

The CAPTIVE VOICE



An Glór Gafa

Vol. 3 No. 1

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The Voice of the Irish Republican Prisoners of War



INSIDE:

A DAY IN THE LIFE ON A WING, RIGHT
TO RESIST, FY FAUL, ENEMIES WITHIN

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 inspi-

rationed 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 first four editions. 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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Censorship

By Bobby Brown (Long Kesh)

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

Write to:

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The

CAPTIVE VOICE



An Glór Gafa

This issue of *An Glór Gafa/The Captive Voice* carries a number of articles and reviews on the media. As it was being compiled many journalists were carrying reports of a possible IRA ceasefire and some were saying that the republican POWs were pushing for an end to the armed struggle. Not one story contained hard facts and not one journalist saw fit to find out our true position. If they had, the stories would not have been written because it is not difficult to establish the strength of the POWs' commitment to the position of the republican leadership.

What was an attempt to sow confusion among our supporters failed because republicans have come to know the workings of the media during 20 years of struggle. Its power lies in how it shapes people's view of the world; we see things as the journalists, editors and presenters would have us see them. Events, their historical roots and their present-day context are filtered through an ideological process by the state's trusted servants who control one of the most self-censoring news management machines in the world. In the Six Counties — especially in news programmes on the local television and radio stations — much of the media is closely aligned with Britain's counter-insurgency strategy.

Republicans are banned from the airwaves not because they support 'violence' but because they are articulate in presenting the republican case. Increasingly, journalists seek to define Sinn Féin as the IRA and so hope to present republicans as having a purely military message. Our politics, our social and economic policies and our vision of a peaceful Ireland are denied.

When interviews appear in the press they typically focus upon IRA operations and how the interviewee squares the armed struggle with his/her conscience — Gerry Adams must by now be tired of the psycho-analysis sessions that pass for interviews. It comes as little surprise that British spokespersons are not similarly pressed. A young nationalist is shot dead by the Brits or RUC — The RUC is conducting an inquiry and it's not possible to comment at the moment, says the NIO minister. Dozens of homes are wrecked in raids — If a complaint is lodged it will be investigated, says the RUC press officer. And that's as far as the intrepid journalist goes.

Just as British rule in the Six Counties reacted to being under threat by corrupting the law beyond justice, so it has corrupted the media beyond truth. When dealing with the republican struggle both institutions have long ago left behind any claims to objective professional ethics and have largely become instruments for prosecuting modern warfare against an insurgent people.

Republicans do not have the resources to compete with the established media. Instead we must rely on the political awareness of our people to recognise the biased and slanted coverage, and we must always challenge the distortions. It is necessary and constant political work on the road to reclaiming our voice.

Fr Faul

Felim O'Hagan
(Long Kesh) ■

Whenever a prison issue is raised in the local media there is one racing certainty: the views of Fr Denis Faul will be sought by reporters quicker than you can say 'criminalisation'. Some recent comment of his — I forget which as I pay little heed to his ramblings these days — set me thinking about how attitudes to religion and clerics have changed here in Long Kesh down the years.

It is a fact that almost all Republican POWs come from Catholic homes and while the degree of practice of the Catholic faith varies from individual to individual, we are still steeped in its values and traditions when we first come into prison in our teens or early twenties. Its influence could be seen reflected during the Blanket protest in the practice of saying the rosary out the doors each night. That we were denied all reading material, apart from the bible and religious magazines, also contributed to a certain religiosity.

Within a few short years of the ending of the protest the situation had changed radically. Signs of religious devotion as measured by, for example, attendance at Mass declined sharply. It is a matter of some debate why this was so. Some would say that men turned to religion during the Blanket for the same psychological reasons that people tend to cling to familiar beliefs in times of adversity and uncertainty, and that once the 'crisis' was over they no longer needed the comfort such beliefs provided. Others argue that the reduction in religious devotion is due to a certain anti-religion climate in our wings.

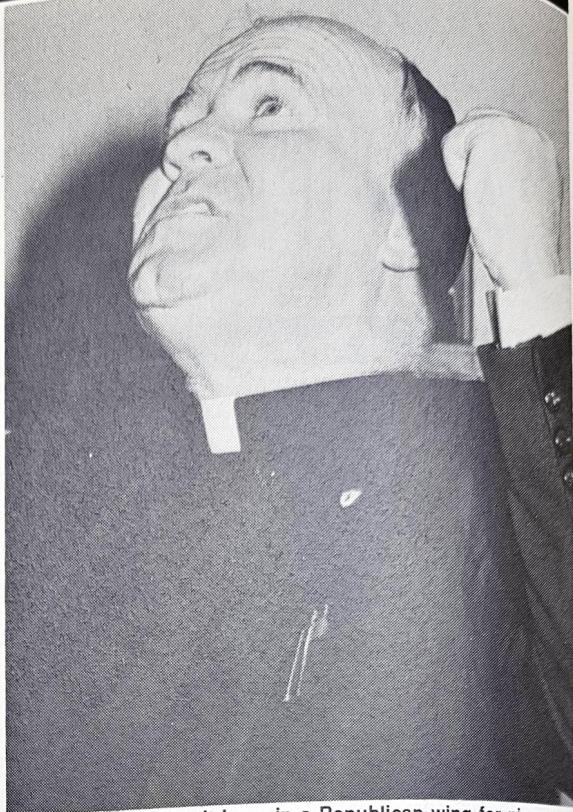
What is certain, however, is that for many of us the process of education and politicisation in which we are involved, prompted a questioning of all our old values, including religious ones. In the process there developed a refusal to accept anything on blind faith. We were reinforced in our disillusionment with religion when we looked around us and saw how the Catholic Church opposed progressive forces in Ireland at every turn. We had in our own

lives personal experience of that, for we have only to consider the role played by the likes of Fr Faul during the Hunger-Strike.

For many years Fr Faul was one of a small group of priests who came into the prison on a regular basis and, during the Blanket protest, he was to be found most weeks saying mass in the protest Blocks. We do not take anything away from him for his work at that time and for his highlighting of the injustices he witnessed. However, in view of the fact that he, more than almost any other person, knows the corruption which lies at the heart of British 'justice' and knows the reality of the treatment of prisoners, we were all the more disgusted at his actions during the Hunger-Strike and, in particular, his manipulation of the families when they were at their most emotionally vulnerable.

We began then to see him in his true light. Fr Faul is among the most dogmatic and staunchest of defenders of the institutional Church in Ireland. All his actions must be seen in that context. In arguments with some men here shortly after the Hunger-Strike, he stated that the 'damage' the hunger strikes did was summed up for him in the spectacle of young people in a Nationalist area protesting and ignoring the parish priest's command to stop. In other words, his greatest fear was that the ordinary people were standing up for themselves and challenging the traditional authority of both Church and State.

In the immediate aftermath of the Hunger-Strike his sentiments became increasingly and more vehemently anti-Republican, to the point of encouraging



● Fr Faul — he hasn't been in a Republican wing for nine years yet is still introduced as an expert on prison issues

people to pass information about our comrades outside to the RUC. When he came into our wings to say Mass he was challenged strongly on his public utterances and many heated arguments ensued. It made no difference. Worse, he was portrayed in the media as a chaplain to Republican prisoners — a position he has, in fact, never held at any stage — and he himself actively encouraged his image as 'the friend of the prisoners'. Often he would leave the prison after saying Mass, speak to the media and convey the impression that he somehow spoke on our behalf. He was repeatedly asked to desist but to no avail.

We are not prepared to countenance a situation whereby Fr Faul denigrated the Republican Movement and, at the same time, maintained a spurious credibility by virtue of his slender connection with us. In early 1982, therefore, we asked him not to come back into our wings for any reason. Fr Faul claimed then, and has claimed many times since, that his ostracisation was at the dictate of a few 'generals' amongst us,

and that the majority of men were opposed to it but were terrorised into silence because of threats from the IRA leaders. This is a lie, pure and simple. No compulsion was employed nor was it necessary. Republican POWs as a collective body made a conscious and purposeful decision. For Fr Faul to suggest otherwise displays the depth of his bitterness and, furthermore, it is an indication of his arrogant and patronising attitude.

That he hasn't been in a Republican wing for nine years doesn't prevent reporters from introducing him as an expert on prison issues who somehow knows the minds of Republican POWs. That he doesn't correct that impression is a measure of his unscrupulous desire to promote his anti-Republican message. The media and Fr Faul have a cosy relationship because, to a large extent, they share a common agenda.

When next you hear Fr Faul being interviewed about prisons and prisoners, recognise it as a home-grown lesson in the art of media manipulation.

Hearts and 'Mindless Violence'

John Doherty
(Long Kesh)

Every day we encounter the constant bombardment of hourly news reports on radio and television which endeavour to keep us informed of the latest events and happenings at home and abroad. Living as we do in a 'war zone' the bulk of the news headlines and reports we receive locally relate to the political and military state of affairs of the ongoing conflict here in the Six Counties. The 'quality' of the news coverage is of vital importance because it influences the extent to which the British and Irish people can participate in an informed discussion on the policies pursued by the British government here, and on the motives and aspirations of those who, by various means, engage in resistance against the British presence.

It is said that the first casualty in war is truth. It is a cliché which rings true here in Ireland. Virtually all the outlets for mass information (i.e. radio, television and the press) portray the conflict in a propagandist fashion that incorporates a heavy anti-Republican bias, and with the numerous censorship restrictions on Sinn Féin and spokespersons for the IRA, the enemy has all the loudspeakers. News reports are constantly used to carry out a propaganda war for the hearts and minds of the ordinary people, in both Ireland and Britain.

This was brazenly illustrated in a local news programme on January 18th. Ivan Little, a UTV reporter, was covering an IRA mortar attack on Crossmaglen barracks in which the mortars exploded at the firing point and one civilian was injured. He compared 'this disregard for the civilian population' to the 'precision bombing' by British and US planes on Iraqi targets 'where every care is taken to avoid civilian casualties'. Thus he not only managed to broadcast a subjective — and wrong — view of IRA operations, but he gave credence to the propaganda from his colleagues covering the Gulf War. It is a tremendous irony and hypocrisy that British bombing raids, in which many civilians have died, are sanitised and used in the propaganda war against the Republican struggle.

One way of keeping the people in acquiescence is to keep them in ignorance. To achieve this journalists assigned to cover the war in Ireland must go to great lengths to become proficient in a 'political vocabulary' designed to ensure that their reports are 'terminologically correct'. The correct terminology means of course one which portrays the British Crown, and its forces of occupation, as the peacekeepers, the neutrals, the forces of law and order and the all-round good guys. At the same time the IRA and the Republican Movement are not freedom fighters, guerrillas or revolutionaries, but rather labelled terrorists, gangsters, criminals and other such derogatory terms which conjure up images of something sinister or mindless. Loyalist death-squads like the UVF and UDA/UFF are

likely to be called 'Protestant extremists' and their assassinations of members of the nationalist community explained as 'tit-for-tat killings' which were carried out in reaction to Republican violence. Quite regularly the RUC tries to downplay Loyalist assassinations of nationalists by releasing press statements saying they are trying to determine whether there was a sectarian motive for the killing and are keeping an open mind about who was responsible for carrying it out.

Mark Twain once wrote that 'a lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth has got its shoes on.' This quote seems to have been adopted as the guiding principle of some of the news reporters who work for *Downtown Radio* (DTR) in Newtownards. I wrote a letter of complaint to DTR's News and Sports Editor, Mr Ken Johnston, concerning — among other things — a news report by Diane Eakin on the night of Saturday, September 29th, last year. Reporting on an incident in which a 15-year-old Castlederg schoolboy, James Harvey, was seriously injured in a booby-trap explosion triggered as he attempted to move a tractor, Ms Eakin, in her eagerness to apportion blame for the incident, claimed that 'the attack was another case of a so-called IRA mistake.' Her report was carried on all of DTR's news broadcasts that night. The RUC later stated that the bomb was the work of a Loyalist group

which had been responsible for a number of other sectarian bomb attacks in the Tyrone area.

I asked Mr Johnston if he could explain Ms Eakin's misleading report and the obvious bias she had displayed. He replied:

Dear John

Many thanks for your letter of October 2nd.

Downtown provides a fast and comprehensive news service each half-hour through the day. This naturally means we are first with information about most situations — it also means we are constantly updating stories as new facts are gleaned or emerge.

Unlike daily newspapers we do not have to wait for a number of hours before we can inform — unlike weekly newspapers we don't have the benefits of seven days to deadlines, and unlike television we do not have until lunchtime, teatime or bedtime to compile our reports.

This means that our listeners can tune in at any time and hear the latest developments on issues at home and abroad which have relevance to them. This means that as they stay with us through the day the information is being constantly updated as new facts emerge or are gleaned.

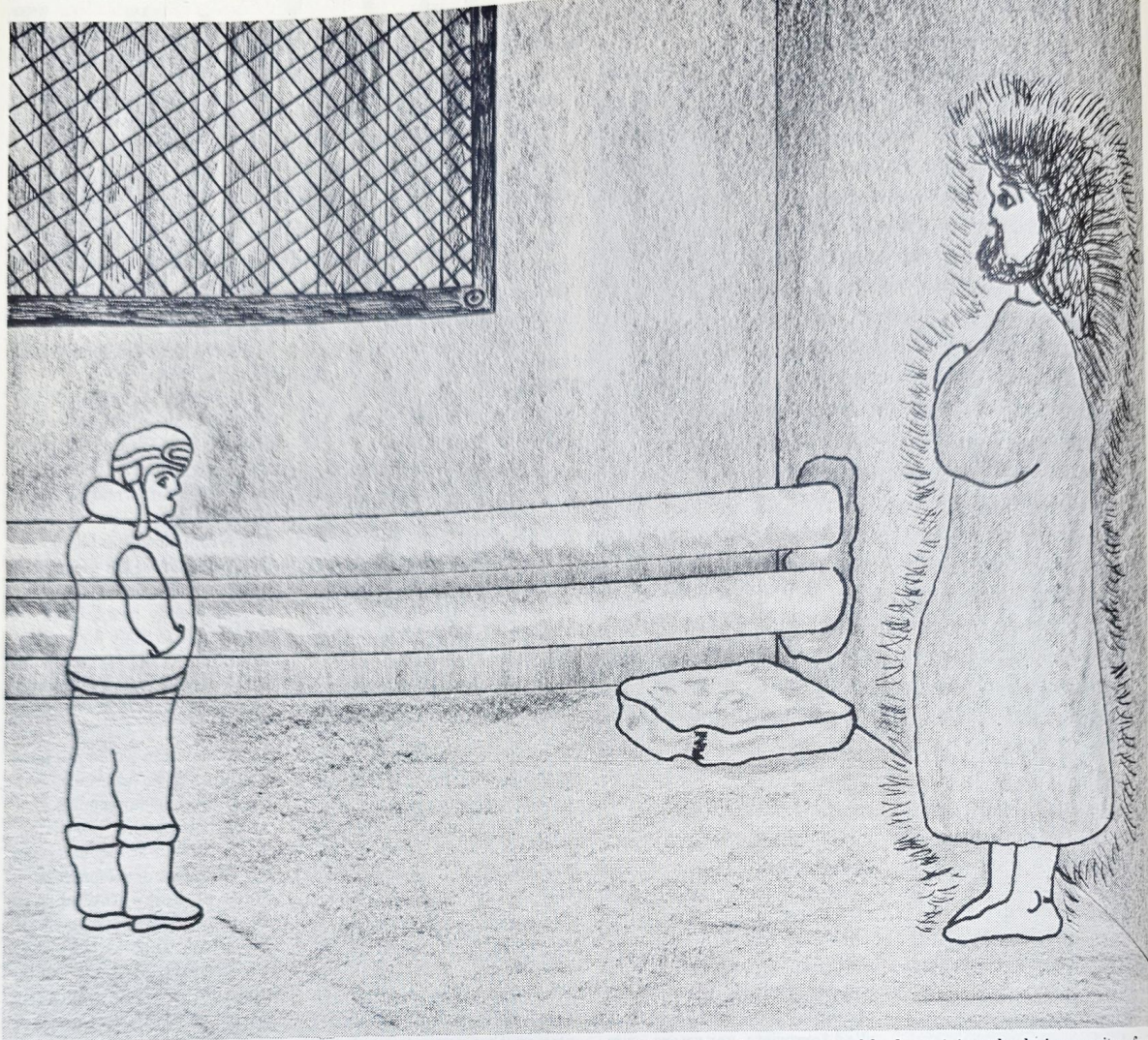
We have no role to play in analysing any situation. As reporters dealing with rigid and rapid deadlines our objective is to present 'up to the minute' information to our very large listenership. To do this we rely on a small but dedicated staff team of experienced journalists and freelance correspondents.

News stories develop and move forward with every minute that passes by — *Downtown* is the spot on the dial where everyone can keep in touch.

Yours Sincerely
Ken Johnston

This patronising and meaningless letter perhaps best illustrates the facade of objective reporting behind which the pro-British media operate in the Six Counties.





Ghosts

Jimmy Burns
(Long Kesh) ■

Taibhsi (or for those unfortunates who lack the mother tongue, ghosts) have popped up quite frequently in the turbulent history of the H-Blocks. Eight single-storey H-shaped cell-blocks encased in long grey concrete walls bedecked with searchlights and watchtowers might seem a strange haunt for a would-be spook but this once wartime aerodrome is the home of one of the most famous of all prison ghosts — Harvey.

Harvey was an airman killed when crash-landing his plane somewhere in the vicinity of where the H-Blocks now stand. The story goes that his restless soul is doomed to wander through the murky, cheerless corridors of the H-Blocks until all the prisoners are released. Bad luck Harvey! At least the prison's 130 acres will give him plenty of leg room.

Many an intellectual debate has taken place about his existence and though a fair share of non-believers remain, no one can doubt

that Harvey has been responsible for raising the hair on quite a few heads — and one or two bald ones at that!

Those who haven't had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, if not sceptical, look on him with tolerant affection. Those who have been honoured by the appearance of this ghoulish apparition (or that of one of his friends) by no means share that sentiment. Well, it would be harrowing, to say the least, to awaken in the dead of night in the presence of a fifty-year-old corpse wearing a Biggles hat!

There are countless stories from those who have rubbed shrouds with a particular spook, ghost element or whatever. Quite recently Rab, a young Markets man, awoke to the sound of his name being called. Drenched with sweat and his body covered with goosebumps, he tried to move but found it impossible. A loud buzzing sound filled his ears, he couldn't shout and, in his own words, he was 'terrified'. When his cell started to glow with coloured lights he thought he had come to his final hour. With a superhuman effort he shook off the paralysis and started beating the hell out of Rubber McKenna's cell wall. An excited voice answered, "What? What? What the Jesus is wrong?"

"There's a ghost in my cell," screamed Rab.

"If you bang that wall again it will be visiting you in the effing hospital!" was the grumpy retort.

That incident led me to consider the history of ghosts in Long

Kesh. One of the first documented incidents involved Bap, a Derry man. It took place around the beginning of the Blanket protest. On awakening suddenly from a deep sleep in the wee hours with his heart pounding like the hammers, and although apprehension covered him with fear, he couldn't fight the urge to turn around and look at his door. They say that Bap's screams could be heard in the Bogside. He maintains to this day that a midget pilot (or Douglas Bader) was standing in the doorway looking at him. A screw (one of the more civil ones at the time) eventually got Bap calmed down, gave him a few cigarettes and kept the cell light on for the rest of the night. For weeks after there was a deluge of sightings from that very same wing. By a strange coincidence most of these sightings took place on the nights when the 'civil screw' happened to be on night guard. It's said that he had to stop smoking as it was costing him a fortune.

For the victims of ghostly encounters, however, the situation is far from humorous. One blanketman in particular was flung quite violently around his cell during daylight hours — and that was without the assistance of any prison officers. Another watched in astonishment as a figure dressed as a second world war pilot walked straight through the walls of his cell. A terrified scream from next door greeted the ghostly apparition.

There are, of course, logical explanations to a great many of the so-called encounters but on one occasion two men actually shared the same ghostly experience. It happened in D wing, H5 in 1977. As usual most of the lads were standing at their doors discussing any pieces of *scéal* they had gleaned that day. Suddenly a thick pall of black smoke crept under the door of Buster McCaughey's and Big Arch's cell. It immediately transformed into an imp-like figure and jumped on top of a locker beside Buster who, trembling with fear, grabbed his beads and started praying. Big Arch, cool as ever, shouted out to the rest of the lads informing them what had happened. There were a few cynical laughs, a few 'wise up' quips and mumblings about crackpots and such like, but the atmosphere became almost tangible and, I can assure you, within seconds there wasn't one man standing at his door. The noise of the bedsprings filled the wing as we all snuck into our beds.

The Crab, also known as Harry Murray, has the distinction of surviving two extremely eerie encounters with those not of this world. One night in the dead of winter he was roused from a deep slumber sensing a pressure at the bottom of his bed as if someone was sitting on it. Keeping perfectly still to allow him to suss out the predicament, he pondered on what it could be. With ears tuned he listened for a few — quite a few — seconds. Then, just as he was about to spin round and challenge any would-be intruder, a dark shadow appeared on the wall he was facing. If that wasn't bad enough there was a pressure — not unlike a hand, he said afterwards — on his back. So, just as any RTP* would do in a similar situation, he closed his eyes as tightly as possible! Harry takes up the story; *"At the sound of a gurgling-type voice all my dialectical training went out the window, and prayers rattled fervently from my chattering teeth. I'm not saying the prayers did the trick mind you, but the noise stopped almost immediately. I turned around — about two hours later — for my tobacco tin for a much needed smoke and, as luck would have it, there it was over on the table just out of reach. It might as well have been in the next cell for there was no way I was getting out of bed to get it."*

His second experience occurred when he was doubled up with a guy called Mickey 'Pope'. Harry was in the bottom bunk and Mickey was in the top one. It was the usual dead of the night scenario (in bed again — the lads like their kip!). Harry awoke suddenly and immediately the words passed on his lips, *"F***, not again!"* This time he could clearly see the bottom half of a person: the top half was obscured by the top bunk. Although he felt ill at ease he sensed the visitor was interested only in the occupant of the top bunk. Harry tried opening and closing his eyes a number of times, tried blanking out his mind and even tried a few prayers, but the presence remained; it

didn't move and neither did Harry. (This time the tobacco tin was under the pillow — The Crab only gets caught out once!) Near daybreak it simply vanished.

Later that morning he innocently inquired of Mickey if he had experienced anything strange the night before. Wide-eyed, Mickey asked why. So he was told of the previous night's goings-on. The Crab stressed that whatever it was at the bottom of the bed was looking at Mickey and not at himself. That was all the Pope needed — out came the rosary beads and multitudes of saints were called upon. He was at it for hours. Harry finally had to tell him that he was only joking or he would still have been reciting the novenas.

Once in a while even the most adamant of sceptics is left with a sense of doubt. Basil, for instance, is one of the most logical and pragmatic people you could find in the H-Blocks. One night while sitting in his cell reading *The Mating Habits of the Dodo*, by Rufus T. Firefly, he was distracted by voices coming from the adjoining cell. Presuming the occupant was having an argument with himself (he was in the cell on his own), Basil continued with his reading. About ten minutes later he heard a screw at Willie's door. Quick as a flash, Basil's ear was blended to the door of his own cell. *"I want a priest,"* he heard Willie say. *"I want a priest to bless this cell."* The screw immediately hurried down the wing. In a short space of time he was back, not with a priest but with a medic. Obviously thinking that Willie had gone bonkers, they talked to him for a while and gave him a cup of tea. Assuring him that everything would be alright, they left.

Basil then got down to the pipe, which runs through the cells, and with his ear to the wall — a very adaptable ear, has Basil — asked Willie the crack.

"There's a woman in here with me," he said.

*"F***, I thought they only gave you a cup of tea,"* said Basil. *"What's she like? Blonde? Beautiful? Has she any sisters?"* But Willie was having none of it.

"I'm deadly serious about this, Basil. She's standing right here in front of me!" So, Basil being Basil and a keen dialectical materialist, he began exploring all the possibilities for Willie's apparition. Drink? Family problems? Faulty lights? No! Willie wasn't budging; she was standing right there and that was that, no arguments.

After a few more fruitless witty remarks Basil reluctantly went back to his book and left Willie to the company of his female companion. For the next couple of hours Basil became so engrossed in his book that he forgot completely all about Willie. Then his ears pricked suddenly to the sound of a table being moved in Willie's cell. The scraping sound of chair legs and sounds of other furniture being moved began to worry Basil.

"What are you doing Willie?" No reply. The sound of furniture being moved continued. As Basil's shouts failed to get a response and fearing that Willie could be in need of some help, Basil hit the alarm. Within seconds screws were three deep outside Basil's door.

"What's wrong?" one of them asked.

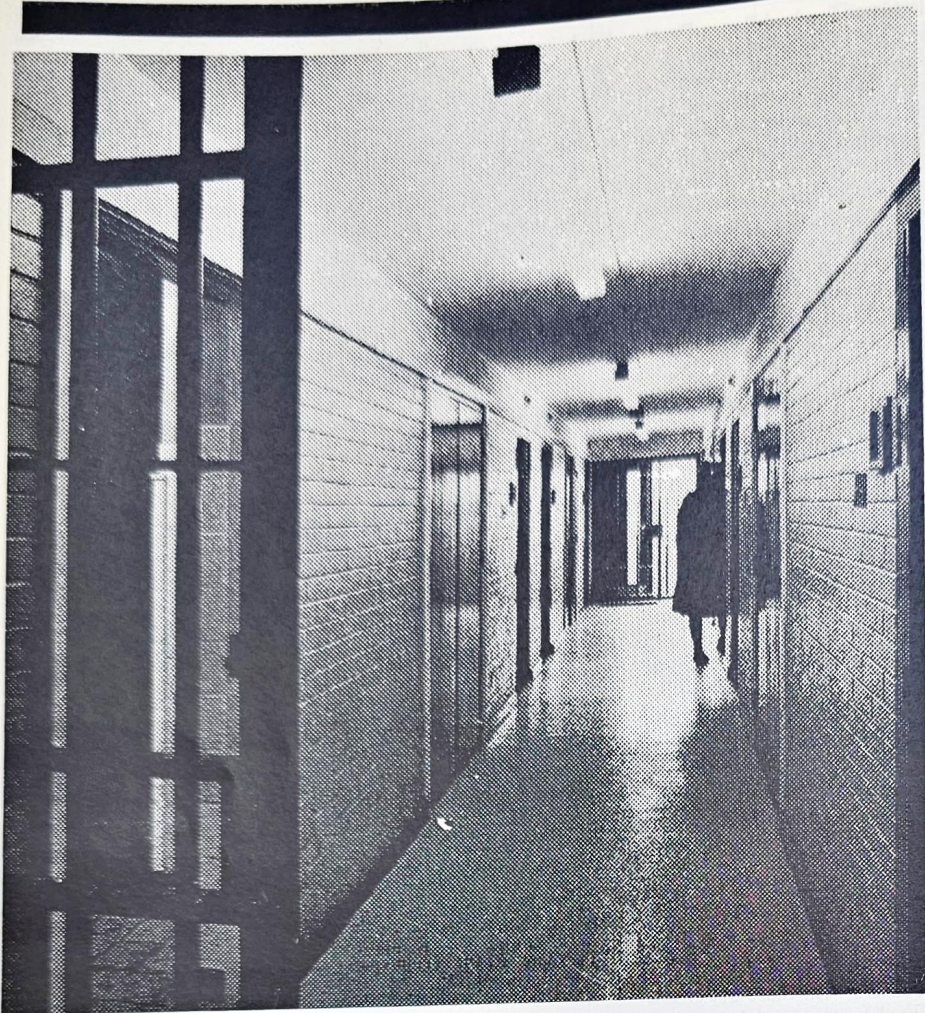
"I think there is something wrong with Willie, he won't answer me," said Basil.

"I'm not surprised," said the screw, *"he's been up in the hospital for the past hour."* Basil is still searching for a logical explanation!

There will always be controversy surrounding the phenomenon of the supernatural. In the H-Blocks the lads will continue to debate the subject every so often, especially after someone is frightened half to death in the dead of night. The sceptics will continue to sneer — that's until they're honoured by a visit. The 'in betweens' will play it safe with their religious paraphernalia occupying the same wall as Karl Marx and Che Guevara. The faithful few will take the philosophical view, while hoping their cells are bypassed when some spook or other has the hump on and is on the prowl.

Harvey? He'll continue wearing out his boots wandering the prison with his fingers crossed hoping there'll be an amnesty or that everyone escapes!

**Rough Tough Provie!*



In the first of a series of articles on daily life in prison, three POWs in Maghaberry describe a typical day.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WING

Nancy McCullough, Roisin Devlin, Karen Quinn (Republican POWs, Maghaberry) ■

Maghaberry Prison comprises four Blocks which the NIO call Mourne House. There are two wings in each Block with seven cells in each wing. At present one wing of C wing and all of B wing house Republican prisoners.

The day begins at 8.00am when we are unlocked, giving us one and a half hours to shower, breakfast and clean our cells before classes begin at 9.30. While there is a

wide variety of subjects it's difficult to gain entry to all classes because the numbers able to attend are severely restricted. To enable everyone to avail of the education facilities we operate a rota system. Irish and woodwork are among the most popular subjects.

After those attending classes have left the wing the rest pursue their various interests; reading and handicrafts are favourite pastimes.

Lock-ups, from 12.30-2.00pm and 4.30-5.30pm, are often spent studying for courses, reading or catching up with correspondence.

Some afternoons are spent in the gym where some serious volleyball playing takes place. The games are lively, full of crack and plenty of good-humoured slagging. Afterwards, accusations are made and injuries examined and moaned about, the usual injuries being swollen

fingers, knuckles and the odd sprained ankle, not forgetting the bruised egos of the losing team.

Visit days are pretty hectic, especially if there are three or four on a wing who have a visit. About 2.00pm preparations are made.

Those going on visits pass by the yard and endure a few minutes of amiable slagging on the way over. Visits can last from 30 minutes to about an hour and a half.

The visiting room has ten tables placed closely together, which is inadequate in a jail that holds 36 women. On a busy day this means long waits for tables, short visits and a lot of disappointed families. The openness of the visiting room ensures a complete lack of privacy. Still, each of us make the most of our visits, and *scéal* (news) is eagerly awaited on the wings when someone returns.

Visits give an opportunity to see family and friends and new friendships are formed with the visitors of comrades.

The evenings are spent engaging in various pastimes; quizzes are very popular with questions being supplied by our resident Quiz-person. Discussions are another favourite and a discussion begun on a particular topic has been known to progress into an entirely different issue.

Despite the seriousness associated with jail, life is mostly light-hearted, although there is always potential for conflict. We have a high degree of respect for each other as individuals but after debate and discussion of any issues we act collectively. It is our refusal to be isolated individually which the jail administration find difficult to cope with and it is their attempts at pursuing a strategy of isolating individuals which causes discord within the jail.

However, life is mostly easy-going with plenty of light-hearted moments. There is a strong sense of comradeship and friendship among Republican women. Life on the wings is never dull as we have always been capable of generating our own recreation and entertainment.

THE ROSARY

Jim McVeigh
(Long Kesh)

It was raining outside the window; a cold, bleak January rain. The greying woman and the boy cast it an angry glance as they shook the water from themselves, relieved to be indoors again, home at last.

The bus from the Kesh had dropped them at the bottom of Clonard Street just as it had begun to pour down, so they were soaked on top of everything else as they quickened home. For a moment the woman watched the raindrops slap against the window; even the boy could see she looked tired though he seemed to care little, while he, in contrast, had shaken off the day's worries and hassles as simply as he had the rain itself. The boy's resilience and youth made her look ancient, much older than her 42 years.

"I'm starving, Mammy," he cried, and she was forced to turn to him, startled for a moment.

"What?" There was a flash of anger in her eyes, but in a moment it was gone and she only looked tired and old again. She realised the boy couldn't know and she thought to herself, "thank God he doesn't"

As the boy huddled to the fire she went out to the kitchen. She'd have to shake herself, she thought again, there was a rosary to be said that night at the top of the street. It was important.

It was still raining an hour later when Mary rapped the door, then rushed in without waiting.

"Where's your mother, Patrick? Rose", she shouted.

"I'm in the kitchen, come on through."

"Jesus, it's freezing, Rose. We'll be lucky if we get half a dozen to turn up tonight. No point in worrying though. Anyway, how'd the visit go today. How was Sean?"

"Well," — did she really know, she wondered — "he says he's in good form and that he isn't getting much hassle. He's certainly determined to stay with the lads till they've got the demands. He made that clear. But he looked even thinner again to me this month. His hands were all skin and bone when I held them. He's like a skeleton. I'm frightened to think how thin he must look under that beard. Sweet Jesus, 22 years of age and he already looks like an old man. Mary, it's just so..."

She couldn't say any more. She didn't need to; Mary knew exactly how she felt. Her own son Paul was also on the Blanket and her heart was broken after each and every visit. It was so hard to watch them grow old before their time. And then abruptly,

"For God's sake Rose, give's a cup of tea before we both start. Anyway, we'll have to be quick or we'll be late. If we don't turn up on time some of them might go home in this weather."

"Well, here, drink that and I'll get my coat on."

"Where's Paddy?"

"Where do you think? Where he's usually on a Saturday — boozing."

Five minutes later Rose and Mary joined the small group of women huddled together at the top of the street. You could hardly see who or how many there were because opened umbrellas pointed in every direction, covering heads and shoulders, while bodies and legs mingled close for warmth.

As they entered the small group Rose could see that there were 12 altogether. She looked pleased. Two more than last time and in



Martin Gough (Long Kesh) ■

this weather too, she thought. Mary smiled and glanced in her direction. Mary knew Rose had worked hard trying to convince more women in the street to attend, and she knew it had been hard for Rose to do as she was normally very shy and soft-spoken. For a moment their eyes met and Rose knew that Mary's smile was for her. She smiled in return, a bright confident smile. She didn't look so tired or old any more.

For the passers-by it was a strange and unusual sight, this small group of women huddled together beneath the street lamp, all of them with rosary beads in hand and solemn faces. Not least of all unusual because of the different women there.

Maisie Cummings was there. Maisie rarely had time for anything or anybody in the street. Even the upheavals of internment and the curfew had failed to move her. Young Theresa McKay and Collette McManus were there as well. Both of them 18 years of age and this a Saturday night, usually their big night out.

Yes, it was a strange sight to see, thought Rose, as she glanced at the faces of the rest of the group, but it was a sight that was becoming less strange these days. People were beginning to care again, even the most unusual of people.

And at that Mary, being her usual self, took charge of the situation.

"Well ladies, I'm sure some of youse are thinking youse must be mad to be out in weather like this. Well, I don't know about youse but when I look at the thing I'm married to I know why I'm mad, so it's nice to get my head showered for a change, even if it is literally. Does anybody want him?" she shouted.

She liked to draw people to her through laughter. She had learned in two years of meetings, demonstrations, vigils, and even rosaries that her cynical humour could attract people, particularly women (she reckoned women had a lot to be cynical about). It seemed to touch something in them, especially when it was about men, which was nearly always the case with Mary.

There was a ripple of laughter and murmured agreement among the women, and a chorus of "No way, Mary. I'm looking rid of my own!" before things settled down and the rosary began.

"A rosary for the boys in the Blocks and the girls in Armagh, and for their just demands," said Maisie, solemnly now.

Changing times indeed, thought Mary as she looked from Maisie to Rose, changing times indeed.

"Hail Mary, full of grace..."

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doinne agus cé go raibh na tuairisceoirí ina seasamh i glábar go dtí a murnáin b'amhlaidh nach dtug siad an saothar réamhdhéanta fá deára. Fiú nuair a scúp mise an fód, a bhí réamhthochailte dúinn fosta, glan as an talamh níor chuir sé sin iontas orthu. Chuir eagraí an tsearmanais an fód ar ais sa talamh agus chomhairligh liom gan an oiread sin brú a chur ar an tsluasaid.

"Nár mhaith leat go dtoclófaí é?" arsa mé leis. Ba léir ón dreach a thug sé domh nár mhaith.

Dá n-inseoidís bréaga ar na míonghnéithe úd, caidé nach ndéanfaidís leis na mórgnéithe? Nuair a amharcaim ar an teilifís na laethanta seo agus duine ag cur crainn nó ag tochailt fóid bím i gcónaí ag ceistiú más firinne ná bréaga atá ann. Ní bheadh a fhios agat. An oíche sin thaispeáin siad mise agus an cailín, beirt ag sá na rámhainne sa talamh agus radharc ná amharc de na hoibrithe ní raibh ann. Ní raibh an pháirc réamhthochailte ná na hinnill a bhí cúpla slat uainn le feiceáil. Murach go raibh mé ann,

the middle of the dug-up field, a square that had obviously been left for us to dig the 'first' sod out of. It was like a green island in a brown sea. The reporters didn't seem to notice it even though they were standing in muck up to their ankles. And even when I scooped the sod right out of the ground (it was already dug for us!) and the organiser replaced it in the earth, that didn't even even surprise them. The MC advised me not to put so much pressure on the shovel. I asked him did he not want the sod dug out, but from the look on his aul' face it was clear what he thought of that suggestion.

If they can tell lies in the small things what can they not do with the Big Lie. I can't watch the TV now when there's somebody planting a tree or digging a first sod without doubts arising about what I'm seeing. You really don't know. The night of the dig the TV showed the girl and me sinking a shovel into the soil and not a sign of all the machinery or the digging or all the workers that were standing only yards from us. If it hadn't been for me being there I'd have sworn that it

chreidfinn gur gort úr glas ar bhris muid den chéad uair ar mhaidín sin. Bainisteoireacht den íomhá atá mar obair ag na meáin chumarsáide agus chan nuacht a aithris.

Tar éis an tseisiúin ghrianghraf labhair mé leis an tuairisceoir:

"Plandáil crainn?" arsa mé, "scúp cruinn a bhí agat-sa!"

D'amharc sé orm, thóg a leabhrán nóta as a phóca agus léigh abairt as m'agallamh déanach leis domh;

"Tá grá agam do gach saghas crainn. Is maith liom an seiceamar go háirithe mar an ceann seo..."

"Tá grianghraf agam i mo chomhad díotsa, a heolaí," ar seisean, "le do lámha thart timpeall ar chrann darach."

"Tá do rún slán liomsa" arsa mé.

"Agus do rún slán liomsa" arsa sé. Ghluais muid ar aghaidh as an pháirc tochailte chuig béile agus junket in ostlann áitiúil. Bhí inneall tochailte ag réabhadh tríd an spás ina raibh muid ag geait-síocht cúpla nóiméad roimh ré, agus ag réabhadh tríd aon chreidiúint a bhí fágtha ionam don mheánchumarsáidefosta.

was a field untouched by human hand that we had been filmed in. The media's whole job had been to manage the news rather than report it.

After the photo-opportunity I spoke to the reporter.

"Tree planting?" says I. "That was some scoop you had!"

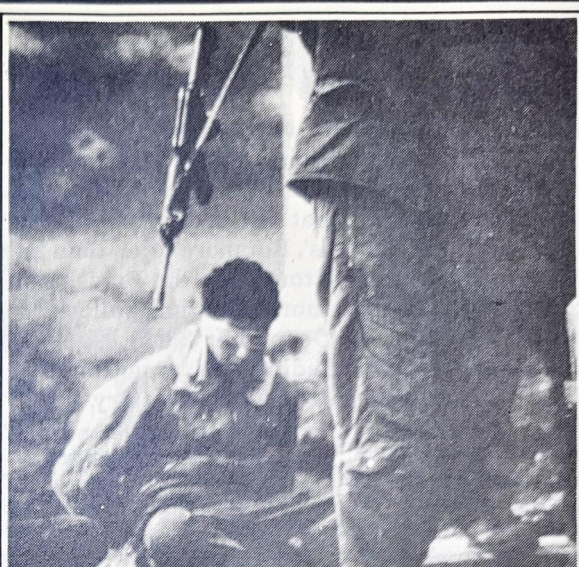
He looked at me for a second then he took his notebook from his pocket, and read a sentence from my 'interview' to me: "I love all sorts of trees... especially sycamores like this one here..."

"I have a photo of you in my file mister know all" he said, "with your arms wrapped round an oak tree..."

"Your secret is safe with me" says I.

"And yours is safe with me."

We walked away from the ploughed-up, dug-up field towards a junket in the local hotel. As we left a JCB was tearing a gouge through the green patch where we had been posing just a few minutes earlier; ripping through it and ripping through whatever faith I had remaining in the credibility of the media.



The Holocaust

Anthony McIntyre
(Long Kesh) ■

Camps where people are concentrated in fear huddling together in make-shift rubble shelters walled in ghettos, the tombs of the living uncertain minds awaiting fateful selection property confiscated and homes destroyed men beaten to death with batons of wood women raped beyond life with batons of flesh children murdered by thugs in jackboots expansionism trampling all in its path greater living space the objective no sign yet of the 'liberators' from East and West advancing steadfastly and resolutely closing the camps, ending the nightmare liberating the Palestinians from... Nazi Israel.

The question of whether articles in Irish should be translated is still being debated. It will be featured in our next issue, so there is still time to write us a letter on the subject. Address them to:

**BRIAN CAMPBELL, No A160
H-BLOCKS,
LONG KESH,
Co ANTRIM.**



RADIO ONE

I don't know what it is with me but every time I hear there is a programme on about the political situation in the North I have to tune in. I suppose it's in the hope that this programme will be the one to 'tell it as it is'. But more often than not it's just the same old story with the British still trying to drive their normalisation policy into people's heads. On December 29th, I was let down again — BBC Radio One's programme *In God's Country* was just the same old story.

I thought there might have been some hope for it when, in his introduction, the presenter, Simon Mayo, admitted that the English don't really understand this place — how true! He then explained how 'normal' the city of Belfast is, casually dropping in the fact that a member of the RUC had just been shot dead around the corner from where he was broadcasting. An explanation of why 'police officers' are being shot in a busy city centre would have been appropriate at this stage but it didn't come.

The programme didn't set out to be a heavy documentary on the 'problem of Northern Ireland'. Indeed, it was so light we even got a political analysis of the whole situation by none other than two members of the Parachute Regiment. These two 'peacekeeping' Paras told us how they take a history course on Ireland before they are sent here. I suppose this history course will tell them how

their brave predecessors 'fought' in Derry, killing 14 innocent civilians. Basically, their analysis of the whole situation was that the majority of Irish people wanted peace except for a bunch of IRA thugs. One of them also said how he couldn't hang his uniform on the washing line back home in England for fear of an Irish person seeing it. Obviously being Irish is enough evidence to confirm guilt for this Para.

From life in Belfast the programme moved to Enniskillen and this is where it went into political point scoring. I admit it would be difficult — and wrong — for a programme of this nature to go to Enniskillen and not mention the IRA bomb in which 11 people tragically lost their lives. But I also think it is wrong to do an interview with members of the Parachute Regiment, talking about the role they play in the Six Counties, and not mention Bloody Sunday. This programme, like so

Fra Hamilton (Long Kesh) ■

many before it, freely talks about IRA violence but never state violence.

Bloody Sunday was mentioned — the record of that name by U2 was played during the piece about the Enniskillen bomb. Even though the record is about Bloody Sunday, this doesn't stop Bono from using it as another platform to attack the Republican Movement. In a live recording of the song he tells us he is sick of people coming up to him in America asking about the revolution in Ireland. He bluntly answers the people by saying, "What revolution? Fuck the revolution!" Of course Bono is entitled to his opinion as much as the rest of us, but to use Bloody Sunday to attack the Republican Movement puts his opinion in its proper perspective.

The programme then moved to Derry city. Simon Mayo tried to work out if he was in Londonderry, Derry or 'Stroke City'. Who better to ask than a few lads of the Apprentice Boys of Derry:

"Well, you see, we are known as the Apprentice Boys of Derry and when we are talking to each other we would refer to the place as Derry, but if we are writing anything down we would always use Londonderry." He said this is because it reminds him he is British. Totally baffled by this, Simon Mayo asked why they do not want a United Ire-

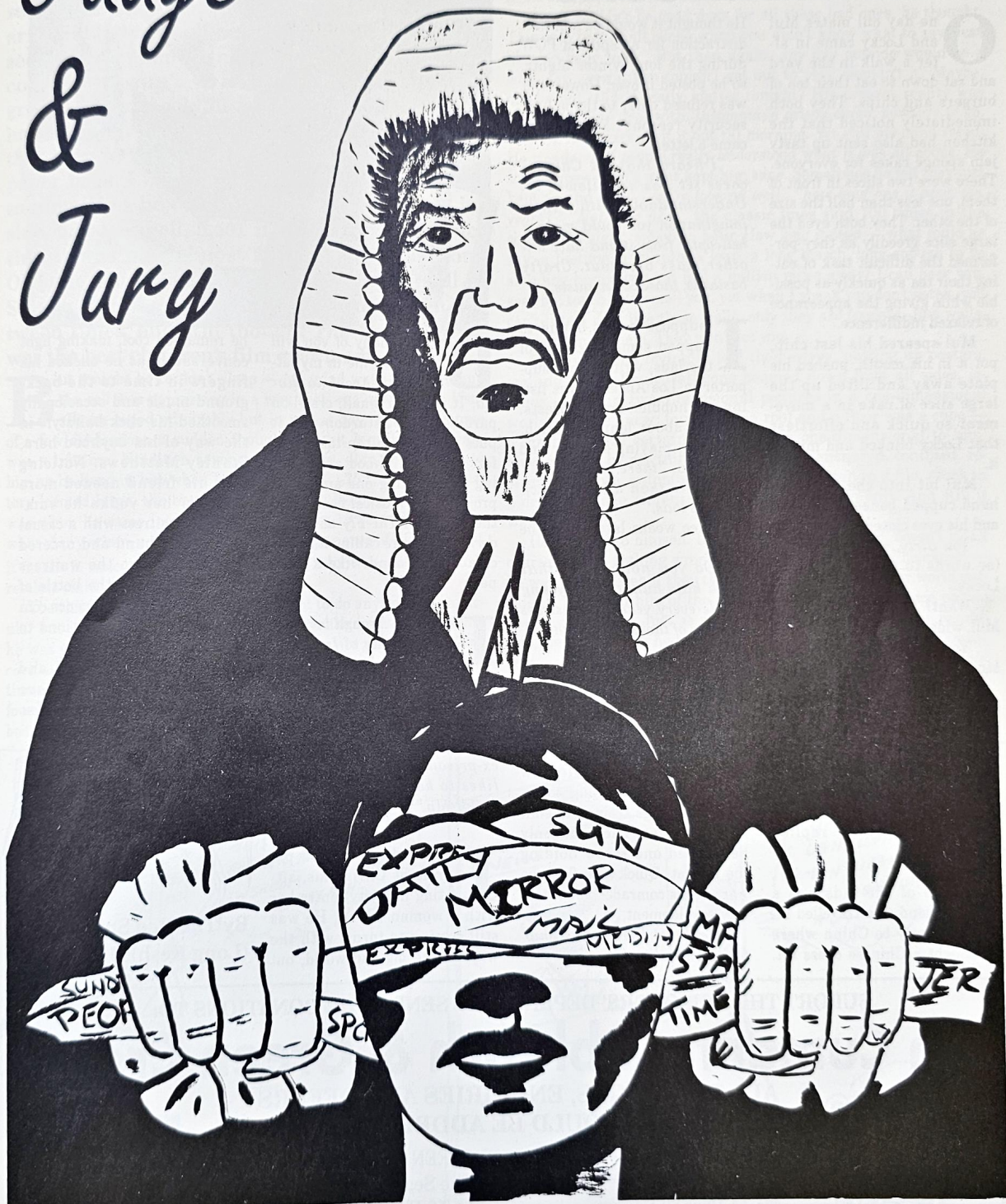
land. They replied that they have a better lifestyle now than they would have in a united Ireland. Coming from a city with one of the highest rates of unemployment in Western Europe it is hard to imagine how things could be any more bleak than they already are.

The programme went over to Derry City Football Club to tell us how well they were doing, and by that stage I was wishing the programme itself would go over. However, it was to be touched with a bit of reality by a group called 20/20 Vision. This group outlined that the problem in the North is not a religious one, that the root cause of the problem is the British occupation of our country and until that occupation is removed there can never be peace in Ireland. I think Simon Mayo was shocked to hear that this group was willing to talk to the Loyalist community and indeed longed for the day when the two communities would live together as one.

It also set out to be a music programme and the reason I have barely mentioned the music is not that it was bad, it just had little or no relevance to what was being said. The music researcher, like the rest of the people who made it, showed no imagination or willingness to take risks in making it. Whether this was because of censorship or just a lack of understanding I don't know, but I do know the end result was boring — just the same old story.



Judge & Jury



Bobby Brown (Long Kesh) ■

Crafty commies, Crack and Coke

One day our mates Mul and Locky came in after a walk in the yard and sat down to eat their tea of burgers and chips. They both immediately noticed that the kitchen had also sent up tasty jam sponge cakes for everyone. There were two slices in front of them, one less than half the size of the other. They both eyed the large slice greedily as they performed the difficult task of eating their tea as quickly as possible while giving the appearance of relaxed indifference.

Mul speared his last chip, put it in his mouth, pushed his plate away and lifted up the large slice of cake in a movement so quick and effortless that Locky blinked and missed it.

Mul bit into the cake, his hand cupped beneath his chin and his eyes closed in ecstasy.

"You dirty, stinking rotter" (or words to that effect), said Locky.

"What? What's wrong?" said Mul, wide-eyed and innocent.

"You greedy git! You took the biggest piece!" cried Locky.

"Wha'? Well, which one would you have taken?" asked Mul, offended.

"I would have taken the smallest piece," said Locky proudly.

"Well then, what are you complaining about?" replied Mul.

One of the lads has a friend who travelled recently to China where he bought a Chinese chess set.

He thought it would be a perfect distraction for a captured POW during the long winter nights, so he posted it over. However, it was refused entry to the jail 'for security reasons'. From China came a letter;

"I heard that the Chinese chess set was not allowed in. Understandable. With a little imagination you could make a helicopter from it and have another mass breakout. Crafty bastards, those communists."

I suppose it was bound to happen sometime. One of the lads, writing to a supporter in Los Angeles, was listing his hobbies and interests. He told about learning Irish, studying, playing snooker and he added, *"there is nothing I like better than a bit of crack with the lads."*

Three weeks later came the reply;

"Do you not realise that crack kills hundreds of young people every year and destroys the lives of thousands of others?"

During a big search in the Crum Fra was on full alert, staring out through a small gap in the side of his door, ready to report any suspicious activity. He saw dozens of screws milling about, some with dogs trained to sniff out explosives. Then suddenly he noticed one screw holding the jail cat. Quick as a flash he warned his comrades about this new development,

"Hey lads! They've got a sniffer cat with them."



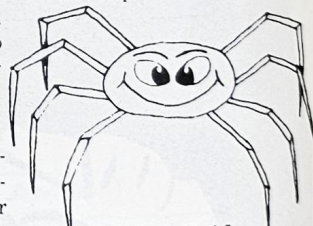
By now many of you will have seen me in my latest film, *Arachnaphobia*. It is just a small, crawl-on part — it's not stardom but it puts the flies on the table. Offers from Hollywood are flooding in, including one ambitious project for a musical combining the scripts of *The Fly* and *Spiderman*. They're calling it *Pesticide Story*. Sounds like a juicy part.

Flicking through my January issue of *Ireland's Own* as part of my research into the media, I came across the following personal ad — and I'm still baffled; *"Girl in Cork seeks a male pen friend, ex-prisoner or pensioner who likes to keep fit. For lasting friendship."*

Leonard was out on parole at Christmas, sitting in a city-centre bar with a woman friend. He was still coming to terms with the ways of the big bad world, but

he remained cool, making light conversation as he clicked his fingers in time to the background music and occasionally smoothed his slick hairstyle in the way of his boyhood hero, Stanley Matthews. Noticing that his friend needed more Coke for her vodka he summoned a waitress with a casual wave of his hand and ordered the drink. When the waitress returned he took the bottle of coke and flipped a 50-pence coin her way with instructions to *"Keep the change!"*

The waitress smiled and asked, *"Here luv, what cave have you been living in? You owe me 14p."*



By The Red Spider
(Long Kesh) ■

SUPPORT THE PRISONERS' DEPENDANTS SEND YOUR DONATIONS TO:

An Cumann Cabhrach & Green Cross

ALL DONATIONS, ENQUIRIES AND OFFERS
OF HELP SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:

AN CUMANN CABHRACH
The Secretary
c/o 44 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1

GREEN CROSS
The Secretary
51/55 Falls Road,
Belfast

19  73



AN INSOMNIAC

Basil Hardy
(Long Kesh) ■

He switched the light on and at once the cell exploded in all its starkness. It was strange how it seemed so much more oppressive at night. The artificial light from the triple tube on the ceiling seemed to enhance the cell's rigidity. It wasn't cold yet it wasn't warm — just there. The new green curtains took the bad look off the place. He had to admit even to his frugal and austere self that they were a big improvement on the brown paper bags. I bet Mandela had curtains, he said to himself as he counted the days he'd spent inside. 5,500 — well, 5,501 if you counted the fact that it was now almost 2.00am. He'd seen four Olympic Games and four World Cups, the fall of Saigon and the rise of Saddam Hussein in between times, and still thought *The Wizard of Oz* was the best children's film ever made.

But tonight he couldn't sleep — his mind was in turmoil and the cell was oppressing in a way that was new to him. Usually he coped admirably but in recent days over the course of a few discussions a sudden thought had hit him. Fifteen years was a lifetime. Nineteen seventy five-ninety, didn't seem long to him as he lived it, but when he looked at 1960-75 time and his history loomed large, the enormity hit him. By looking at the age he was when he came into jail and subtracting 15 years he saw just what many others seemed to miss — the experience of life and what it meant in time and space. From 17 1/2 to 2 1/2; a restless man to a restless child, and tonight he was both.

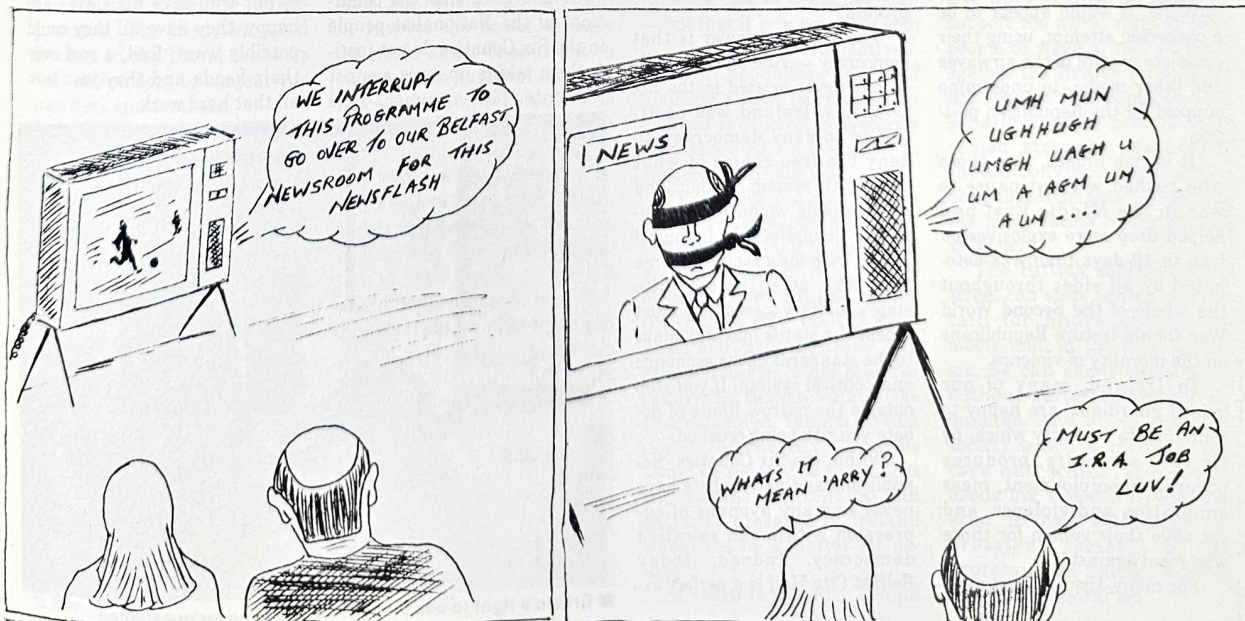
The child in him wanted out to play, not to do anything in particular but just out 'cos he was locked in, just like he had been when he was young and it was raining. "No, you're not going out. I don't care who's out there, it's teeming," his mum had said a million times. But it wasn't raining now, instead silence dripped from the four bare walls that gripped him like a vice, squeezing life from his body. He screamed silently, filling his head, sounding like a rush of

water from a tap in the house next door when he was young — muffled but you knew it was on. But no one heard his sounds — he was alone except for the four bare walls, his scream and the silence.

There couldn't be good days for all these bad ones, he thought. That was just a jail cliché when you didn't know what to say. Just like 'do your wack'. But then again, any day outside would be a good day, even if you couldn't get out to play, wouldn't it? Maybe, maybe not. Did it really matter tonight? His present reality was what he had to deal with. Insomnia; a prison curse, nowhere to go, nothing to do except sit it out till morning. Yet still his mind raced. He wondered if people really understood what it was all about. He sort of knew; that's what kept him sane. Sometimes he felt they just kept on and on — "you're looking well" "how long has it been, ten years?" "Not long now" the classic lines said 100 times in the course of a night, a day, an hour. How long indeed — what could he say; a lifetime, a culture, a leap, a long march, long enough to be standing beside you yet feel a million miles away? I can hear you, see you, touch you, smell you, yet when I speak you don't listen, you can't listen. Just like these walls, only they are faceless. Just walls, you can't miss them. They won't let you.

He saw people trying to fool themselves, putting up posters, smiling faces of cultural icons beamed down from all sides, islands of colour, two-dimensional pictures in a one-dimensional world. Yes, he knew; four walls, a roof and a floor was a cube — a mathematical certainty. But it was one-dimensional to him. How could it be anything else? Trapped, ensnared, confined, restricted, unfree, entombed in a cube — written in a file, stuck in a drawer — one dimension and one dimension only. And still it wasn't raining.

He laughed to himself. It gets to you like this kid, doesn't it? Of course it does, nothing wrong with that. What else did he expect — he was human even if they thought he was from another world outside. It reminded him of the film advert for *Alien*: In space no one hears you scream. Just as well. What would happen to the revolution, he thought, as he turned the lights off — "Jails full of impotent, conscience-ridden depressed insomniacs who can't do their wack!" screamed the masses in front of the GPO. So the nightmare continues — or is it a dream? Who cares? At least he's out asleep — and it's raining.



Phil Nolan (Long Kesh) ■

Right to resist

A British soldier loads his rifle and, with nervous steps, runs from his base into the streets of an Irish town. Does he question his actions? Has he weighted up the rights and wrongs of using violence? Or is he just doing a job, his rifle one of the tools of his trade and his morality paid for by the danger money in his pay packet?

When discussing morality in the struggle it is seemingly always a one-sided question. The British soldier is never cited as someone whose conscience is a desirable place in which to hold a public debate. His political decision to use violence to uphold the state is not on the list of moral questions in *The Irish Times* or on Cahal Daly's pulpit. Britain's right to use force in Ireland is never questioned. Instead, and increasingly over the last few years, a barrage of churchmen, politicians, journalists and anyone else whom the media can haul on board has spoken out against the right of Republicans to engage in armed struggle. It would appear to be a concerted attempt, using their complete control of the airwaves and other media, to undermine support for the Republican position.

It is rich indeed, that those who rushed without pause to war in the Middle East and helped drop more explosives on Iraq in 19 days than was detonated by all sides throughout the whole of the Second World War should lecture Republicans on the morality of violence.

In Ireland, many of our 'moral guardians' are happy to contemplate a society which, by its very structure, produces poverty, unemployment, mass emigration and violence, and yet save their venom for those who rebel against it.

For many, the first and most

obvious irony must be that, those who join the Republican Movement do so for moral reasons; they want to see an end to oppression and the creation of a better world in which to live. Those anti-Republican commentators seldom publicly scratch the surface to examine the reasons why so many people feel it necessary to take up arms; they are comfortable to ignore the causes and peddle nonsense about 'psychopathic killers addicted to violence', and people 'gripped by evil'; buzzwords which indicate an unwillingness to engage in real debate.

Why use violent means, they say, when disputes can be settled through 'the democratic process'?

The simple answer is that democracy — rule by the people — has never existed in the Six Counties. Ireland was partitioned to deny democracy, to deny the free choice of what democratic system or what kind of life people would like to create for themselves. In Ireland if people wish for a secure life free from the attentions of the state's military forces they must accept the status quo and adapt to the standards of the economic and political system. If you step outside the narrow limits of debate you risk being crushed.

Within the Six Counties, Republicans and nationalists have never had any avenues of expression within the so-called democracy. Indeed, today Belfast City Hall is a perfect ex-

ample of how 'you can participate in our democracy as long as you are a Unionist.' The media are tied into this approach with censorship and bans, removing Republicans views from the airwaves — 'you can speak only if you do not call for real change.' The parameters of debate are set to exclude debate. The 'democratic system' set up in the Six Counties was specifically designed to thwart any attempts to remove partition and British interference — it is guaranteed to prolong oppression within its artificial border. Clearly the 'democratic system' is not democratic and use of it alone cannot end oppression.

When a mortar bomb explodes in the back garden of 10 Downing Street and MPs of all shades cry about 'this attack on our democracy', it can only put a wry smile on the face of every Republican and democrat who considers it an attack on Britain's imposition of a non-democracy in Ireland.

When the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1960s called for basic change the state erupted in violence against it. The reaction of the state betrayed its nature. Peaceful calls for equality were viewed as a challenge to the state's very existence because it was a state founded on the basis of inequality. Its democracy was exposed as a sham and it proved itself closed to change.

It is argued that the conditions of the Nationalist people in the Six Counties do not justify them taking up arms against the state. This argument lists

the material factors (jobs, housing, etc.) whose denial add to oppression, throws in a measure of inequality and injustice, then puts them all together in a large sum which, it is then said, does not add up to a large enough pile of oppression to justify the use of violence. In other words, things are bad, but not that bad. This method of analysis, most vocally used by Vincent Browne, editor of *The Sunday Tribune*, and supported by other long-distance liberals, assumes that all forms of oppression can be reduced to one another, that there is some scale on which people's conditions of existence can be measured against a figure which 'allows' them to revolt.

The gauge most often used is the list of demands drawn up by the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Those spoke of an end to discrimination in employment, in housing allocation, an end to the gerrymandering of electoral boundaries and an end to the practice of giving extra votes to property owners in local elections. All are worthy and worthwhile demands but they do not add up to a charter for freedom; they simply seek the removal of some of the barriers to equality. Not all the demands have been met but even if they were it is wrong to say that people would then have full civil rights. That would be the modern equivalent of the plantation owner who says his slaves are happy, they have all they could possibly want; food, a roof over their heads and they just love all that hard work.



● Britain's right to use force in Ireland is never questioned



Prison is perhaps an appropriate analogy. Material conditions are important and we constantly campaign for better food, adequate heating and even for a supply of better footballs. But even if we had jacuzzis and cocktail cabinets, it would still not make for a fulfilling life in which our talents and emotions could find full expression. For that, we need freedom in the literal sense as well as freedom to control our own lives and destinies.

It can also be asserted that the British are an illegitimate force in Ireland, that their partition of the country is illegal. In that way there is also a legal basis for opposing their presence — they have no right to be in Ireland. But then, according to John Hume, it is immoral to fight over a piece of land; it is the people who are important. The vacuous phrases of John Hume hide many untruths. Our struggle is entirely concerned with people. We seek emancipation for people as well as for our country — the two are bound up together: The people of Ireland cannot be free until the country is free.

But how, it is asked, can a cause which has as its objective the creation of a society based on human values justify the taking of human life? It is the question of ends and means. There are few, if any, examples, where the means for removing fundamental injustice were compatible with the expressed ends. All revolts against tyranny involve the use of violence for noble ends. That is not to rule out the tactic of non-violence, where appropriate. The often-cited example is the civil rights movement in the USA in the 1960s. For its objective — the removal of certain laws which upheld racism — it was appropriate. But full emancipation of black people in the US would require a much more fundamental challenge to the structure of that society; a challenge which, to be successful, could not forswear the use of violence.

The question then becomes one of tactics. If people are not prepared to suffer indignity and oppression they will seek the means to bring about change. In the Six Counties politics alone, or non-violent protest, will not be successful. Republicans see

armed struggle as a viable tactic which is morally justified.

All the reasons which give a moral justification for the use of armed struggle come to nought, however, if that armed struggle is not effective in reaching its objectives. It is not that the campaign has to be guaranteed of success — every revolution runs the risk of being defeated — but that it is in principle able to bring about its objectives. The anti-Republican chorus of 'conflicts cannot be resolved by violence' is exposed as hypocrisy from those who are loudest in support of the Gulf War.

Others say, 'you may feel you are morally justified in what you are doing, but violence will get you nowhere.' And yet the evidence shows entirely the opposite to be true: the IRA campaign and the rise of Sinn Féin as a political force has been the catalyst for change. Without the IRA campaign, the nationalist people of the Six Counties would be reduced to permanent second-class citizenship and Britain's presence in Ireland would not be a matter for debate.

If there is morality behind

the armed struggle there is also morality in how it is waged. There can be no licence for the indiscriminate use of force. The accidental deaths of civilians during IRA operations have been cynically exploited by the media. Such deaths are tragic and genuine concern has been raised within the Republican Movement and by its supporters. If it is shown that regular deaths of large numbers of civilians is an inevitable consequence of armed struggle it would be morally unjustifiable and counter-productive to continue. But armed struggle properly, professionally and politically executed will keep civilian casualties to an absolute minimum. The IRA's responsibility is to prove that in practice. On that basis, morality is bound up with the effectiveness of armed struggle as a tactic.

Of course, British responsibility for the deaths of civilians has always been shirked. Even in Iraq where many hundreds of civilians have been killed, their response has been a shrug of the shoulders and platitudes about war being a dirty business. The British never apologise.

It must also be emphasised that armed struggle alone will not gain our objectives, if only because of the weight of numbers and force of arms against us. There is a need to organise the mass of Irish people in active work against injustice. To support the moral right of Irish people to wage armed struggle against the British forces does not require that someone personally participates in that armed struggle. Rather, it should convince them of the need to participate in some of the many facets of the overall struggle.

The British soldier on the street can stop, search and detain for hours anyone he meets and, in the final analysis, he can shoot them dead without suffering the consequences. And all to uphold a society which is rotten to the core and which absolutely needs his violence in order to exist. To resist within that oppressive society is an expression of human dignity, an entirely moral act.

Adverts exploit women

B-wing Republican POWs, (Maghaberry) ■

It is almost impossible to turn on the television without seeing images of half-naked women advertising everything from lawnmowers to bars of chocolate. Why do advertisers need to trivialise women in order to sell their product? Do they not realise women find this offensive? Why does a car need a woman draped over the front of it to sell it — could the car not sell on its own merits? It is just one example of the way women are exploited.

This form of sexism in advertisements is far more serious as it is brought into people's homes where young children are influenced from an early age in their thinking of a woman's role in society.

It can also have an adverse effect on young girls who see women in these advertisements as 'The Perfect Woman', as an example of what they should be. This causes an inferiority complex, low self-esteem, which can

lead to serious problems if they do not see themselves as this 'Perfect Woman'; anorexia, bulimia, other personality disorders, and even suicide.

The effect of this type of advertising on the young male is to portray women as sexual objects, to be seen as a body, not a person with an intelligent mind. This can lead to problems such as rape and abuse as this pattern of thinking carries on from childhood to maturity. The opinion that women are sexual objects



● The opinion that women are sexual objects solely for male use undermines women in everyday life

solely for male use undermines women in everyday life, with the onus on a woman to be the perfect stereotype as portrayed by

the media, totally submissive to those around her — husband/partner, children — with no thought to her inner self.



Women Frankie Quinn (Long Kesh) ■

Shuddering in sounds of human feet,
touching each other in loveless beats
at suffering defeat.

Passions suppressed in walls
of green.

Piercing hearts with needles
sharp.

This is, to me, another part of
lonely life,
like shining steel of butcher's
knife.

Dreams are made of nights like this;
wide open eyes afire with fright,
a child holds
with fingers tight.

Scorching red from tears of
plight, from someone who must often
fight

with loneliness in dark deep
nights,

in search of subconscious mind
for corner of light,
but memories bring
no happy sight.

The curtains drawn,
once more daylight.

THE RETURN

Brian Campbell
(Long Kesh)

He dressed in a leather jacket, open-necked shirt and jeans. Hardly appropriate for a job interview and his mother and father were exasperated in their disapproval.

"Sean, put this on." One of his father's ties, rolled like a toilet roll, was held out as he combed his hair in the mirror. "No, no, I'm alright as I am. I'll do fine. Don't worry."

He hurried out into the street. It had turned cold after a week of April sunshine and it was wet after the afternoon's rain. It was the time of day when work had finished and the shops had just closed. He walked against the flow of people and traffic.

Sean had spent five years working in England. A draughtsman, he had been made redundant a fortnight before Christmas; 20 men given their cards. In the face of Christmas, money for drink and presents was a more persuasive option than a strike with an uncertain end and there was little resistance among his workmates. He took his wages and his redundancy pay and came home.

Christmas brought a need for the comfort of his well-worn home town. Friends, familiar rain, the smell of coal smoke in the streets, Saturday morning hangovers settled in the pub and all the other habits and memories drew him closer to the flow of life he really knew. But Christmas had evaporated, his stay had now drifted into months, and once more waking to days without work and weekends without money built up the dreary weight to force him back to England. That space in his life that wanted to be filled with the spectacle and feel of busy crowds, the energy of being at the centre of excitement, could not be satisfied here. Each day saw his eyes more narrow and his teeth more firmly clenched. It was in his mind to return to England.

Then one night his father came home from work with the news that Barney McKeown wanted to talk to him about a job; they were to meet in the bar of Crilly's pub at six o'clock.

Sean walked quickly down towards the centre of the town and into Canal Street. It was a narrow mixed-up street with pubs, shops, and terraced rows of private houses, some three-storey and some two up-two down. It was a street with a haphazard evolution till now it didn't know if it was meant for business or for living in. Opposite the bookie's was Noel Crilly's bar; Sean crossed the road and went inside.

At teatime on a Friday it was a cosy haven for men of all ages, only men. Pounds and pay cheques slid over the bar and pints and bottles and half'uns flowed back. The packed bar buzzed with conversation as wit and banter gathered in groups. Sean walked in, an unfamiliar face noted then ignored. Nevertheless he felt exposed, watched. He leaned across the bar and ordered a pint of Guinness.

He asked the barman if Barney McKeown was in. "No," he answered, taking Sean's money, "he should be in any minute now. He always comes in with his lads about this time on a Friday night."

Sean leaned on the bar, watching the television. The drone and laughter of conversation left him comfortable with his thoughts. When he had half-finished his pint Barney McKeown strode in, followed at intervals by six men. He was tall with a substantial porter belly and a ring of thick hair around a shining bald crown. He was the boss and salesman — or, as he described himself on official forms, the managing director — of his small engineering firm. He spent his time sniffing deals and pricing work, at once backslapping and cut-throat. He leaned on the shoulders of two men sitting at the bar as he spoke to the barman.

"Give the lads a drink," — he waves his hand towards the end of the bar — "and give me a pint of Harp and a Scotch, plenty of ice."

Sean waited to approach him, but as the barman served the drinks he saw himself being pointed out. McKeown came over.

"You're Joe Carroll's son?" They shook hands. "What're you drinking?"

"Now, I'm alright," said Sean.

"I know you're alright but what're you drinking? A pint of stout?"

"Yes, thanks," Sean said, reddening, polite in spite of himself.

McKeown put their drinks on a tray and beckoned Sean to follow him to an empty table. He took a pen from his jacket pocket and peeled the front off a beer mat.

"Now, what's your qualifications and work experience?"

For the next hour they were in the roles of employer and prospective employee, formal in their evasions and exaggerations. It became clear that McKeown saw his firm undergoing a change. No more just a welding shop, he would soon be able to talk about his design office, his draughtsman, his engineer. He would expand into the complex, moneyed work which until now had been beyond his rule of thumb abilities. Sean caught the glances of the six men at the bar. They looked suspicious, curious, an uneasy backdrop to Barney McKeown's enthusiasm.

Finally, Sean asked about wages.

"We'll not discuss money in the pub," McKeown said, gripping Sean's shoulder, "we'll talk about that on Monday morning." He smiled. A buyer's market.

Sean looked at him and said flatly, "I'll think about what you've said and phone you tomorrow." He drained his pint and they shook hands again.

On his way out Sean exchanged a glance with one of McKeown's men standing at the bar. "Alright?" he nodded.

"How're you doing?" the man replied. Sean vaguely recognised him. He came over.

"Sean Carroll?" he said, pointing his finger and smiling.

"Yes," said Sean, still unable to place him.

"Mickey Martin. I played football against you a few times. For Ballyholland."

"Right!" said Sean. He remembered him; a good footballer, always took their free kicks from scoring positions, but he looked different with short hair and an inch off either side of what had been a Mexican moustache.

They chatted for a few minutes and soon were talking about Sean's job offer. "Oul Barney's a chancer," Mickey said quietly out of the corner of his mouth, "one minute we've any amount of overtime, the next he's laying half of us off. If I were you I'd head back to England. Or to America. That's where I'm thinking of heading. There's fuck all in this town."

Sean found himself nodding in agreement with this accepted wisdom, but it disturbed him and he felt it almost as a reproach.

"Are you staying for another pint?" asked Mickey.

"No thanks, I have to go. I'll catch you again," Sean said.

"Right, take it easy," said Mickey as Sean turned towards the door.

Walking out into the street Sean sucked in the fresh air. A car slashed past, its headlights on. He stood for a moment looking up and down the street. The few pints, the night air and the sense of the town coming alive, people going places, helped him banish Barney McKeown's heavy smile from his mind. He turned and walked into town.

In front of him were two women, their arms linked, every few seconds their conversation bursting into laughter as they swung together down the street. More women, in pairs and in groups were converging in the distance towards the Parochial Hall and a night of bingo. Men too were in the street, hands dug into their pockets as they shrugged along. Others, more purposeful, strode in long hurried steps, their jackets neat and with Brylcreemed hair, dressed for inside, not this sharp dampness. Others, dropped off in cars, tapped the roof and hurried into the glow of the pub.



Paul Doherty (Long Kesh) ■

Sean walked on, going nowhere in particular, the fresh night telling him to spread his arms and breathe. He walked through the town centre and up behind the Cathedral towards the new road. He felt the darkness at his back and he shivered, shaking his head quickly. Across the new road and up the hill among the tightly-packed, weather-beaten houses he leaned into his stride, every pace giving a rich tension in his legs. The hill was steep and he savoured each step. He walked close against each living room and saw the glow of TVs and fires. He strode on till he felt the light end at the edge of the town and a country road opened into the dark distance. On up till the road flattened and he was above the town. He climbed over a stone wall and into a small field, large smooth stones were embedded in the grass. A half-mound, half-hill rose up out of the rough ground and he clambered up.

He could almost feel the glow of light above the town. He identified the main roads and their lighted flow of traffic. Housing estates speckled and the bright hospital lit a busy efficiency. Pubs and clubs and discos sparkled their brash business. He pictured the people sleepy on their settees or relaxed and talkative as they set about the important task of enjoying themselves. He picked out his street as a small group of lights shimmering in the distance; his granny's house beside the Dominican chapel; Crilly's pub lost among the lights in the centre of the town.

He felt a great affection for this familiar scene bound by the great hovering light thrown up by all the well-known life and activity. Spread out beneath him was the sparkle of memories and the vibrant, interwoven struggle of living which he could see and feel a part of.

In England he had bobbed among the waves, skimmed the surface, enjoyed life in that intense way that had never really satisfied him. He had wakened every morning still aware of being a stranger. He knew if he had climbed above the city he would have turned his face from the light.

He was jolted out of his thoughts by an RUC armoured car slowly rolling past with a low sound of heavy menace. He crouched down off the road for no good reason, suddenly conscious of where he was. He waited, then ran across the field, vaulted the wall and set off down the road. He walked, skipped, walked, skipped, wanting to find a phone. He came to Maguire's bar and went to the phone in the small corridor that led to the toilet. He dialled the number and his mother answered.

"Mum?"

"Sean, is that you?"

"Yes."

"Well, how'd you get on?"

"I'm starting on Monday morning."

"Sean, that's great. Are you pleased?" She wanted to know if thoughts of England were now banished from his mind?

"Yes, I am, alright. Listen, I'll be back late. Would you leave the key under the mat? I'm away round to The Claddagh for a few pints with the lads."

"Have you enough money?"

"Yes, no problem. I'll see you."

"Right, look after yourself. I'll tell your father your good news."

Sean stepped out and greeted the sharp night with quick steps down towards the light.

MCC New York City

By Joe Doherty, (Metropolitan Correctional Centre, New York City)

Gazing from this opening to the ambient movement of distant shapes — automobiles, public transport, a fire engine — the speeded figures stride, shuffle in vigilant glances at careless cab drivers, a mugger's snatch.
The air fills with ominous fumes, the humidity of midday, stale Chinatown food.

Encircling, New Yorkers quietly ignore the tomb before them; the mass of concrete, the barred windows whose tainted glass conceal imprisoned faces; blue-shirted guards, shot gun, two-way radio, observe with cynical suspicion;

enduring the ambience with bored expressions on fatigued eyes of excessive shifts, the long hours, anxiety-filled emotions to homey comforts.

I focus my pupils to capture colours — white silk blouses, the red buntings on little girls' frocks; white streaks cutting the blue sky as the sun plays on window panes of far-off office buildings. I glare at the blurred pedestrians; diverse shapes of multi-ethnic New York, Hassidic beards, round disconcerting faces, sleeveless hard-hats, a hooker's waddle to downtown hang-outs. I spot a stray dog urinating, uncaring to

the auto-noise, the blue sky, and my inquisitive laughter.

My perennial gaze to the ambulant world is the metaphorical escape — from heavy metal doors, the recurring lock-downs, strip searches; the dysphoria of unnatural sounds; petty cat-calls, guilty pleas, the screeches of a junkie's convulsion.

My mind shuts to the reality of entrapment — shutting out unabated inequities of lifeless endurance.

My closed eyes to reality is but an absurdity — an illusion. I cannot evade the years past, and the uncertainty of the approaching years, months, weeks, days, minutes to

my journey's end.

My face presses the window panes; its chill, a woman's first touch, lips lustfully caressing — an emotional lifting to heightened expectations.

My breath plays figuring on misty glass; I see imaginary lovers, walking the wet grass, laughing to the salt-breeze roar of ocean waves.

I dream of noiseless sounds — the solitary of welcomed gatherings — a fearless encounter — the coming of children to a disimprisoned father.

But I gaze, still, at my world beyond the window.

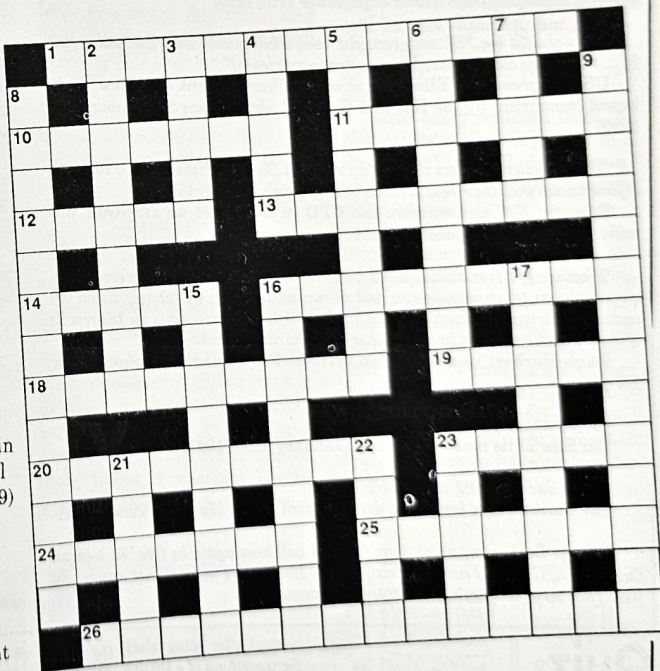
Crossword

Across

1. & 9 Down Criminalisation's two partners in crime? (13;13)
10. Social leper (7)
11. Sociable; soft fruit drink (7)
12. Separated or divorced from (5)
13. It is said that this vision is twenty-twenty — and a wonderful thing (9)
14. A unit could be to blame for Angolan atrocities (1.1.1.1.1.1.)
16. & 26 Across Murder of one's reputation (9,13)
18. ...exit, ward or Powers Act (9)
19. Retains (5)
20. To distort someone's beliefs through mental pressure (9)
23. Eight players (5)
24. Prepares cash (7)
25. An Italian rice dish (7)
26. See 16 Across

Down

2. Send to Coventry (9)
3. Intended (5)
4. Door fastening (5)
5. Not of primary importance (9)
6. Refuses entry or retreats (5,4)
7. In debt or because of (5)
8. Socialist murdered in Berlin in 1919 (she was from a small European country, I hear) (4,9)
9. See 1 Across
15. Che Guevara's country of birth (9)
16. Lobbies for opinions or votes (9)
17. Not a number to be caught in (6,3)
21. Gather, collect (5)
22. Wading bird (5)
23. Beginning (5)



Answers Across 1. Normalisation; 10. Outcast; 11. Cordial; 12. Apart; 13. Hind-sight; 14. UNITA; 16. Character; 18. Emergency; 19. Keeps; 20. Brainwash; 23. Octet; 24. Reads; 25. Kisolet; 26. Assassination
Answers Down 2. Ostracise; 3. Meant; 4. Latch; 5. Secondary; 6. Turns back; 7. Owing; 8. Rosa Luxemburg; 9. Usterisation; 15. Argentina; 16. Canvases; 17. Twenty Two; 21. Amass; 22. Heron; 23. Onset

QUOTES

"We have had enough of trade union leaders who are earning £60,000 plus per annum wringing their hands and talking about the 'crime' of low pay. It is time these union officials... set about organising these exploited workers and fighting for an end to their exploitation."

My Gregory Kerr, member of the Irish National Teachers Organisation. (*Irish Times* September 17th, 1990)

"Northern Ireland remains a profoundly unsatisfactory instance of democratic life and the reason may lie in the rationale behind its creation in the first place. The British government may argue that there is a peaceful political way of solving the conflict, but it has failed to show what that might be."

Fr Oliver Rafferty, Jesuit priest (*Month* magazine, quoted in *The Irish News* September 13th, 1990)

"There are a number of MPs from all parties who come up to me and say, 'Clare, I never talk about it, it's such a mess, but we ought to get out of Ireland.'"

Clare Short, British Labour Party MP. (*Irish Times* October 22nd, 1990)

"[The Loyalists] have a lot in common with — it's unfair to them to say this, but it's true — with the Afrikaners in South Africa or the Zionists in the Kibbutzes in Israel... and they have embarrassed successive British governments by proclaiming their loyalty to the Crown and to the Union."

Sherard Cowper-Coles, a First Secretary at the British Embassy in Washington. (*The Independent On Sunday* December 2nd, 1990)

"Are we to assume that we can have Hitler, because he wasn't Irish, but not de Valera or Brendan Behan? I suppose the Nürnberg rallies are okay?"

Martin Roberts, Historical Association, on the ban on a historical programme for schools in Britain because it breached the media ban on Republicans. (*Irish Times* September 11th, 1990)

"Why should the FBI even consider co-operating with an organisation [the RUC] that is so clearly linked to perpetrating violence?"

US Congressman Eliot Engel on the harassment of a New York-based immigrant by the FBI and the RUC. (*Irish Voice* September 15th, 1990)

"When Western leaders described President Saddam Hussein as 'a thug' everyone knows that their real problem was that he's not their thug."

Eamonn McCann outside the GPO in Dublin at an anti-Gulf War rally. (*Irish Times* October 1st, 1990)

"[Footage of a bomb disappearing down the centre of the Iraqi defence headquarters] was triumphantly run and re-run until it became the war as an arcade game, a war in which even the most immediate participants see the results of their attacks as video images rather than the bloody reality below."

Hugh Herbert in a television review. (*The Guardian* January 19th, 1991)

"Bastards of Baghdad"

The Sun at its most articulate. (January 22nd, 1991)

"Hang Saddam long and slow."

The Sun's recipe for peace and reconciliation. (January 22nd, 1991)

"George Bush came on at 2am. 'Kuwait will once again be free,' he told us. Once again, George? Feudal statelets run by Emirs were not, will not, cannot, be free. They serve economic and strategic purposes."

"The world could wait no longer."

Well, George, I could have waited a hell of a long time before starting a war. Generals with new weapons and new strategies to test, they couldn't wait. War-mongering tabloids which can calculate precisely the ratio of circulation gains to the number of fluid ounces of blood shed onto the sand, they couldn't wait. Most of us were in no hurry."

Gene Kerrigan. (*Sunday Tribune* January 20th, 1991)

"Specialist Daryl Smallwood, aged 21, said his platoon was preparing 'guest cards' to leave on the corpses of Iraqi soldiers they kill, with messages like: 'Personal debt paid.' 'I got 50 but I know I'll need more,' he said."

US soldier upholding truth, justice and the American way. (*The Guardian* January 23rd, 1991)

"Never believe anything until it's twice been officially denied."

Air Commodore Alistair Mackie. (*The Guardian* January 21st, 1991)

"Hidden Agenda is clearly a major film pertaining to the current situation here. Though based to some extent on actual events, it is a work of fiction and as such no more a reflection of the Film Theatre's point of view than any other film shown here (such films have ranged from *Battleship Potemkin* to *Triumph of the Will*).

In the same way that the showing of *ET* does not imply a belief by the organisation in little brown men from outer space, the showing of *Hidden Agenda* in no way implies its belief in the premise of that film."

The 'disclaimer' printed in the programme issued by Queen's Film Theatre, the only cinema in the Six Counties to screen *Hidden Agenda*, which is based loosely on the Stalker affair and the Colin Wallace revelations.

We have
Army, Navy and Air Force
Reporting guidelines
Press briefings

They have
A war machine
Censorship
Propaganda

We launch
First strikes
Pre-emptively

They launch
Sneak missile attacks
Without provocation

Our boys are...
Professional
Lion-hearts
Cautious
Confident
Heroes
Dare-devils
Young knights of the skies
Loyal
Desert rats
Resolute
Brave

Theirs are...
Brainwashed
Paper tigers
Cowardly
Desperate
Cornered
Cannon fodder
Bastards of Baghdad
Blindly obedient
Mad dogs
Ruthless
Fanatical

Our missiles cause...
Collateral damage

Their missiles cause...
Civilian casualties

We...
Precision bomb

They...
Fire wildly at anything in the skies

All the expressions above were used by the British press in the first week of the Gulf War. (*The Guardian* January 23rd, 1991)

Quiz

- 1: Name the Irish POW who died on hunger-strike on February 12th, 15 years ago and whose body was kidnapped by the 26-County government before being reclaimed by comrades and given a proper Republican burial.
- 2: The Tottenham Three (Engin Raghip, Mark Braithwaite and Winston Silcott) were sentenced to life imprisonment after being falsely convicted for the killing of a British policeman during riots in which North London housing estate?
- 3: When Saddam Hussein ordered the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people of Hallabja two years ago, it was reminiscent of British mustard gas attacks against Kurdish villages in 1920 under the orders of someone who was later to become the British Prime Minister. Who was he?

ment after being falsely convicted for the killing of a British policeman during riots in which North London housing estate?

3: When Saddam Hussein ordered the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people of Hallabja two years ago, it was reminiscent of British mustard gas attacks against Kurdish villages in 1920 under the orders of someone who was later to become the British Prime Minister. Who was he?

4: "A nation which has such citizens will never surrender." So said a young Ho Chi Minh on hearing of the death on hunger-strike of an Irish Lord Mayor. About whose death was he speaking?

5: Who was the Minister responsible for originally introducing Section 31, the broadcasting ban on Republicans, in the 26 Counties?

Answers to Winter 1990 Quiz: 1. Chief Buthelezi; 2. CIA; 3. Guy Fawkes; 4. Hugh Callaghan, Gerry Power, Gerry Hunter, Paddy Hill, Richard McKelkeny, John Walker; 5. Battle of the Boyne.

Prizes of a year's subscription to *An Glór Gafa* plus a £5 book token will be given to the first three correct entries opened on our closing date of May 15th, 1991. The names of the winners will be published in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* and in our next issue.

PRISON NEWS

COURTS

Once again the courts have illustrated the vindictiveness of a heartless judicial system in the case of Marie Wright, who has been held in Maghaberry prison for nearly two years. Marie, whose 72-year-old father was terminally ill in hospital, was refused bail to go and see him while he was still alive. Refusing bail, Justice Nicholson told Marie, "I understand your father is about to die and it is a terrible thing that you cannot be there. I cannot grant bail even for a short time as I cannot be sure you would be seen again."

A short time later, after Marie's father sadly died, she applied for and was granted bail by Mr Justice Sheil, in which he stated, "In any case in which I have granted bail it has always been honoured." He granted five hours for Marie to attend the funeral. It was not sufficient time for Marie to comfort her family or be comforted by them.

Jackie McMullan, who was granted Christmas parole, was refused permission by the British Home Office to visit his fiancée, and fellow Republican, Ella O'Dwyer in Durham Jail even though he had won a High Court battle lifting the ban on him leaving the Six Counties while out on parole.

CRUMLIN ROAD

Further proof — if proof was needed — that the NIO policy of forcibly integrating Republican and Loyalist prisoners cannot and will not work was shown recently when a Republican prisoner, on his way to a visit, was attacked by a Loyalist pris-

oner and had his nose broken.

Another alarming aspect for Republicans and their families is that their mail is being handed over to Loyalist prisoners. At Christmas a Republican prisoner received a letter and Christmas card on which was written threats and Loyalist slogans, directed not only at him but at the sender also. The only credible explanation of how these letters could have fallen into the hands of someone other than those they were intended for was that it was done with the collusion of the screws.

EXTRADITION

Dessie Ellis, the first Irish person to be extradited under the 1987 Extradition Act, appeared before London Magistrate Daphne Wickham on Thursday February 14th.

Wickham accepted defence submissions and rejected the charges for which Ellis was extradited. But instead of freeing Ellis, the magistrate said that in her opinion there was prima facie evidence to proceed with two different charges under the Offences Against the Persons Act and the Criminal Damages Act.

By changing the charges against Ellis the Magistrate broke one of the basic principles of international extradition law.

The Dublin government has since been trying desperately to wriggle out of responsibility for the travesty of justice perpetrated against Ellis by blaming the British for breaking the "gentlemen's agreement" which underlines the extradition of Irish political hostages to Britain.

The British DPP office has since announced it is appealing the London magistrate's decision to a higher court.

The Irish Anti-Extradition Committee has called for Dessie's immediate release and the Ellis family have called for the resignation of 26-County Justice Minister Ray Burke and the Attorney General John Murray.

Belfastman Robert Russell finally won his appeal against the original 1981 conviction which sentenced him to 20 years for the attempted killing of an RUC officer. On February 7th the Belfast Court of Appeal overturned the conviction. He was eventually freed on Monday, February 25th.

Russell spent four years incarcerated in Portlaoise Prison, where he was held on British extradition warrants, after he was arrested in the South having escaped from Long Kesh in 1983.

The Six-County authorities now say that he should never have been in Long Kesh in the first place and that his only crime was a failure to trust the system of justice which had convicted him twice on evidence they now admit is "unacceptable". Despite all the evidence pointing to the corrupt nature of the Six-County justice system, the Southern authorities extradited Russell across the border in August 1988.

ENGLAND

Yet another glaring example of anti-Irish racism within the British penal system was provided by the case of three Republican prisoners held in English jails. Billy Armstrong, Roy Walsh and Paul Holmes, who have served 18 years in jail and who are constantly transferred, or 'ghosted', from prison to prison, were informed just before Christmas that their cases will not come up for review for another five years.

EUROPE

Ireland's legitimate right to self-determination was put on trial in a French court in the case of five Irish men who were arrested on board the ship Eksund. The Eksund was stopped off the coast of Brittany on October 30th, 1987, and found to have 150 tonnes of weapons and ammunition on board bound, it was said, for the Irish Republican Army. Three of

the five men on trial, James Coll, James Doherty and Gabriel Cleary, left the court in no doubt about their belief in the legitimacy of the use of force to resist British violence. James Coll from Donegal stated with clarity, "I have no regrets. My only apologies are to the Volunteers of the IRA who needed those guns to continue the war against England."

RED BOOKS

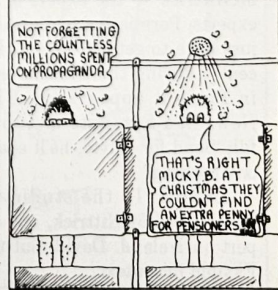
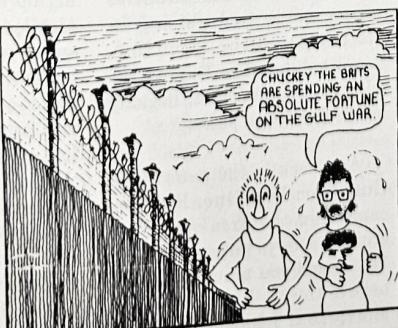
Brendan (Bik) McFarlane was the only life prisoner having served 12 years of his sentence (the criterion set down by the NIO) to have been refused Christmas parole. Bik was extradited from the Netherlands along with Gerry Kelly, only after the British government gave an undertaking that he would be treated in the same manner as all other prisoners. Yet he lost his High Court action against the NIO to be considered for Christmas parole. This is but one example of how the British government will give undertakings to foreign courts enabling them to be granted the extradition of Irish citizens only to renege on them at a later date. Mr Justice Carswell, on announcing his judgement in Bik's High Court action, said he was "satisfied that no special restrictions had been placed on McFarlane." That is very far from the truth.

After being returned from the Netherlands Bik was placed on a 'Red Book' (so-called Top Risk) which means he is constantly on the move between Blocks; he gets a maximum of six weeks in any Block. This makes it extremely difficult for him to settle or to build up relationships with his comrades. The decision not to grant Bik Christmas parole has a direct effect on him and his family and it clearly contradicts the lie that he has not been placed under 'special restrictions'. Bik is the only one of the Red Book prisoners to have served the 12-year benchmark laid down by the NIO in granting parole.

CRUMLIN ROAD



By Martin Gough (Long Kesh) ■



A famous casualty

Raymond
McCartney
(Long Kesh) ■

"I knew it was for real once I saw Kate Adie was here," a BBC reporter quotes the words of a British soldier in Saudi Arabia. Of course we didn't get to see or hear the soldier in question. Why? Well, you know the old cliché yourself; the first casualty is truth. It had been trotted out for weeks on end right up to Gulf War: Day One. Then of course once the bullets (very large bullets at that) began to fly, these very same trotters were inflicting massive casualties on the truth. Therefore, as all would-be journalists say — especially when there is nothing to back up the story — *"I have come to understand from a source close to the BBC that the Kate Adie line was actually uttered by an Iraqi soldier. However, in the interests of 'our chaps' morale, please adjust your sense of reality."*

I knew it was for real once the BBC wheeled in the resident experts and nearly postponed *Neighbours*. After all, in a strange sense we were experts of a sort on how the BBC handles war situations. If there is an opinion to be expressed, and the News Editor wants to be distanced from it, then simply make someone an expert. We know them well.

Subject: No 10 wants to test the water with the next piece of repressive legislation — enter Professor Paul Wilkinson.

Subject: The NIO needs the old 'stop the war/release the prisoners' piece — enter Fr Paul or the latest ex-prisoner Mark II.

And then there is David McKittrick — the expert of all experts. Permission to digress. I just have to get this one in. Recently during the Eksund trial in Paris it appears the BBC News had a minute or two to fill; 'Send for David, he'll speak on anything.'

INTRO: In the studio we have David McKittrick, our expert on Ireland. David, put the Eksund in context.

DAVID: Well, after Enniskillen the IRA were in disarray; a small, dwindling group,

more or less in a huddle (I had a picture of about 25 Volunteers freezing cold, blowing into their hands, at the bottom of Westland Street — boy, did I feel bad!) Then came the Eksund to lift them out of the abyss.

No doubting it could and therefore very good? All except for one silly little thing, Enniskillen happened in November; the Eksund was captured in October. (Hopefully by now my wee band of freezers are away from Westland Street out of the road.) I haven't heard David on the radio since. It has nothing to do with his calendar dyslexia, there's just not enough room in the studio with the new wave of experts!

So I entered into the Gulf War with my distaste for experts firmly in place. I wasn't to be disappointed.

An Glór Gafa guide to BBC/Gulf War experts.

There are two species:

Militarus Discontinuous: Retired Rear Admirals or former Commanders of Land Forces in the North European theatre of war (Pheew!). Often seen resplendent in their dress uniforms in TV studios. Usual habitat: a large armchair in the

As they were saying . . .

■ THE PENTAGON estimates that its build-up could be complete within three weeks, and that it could then defeat Iraq within days.
Sunday Times, August 19, 1990

■ ACCORDING to Pentagon war plans, the destruction of the 500-strong Iraqi air force will take about 24 hours and the defeat of all Iraqi ground forces just 10 days.
ditto

■ IF IT comes, it will be nasty, brutish and short.
John Bulloch, Independent on Sunday, August 19, 1990

■ NO POLITICIAN has yet dared utter the immortal words that our forces in the Gulf will be 'home by Christmas', but unless they are, the British public will have deemed that Saddam won and the West lost.
Simon O'Dwyer-Russell, Sunday Telegraph, August 19, 1990

■ SUPERIOR American targeting from the air might take out every Iraqi tank, lorry and grounded aircraft in a three-day turkey shoot.
Norman Macrae, Sunday Times, August 26, 1990

■ I SUSPECT that 10,000 sorties in six days . . . would, with today's precision bombing, wipe out Iraq's missiles, air

force and communications to its desert army.
Norman Macrae, Sunday Times, January 6, 1991

■ THE WEST has over-estimated the military strength of Iraq. A joint massive air attack could decide the outcome of the war in its first few hours.
Saul Zadka, Guardian, January 11, 1991.

■ THE WEIGHT of the onslaught . . . will be devastating, and Tom King made it clear that the aim would be to limit the war to "weeks not months".
Independent, January 14, 1991

■ CONGRESSMAN Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said a war could be won within a month at a cost of 3,000 to 5,000 American casualties with 500 to 1,000 dead.
Daily Telegraph, January 11, 1991.

■ THIS massive air attack will be the most vital phase of the war . . . It could run into a few days.
Chris Jenkins, Daily Mail, January 12, 1991

■ THE Iraqis would only get one chance. American radar planes would detect the launch of any [Scud] missile and the launchers would be destroyed within minutes.
James Adams, Sunday Times, January 13, 1991

■ MY GUESS is that any fighting will be over quickly.
Paul Johnson, Spectator, January 17, 1991

● *Guardian 15/2/91*

Carlton Club or other St James's watering hole.

Lesser Spotted News Analyst: the BBC's very own correspondent; defence, foreign, Middle East, wildlife, etc. Many of them were once inhabitants of the mudflats of Ormeau Avenue — it seems the Six Counties news scene is good training for the troops on the front line. Usual habitat: The Europa Hotel or the Riyadh Hyatt Regency (ninth floor Scud patrol).

And back in the news room: Gulf War: Day One. Read the caption in the *Breakfast Time* studio — very, very impressive. Yet — and you are not going to believe this — I was absolutely shattered. I had missed the war! I had gone to sleep the night before assured by the

World Tonight's expert on Radio 4 that the first attacks would come on a moonless night and since it was a moonlit night, Saddam (and I) could go to sleep. Were we in for a shock — Saddam more than me! Now at 9.15am the experts were queuing up to gush, "We have taken him by surprise, he cannot respond — we've won!" I couldn't believe it — over, finished, no more — and I missed it. Now I was listening intently to what I had already missed.

Linkman: "To date no response from Saddam, what do you make of this, Rear Admiral?"

Rear Admiral: "Quite obvious, dear boy. Air force — totally destroyed. Communication and Command — totally disintegrated. Missile sites — totally

Inside Out Inside Out Ins

neutralised. Sum total — we've walloped the bastard!"

Linkman (to the BBC Defence Correspondent — another of my pet hates, one BBC reporter interviewing another BBC reporter; it's virtually incestuous): James? James (who is showing off the latest in hi-tech computer ware by drawing a series of incongruous lines on a TV screen slightly off-camera): "Here Saddam has 14 missile sites — all must be destroyed. No air response — air force eradicated."

There is a lot of time to fill and, unlike the other side, the BBC has no adverts to use as strategic cover when things go quiet.

Linkman: "But James, how can you be so sure?"

James (with a smug smile that says, How? Remember I'm an expert): "We are six hours into the war and there has been no Scud attack on Israel. Need I say more?"

Linkman: "Now for an update. (Land of Hope and Glory is playing softly in the background.) We've done it. We have blitzed the Iraqis, the dirty rotters won't fight back and I'll be back to ordinary news tomorrow with no overtime — the swine!"

I would be a liar to say that I wasn't a trifle disappointed to have slept through a whole war. The humility of it all. "Daddy (I remain the eternal optimist), where were you during the war?"

"Right in the thick of it, son." Well, I am entitled to a truth casualty or two of my own.

"And the Gulf War?" One child drops to the ground, "Who told you to ask that? I fell asleep, but..."

But I needn't worry. After all, I am a veteran of the Malvinas TV War. Then too, it was all over before it started, and the very same reporters who complained of being 'conned' by the military (and have written many a profitable book to prove it) told us that they would not allow it to happen again. It did and they didn't. For here they were from the very first morning saying it would all be over before dinner-time, never mind the 'dream' scenario of four days. By the way, the 'nightmare' scenario was eleven days.

I may have missed most of it but no way would I be absent from the surrender. Dinner-time came. Teatime. Lock-up. No surrender.

Gulf War: Day XX. We wuz conned! By whom? Ah well, sure the experts are still with us, and pouring forth expertise. Now James simply ignores all previous mention of missile sites and tells us that we forgot to take account of the mobile sites. James, we didn't know there were any mobile sites — the experts forgot to tell us.

The Rear Admiral's sidesteps are a real treat. All those destroyed airplanes, sites, runways, buildings were — wait for it — Dummies! Now there is a subject on which the BBC has experts aplenty.

Thus the Gulf War dragged on. We expect the truth to be concealed. No photographs of the wounded allowed. The deaths of human beings become: collateral damage to specific assets is slight. Even the BBC's saturation coverage has dissipated; no doubt the experts are suffering from battle fatigue as each of their predictions is scuttled by what eventually unfolds. But if you can turn Dunkirk into a victory the Gulf should be a doddle.

Where lies the truth? Will Kate Adie ever get to tell us? She came close in Libya but after the Norman Tebbit broadside it is much more civilised these days. "The desert looks beautiful this morning as the British troops prepare for battle. Their high state of alert is playing constantly on their nerves and morale is not easy to assess. They all know this war may cost their lives and there are strained faces as they get ready to face the Iraqis. This is Kate Adie for the British News Pool." This report comes subject to an MoD censor: Classified.

As for the truth, well I think my friend Peter has the answer. The other night as yet another update approached and with the fear of still missing the surrender hanging over me, says I, "Are you going in to catch the news?"

"Nah, I'll wait a couple of years and then read the real story." Without doubt therein lies the first casualty of war.

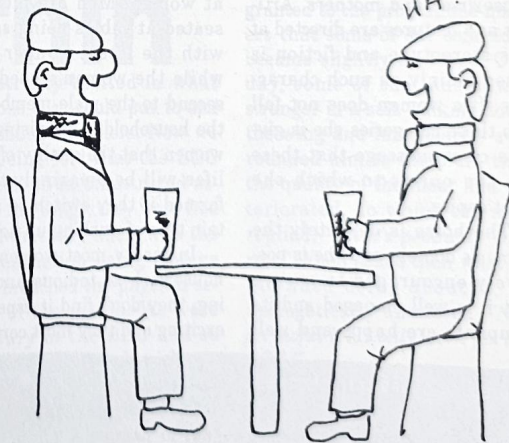


WHAT'S THE LATEST
FASHION IN

LONDON FOR FURNITURE?

CHUCKLE!
CHUCKLE!

HA!
HA!



AN UNDER THE TABLE
CABINET!

Davy Glennon + Pat Livingstone
(Long Kesh) ■

Women's magazines

Mary McArdle
& Carol Cullen
(Maghaberry) ■

Although the content of the traditional women's magazines has changed in recent times with the emergence of the modern woman, the underlying assumptions on which they are based remain. It is only in the 'alternative' women's magazines such as *Spare Rib* and *Women's News* that women are not slotted into the roles which are largely seen by society as the only normal and desirable roles for women. The long established magazines such as *Women's Own* may include an occasional article about issues which are increasingly being highlighted and which affect women in spheres other than domestic life.

However, there is no fundamental challenge to women's oppression and 'controversial' issues such as sexual harassment are treated individually and not as symptoms of the patriarchal ideology which produces them. These magazines fail to address the real issues which affect women, continuing instead to focus on the traditional stereotypes of the domestic woman and to reinforce this stereotype by refusing to challenge it. These magazines target white, middle-class heterosexual housewives and mothers. Articles and features are directed at this stereotype and fiction is based mainly on such characters. If a woman does not fall into these categories she is given a clear message that these are the norms to which she must aspire.

The home is definitely the woman's domain and she is positively encouraged to ensure that it is well managed and its occupants are happy and well

cared for, otherwise she has failed in her domestic duties. But never fear, help is at hand! Women are treated to endless lists of helpful hints should they fail to remove a stubborn stain from one of hubby's shirts or worse still, burn his dinner.

Pictures within the women's magazines are often images of domestic bliss. Women are invariably pictured in the kitchen performing domestic chores, or with the children performing the role of carer and mother. Most advertising, from nappies to household goods, is directed at women. Men are pictured seated at tables being served with the latest wonder food, while the woman's needs are second to the male members of the household. Advertising tells women that the quality of their lives will be amazingly transformed if they switch to a certain type of washing-up liquid.

In reality most women view housework as tedious and boring, they don't find it especially exciting and they most certainly

don't want their intelligence insulted by advertisements which portray them as mindless creatures who work themselves into an excited frenzy simply because their husband's shirt has washed whiter than white!

For those women who have not succeeded in ensnaring a husband to ensure their future of domestic bliss there is lengthy advice on how to catch and keep your man. In pursuit of this end women are encouraged to change their appearance in order to make themselves more attractive to men. They are bombarded with features and articles offering advice on how to dress, apply make-up and lose weight, all accompanied by pictures of beautiful, slim young women. If we are not fortunate to be born beautiful we are encouraged to use any and all means at our disposal to cover up our deficiencies. We are treated to a front cover usually complete with a smiling celebrity who more often than not invites us to share the secret of her youthful looks. In this way the traditional women's magazines exert page after page of pressure. They remind us that we are not the perfect woman, while holding out the hope that we could be if only we worked hard enough at it. The reality of life for a lot of women is that they do not have time to indulge in the rituals involved in keeping themselves young and beautiful, they are too busy trying to look after homes and children, often combining this with paid

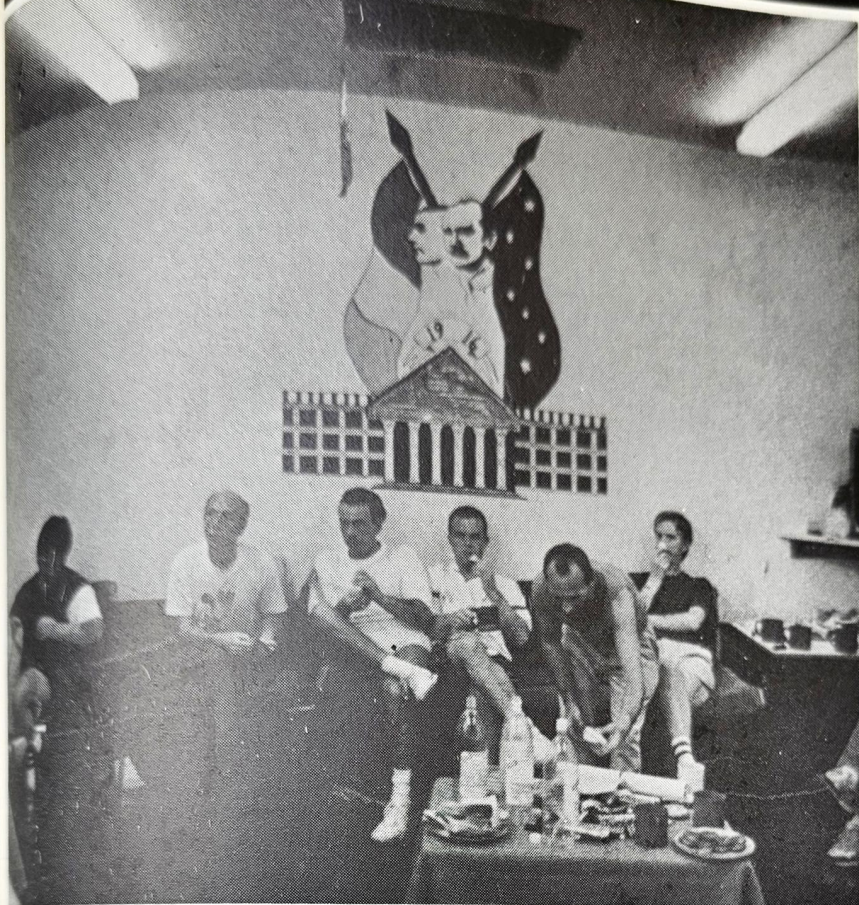
employment.

Of course, the fact that they are still popular means that someone enjoys the traditional magazines. Perhaps this is because they provide a form of escapism and it is easy for women to become absorbed in some of the more romantic tales with the proverbial happy-ever-after ending.

Articles on health care make interesting and informative reading and appeal to a large proportion of readers. Humour can be found dotted throughout the pages and crosswords and puzzles provide light entertainment.

'Alternative' magazines do not focus on what are traditionally women's affairs, in other words they do not merely concern themselves with domestic issues. Instead they provide a forum for women to raise issues which they themselves feel are important. The focus is on the woman as a person in her own right rather than the woman as an extension of her partner (male or female), children and home. The social pressure is absent and women are not expected to mould into the roles that wider society has allotted to them. Most are printed by women's collectives and offer their readership a larger input than most other magazines, ensuring that women's voices are heard and their ideas adequately represented. These magazines reflect the way in which women view themselves and afford them an opportunity to express themselves.





By Eugene Gilmartin
(Long Kesh) ■

one stipulation — that we be allowed to speak for ourselves. The programme makers were free to disagree with, or rubbish, our comments, provided there were no distortions or BBC editing.

The making of the programme was much more intricate and time-consuming than many of us would have believed. The presence of the cameras also seemed to induce in some men a sudden urge to do things they had never previously done. Some even mopped the landing and washed the dishes, an unprecedented phenomenon! On days when prior notice had been received that the cameras would be coming, it would have been easier to discover Austin Currie's principles than to find an empty sink in the wash-house. The shaving and showering that went on would have kept a beauty salon in work for a week. Then there were the men who thought their moment of stardom had arrived, only to have their hopes dashed. And in one case, a 45 minute in-depth interview was whittled away to a brief 15 second appearance.

So unusual was the access granted to the programme-makers that some of our comrades became slightly confused. One day, some of the lads saw a stranger in a suit walking down the wing and immediately surrounded him to complain that the quality of the meat had deteriorated. To which the man replied, "That's probably correct." When asked then what he intended doing about it, he apologetically answered, "Not an awful lot, I only work for the BBC."

Having seen the programme, were our wishes complied with? In general, the answer has to be yes. By and large all Republicans were allowed to convey their aspirations and political motivations free from distortion. We were able to express our views on many issues ranging from our day by day life in here to our attitude towards the struggle.

Overall, the images of Republicans in the programme seemed to have humanised

Enemies Within

"Just ignore us, pretend we're not here," said Steve. Easier said than done when a huge camera lens hovers three inches from your left eyebrow as you wash a pair of socks; or a boom mike creeps over your shoulder in the middle of a chat on the landing. Even an everyday thing like reading a newspaper becomes incredibly self-conscious when you know it could be seen by millions of TV viewers.

The BBC's *Inside Story* team spent four weeks in August/September filming in the H-Blocks; the producer, Steve Hewlett, spent twice as long researching the documentary. The project actually began some nine months previously when reporter Peter Taylor and the series' executive producer, Paul Hamann, arrived in H5 to discuss with Raymond McCartney the possibility of making a programme. At that stage their ideas of what shape the documentary would take were

vague. 'A day in the life of the prison' was as much as they could say.

Given this vagueness, our natural suspicions as to the motivations of the NIO and the inherent anti-Republican bias of the British media were heightened. Foremost in our minds was; why was the NIO suddenly prepared to allow a film crew access to the H-Blocks? Previously, a few film crews had been permitted in during the Blanket protest and the first Hunger-Strike in 1980, but they had

been strictly limited in what questions they could put to one of the hunger-strikers. Now we were being told that the BBC had been given unrestricted access to the wings; they were free to ask what they liked, with the only restriction being footage which breached the physical security of the prison. We were also wary of the BBC and so were fearful of a hatchet job.

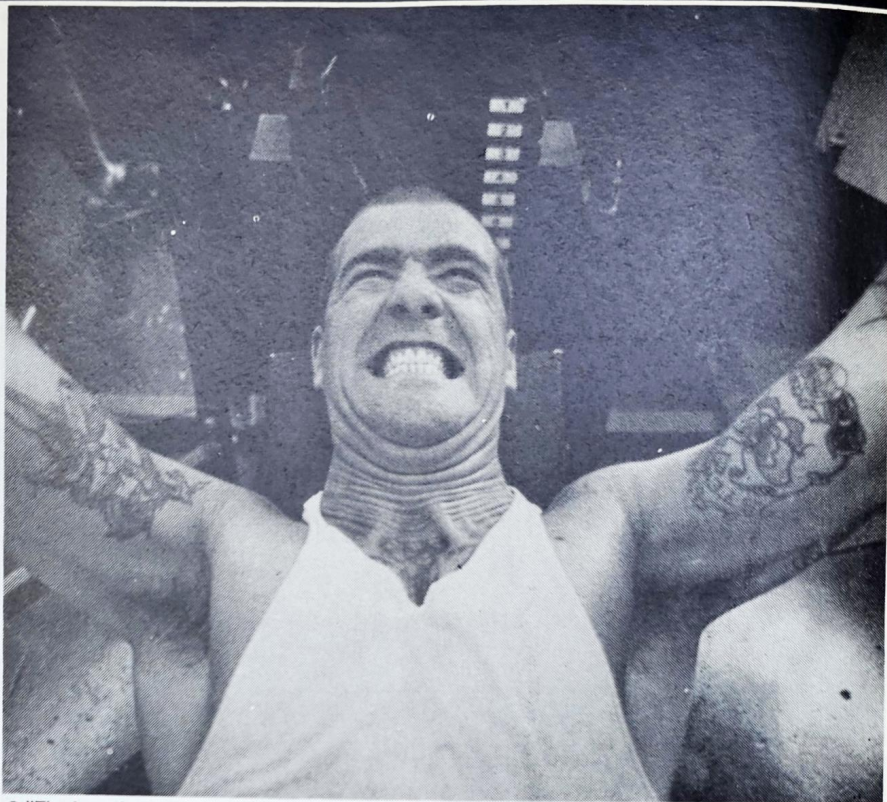
So why then did we decide to co-operate with the programme? We did so for a number of reasons, central of which was that the programme would have gone ahead without us and our absence would have created a wrong impression. We were also confident about participating because, regardless of what the programme would say about us, it would be impossible for them to falsify the reality of our lives and political convictions. So we agreed to co-operate, with only

those who are normally portrayed as mindless thugs by the media. If the programme achieved nothing else but this, it would have been worthwhile. However, this is not to say that the programme fulfilled all our expectations. There were many aspects of jail struggle that could have been covered but weren't. For example, the uninformed public would have got the impression that there had been the Blanket protest, followed by the Hunger-Strike and then a short peaceful transition to the present conditions. There was no mention of the long years of hard-fought struggle in between. Also, the communal way of life we promote was not explored as much as we would have liked.

While the benefits of segregation were apparent in the relative calm in the H-Blocks, no reference was made to the ongoing struggle in Crumlin Road jail. Other issues such as the strip searching of our female comrades, the plight of Republican prisoners in England and the injustices of the Life Sentence Review Board were not touched upon. So, it would be wrong to assume that conditions in the H-Blocks, as portrayed by the programme, are representative of the British government's overall prison policy.

These omissions may be explained by the time limits on the programme. Whilst most of the Republicans interviewed mentioned these issues, all the footage must have ended up on a BBC editing room floor.

Predictably, many sections of the media were outraged. The BBC "should never have screened it," as it gave the "articulate Provos an hour-long TV commercial," said the *Daily Express* (21/11/90). Their main complaint appeared to be that, whilst the programme kept to within the letter of the law, it broke the spirit of it. But surely this is the precise role a 'free and independent' media is supposed to fill! However, even the begrudgers in the British media couldn't help but notice the politicisation of Republicans. Indeed the *Sunday Times* (25/11/90) likened Republicans to "those cheerful plucky characters of an old POW movie",



● "The Loyalists seemed confused, despairing and much more like routine cons"

whereas Loyalists "seemed confused, despairing and much more like routine cons." Astutely enough the same paper realised that, "the difference is one of political convictions."

But even within the predictable reactions the British media were forced to concede how Republican prisoners came across as 'ordinary' people, a fact that many in England, fed on a diet of distortion and lies as to the nature of Republicanism, would find remarkable.

Reaction to the programme from within our own communities was generally very positive. For many prisoners' families it was their first opportunity to see how and where their loved ones lived. Undoubtedly the relatively relaxed atmosphere would have been reassuring for families who are only too familiar with just how brutal the British prison system can be. Furthermore, the sight of Republicans unapologetically stating their political convictions seemed to have struck a chord with many non-Republicans, judging from reactions witnessed by prisoners out on parole at Christmas. Could it be

that the programme reminded many people that the Republican Movement consists simply of ordinary women and men from within their own communities?

One thing the programme clearly showed was just who won the Hunger-Strike. While Thatcher and the British may have claimed that they did not give in to the five demands it

was obvious for all to see that Republican prisoners, by their constant struggles, have achieved what their comrades died for. Conditions today in the H-Blocks stand as testimony to the 'Ten Men Dead'. Britain's 'breakers yard' was revealed as a 'building site' with politicised Republicans determined to carry the struggle to a successful conclusion.



● Some of the POWs who took part in the fun run to raise funds for Gaelscoileanna



● The South African police — Sachs was a victim of a booby-trap bomb planted by their agents

The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter by Albie Sachs. Published (Hardback) by Grafton. £13.99

Call me ultra-sensitive. Call me downright pernicky. Call me a begrudger for damning a person because of one remark. But I swear it pisses me off, it really does. There I was, over halfway through the book and thoroughly enjoying the read: chuckling at Albie Sachs's dry humour, impressed by his resilience in the face of the mutilation done to him, enthralled by his vivid descriptions of the coming to terms with sudden disability. Then, on page 121 he said it. He's sussing out a couple of ANC comrades about the organisation's use of no-warning bombs against white civilians and is worried about the implication of this apparent change in tactics: "...bombs, bombs and more bombs, that is part of the struggle, but are they just being let off anywhere?" he agonises.

"Are we entering an endless Northern Ireland or Lebanon type of situation, where the action becomes everything and politics get left behind?"

Ruefully rubbing my face to ease the pain of the stinging slap, I hoped to ponder the conundrum of how an obviously intelligent person could regurgitate such crass propaganda. True, he was convalescing in

London at the time but surely he wouldn't take his view of the situation here from reading *The Guardian* or, heaven protect us, *The Times*. This was his only reference to Ireland so, short of asking the man himself, I remain at a loss to know why he should make such an uninformed comment. I read on but finished the book with an unfortunate sense of detachment where previously his account had engaged me.

Don't let me put you off completely, however. *The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter* is well worth a look. Albie Sachs, a white member of the ANC and a lawyer, was blown up in April 1988 in Mozambique by a booby-trap bomb planted by South African agents. He survived, but minus an arm and the sight of one eye, and with serious injuries to various parts of his body (although, like Himie Cohen, his other vital bits were mercifully intact — I leave you to read the book to enjoy the joke).

The book begins at the moment of the explosion and is a very personal account of convalescence, often painful, often humorous but always touching, until his return to Mozambique and his triumphant jog along a beach, the 'soft vengeance' of the title.

Although the political context of Albie Sachs's life is ever present, the book is not in any sense a heavy tract. Political commentary is effort-lessly worked into passages dealing

with the nitty-gritty of a pain-filled rehabilitation. Thus a description of an arduous walk upstairs to exercise a damaged leg is interwoven with reminiscences of trips to the US, thoughts on the English class system and on the ideological correctness of choosing a shrivelled orange or of not smoking marijuana. It is this off-centre, slightly surreal quality which is one of the book's charms, along with the earthiness of the humour. The author also has a particularly nice line in running jokes.

The political context in which Albie Sachs came about his injuries aside, the book is a valuable document on the reality of physical disability. It is a plea to those of us, the so-called able-bodied, who are often insensitive or uncomfortable in dealing with the disabled, and to the medical staff who treat them. They go through agonies in not knowing how the outside world might react to the sight of a shattered body; for Albie Sachs, the removal of his shirt in public to catch the summer sun becomes "perhaps the most critical single decision of my life."

At times the self-absorption in his body can be a bit off-putting — indeed his ex-wife complains at the narcissistic nature of his letters — but only those who experience the loss of a limb can know the almost obsessive preoccupation with the physical.

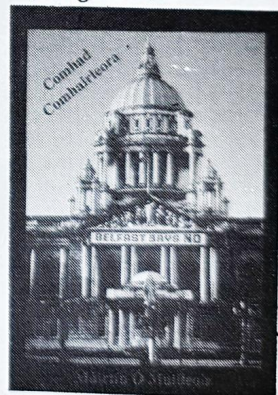
"The blast has put me actively and at times overwhelmingly in touch with my body," writes Sachs.

But he is impatient with those who would call him heroic; there was nothing heroic about surviving the explosion, he says, heroism lies in re-learning those little physical actions of everyday living that most people take for granted.

One of his strengths is the ability to analyse and convey moods and feelings. From the sympathetic reaction of women in particular to his injuries he gains insights into the social construction of masculinity and how it frequently prevents men from enjoying their bodies in a sensual, as distinct from a sexual, manner. Throughout his convalescence the love and support of women is as important as the medical attention, perhaps more so.

At one point Albie Sachs is moved to rage against those who planted the bomb and begins to curse them roundly. He checks when he finds himself using the terms "bastards" and "buggers", and tells how he stopped using such words because he learned they offend friends who were born out of wedlock or who are gay. It's a pity he has no Irish Republican friends — perhaps then he wouldn't speak so off-handedly about situations where politics get left behind. Who knows, he might even learn not to call this place 'Northern Ireland.'

Felim O'Hagan
(Long Kesh) ■



Comhad Comhairleora Le Máirtín O Muilleoir, Foilsithe ag Coiscéim

Faoi dheireadh is faoi dheoidh tá leabhar soléite ar fad againn, i nGaeilge, a thabharann léargas dúinn chan amháin ar ghaeisíocht na gcomhairl, ach ar stair fhás agus fhorbairt Shinn Féin óna idirghabháil toghcháin go dtí a straitéis toghcháin san am i láthair. Agus tá fáilte ar leith roimhe toise go bhfuil sé scríofa ag ball de Shinn Féin. Is léir anois go bhfuil poblac-taighaigh sásta peann a chur ar pháir, agus gan chead a gcinn a thabhairt



● Halla na Cathrach Bhéala Feirste — moltar comhairleoirí Shinn Féin as a gcuid misnigh in aghaidh a leithéide freasúra

do strainséirí a ndearcadh neamhthuisceanach, frithphob-lachtánach a scríobh.

Mheas mé, mar gheall ar an teideal *Comhad Comhairleora*, go mbainfeadh an leabhar go hiomlán le cursaí na seomraí comhairlí amháin. Ina áit sin, léirigh an chéad leath den leabhar éifeacht an dara stailc ocras ar fhás agus fhorbairt Shinn Féin mar fhórsa polaitiúil; freagra 'daonlathach' rialtas Shasana nuair a dhiúltaigh siad éisteacht d'ionadaithe tosa; an cosc craolta; agus, gan fiacail a chur ann, pleidheocht leanbhaí na n-Aontachtóirí. Mura mbeadh an seéal chomh dáiríre sin bheadh sé

áiféiseach. Thug an léargas ginearálta seo an-tuiscint dom, agus lig sé dom sult a bhaint as an leabhar ar fad.

Bheadh sé furasta ceist a chur ort féin cad chuige a leanann Shinn Féin ar aghaidh ag freastal ar na comhairlí, áiteanna a dtugtar drochíde dóibh agus nach dtugtar aird dóibh. Cruthaíonn freagra rialtas Shasana agus na n-Aontachtóirí an éifeacht atá acu agus lena chois sin an imní atá orthu roimh Shinn Féin, agus taispeánann an leabhar seo cé chomh riachtanach 's atá sé do Shinn Féin barúil na n-Aontachtóirí ar shealúchas na tíre a bhréagnú.

Caithfidh moladh a thabhairt do chomhairleoirí Shinn Féin as an mhisneach atá acu in aghaidh a leithéide de lucht freasúra agus an moladh céanna a thabhairt do phobal náisiúnach na Sé Chontae, mar is léir ón ghrianghraf de Janet Donnelly.

Tá a fhios agam gur Gaeilgeoir díograiseach Máirtín ach tá súil agam go bhfoillseoidh sé *Comhad Comhairleora* i mBéarla, le seans a thabhairt do na daoine mhifhortúnacha nach bhfuil Gaeilge acu, an sárshaothar seo a léamh.

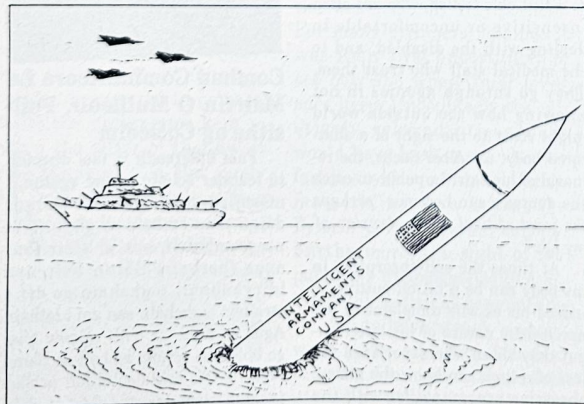
Joe McQuillan
(An Cheis Fhada) ■

At last, a highly readable book, in Irish, that gives not only an insight into the exploits of the council but incorporates a concise history of Sinn Féin's development from its electoral intervention to its current electoral strategy. But more welcome because it has been written by a member of Sinn Féin. Something that is coming more to the fore is that Republicans are now putting pen to paper, and not leaving outsiders, especially those unsympathetic to the Republican viewpoint, free to write their version, unchallenged.

The title *A Councillor's File* led me to think that it would deal solely with the affairs of the council chambers. Instead the first half of the book traced the effects to the Hunger-Strike on Sinn Féin's growth and development as a political force; the British governments 'democratic' response of disenfranchising those who oppose their views; the likes of the media ban; and, what at best can be described as, the childish antics of the Unionists. If the matter wasn't so serious it would be laughable. It was this broad overview that helped me understand and enjoy the whole book.

It would be easy to ask why Sinn Féin continues to attend the council where they are abused and ignored. The response of the British government and Unionists prove that they are effective and feared, and reading this book shows why it is necessary for Sinn Féin to continually challenge Unionist assumptions of ownership. Sinn Féin councillors must be commended for their staying power in the face of such opposition, as well as the Nationalist people, the picture of Janet Donnelly speaking volumes about their suffering.

I know Máirtín is an ardent Gaeilgeoir but I hope he releases *Comhad Comhairleora* in English to allow those unfortunates with a lack of Irish to read this excellent work.



TARGET — MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, BAGHDAD.



OOPS! WRONG ADDRESS!



MUSIC FROM THE BLOCKS

Some still had sleep in their eyes as others, on full alert, secured the area of operation. Everything went to plan as blankets and extra mattresses were casually moved to the designated cell. To the inquisitive eye it might appear simply cluttered — to us it had become a soundproofed recording studio.

Then we waited, the very cool operators ate breakfast, for others tightened stomachs permitted only sips of tea or strong coffee. At the appointed time eye contact was made and each man in turn rose to make his own zig-zag route to the control zone, the op was on. Though still early the cell was

warm. Six bodies, plus guitars, bodhráns, and mandolins, bed mattresses and lockers competed for space. Upturned wastepaper bins served as seats for some, the lucky one reclined on the bed. Songs, scribbled out on scraps of paper, littered the floor, the ink spread where coffee was kicked

over by a nervous foot. Throats were cleared - many times. Guitars, tuned, then tuned again, still provoked pained expressions on the face of the perfectionist. Time raced on and we knew we must begin.

A short practice first? Just a quick burst. There will be no re-takes once it gets going in earnest. Soon the cell resounded to the chorus of *Hiroshima, Nagasaki*. We're happy with it. Last minute sip of tea. Throats cleared for the last time... let's go... a sudden heavy silence, then the music rings out.

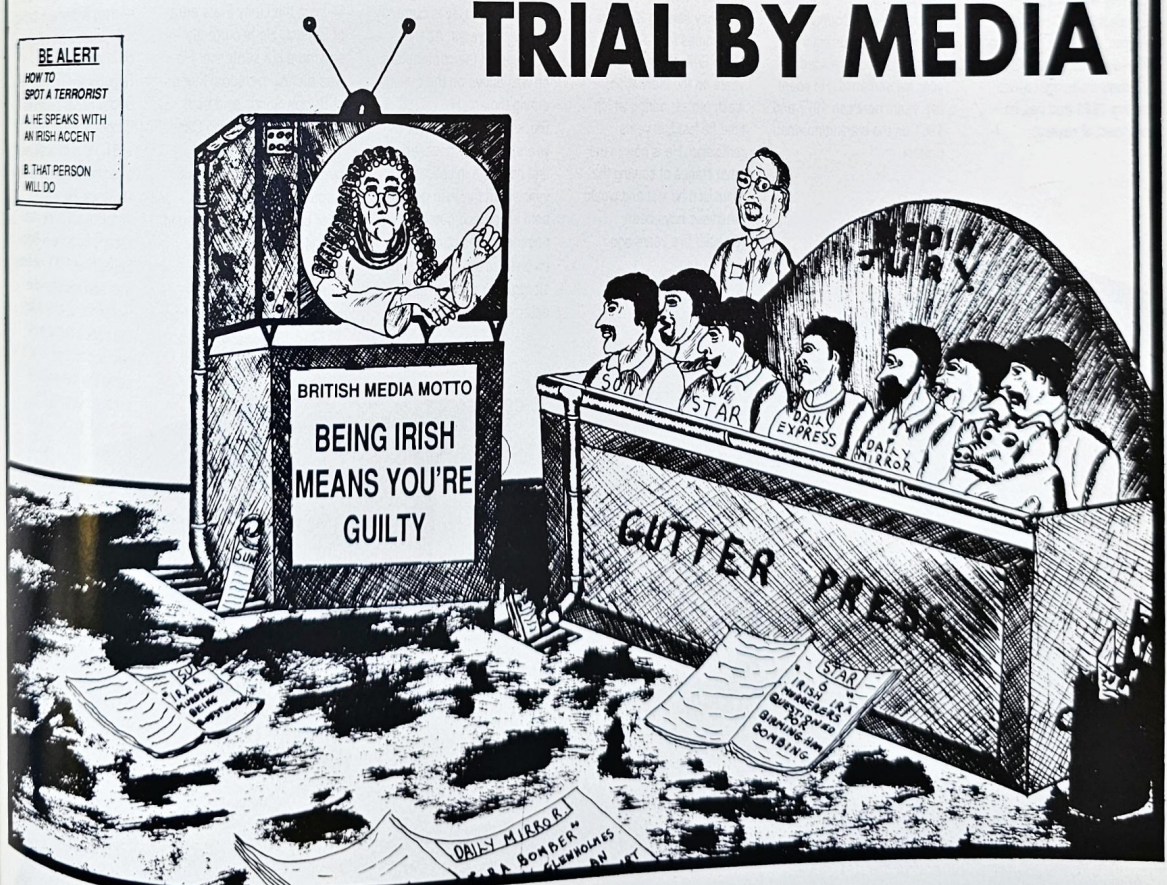
In a moment we are totally engrossed, the microphone no longer frightens us. We're speaking... we're singing... we're playing... we're creating, we're showing what we can do, we have something to say, we have the opportunity and we're taking it for those who will hear our voices in no other way. We move from song, to poem, to statement, feeling the emotion of the moment, recalling the faces of those whose names we now recite, all too vividly picturing them as they once were. The blankets draped

around the walls serve as a poignant reminder of how wearing one was once the symbol of determined resistance. It's an emotional moment, an experience shared. It's more than a recording, it's a political statement. It says we know who we are, what we're about, where we've come from and where we're going to!

By now the sun is a lot higher in the sky. It's a glorious day outside. We hear others in the yard. We're hot, we're drained but we're happy with our achievement. We laugh at some of the errors we made and disasters we narrowly avoided. But it's time now to dismantle the studio and call off the scouts, who've done an excellent job.

Later we get a chance to listen to the result. There are shocked faces and embarrassed groans upon hearing our own voices. "Is that really how I sound!" Critical comments too, about wrong notes or voices not just right, but overall a general satisfaction and even surprise at the quality.....but we'll leave you to judge that.

TRIAL BY MEDIA



BE ALERT

HOW TO SPOT A TERRORIST

A. HE SPEAKS WITH AN IRISH ACCENT

B. THAT PERSON WILL DO

MUSIC FROM THE BLOCKS

Music from the Blocks is an audio-tape recorded in Long Kesh and is dedicated to the memory of the ten republican hunger-strikers who died in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and to the memory of all those who died during the anti H-Block/Armagh Jail agitation campaign.

"They will not criminalise us...rob us of our true identity...steal our individualism...depoliticise us...churn us out as systemised, insti-

tutionalised, decent law-abiding robots. Never will they label our liberation struggle as criminal." (Bobby Sands)

On March 1st, 1981, in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, republican prisoners began a hunger-strike which was to last 217 days and witness the deaths of ten prisoners, ten Republican Volunteers.

This tape was recorded live and in secret by Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh during the sum-

mer of 1990, under the intense scrutiny of their captors. The cell had to be organised and converted into a recording studio with the same military discipline characteristic of imprisoned Republicans.

They had nothing but the very basic tools of recording i.e. one small cassette tape. But what they had in abundance was the same dedication, commitment and ingenuity which sustained Irish prisoners through five years of protest and 217

days of hunger-strike as well as enabling them to carry out the most successful prison escape in the annals of British penal history on September 25th, 1983.

All songs on this tape bear a direct relation to the 1980/'81 hunger-strike. Some of the songs were written and composed by Bobby Sands and Brendan "Bik" McFarlane and have never before been recorded or heard outside the confines of the H-Blocks.

Many republican prisoners contributed to the making of this tape but only six of them actually appear on the tape. They are:

Lorney McKeown — from Pandoistown, County Antrim, currently serving a life sentence. Lorney spent 72 days on hunger-strike during 1981 and has no prospect of release.

Felim O'Hagan — from the Lurgan area of County Armagh. He is currently serving a recommended 25-year life sentence. He spent five years between 1977 and 1981 on the blanket/no wash protest.

Leonard Ferrin — is currently serving 22 years and comes from Ardoyne in North Belfast. He spent five years on the blanket/no wash protest during which time he lost five years remission. He is now in the latter stages of serving the remission he lost and would otherwise have been released five years ago.

Kevin "Snooge" Crilly — from Armagh City is currently serving 15 years. As the youngest of the contributors he was active on the outside during the anti H-Block/Armagh agitation years. Having witnessed at first hand the injustices inflicted on the Irish people both inside and outside the prisons he became actively involved in the republican struggle for national self-determination.

Thomas "Tomboy" Louden — from the Unity Flats area of Belfast. He is currently serving a life sentence. He was a close personal friend of Bobby Sands and both spent time together in Cage 11. After release, both became re-involved in the Republican struggle and after being re-arrested found themselves sharing the same H-Block cell. "Tomboy" was on the blanket/no wash protest from 1977 to 1981.

Brendan "Bik" McFarlane — from Ardoyne in Belfast, took over as the officer commanding (O/C) Republican Prisoners when Bobby Sands began his hunger-strike on March 1st, 1981. He is currently serving a recommended 25-year life sentence. He was instrumental in the mass-escape from the H-Blocks in September 1983. He himself was later recaptured in Holland and, after a long extradition battle, was returned to the H-Blocks to serve the remainder of his sentence among his comrades.

