brought to a room and locked in with three men who introduced themselves as RUC detectives from Belfast. They said they wanted to question him about the fatal shooting of Samuel Llewelyn in Belfast. He refused to acknowledge their questions and banged on the door to be let out. After about three minutes the door was opened and Pat was returned to a holding cell.

In September 1976, Pat was arrested in Newry and charged with possession of an arms cache (a charge on which he was later acquitted). While in hospital recovering from injuries received in Bessbrook barracks after his arrest, he was charged with the murder of Samuel Llewelyn.

The only evidence against Pat was a brief verbal admission he is alleged to have made

to the three RUC detectives in Dundalk barracks. He has consistently denied having made it. His trial in May 1977, began at 11.00am, there was a one hour break for lunch, and by 3.10pm he had been found guilty and sentenced to natural life. His appeal in September 1977, lasted for 10 minutes and his conviction was upheld.

Case No 2

Name: Eddie Harkin

Charge: Murder

Sentence: Life

In 1977 following a bomb explosion in Derry in which a British soldier was killed, Eddie Harkin was arrested and taken to Strand Road barracks in Derry. During his detention he was subjected to various forms of torture and forced to sign concocted statements admitting to being involved in the killing of the soldier. Eddie was examined in Strand Road by an RUC doctor and his family doctor, and by a prison doctor on his admission to Crumlin Road Jail. All the doctors noted his extensive injuries.

At his trial the only evidence against Eddie was the statements. These, he said, had been obtained following ill-treatment, and this he backed up with evidence from the three doctors. The weakness of the prosecution case was shown by the fact that Crown lawyers offered a "plea bargain" whereby Eddie would get a sentence of 15-18 years if he pleaded guilty to lesser charges. He refused to plead guilty to something he was entirely innocent of.

The trial judge rejected Eddie's defence because, in his opinion, it was "too plausible" and he believed Eddie had inflicted the injuries himself. He found him guilty and sentenced him to life imprisonment with a recommendation that he serve 25 years.

Since his conviction Eddie has protested his innocence and following publicity surrounding the application of the ESDA test (see box on page 17) he attempted to have his interrogation notes and "confessions" tested so that evidence of wrongdoing

could be gathered. He was informed by the RUC that his notes could not be found.

Case No 3

Name: Seán McKinley

Charge: Murder

Sentence: Life

In March 1987, a British soldier was killed in the Divis Flats complex when a grenade was dropped from a flat onto the jeep in which he was travelling. Three weeks later Seán McKinley and his brother were arrested in Seán's flat in Divis on suspicion of having stolen property. They were held for two hours in Grosvenor Road barracks, released and immediately rearrested and taken to Castlereagh interrogation centre where they were questioned about the attack on the jeep. (They later won damages from the RUC for wrongful arrest on suspicion of having stolen property.)

Seán made a number of verbal admissions in relation to the attack. These, he says, were made "not because I was guilty of anything, but through fear, suggestions, threats that my brother would be charged, and because of acts of brutality against me". He states that detectives "tailored" his admissions, that they left the interrogation room and returned "after checking out details of what I was saying against what they knew of the incident already, and in my presence [they] altered my 'version' so as to suit the facts". He says he made the admissions without knowledge of the details of the attack.

During Seán's trial in May 1988, a number of inconsistencies arose in the prosecution case. One of the alleged verbal admissions was shown to be a fiction when it was proved that Seán could not have been a lookout from the position he was alleged to have been in, because it would have been impossible to observe the jeeps approaching the flats complex. Also, because Seán is only 5 feet tall it was further proved that he could not have observed the jeeps outside the complex.

The prosecution then put a new interpretation on his statements and said he was on the

stairway for a different reason, that is to warn the attackers of British army foot patrols entering the stairway. They alleged that he shouted a warning that the jeeps were inside the flats complex. Yet the complex at that time was swarming with soldiers on foot. One soldier who was on the ground level below Seán's flat testified in court that he heard no such warning shouted.

The judge accepted the prosecution arguments and found Seán guilty of murder.

Seán has recently instructed his solicitor to subject the RUC interrogation notes to Electro-Static Document Analysis and syntax examination in a bid to prove that his verbal admissions were written by RUC detectives.

Case No 4

Name: Dermot Quinn

Charge: Attempted murder

Sentence: 25 years

At 8.30pm on 13 April 1988, two RUC detectives were shot in an ambush near Armagh. An hour later Dermot Quinn was arrested six miles away in his employer's car. He was taken to Gough barracks interrogation centre in Armagh where he was held for seven days before being charged with attempted murder. He made no written or verbal statements.

The evidence against Dermot consisted of statements from the owners of a car hi-jacked after the ambush, fibres allegedly from a balaclava from this car were said to be linked to Dermot, and firearm residue was said to be present in his coat pocket.

The charges were dropped on 27 September 1988, when the owners of the car refused to give evidence at a preliminary enquiry.

On 14 November 1988, the Criminal Evidence (NI) Order came into effect. This included two new pieces of legislation which (a) removed a person's right to silence, and (b) empowered the court to admit as evidence statements from witnesses who later wished to withdraw their statements or who refused to testify in court.

On 16 July 1990, Dermot was rearrested. After a few hours in Gough Barracks (during which he requested and was refused access to a solicitor) the same charges, based on the same evidence, were laid before him.

The witnesses told a judge that they would not give evidence in a non-jury Diplock Court. Their unsworn statements from 1988 were then submitted as evidence.

The witness statements were central to the prosecution case if it could be established that the balaclava found in the car hijacked after the ambush was forensically linked to Dermot (even then, it was never clearly established that the car was hijacked by those involved in the ambush). However, during the trial the forensic evidence was shown to be fatally flawed.

Thirty nine black acrylic fibres similar to those from the balaclava were found in Dermot's hair at the time of his arrest in 1988, but only six had actually been forensically tested. Under cross-examination the forensic scientist, appearing from the prosecution, admitted that the pullover Dermot had been wearing at the time of his arrest would likely have contained the same type of black acrylic fibres. Yet his pullover had not been examined to establish if it was the source of the fibres in his hair, a possibility the forensic scientist agreed should have been considered. It could also have explained why none of Dermot's hair was found in the balaclava.

It was shown that the 'firearm residue' could have been in Dermot's pocket for three years or more. Furthermore, it was stated that as Dermot was from a rural area, he often hunted with shotguns and the residue could have been left by shotgun cartridges.

Dermot and his employer both went into the witness box and testified that Dermot was working at the time of the ambush.

The trial judge rejected both Dermot's and his employer's evidence, saying they were both telling lies. He used Section 3 (removal of the right

to silence) to infer guilt, even though Dermot had been interrogated for only a few hours and had not been allowed to see a solicitor (during his arrest in 1988 the right to silence was in effect). Dermot was found guilty and sentenced to 25 years.

Case No 5

Name: **Brian McLarnon**
Charge: **Possession of weapons with intent to endanger life**

Sentence: **18 years**

On 26 January 1989, a plain clothes RUC patrol followed a car containing three men to a house in Coalisland. They kept the house and car under surveillance. Five minutes later Brian McLarnon arrived and went into the house. He emerged a few minutes later with one of the three men and they drove off in Brian's car.

Inside the house, hidden behind a sealed panel in the bathroom, was an arms cache. Brian and the three men were arrested and charged with possession of the arms. Forensic evidence linked the three men to the cache, but there was no such evidence against Brian.

In Gough barracks interrogation centre, Brian's solicitor at first advised him to remain silent, then on a second visit suggested he make a written statement stating the innocent nature of his visit to the house. At the start of his next interrogation session Brian asked for a pen and paper and told the detectives that he wished to make a statement. Instead, the interview ended suddenly and he was then charged. On 1 February, a magistrate ordered the RUC to take a written statement from Brian and this was done in Crumlin Road Jail.

In his statement, Brian said

he had gone to the house to give a message to the owner of the house. While he was there one of the three men asked him if he'd give him a lift to a friend's house, he agreed and they left. He denied any knowledge of the arms. He had been in the house for two minutes.

The RUC found a photograph of Brian in the house along with letters he had written to members of the family, thus proving that the occupants of the house were known to him and he could have been there for an innocent purpose.

The prosecution case was that the three men became aware of the RUC patrol, panicked, drove to the house and dumped the weapons. Brian and the man he left with were trying to lure the RUC from the area, they said.

Taking advice from his barrister, Brian did not give evidence at his trial because he did not believe the prosecution had a case against him. However, the judge used Section 9 of the NI (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978, to say that because he was in the house he had knowledge of the weapons and control over them. He further drew an inference of guilt when he used Articles 3 (removal of the right to silence) and 4 (refusing to give evidence) of the Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1988, to say that Brian had not given an explanation for his presence in the house. He rejected the written statement as not credible.

Brian writes: "With such draconian legislation as Articles 3 and 4, the law of the land has been turned on its head. An accused now has to prove himself innocent and what might be called suspicion has now become evidence of overwhelming guilt. Remove Articles 3 and 4 from this case and what we are left with is a guilt verdict because I happened to be in this house for two minutes." ■

The Mysterious Disappearing Notes

If a convicted prisoner wishes to have his/her interrogation notes ESDA-tested as part of having their conviction reconsidered, they must apply to the RUC Chief Constable who has the authority to permit or refuse the tests.

A number of prisoners have applied to have the tests done. To date, only five have received an answer other than an acknowledgement of the application. Four have been told that, after "a diligent and thorough search", the relevant documents cannot be found. The fifth has been told that the RUC is unwilling to let his papers be tested, as setting such a precedent would lead to the opening of floodgates to requests from other prisoners.

RUC detectives who interrogated the UDR Four were involved in interrogations in three of the four cases where the notes have gone missing. The fourth case is that of Eddie Harkin (see page 15).

In addition to these four cases of "missing" notes we

have the equally disturbing circumstances surrounding the conviction of Barry Murray. His was the first case in which ESDA testing was used in a Diplock Court. He was convicted entirely on the basis of unsigned, uncorroborated and totally disputed "verbal admissions". The ESDA testing showed that substantial rewriting had taken place. Despite this he was convicted.

Prior to his appeal he applied to have further ESDA tests carried out. He was told that none of the documentation could be found. His appeal was dismissed. It has now emerged that at least one RUC detective from the UDR Four case was involved in the rewriting of Barry Murray's interrogation notes.

Casement Accused

In our next we look the case of The Casement Accused — the punishment of an entire community, where 41 people have being convicted on the most dubious evidence of offences arising out of the killing of two British corporals at the funeral of Volunteer Caoimhín Mac Brádaigh in West Belfast, March 1988.

Footnote: On 1 May 1991, RUC Sergeant Stephen Gillespie was killed as a result of an IRA gun and rocket attack in the Beechmount area of Belfast.

Five young men, Liam Coogan (18), Mark Prior (19), Jim McCabe (19), Kevin Mulholland (17) and Laurence Hillick (17) were arrested and forced to sign statements in Castlereagh that they were involved as look-outs at the time of the attack.

The "Beechmount Five" are currently on remand in Crumlin Road Prison and are due to go on trial as we go to press.

Quotes

"Complex issues of great significance were at stake. People were being asked to make decisions [in regard to the Maastricht Treaty] which had major implications for the future of this State. Yet very little attempt was made by the Government to provide voters with the range of information required to make these decisions.

"The Government produced a White Paper on the treaty. A summary document was circulated to households throughout the country. Both documents were, for the most part, partisan presentations of the case for a Yes vote." **For Seán Healy, director of the justice office of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors, speaking at a conference on "Power, Participation and Exclusion". 23/9/92**

"The SDLP, on more than one occasion, has asserted that the British no longer have any selfish interest in maintaining the union between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. But this is not, in fact, the case. In the last general election, the Prime Minister made clear that he was 'a unionist'. His declaration about the integrity of the United Kingdom was directed, in the first instance, to Scotland. However, if there was a settlement in the 'nationalist interest' in Ireland, that might provide the momentum necessary to provoke the end of the 1707 union between Scotland and England. Should that happen presumably Welsh nationalists would also be thereby encouraged to seek for an end of their old alliance with their eastern neighbour.

"In other words, the present territorial arrangements are very much in English interests. The loss of Northern Ireland, followed by Scotland from the UK would be a serious blow to English prestige in world affairs, struggling, as it is, to exercise influence as a political and economic power, no longer of the first order.

"It is, therefore, in Britain's long-term interests to hold onto Northern Ireland. That is why we have, in the person of the secretary of state and his security minister, Michael Mates, two of the most determined unionists to have occupied government office in Northern Ireland since 1972. Britain is not a neutral party, arbitrating between the squabbling factions of northern Irish unionism and nationalism; it, too, is a serious contender in the conflict." **Oliver Rafferty SJ, writing in The Irish News. 29/9/92**

"By branding the native Irish as sectarian and racist, [Dr Roy] Foster [a leading revisionist historian] has constructed a subliminal argument for separation — for acceptance of the 'two nations' theory and of a partitioned Ireland. In short, one has an argument for an

acceptance of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, and for the abolition of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution.

"One cannot but feel that a finer regard for source material would result in entirely different conclusions: unity amidst diversity rather than separation and partition would appear to be indicated by the historical evidence. The 'two nations' theory would stand rejected and doubts cast upon the authenticity of partition. Respect for the two races, two cultures and the two religions that exist on the island of Ireland would be matched by a recognition that these differences were best reconciled within the perimeter of one country." **From a speech by Dr Brian Murphy OSB given at the Desmond Greaves Summer School in which he showed that much revisionist history is based on erroneous use of source material. Irish Times. 24/9/92**

"People in Southern Ireland seem to think that being sophisticated and modern means self-professed ignorance of their history — laughing at their grandmothers' bare feet." **Bernadette McAliskey. Irish Times. 1/9/92**

"Some intractable cynics expressed unease at the alacrity with which the southern political establishment donned the robes of office and knuckled down to the business of running their wee free state [following the 1921 Treaty]. More recently that unease has changed to alarm and spread among even the most complacent.

"The censorship of any expression of republican sentiment, the enthusiasm and resources with which the border is defended, the introduction of political extradition, the total disinterest in the plight of victims of miscarriages of justice and, worst of all, the revision and distortion of our history to accommodate all of these, fuel our worst fears." **Dr Anne McCloskey, Secretary, Forum 2 & 3, a group set up to defend Articles 2 & 3. The Sunday Press. 4/10/92**

"By this time [5.00pm on 'Black Wednesday'], Treasury bitterness with the Bundesbank was high. One official asked another how the Treasury delegation would travel to Brussels that night. 'The RAF are taking them,' he was told. 'Let's hope they get out their World War II maps of Dusseldorf before they go,' the official retorted." **Good to see the old bulldog spirit shining through. The Independent on Sunday. 20/9/92**

Prison News... Prison News... Prison News...

Bringing them all back home

POWs in England are still applying for, and still being refused, transfer to jails in the Six Counties. The relatives of those prisoners must still travel to England to visit their loved ones and, because of that, they are forced into debt, harassed under the PTA, followed and intimidated and suffer the stress of long separations and difficult journeys. Some have been refused permission to travel and others find the POW 'ghosted' to a prison hundreds of miles away when they arrive to visit.

The campaign to highlight the injustices of the British government's refusal to allow prisoners to be transferred continues with press articles, lobbying of politicians and pressure from professional organisations.

Intellectually and morally the argument for prison transfers is won. Irish political prisoners are kept in English jails on savagely long sentences as hostages.

The pressure that has been put on the British government has forced them to be seen to be doing something. They have established a civil service investigation under a Lord Ferrers to examine the issue of prison transfers from England to the Six Counties.

Ferrers' report was due for publication in autumn 1991. The British have delayed, stonewalled and spread rumours about imminent publication. While it is significant that they are having to be seen to give the issue consideration, the delaying tactic has been a clever one. It has effectively prevented many professional organisations and politicians from putting on as much pressure as they might have because the British continually reassure them that the matter is in hand and being properly considered.

It is clear that only sustained legal and political pressure will force them to allow transfers. To this end there are 14 cases currently lodged with the European Commission on Human Rights alleging breaches of:

Article 8: The right to respect for family life;

Article 13: The right not to be discriminated against;

Article 14: The right to legal redress.

These cases have now reached the stage where the British government has been forced by the European Commission to state their reasons for refusing to allow transfers of Irish political prisoners.

This is an historic decision as the British have never before been forced to justify their refusal on transfers. The cases still have a long way to go before they reach the European court but the vital first stage has been won.

Committee for Transfer of Irish Prisoners,

PO Box 303,
Tomb Street,
Belfast BT1.

Strip Search Update

The punishment of women prisoners in Maghaberry Jail is still continuing after the forced strip search of 21 republican women prisoners on 2 March, 1992.

The women receive only one hour of exercise per day and they have no inter-

landing association in the evenings. They are permitted to associate only with the six other prisoners on their own landings, whereas on the male side of Maghaberry Prison, up to 70 men can associate together.

Education classes are severely restricted with the administration constantly cancelling classes on the pretext of staff shortages.

All material is heavily censored, even the local community newspaper. Any literature with radical political content or coverage of controversial issues is sent to the Northern Ireland Office for clearance; this results in delays of up to several weeks.

Crumlin Road Update

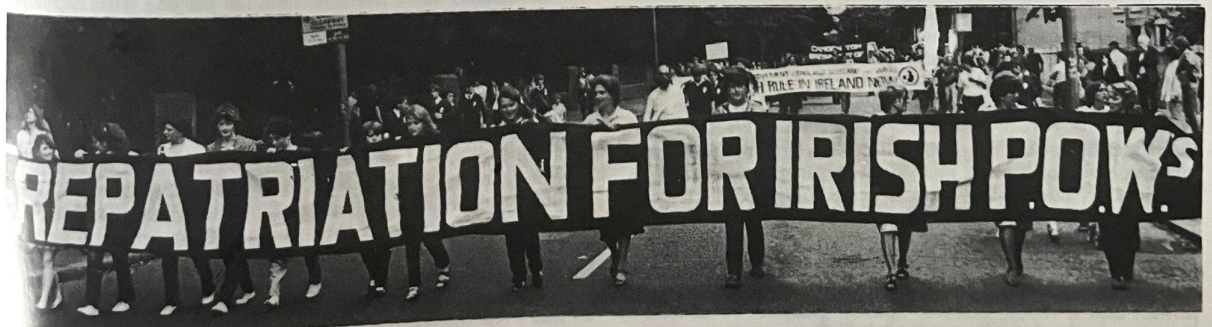
In the day before the Twelfth of July there were four incidents of loyalists attacking republicans. There were no serious injuries.

On Sunday, 26 July, republican prisoners in B Wing were brought to a canteen to attend Mass. Loyalist prisoners were on the landing above them. During the Mass the loyalists banged on the floor with tables, chairs, snooker balls and cues which made part of the ceiling come down on top of the altar. They then poured water down onto the massgoers and made it impossible to hear anything the priest was saying. None of the loyalists involved was charged.

On Friday evening, 14 August, loyalists took over A1 landing, overpowered one of the prison staff, stole his keys and gained entry to the cell of a republican remand prisoner, Liam O'Hanlon.

Once inside the cell, they threw scalding tea round him and gave him a bad beating which resulted in part of his earlobe being bitten off. He had to be taken to an outside hospital.

There was great anger among republican remand prisoners that this incident took place because there were clear indications of it in advance, and strong suspicion that there may have been complicity between the loyalists and the prison staff member.



US Law and the New World Order

■ C Wing H6
(Long Kesh)

ALL OF US have reeled in horror as the Martin Bells and Michael Burkes of this world flash pictures of death and starvation in Bosnia or Somalia across the TV screen. It is a sad reflection that such suffering is possible in the last decade of the 20th Century but surely, many ask, in this day and age it is not possible for the rich countries to utilise their vast resources and alleviate much of this suffering? Surely powerful governments could come together and work out a formula to help those in need: they could distribute their surplus food, settle warring factions and create a climate of mutual respect and understanding.

And isn't that what the United Nations is all about? Well, not exactly. Noble and grand ideas enshrined in the UN Charter have been turned inside out and the organisation cynically abused by the major powers. Greed is their motivation as they manipulate less powerful countries in their pursuit of global domination. And it is the United States, the elite among the world's major powers, which is pre-eminent in this manipulation.

In theory the fundamental principle upon which the UN is built is that of "collective security" — that is, if one state attacks another then all the other member states of the UN will act collectively to help the victim and punish the aggressor. This looks good on paper and sounds good at high level international meetings, yet the reality is in stark contrast.

If conflict breaks out between two states, who decides which is the victim and which the aggressor? And exactly what criteria must be met before the UN decides it should act? At the outset of the Gulf War, for example, we were led to believe that the UN's involvement stemmed solely from the fact that Iraq had violated the territorial integrity of Kuwait, and therefore UN intervention was necessary to protect Kuwait from human rights abuses. All of which begs the question: what was so special about Kuwait that it should deserve such massive backing, while other countries in similar cir-

cumstances seemingly do not deserve it? And let us not forget that Kuwait, with its totally undemocratic form of government, is itself guilty of many of the accusations that were aimed at Iraq.

Whilst not wishing to minimise or excuse Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, the Gulf War exemplifies the glaring inconsistencies of UN policy. Throughout the short but bloody war the full propaganda machine of the west swung into action, with the media quickly establishing the image of "Mad Dog Saddam" as a dictator who must be stopped. Yet for us living in the occupied Six Counties the question arose: was Saddam's role in Kuwait any worse than Britain's role in Ireland? Was he really worse than any US president who directed American intervention in Vietnam, Cuba, Grenada or in many other countries around the world?

Strip away the outer clothing of respectability from George Bush and you're left with the naked desire for dominance. Saddam wanted to dominate the Arab world and its oil, Bush wanted the same. However, mindful of the difficulties for pro-Western Arab states in colluding too blatantly with American imperialism, the US had first to cloak its actions in a semblance of legality. Through a mixture of bullying and promises of economic aid the US ensured the passing of UN resolutions, thus creating the fiction of a world united in a holy crusade

against the most evil dictator since Hitler.

On paper at least, no government should be capable of exploiting the UN for its own ends — indeed, if governments genuinely adhered to the high moral principles of its Charter, none should even try to exploit the UN. However, in the real world (and especially since the disintegration of the Soviet Union), the UN is becoming more and more an arm of US foreign policy; and in the New World Order the US has emerged as the not-so-friendly local police officer. The UN is a highly convenient vehicle on which to pose as the saviour of Kuwait or the Kurdish refugees — or, as circumstances suit, to use in order to deflect criticism over the lack of action as in the case of Somalia.

Once upon a time, isolationism was the golden rule of US governments. However, having emerged from the Second World War as the strongest nation and increased its economic interests throughout the world, US foreign policy became interventionist. The US spread its tentacles into every corner of the globe and involved itself in disputes with the maximisation of profits as its primary aim. Today that aim can be accomplished through the UN at much less cost to the US itself.

How exactly does the US exploit the UN to aid her foreign policy? One way is through the manipulation of smaller nations. The US can normally count on a majority in both the Security Council and the General Assembly because so many nations depend on American aid and goodwill. An example of this was the exclusion of China from membership of the UN until 1971. The US was able to do this even though it clearly undermined the whole basis of the UN's ideal of encompass-

ing all countries of the world.

On those odd occasions when votes in the UN run counter to US wishes, they are simply ignored. In the case of the invasion of Grenada in October 1983, a group of US lawyers expressed themselves thus on the legality of the action: "In direct violation of these international obligations the Reagan Administration has forthrightly admitted that it invaded Grenada for the illegitimate purpose of deposing the leftist power after the coup against Maurice Bishop, and then installing a government more favourably disposed to the United States."

Long-standing US foreign policy throughout Central and South America has been one of aggression, and its determination to protect strategic and economic interests through support for right-wing governments has far outweighed any respect for human rights enshrined in UN resolutions. In the case of Nicaragua, US policy was openly designed to lay economic and military siege to the region in order to overthrow a popular government. A superpower like the US is a law unto itself and the UN is being used increasingly as a scalpel, as it cuts its way through the globe to implement its foreign policy.

For the innocent people of Bosnia and Somalia the suffering and death go on. How different things would be if "Mad Dog Saddam" were their oppressor and vast reserves of oil lay under their soil. Yet not so long ago the US and the West were Saddam's heroes; they supplied him with armaments for use against Iran and turned a blind eye to human rights abuses within Iraq. During the Gulf War the US was prepared to spend \$100 million per day. That expenditure was not the result of a miraculous improvement in American eyesight — rather, Saddam had outlived his usefulness just as Noriega had in Panama.

Isn't it comforting how rich and powerful governments can come together and form an organisation for world peace? Just remember, though, that should the world's police officer ever come knocking on your door, it's no use pleading that you were once buddies — just ask Saddam Hussein. ■

Shabby Clothes, Scruffy Runners and Dodgy Alarms

■ By the Red Spider (LongKesh)

Historical revisionism is alive and well in the Northern Ireland Office, judging by the briefings given to foreign journalists. The latest economy of the truth concerns the story of how the Blanket Protest began. According to the NIO version a young working-class lad called Kieran Nugent arrived in the H-Blocks after being sentenced. His clothes, they said, were shabby and dirty so the jail administration offered to take them away and clean them for him. They offered him, not a uniform, but new clothes to wear until his own came back, but he refused and wrapped himself in a blanket instead.

When his own clothes were returned, what did the filthy rotter do? He refused to accept them, preferring to wear his blanket and cry for the right to wear his own clothes. Those dirty, devious republicans.

The music they play in the visiting room in Long Kesh is picked by a screw who has developed a cruel sense of humour. As prisoners sit in

the visiting boxes with their partners two songs get played rather too often. They are: "You're My Favourite Waste of Time" and "Torn Between Two Lovers".

Washing machines have recently been installed in the wings in Long Kesh. After years of red-knuckled hand washing, it is a modern convenience much appreciated. However, there have been teething troubles...

Scene: The ablutions. Felim O'Hagan is about to give his running shoes a long overdue scrubbing as the hum off them had threatened to drown out the sound of his radio.

Paddy Flood: "Here, there's no need to scrub them, the washing machine does a brilliant job. I'm doing a pair of Hatchet's now, I'll throw yours in with them."

Felim (doubtfully): "Are you sure? Will they be OK?"

Paddy (confidently): "No problem — I did a pair of my own and they came out like new."

Felim: "OK, but what num-

ber are you doing them at?"

Paddy: "No 1" (ie 90 degrees)

Felim (even more doubtfully): "Are you sure? Would No 2 not be better?" (ie 60 degrees)

Paddy (super-confidently): "Nah, I did mine at No 1."

Felim hands over his runners, Paddy puts them into a pillow case along with Hatchet's, ties it and throws them in.

A few hours later Felim meets Hatchet, whose face matches his name. "Your runners are in your cell — have a look," sez he. Felim goes down and discovers a size 6 pair of Hi-Tecs — the problem is they used to be size 8. Subsequent strenuous attempts to stretch them fail and Felim presents them to Dikel Gorman where they now sit comfortably on his fairy feet.

Just before his first parole after twelve years in jail, Jackdaw's mother told him that she has had smoke alarms fitted in the house. So, there's Jackdaw in the hallway of the house and he spots this wee round thing on the wall. He whips out a cigarette, lights us

and puffs away, blowing the smoke into it. A minute goes by: "Here ma, this smoke alarm doesn't work."

His mother puts her head round the door: "Not a bit of wonder, son, that's the door bell."

A screw, on duty in H4, was stumped at why several of the most obvious answers to clues in his *Daily Star* crossword were clashing with 5 Across.

Its clue had read: "Two people in first Garden (4,3,3)", and had been the first one he had solved.

He eventually threw the paper on the table in frustration, at which stage one of Ireland's finest picked it up.

"Ahem," said Pod Devenny rather diplomatically, "I think 'Bill and Ben' is wrong..."

In the Crum, Duncan Macro-ry was explaining why he had to leave his window open at night: "If I don't," he said, "compensation runs down the walls."

And in Long Kesh, Mickey Hillen came back to the wing after a medical check-up. "He put the telescope to my chest..." he began.

The way ahead unclear

The way ahead unclear.

Weary, though still faithful, worries echo in my mind, uncertainty playing with emotions. One earns to surpass the boundaries of pain and life outside seems convenient to forget. Yet through suffering strength is drawn from thoughts spurred by photographs on the wall. A child's smiling face is an inspiration giving purpose to her struggle.

■ John McLaughlin (Long Kesh)

Templemore Talking

Promotion
In Monaghan
Is expedited
By an accredited
'Verbal' tradition

After two days
The damning reply
Noted and copied

The suspect
'Still silent'
Faces conviction.

■ Pat Arthurs (Portlaoise)

Rude Awakening

One rainy day
I was stopped
In our street
By a neighbour friend

He had a notebook
A radio and a rifle

He asked: my name,
Address, date of birth

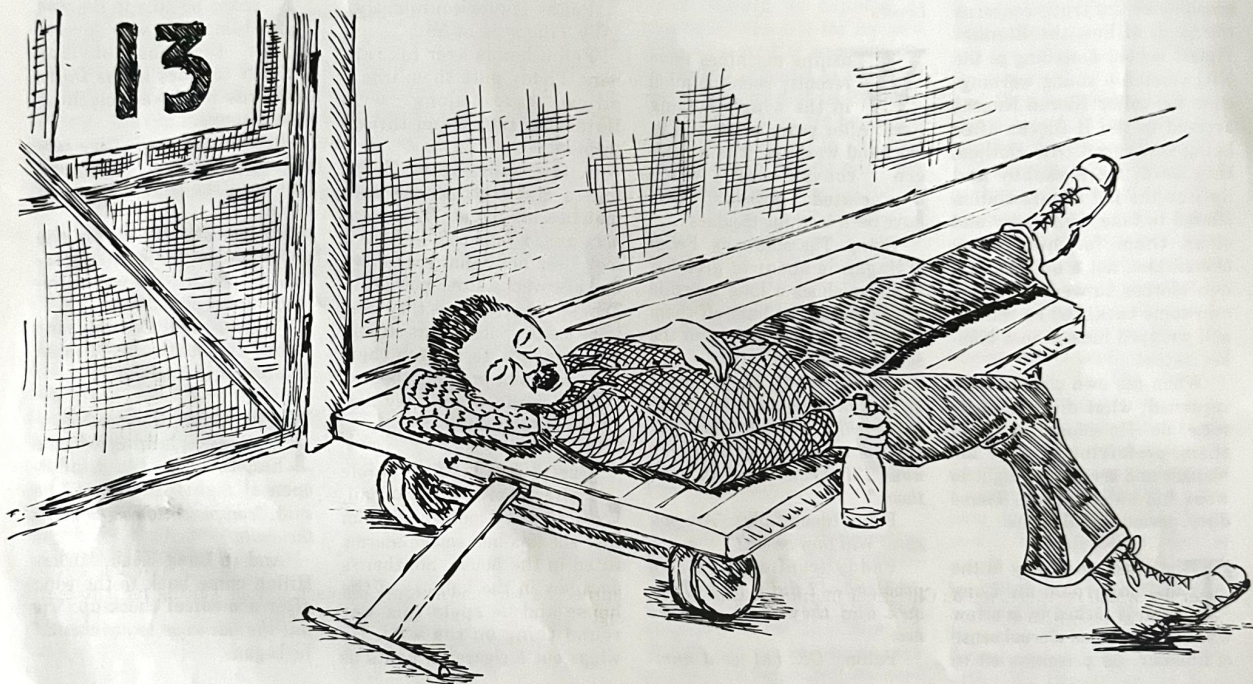
The friend
Disappeared

The neighbour and I
Went our separate ways.

■ Pat Arthurs (Portlaoise)

THE TOAST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

■ Hugh McMonagle
(Long Kesh)



■ Illustrations by Terry Boyle

I WENT UP to the canteen for my breakfast and sat down at the table with Bik McFarlane who had moved onto the wing the day before. While I was crunching my cornflakes and supping my tea I noticed Bik looking at me with a quizzical expression on his face.

"I know your face from somewhere, but I just can't place it at the minute," he said.

"I was in the Cages, Bik," I told him.

"Aye, that's right, I remember you now. You were in Cage 13."

"Aye, that's right."

A grin appeared on Bik's face and as he stared at me it got bigger. I felt my face redden at the same time.

"Yes, I got you now, Christmas 1977. You came over to Cage 12 for Mass and had to be carried back."

Now the milk on my cornflakes was starting to bubble with the heat from my face. How did he remember that long ago? I can just barely remember it myself.

It was Christmas 1977 and I was a POW in the Cages of Long Kesh (where political status was officially recognised). I had just turned 18 that year and was a bit excited, because I was to be allowed to participate in the Christmas festivities. Now don't get me wrong. I wasn't locked up or confined to my cube (cubicle). No, this

year I was allowed to drink. In those days old fashioned values led to some strict rules. I would be sampling the poteen and I was certainly looking forward to it. I wanted to be one of the big boys.

I followed the process very carefully watching Patsy McNeice and Harry Maines putting down the wash, letting it lie for a week or two and all the time hoping that the search team would stay well away. Luck was on our side; the screws didn't show their faces. Then I helped put the wash through the still, giving Patsy and Harry a hand in the showers pouring cold water over the pipes to liquify the steam that was running through it.

We all waited for the first drops to drip from the end of the worm. At last they trickled out and were promptly disposed of, because, as every good poteen maker knows, the first cupful usually cleans out any dirt that may be lying in the worm, so it's advisable not to consume the first batch. After that cup it started to come out as clear as water and big Patsy and Harry were looking very pleased with themselves. Then they took a couple of sips to taste it. I declined the offer, not wanting to spoil it for Christmas night.

After we filled the last bottle we cleaned the place up and stashed the bottles of poteen. Christmas was only a couple of weeks away, but it seemed too long for me who couldn't wait to get stuck in and enjoy the craic with the rest of the lads.

Christmas morning came and I was up before the cock crowed waiting for the doors to open (a habit I don't practice too much these



days). The doors opened and I was round to the showers for a wash. Then to the half-hut canteen to help sort out the breakfast — an Ulster fry, which is still served on Christmas morning to this day.

Sitting eating my breakfast with Séamy Grew (RIP) I was eyeing the three massive turkeys sitting cooked on top of the hot plate. The Green Cross sent the turkeys in every year. Yes, I was really looking forward to the Christmas dinner.

Then it was time to go over to Cage 12. We went over to 12 every Sunday for Mass, which we looked forward to because afterwards we would retire to one of the huts for a cup of tea and a good old chinwag with our comrades.

After Mass on this Christmas morning we were greeted by Harry Fitzsimmons and Bik McFarlane who invited us round to the half-hut for "a wee treat", as they put it. Their canteen was ready for the Christmas dinner with all the tables set out with white sheets as tablecloths and neatly laid-out cutlery, salt, sauce and bottles of mineral. It was then that I spotted the water gallons in the corner, and there was no mistaking what was in them. After all, I considered myself a bit of an expert on poteen now.

Bik went over to the stock of gallons and brought one over. Harry got a few cups and they invited Seamy Grew, Spud Murphy, Cahir Doherty and myself to have a seat. Then Bik poured the poteen into the cups, half filling them. When he got to mine he looked at me and said, "Is that alright for you, not too much in the cup there?"

Too much? Who did he think he was talking to? This here would just give me the taste for the stuff tonight, and maybe after four cups I could be tempted to sing a song if called upon.

"Aye that's dead on Bik, no problem there," I said with a bit of cockiness.

"Do you want Coke or Orange in it, Nipper?" asked Bik.

"Awk just the usual Bik, a drop of Coke and don't kill the poteen." I was real full of myself now as I sat down to enjoy the wee drink and for us. I lifted the cup to my head and took a good swig of the

stuff to put the lads at ease and show them I could handle my drink. It hit the back of my throat like molten lava and slowly burned its way down to my stomach. I was waiting for it to burn right through me and run on to the floor.

"Is it alright, Nipper?" asked Bik. I couldn't answer right away — as a matter of fact I thought I'd never be able to talk again. But I nodded my head and croaked, "Great gear Bik".

After a few more drinks (small sips this time) I was starting to get used to the stuff and the craic was warming up. I felt the owl glow coming to my head, actually my whole body was beginning to glow at that stage. Then I decided to answer nature's call, but when I stood it seemed like a tornado must have hit the hut and sent it spinning. I managed to reach the toilet and get back again in one piece, but something serious was happening inside my head, I didn't know where I was.

The next thing I remember I was waking up in my bed and there was an awful lot of noise coming from inside the hut. My head felt like a big bass drum with the whole wing pounding on it. Then the curtain hanging from my cube door was drawn back and one of the lads popped his head in, "Are you alright Nipper?" he asked. Just then the smell of poteen blew into the cube, my stomach heaved and I bent over the bed to be confronted by a bucket with the good old Ulster fry lying in the middle of it. I just fell back on the bed and pulled the blankets over my head.

Three days later I surfaced from my bed still bleary-eyed and with my mouth felling like a fur boot, then to be told how I was carried from cage 12 (which is about 50 yards), with all the lads from 12 and 13 standing at the wire clapping and cheering as I was carried past. I had to go into hiding for about two weeks to let the stick die down.

I looked up from my cornflakes and Bik was still grinning.

"Well," I said, "one thing's for sure".

"What's that?" asked Bik.

"They certainly don't make Christmases like they used to," I said.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Comrades,

We, the North Staffs Miners' Wives Action Group, would like to answer the statement made in the last issue of *Captive Voice* (a caption with a photograph of miners' wives) that the miners' strike was a defeat for the working class in Britain.

You might be wondering why we feel valuable space in your letters column should be taken up with the question of a mere photograph caption. Well, it is our struggle and our history and we are determined that no one else should write it for us or, more importantly, write us out of it.

To sum up our year-long struggle as a 'defeat' is to consign it to the dustbin of labour history and we are all too well aware that that is what leading sections of the labour and trade union movement, the Tories, the media and reactionary historians would like to do. In fact it is just what the revisionists in the south would like to do to the 1916 Rising and yet in the same way that the Republican Movement resists this 'dumping' of 1916, so do we our heroic 1984-85 Strike.

Yes and sections of the British Left didn't waste anytime in telling our communities the lessons of why we were 'defeated'. The fact that the struggle to defend our communities transformed our lives; gave us a voice; found us at the centre of a vast network of solidarity, both national and international; and, inevitably, bound us to a lifelong process of resistance and collective action, did not prevent our struggle's relegation to the 4th division in the political league tables of the British Left. Yet the struggle has to go on because we have no choice about it — our communities continue to be under the most vicious attacks. We can't wait for a Labour Government anymore than we can wait for that old 'pie in the sky'. For us there's no going back.

It's not just a quibble over words but a serious question concerning the politics of class struggle and class resistance. If it was a game that could be confined to a football pitch then you could have your defeats and victories but that summing-up offers nothing to an understanding of the process of struggle and the potential it creates for changing our lives and our world.

Let's look at the costs borne by those who scored the so-called victory. It cost the Tory Government nearly £7 billion to put into operation a full-scale war on the mining communities. They had to criminalise 11,000 of us; hospitalise/injure 20,000 of us; imprison 200 of us; put soldiers in policemen's uniforms to terrorise us; use roadblocks to stop our movements; sequester our union's funds; finance the scab UDM to split us; kill 2 of us on picket lines and more in strike-related activities; cut DSS benefits to starve our bellies and use the media propaganda to demoralise our minds; finally, they had to impose life sentences — through sacking — on 996 of us.

But the most important cost of all, which our 'victors' will have to bear forever, is that they shook a working class community out of its complacency — the product of the 1972/74 so-called strike victories — a complacency on the Irish struggle; on black struggles; on women's struggles; on gay and lesbian struggles and so on; and that doesn't add up to a victory for the British state, that is a victory for freedom fighters everywhere.

Slán le grá.

Is sinne le meas,

North Staffs Miners' Wives Action Group: Bridget Bell, Rose Hunter, Debbie Patton, Maureen Rowley and Brenda Procter.

Sheena

**A tribute to Sheena Campbell,
murdered by loyalists 16/10/92**

I was thinking of you last night,
Not long before I heard the terrible news;
I cried out in grief and despair,
My heart broken
For a special and dear friend.

A torrent of memories come flowing back,
Of times we met and spent together;
Stores we told, sad ones but more
Happy ones,
Slagging and teasing,
Your laughs down the telephone line.

You told me the story of a lifetime of struggle,
Beginning as a child
By your Daddy's hand,
Bringing the republican message to the people,
Despite harassment
And laws of the Crown.

Credit for your work has no end,
Words of admiration,
About dedication,
Commitment;
Helping the community in every way,
A sympathetic listening ear,
Thoughtful,
Always a lovely friendly smile,
With a warm and caring heart.

When I felt under pressure,
Finding it hard to keep going,
I knew you were there,
A trustworthy friend.
We talked,
And shared problems,
Understanding.

As I think of you, Sheena,
I know your contempt for the negative line,
Your words were positive,
Encouraging,
You worked with discipline,
An abundance of energy,
With endless enthusiasm,
You are an inspiration.

You gave your entire life for the people,
For our future,
For a better way of life,
For freedom,
For justice,
And a lasting peace in Ireland.

■ Gerard Magee (Long Kesh)

GERRY ADAMS THE STREET



AND OTHER STORIES

"The Street and Other Stories" by Gerry Adams, published by Brandon. Price £6.99

The Street and Other Stories is a compilation of 18 stories from the pen of Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams. Being a fellow Belfastman I found myself deeply engrossed in the book from the start, savouring each and every colloquialism that the author so skilfully uses to create a vivid Belfast atmosphere.

It might be partly due to the fact that I have been imprisoned these past few years and away from the usual Belfast banter but I was so impressed by his ability to reproduce the old Belfast sayings in his writing that I thought more than a few times, I wonder has Gerry A been out and about with a tape recorder?

Almost all of the stories are

set in nationalist West Belfast and in them we are treated to a fly-on-the-wall look at just what life is like within this close-knit community. We are given an insight into the psyche of the ordinary people of West Belfast who have so gallantly endured and adapted to the military occupation of a foreign power.

In 'Civil War' the outbreak of open conflict once more onto the streets of the Six-County state in the early '70s sets the scene for infighting between an ageing brother and sister. The pair, who share a house together, find their once sacrosanct daily routines thrown into a state of uncertainty, as befits the political climate.

The two react in different ways to the civil unrest and this causes great grief to them because their once close relationship is shattered.

In 'A Safe Bet' the author waves beautifully an intriguing story of survival (against all the

odds, you could say). I think every Belfast mother (and as Adams figures, probably every Irish mother) dreads the thought that her son might one day join the crowd of what she could call yahoos who spend their days running between the pub and the bookmaker's shop. It is very easy to get caught up in this depressing merry-go-round because of the economic deprivation in areas like West Belfast. Some men see this as a way out of their predicament, if only until they sober up again. Gerry takes a benign view of the men's behaviour and for me paints them in a different light from that seen by most Belfast mothers and partners. He tells it like it is, and you wonder, maybe this is the only way these men are able to survive the unemployment and the poverty and keep a wee bit of their sanity, even if they do drive everyone else in the house mad.

Adams touches again on the question of people being judgmental of others in 'Says She To Me'. This was one of my favourites because it highlights the added hardships endured by the women of West Belfast and indeed the rest of the Six Counties. I like the way the author uses the characters of Aggie and Maisie, two grandmothers, to portray two different versions of the type of person they consider their lifelong acquaintance Lily to be. I enjoyed the contrast and the way the author showed how easy it is to pigeonhole someone and cast them in a bad light without realising you are doing it.

I laughed out loud at the part where the two women are commenting on the sexual attributes of the suspected father of Lily's child. It just came out of the blue and was very funny.

To finish off the collection Adams chooses a story about the republican prisoners in Long Kesh. For the uninitiated it is a wonderful journey into the atmosphere of life in captivity. It is amazing how the human spirit overcomes the mundane routine of prison life and how we each from time to time escape into a second childhood in order to erase the seriousness of the situation in which we find ourselves.

The story tells of the trial of

a mouse which happened to fall from the rafters of one of the cages into a republican prisoner's porridge. The camp policy was that all mice were to be killed for health reasons and because of the damage they do.

Hugh Deeney, into whose bowl the mouse landed, decided to adopt the role of Perry Mason and fight the little guy's corner. I'll not spoil it by telling you what the outcome was, nor will I disclose whether the event ever took place in real life. What is more important, as the author points out in 'A Safe Bet', is that we accept the story for what it is, which is the delightful product of the writer's imagination.

Overall it is a book of warm-hearted and very readable stories. I thoroughly enjoyed it and have no hesitation in recommending it.

■ Kevin McMahon
(Long Kesh)

Drawing Support: Murals in the North of Ireland by Bill Rolston. Published by Beyond The Pale. Price £9.95

Bill Rolston's short introduction to this neat, compact book is almost as interesting as the 60 pages of colour prints which follow. Loyalist and republican murals, "windows which allow the onlooker to see into two very different worlds", are placed firmly in their historical and cultural contexts, reflecting the fundamental ideological differences between the two working class communities.

The author traces the changing imagery of loyalist wall painting from the "political cosiness" of the pre-1968 era — King Billy on the Boyne, etc. — to the more militant and openly sectarian symbolism which emerged after the fall of Stormont and, later, in 1985 Hillsborough Accord. Republican murals, described as forward looking and innovative, are a more recent phenomenon, dating from the 1981 hunger strike.

The book itself is well laid out and the colour reproductions sharp and clear. The three main sections — loyalist, republican, and the art of Gerry Kelly



(aka Mo Chara, an ex republican prisoner) — are broken into categories such as 'historical events' and 'military images', while the art on show ranges from the sublime to the downright embarrassing.

After reading Rolston's introduction and enjoying the images in this book you may never look at a political mural again without mentally peeling off the surface layer of Dulux to see the wider meaning underneath. Just don't stare too long if you're on the wrong side of the road!

■ **Terry Boyle**
(Long Kesh)

Prison Writing: A journal of prisoners' writing and writing about prisons. Volume 1 No 1 1992 by Dept of Sociological Studies, published by University of Sheffield.

This, the first issue of *Prison Writing*, shows the views and talents of prisoners and ex-prisoners from British jails in their poetry, fiction, autobiographical work and an interview.

While POWs' prison writings have generally emerged from their collective experience, the

poetry and short stories in this booklet reflect an individualist outlook. Nevertheless, in some of the writings the process of politicisation that imprisonment can sometimes create does emerge.

The poem "*I'm Not Alone*", dedicated to Leonard Peltier (political prisoner and member of the American Indian Movement — see Pine Ridge Appeal on page 2) and to Nelson Mandela, highlights the process of overcoming the gloom that isolation in prison can bring.

When reading "*Insanity Drove Me Mad*", an account of how the penal system in England treats its mentally ill — based on the experience of Charles Bronson (aka Mick Peterson) who spent lengthy periods in Broadmoor, Rampton and Ashworth special hospitals — I couldn't help but think it's a miracle that anyone can overcome the feelings of despair that the penal system enforces on 'ordinary prisoners', particularly those in need of medical care.

The fact that Bronson has been able to write this personal account at all is incredible given the amounts of physical ill-treatment and drug-based therapy he received. Harrowing though his experiences are, the spirit of defiance that fighting

the system creates still manages to glow. And in places it's incredibly funny — even 'the criminally insane' have a sense of humour. Though it is in this story that the lack of collective strength towards the prison system is at its starkest.

Probably the most celebrated contributor to the booklet is ex-prisoner John McVicar. In an interview he explains his journey from the world of criminality into journalism. When asked about the attitudes of prisoners towards him now and in particular about his writings related to 'crime and criminals and the criminal justice system', he replies frankly: "*They don't like me*". He puts this down not to what he has written but to the fact that it is him who has written it. Though perhaps the reality of his statement lies in his own admission that "*I'm not on their side... I'm not on anybody's side*". A fence sitter! Somehow it appears more probable that in announcing his declared neutrality he exposes the reason for not being flavour of the month with his fellow prisoners.

McVicar incidentally is also on the editorial board along with ten others. It is overwhelmingly male and this imbalanced representation is also reflected in the contributions in *Prison Writing*. Howev-

er, the editors recognise this as a shortcoming in this first issue and they hope to remedy the representation of, for example, women and black writers in the future.

It will take further issues to convince its readership that this outlet is a means to expose the penal system for the shambles it is, though it's not clear if that is one of its purposes. However, it is a worthwhile opportunity for prisoners held within the prison system to express their creativity.

■ **John Rice (Long Kesh)**

***Never Counted Out* by Michael Herbert, published by Dropped Aitches Press.**

This book's subtitle is "*The Story of Len Johnson, Manchester's Black Boxing Hero and Communist*". Some people reading this may be familiar with the name Len Johnson because in October 1987, a group of actors and musicians from Frontline (a cultural and educational group based in Manchester) toured Ireland performing a play called "*Struggle For Freedom*", based on Len's life. The areas visited included Belfast, Derry and Newry where workshops were held with local youths to great political and dramatic effect.

Len Johnson was just an ordinary person like anybody else who grew up and became a boxer who beat many a great opponent. Unfortunately for Len racism was to prevent him becoming a famous boxer with many titles to his name. Nowadays, looking at the boxing scene with so many black champions you would hardly believe that racism was involved in the sport.

The book gives great detail of Len's career as a boxer but it also shows how racism affected him with the ruling made by the British Board of Boxing Control that barred non-whites from challenging for British titles. Len defeated most boxers who held these titles but at no stage were these fights classed as title fights.

In the end Len had to retire from boxing for health reasons and he then served in the army during the Second World War. After the war he joined the

Communist Party of Great Britain.

Len was motivated to join the Communist Party because of his own life experiences as a black person living in Britain and because of the treatment he received as a professional boxer. These reasons were enough to make him question the values of the society in which he was living. He believed that the Communist Party could bring about change and he remained a member for the rest of his life.

The book also gives an historical look into the workings of the Communist Party as it follows Len's career in the Party and during elections.

The book would be of interest to any boxing fan who would like to know about the life of Len Johnson, who was given the title of Manchester's Uncrowned King of Boxing. It is also worth a read for an insight into the workings of the Communist Party in Britain in the 1940s and '50s.

■ Martin O'Neill
(Long Kesh)

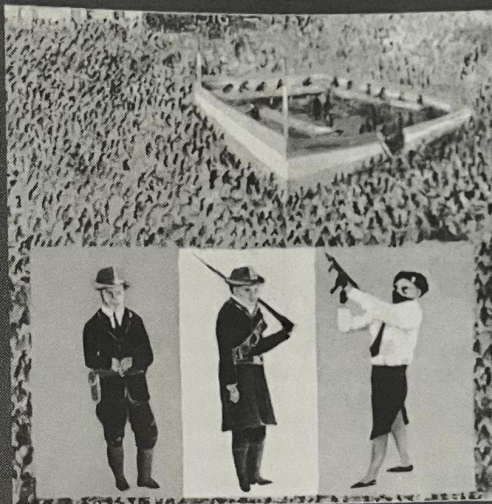
Cobh's Contribution to the Fight for Irish Freedom: 1913-1990 by Kieran McCarthy and Maj-Britt Christensen. Published by Oileánn Mór. Price £6.95

When "*Cobh's Contribution to the Fight for Irish Freedom*" arrived in my cell via the jail censor I was immediately pleased, not because of the unusually short time it took the censor to pass it, but for one of the authors in particular. Knowing Kieran McCarthy I was well aware of the great amount of time and effort he had put into getting the book written, never mind published, and for that reason alone I was more than pleased with it without even having read a page. Working on it must have helped him pass many a lonely night in a Belgian prison cell — at least I assume he was slaving away at it because he certainly wrote me few letters.

A former British garrison town with a small unionist elite, Cobh is situated approximately 5 miles from Cork city. The book tells of the contribution of

COBH'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIGHT FOR IRISH FREEDOM 1913-1990

COBH'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIGHT FOR IRISH FREEDOM 1913-1990



Kieran McCarthy/Maj-Britt Christensen

Oileánn Mór Publications

the people of Cobh to the Irish liberation struggle during important and influential periods of history such as the 1916 Rising, the Tan and Civil wars through to the early 1970s and the H-Block/Armagh struggle.

At first glance the book would seem to be one which appeals only to a local audience, but this is not the case. It places what was happening locally in Cobh into context, and makes the story of those events of more general interest, by outlining the broader political picture in Ireland during the times in question. As well as detailing historical events it also describes the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of groups like the media, the church, unionists and "constitutional" nationalists towards republicans. This made particularly entertaining reading, especially in the chapters dealing with the 1920s and 1930s, because if one was to simply forget the date you could

be reading about present day attitudes towards republicans. The disapproval, dislike and denunciation of anything republican were as alive in the 1920s and 1930s as they are today.

What has changed since the 1920s is that the republicans of that era are now viewed as heroes and patriots unlike their modern day counterparts. The book goes a long way towards dispelling this myth of "*the gold old IRA*" and shows in a clear manner the continuity of Ireland's fight for freedom from 1913 to the present day. The chapter depicting the H-Block/Armagh struggle is particularly interesting for us in the Blocks because we have a tendency to forget about all the small localised groups which played an important part in highlighting the plight of republican POWs. These small groups of people in places like Cobh were directly responsible for keeping the H-Block/Armagh

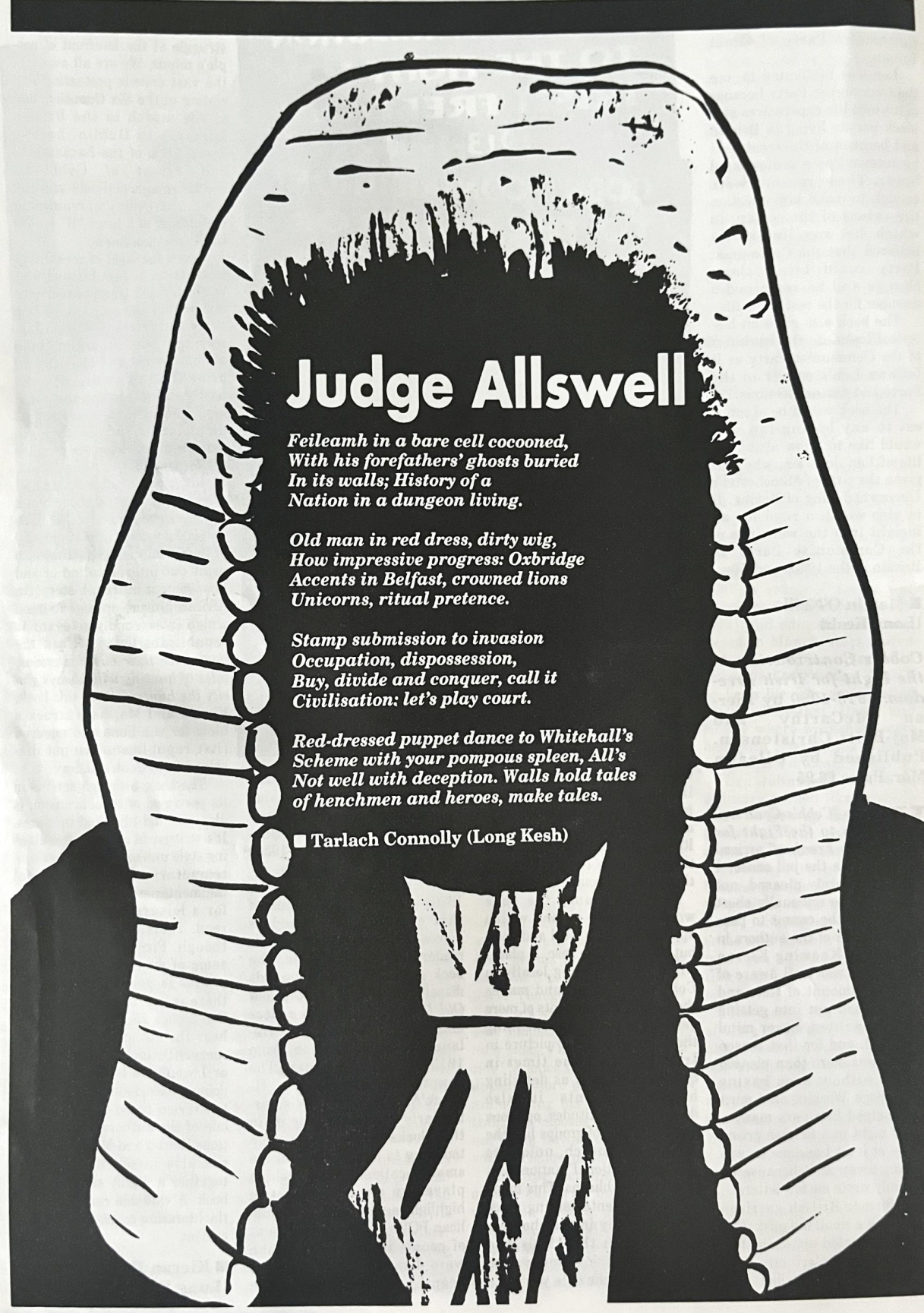
BOOK REVIEWS

struggle at the forefront of people's minds. We are all aware of the vast crowds protesting and rioting in the Six Counties, and of the march to the British Embassy in Dublin, but we heard little of the harassment and arrest of Cobh H-Block/Armagh activists and the local controversy surrounding the placing of a large "H" on the Lusitania monument.

Given the level of censorship in relation to republicans and the disturbing trend of revisionism which is rampant in the study and teaching of Irish history, the most important thing about the book is that it's in print. There's an urgent need for republicans to give their side of the story before their involvement in Irish history is demonised or disappears under the eraser of the revisionists. Myths about republicanism and the belief that we all have horns on our heads have to be challenged, and one important way of doing this is by putting into print our interpretation of and involvement in Irish history. An African proverb springs to mind which is especially relevant to republicans today: "*Until the lions have their own historians, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.*" With this book, Kieran and Maj have struck a blow for the lions and ensured that republicans are not dissolved from Cobh's history.

The book, although serious in its portrayal of republicanism, is also very light-hearted in places. It's written in an easy free-flowing style unlike a lot of other contemporary political commentaries and as such makes for a leisurely and enjoyable read. There are two criticisms though. Firstly, the quality of some of even the more recent photos is poor and, secondly, there is a printing mistake on line 2 page 25. I'm being petty I hear the authors saying — but some criticism had to be included or I would've been accused of doing a biased and totally subjective review based on my knowing one of the authors. Congratulations Kieran and Maj, and everyone else involved in putting together a highly commendable book. A valuable contribution to the literature concerning republicanism.

■ Kieran Pritchard
(Long Kesh)



Judge Allswell

*Feileamh in a bare cell cocooned,
With his forefathers' ghosts buried
In its walls; History of a
Nation in a dungeon living.*

*Old man in red dress, dirty wig,
How impressive progress: Oxbridge
Accents in Belfast, crowned lions
Unicorns, ritual pretence.*

*Stamp submission to invasion
Occupation, dispossession,
Buy, divide and conquer, call it
Civilisation: let's play court.*

*Red-dressed puppet dance to Whitehall's
Scheme with your pompous spleen, All's
Not well with deception. Walls hold tales
of henchmen and heroes, make tales.*

■ Tarlach Connolly (Long Kesh)

HELP THE PRISONERS



SUPPORT An Cumann Cabhrach & Green Cross

An Cumann Cabhrach and Green Cross are two organisations, staffed by voluntary unpaid workers, which exist to alleviate some of the suffering of republican prisoners and their families. Dependent solely on public subscriptions and collections, these bodies provide weekly grants to dependants of over 700 republican prisoners in jails in Ireland, Britain, Europe and the US, pay expenses and arrange accommodation for relatives visiting POWs and provide finance to purchase clothing and other necessities for these prisoners.

All donations, enquiries and offers of help should be addressed to:

**An Cumann Cabhrach,
44 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1.**

or

**Green Cross
51/55 Falls Road,
Belfast 12.**

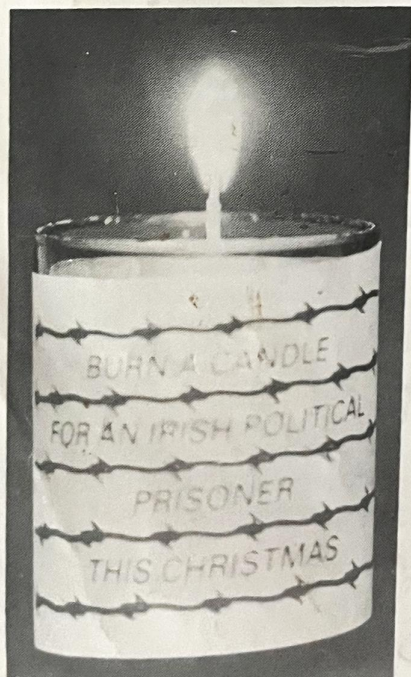
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Information
Fact File

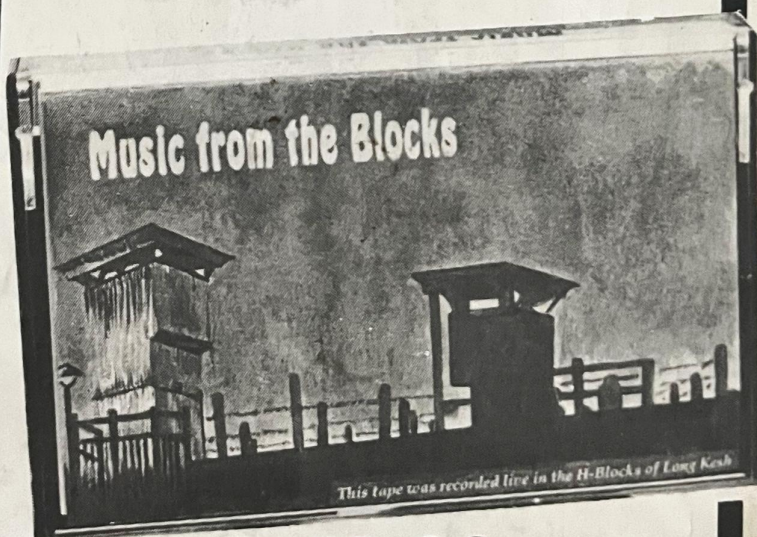
Part 4:

Ireland
Information
Fact File

Part 5:

Practical
support for
prisoners and
their dependants

£1.50



£2.99

OFFER ENDS 31 DECEMBER