

The

CAPTIVE VOICE



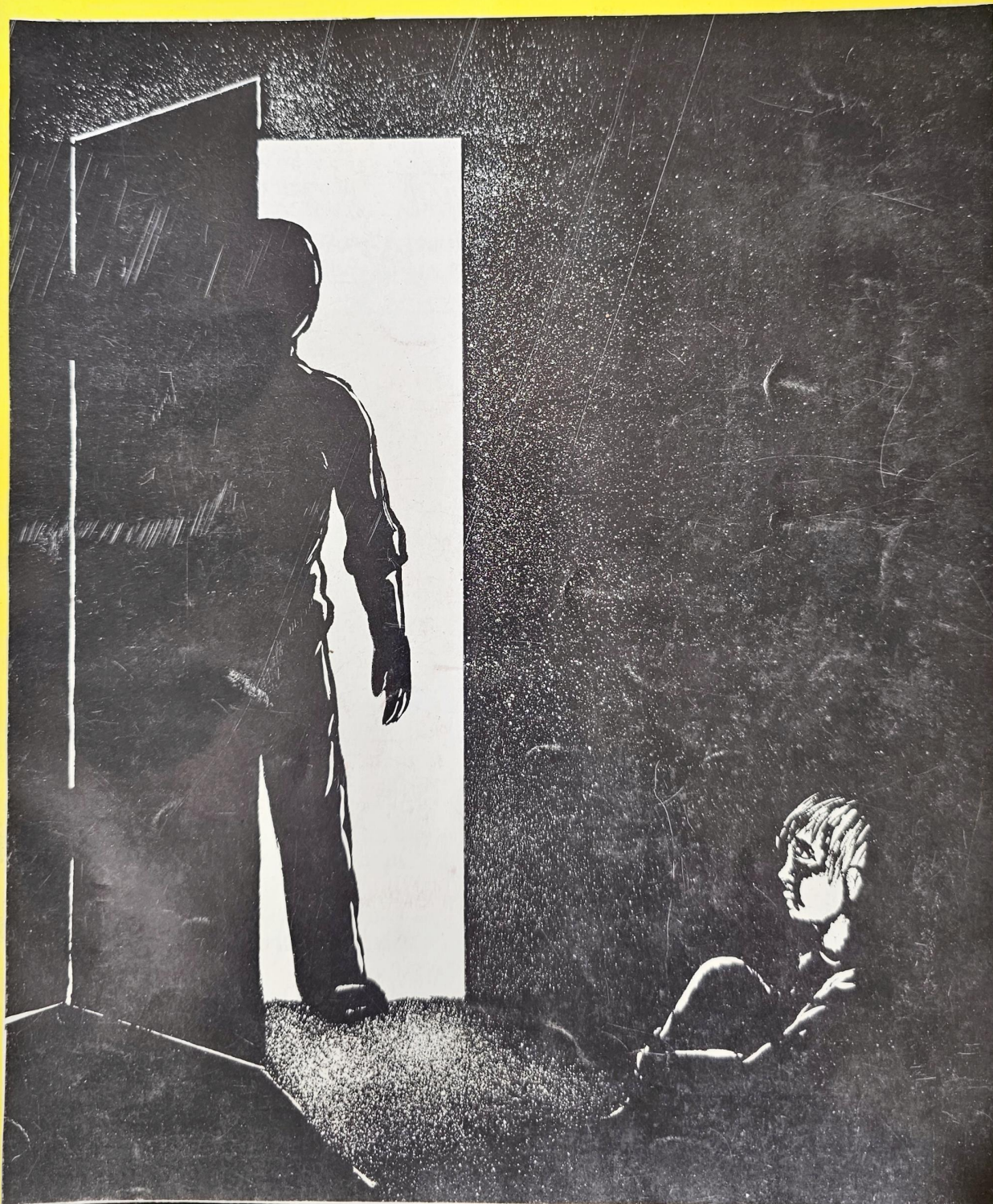
An Glór Gafa

Vol. 6 No. 1

Winter 1994

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The Voice of the Irish Republican Prisoners of War



The CAPTIVE VOICE

An Glór Gafa

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We are determined that our message and our captive voice shall be heard by many.

— The Irish Republican Prisoners of War. ■

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

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Cover illustration



■ By Mícheál Doherty
(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.

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The CAPTIVE VOICE



An Glór Gafa

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE is a crime which is universally abhorred. In addition, it does not discriminate on the basis of class, religion or any other social division. The children who suffer from child abuse, like those adults who perpetrate the crime, come from many different backgrounds. Increasingly, we find that stories of child abuse appear in virtually every newspaper or magazine that we read, yet, as stated in our lead article from a victim of child abuse in this issue of the *Captive Voice*, it is still very much a taboo subject. We read the articles, watch the TV programmes, but we don't discuss it like any other important social issue.

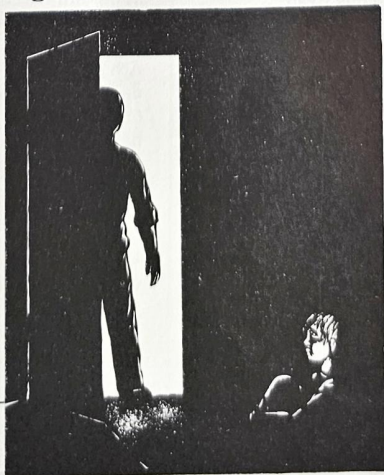
How does an issue which is so abhorrent to us and which commands so much publicity remain so hidden?

Part of the answer lies in social attitudes to the subject which, while condemning child abuse, would then prefer to forget it, rather than to address the difficult question of how to tackle it. Perhaps this is why so many of the victims feel the need to remain anonymous even though they have done nothing wrong. Society isolates and thereby further abuses the victims of child abuse.

The republican prisoner who gives his personal account of child abuse in this issue of the *Captive Voice* also felt the need to remain anonymous. He describes the physical and mental anguish of those who suffer abuse. The fact that the victim in this case is a friend and comrade of ours goes to underline the widespread nature of the abuse. As the article states:

"The subject of child abuse seems to be strictly taboo, one to be swept under the carpet. But as the recent [media] coverage shows, it exists and won't go away simply by ignoring it. By refusing to ignore it's existence, by being concerned about and learning to understand the reality of the suffering caused by it, we may however be able to thwart similar instances of child abuse."

The courage shown in telling his account should act as an inspiration to us and give us the determination to bring the issue out into the open.



Doirse Oscailte

■ Le Conor Mac Giolla Mhuire
(An Cheis Fhada)

AR NA MALLAIBH, nuair a bhí an chuid is mó de mhuintir na hÉireann ag ullmhú le Corn an Domhan a fhéachaint, bhí an cuspóir ceannan céanna na romhainn féin — 'se sin chun fanacht os comhair na teilifíse is na cluichí beo, gan dul faoi ghlas as sin amach agus fanacht beo leis!

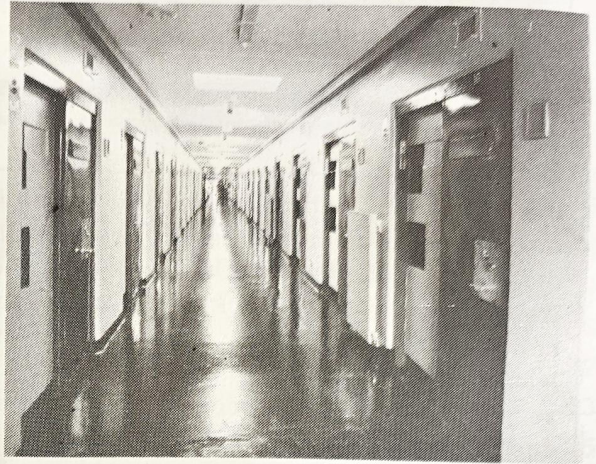
Leis na blianta tá muid ag obair agus ag cur brú ar an riarachán phríosúin chun deireadh a chur leis na treimhsí faoi ghlas. Ar fhead 12 déag in aghaidh an lae bhí muid taobh thiar de na doirse gan ach pota gnó againn mar ghléas leithris. Is léir nach raibh muic ariamh sásta leis an scéal seo.

O am na hAgóide Pluide agus an Stailc Ocrias, ba é caidreamh 24 huairde ceann de chuspóirí móra a gcimí. Sular shocraigh Rialtas na Breataine ar bheartas coirithe ('sé sn, "coirpigh" a thabhairt ar na cimi polaitiúla) bhí caidreamh lánaimseartha ag na polactánaigh i gCásanna na Ceise Fada, mar d'admhaigh an Bhreatain gur chimí polaitiúla iad. Ach, mar atá a fhios ag cách, i 1976 scoradh an stádus polaitiúil maidir le cimi úrghafa as sin amach.

Tharla an méid seo uilig i gcomhthéacs an ama sin, nuair a d'aithnigh na Brits nach mbeidís in ann an lámh in uachtar a fháil ar Oglagh na Éireann trí

neart míleata amháin. Mar sin, rinne siad iarracht cúis agus fiú idé-eolaíocht an phoblachtánaigh a sháinníu agus a scriosadh. Ba é bun agus barr an bheartais sin coiriú na gcimí. Ach theip orthu mar gheall ar dhiandícheall agus cheartas na gcimí céanna. Chuir íobairt na bhfeair a fuair bás deireadh leis an pholasaí ghránna sin go deo. D'éirigh Oifig Thuaisceat Éireann (OTÉ) as an seasamh go gcaithfeadh cimi cogaidh éide phríosúin a chaitheamh, agus ar an dóigh seo briseadh siombail an choirithe. De bharr an bhriste seo bhí an cimi ábalta atheagrú agus pleann gnímh a leagan amach ar son a n-aidhmeanna. Abhar beaguchtaigh agus céille ceannaithe d'OTÉ a bhí in agóidí na gcimí, ach go háirithe an stailc ocras. Thuig siad nach n-éireodh lena mbunstraitéis choíche. Da bharr sin ba é an stailc ocras bunchúis an dul chun tosaigh a rinne na cimi sna 1980í.

Throid na cimi a chuaigh romhainn le linn na 1980í ar



son na n-áiseanna agus an slí bheatha atá againn sa lá atá inniu ann — chan amháin mar gheall ar an buntáistí féin ach chun an rudaí a bhaint amach a ba chóir a bheith ag cimi cogaidh le ceart. Diaidh ar ndiaidh d'éirigh linn tógail ar an rud a bhí séanta orainn. I gcónaí, mar bhunphrionsabal, bhíomar ag streachailt chun ár saol féin a mhaireachtáil mar phoblachtánaigh. Anois tá ach an ceann dena Cúig Éileamh Córa againn agus chan amháin mar a bhí leagtha amach ar pháipeir ach i siopraid an chuspóra a bhí ag laochra na Ceise Fada a d'éag. Is é an caidreamh lánaimseartha agus deireadh leis na treimhsí faoi ghlas sampla eile den bhua seo.

Ba ghnáth go mbíodh orainn dul faoi ghlas ó leath i ndiaidh a hocht tráthnóna go dtí leath i ndiaidh a hocht an mhaidin arna mhárach. Bhain muid úsáid mhaith, afách, as an am seo i ndóigheanna éifeachtacha. Ach ba é an rud é nach raibh an dara suí sa bhuaile ann — bhí orainn dul faoi ghlas i gceillín beaga, gan mórán smachta ar ár saol. Rinneadh a lán staidéar ar feadh an ama seo, sríobhadh litreacha, léadh nuachtáin agus leabhair, rinneadh machnamh ar chúrsaí móra an tsaoil, cleachtaíodh cibé gléas cheoil a sheinn tú, má sheinn — rinneadh yoga fiú. Is cinnte gur chodail muid na hoícheanta amach agus b'fhéidir gur seo an fáth a dtugtar "Tir na nOg" ar

an áit seo go minic — cionn is go bhfaigheann muid codladh sámh chomh rialta sin.

Anois bíonn roghanna agat. Is iomaí uair a chuaigh mé chun an leithris nó fá choinne bolgam tae agus bhuaile mé le duine eile nó chaula mé dream ag airneáil nó ag díospóireacht agus níl rud ar bith níos cinnte ná go mealltar isteach mé féin agus ní fada go gcluintear fuiseog na maidine. Ceol binn do mo chluasa!

Ach an rud is tabhachtaí faoi na hathruithe is déanaí ná go bhfuil méadú ar an smacht atá againn ar ár saol polaitiúil, sóisialta, cultúrtha istigh anseo; agus laghdú eile ar chumhacht an riaracháin phríosúin. Ar na mallaibh eagraíodh ranganna ar stair an champa seo ar achan scaithán agus tugadh seans dúinn tuilleadh eolais a fháil ar na hÍobairtí a rinne na daoine romhainn (agus roinnt acu atá anseo go fóill) ar son an stádais pholaitiúil.

Is léir ó na háiseanna agus na cirt atá bainte amach inniu nach féidir ár n-aitheantas polaitiúil mar phoblachtánaigh a bhaint dinn, agus nach raibh insán bheartas úd ag na Sasanaigh ach ainbhios impiriúil ar chúrsaí Éireannacha. Níl aon amhras ann anois ná go bhfuil stádus polaitiúil againn i dteoiric agus i gníomh.

Mar sin féin, ní chuirfeair stad leis an streachailt sa champa go dtí go ndruidfeair an áit agus nach mbeidh poblachtánaigh ar bith ann. ■

FOCLOIR

ag ullmhú.....preparing
ag aimsiú.....aiming
an riarachán.....the administration
pota gnó.....piss pot
caidreamh.....association
beartas coirithe.....criminalisation policy
Cásanna na Ceise Fada.....the Cages of Long Kesh
a sháinníu.....to corner/trap
dhiandícheall agus.....the determination and
cheartas na gcimí.....just claims of the prisoners
íobairt.....sacrifice
Oifig Thuaisceat Éireann (OTÉ).....NIO
na háiseanna agus na cirt.....the facilities and rights
na buntáistí.....the benefits
na Cúig Éileamh Córa.....the Five Just Demands
an cuspóir.....the objective
cumhacht.....power
machnamh.....contemplation
fuiseog.....lark
is déanaí.....the latest
smacht.....control
ár n-aitheantas polaitiúil.....our political identity
i dteoiric agus i gníomh.....in theory and in practice

Children's day in the H-Blocks

■ By Kieran Murray
(Long Kesh)

MONDAY, 8 August 1994: A rap sounded at the door followed by a whispered voice. *"That's eight o'clock."* It signaled the beginning of a very important day. Never before in my lifetime in jail have the H-blocks of Long Kesh sounded with such exhilaration. What was this event that was causing such a sudden surge of activity? This was the day that our kids were coming to prison.

Following a shower, shave and breakfast at around 8am, I was watching the early morning news. The canteen was buzzing, as more lads entered the fray of getting up. Having a smoke, I felt a little flutter of anxiety in my stomach. *"Jesus!"* I thought: *"I'm nervous as hell. Surely this can't be so? Everyone else seems to be coping, or are they, like myself, just trying to hide their nervousness?"*

"Aren't you getting ready?" someone asked.

"Yeah! In a while," I replied.

"What time is it anyway?"

"Ten past nine." So off I went to change from shorts and shirt to put on my jeans and my new reeboks T-shirt, both freshly laundered and cleaned from the previous night.

"The transport is here, ten men at a time."

This was it, I thought. I checked that I had everything. I was ready.

The transport was a brand new transit van with cushioned seats, which was humorously approved by my self and the others; the general comment was as to where it came from. A new policy? NIO keeping up with appearance? All laughed, even the screws joined in. Finally, we all arrived at our destination. A crowd of 27 republican prisoners were gathered together and I could detect a high level of nervousness. We were all at hyper-tension stage. *"What lies ahead of us today?"* we wondered.

The kids' party was about to begin!

Children over age the of three, but under 12 were allowed to visit within the heart of the jail for the first time in the history of the H-Blocks. Usually we could only see our children on the visit block. This made it difficult to form direct relationships between us fathers and our children. The lack of privacy, overcrowding and time limits were prohibiting that kind of relationship. But this was the first time we, as fathers, could have the kids in for the day. No mothers were allowed. This, ironically, allowed the fathers to build on this new and unique opportunity with our kids.

We envisaged difficulties as this sort of event was unprecedented. How would the kids react without the mothers present? Also, how would we fathers cope on our own, tending children; some of us having never had such responsibilities before. Many of the men had never experienced being an active father. Prison and prison visits have been our whole lives. So one can appreciate how our journey felt that morning.

The party was being held in the prison gym, where facilities such as professional entertainers could be brought in from outside. A bouncy castle, stilts and a merry-go-round were placed in the large gym and on the all-weather football pitches. Sandwiches, trifles, choc-ices, minerals and sweets were laid on by the prison administration. The prison staff, physical training instructors, NIACRO people and Quakers were in atten-

dance to supervise the morning.

As we waited for the kids to appear, we huddled around in groups talking in muddled verses, some of which probably didn't make any sense. Some of the lads tried out the different pieces of equipment, such as the stilts and the unibike with varying degrees of difficulty and humour.

Finally, the kids arrived from the outside, strolling sheepishly and with little eyes searching in panic for their fathers. Smiles of relief broke out all around as each found their own.

It was all happening so fast; everything was moving at a hectic pace. My own daughter Karen jumped into my arms, smiling as she embraced me. Although she seem tired from her journey, she still had that jubilation and radiance about her. She seemed unconcerned about the prison around her, or the fact that I have been here since she was born. She is almost eleven years old now. This prison had been our whole lives. But that morning, it just didn't matter. At first, she was content to simply walk around, uncaringly watching the other fathers and children. She seemed oblivious to everything except that we were together.

It wasn't until I took her to the football pitch to play some ball, that she began to liven up. I guess it was the open space that helped her to relax. From then on in, it was pure fun for us both.

Karen wanted her face painted as did the other kids. She went totally berserk on every piece of equipment she could see. The bouncy castle was her favourite. This was my favourite too, much to the amusement of my daughter. My most memorable time was the penalty kicks on the pitch.

My daughter embarrassed me, as she gave me a good whopping. Karen is a fantastic sports kid. These are things I never could have known or understood until that day.

All the foods and sweets went down a treat, especially with the dads. Photographs were taken throughout the morning to record the historic and emotional event. Finally, it was time to go. Fathers and kids headed towards the bus. Kisses and hugs were handed out. The kids boarded the bus and dads bade their farewell, holding back tears. It was tough seeing the kids off, trying to capture every last image of their smiles. Some of the kids broke down crying, which made things yet more emotional for everyone. We were unsure of the next time we would see them in these circumstances. The bus sped off to the outside and all we had were the memories of their laughter. Each of us felt the loss.

Sitting in the van, heading back towards the block, I could detect an air of silent gloom. It was a contrast to our trip that morning. Excited voices changed to silent stares. Each of us were in our own thoughts. I was totally exhausted and emotionally drained from those few hours with my daughter Karen. It wasn't just the physical running around. Simply being with my Karen was a handful. It was a demanding experience, constantly keeping up with her. I can now appreciate better the work of mothers in rearing children. We men too often exempt ourselves from that activity and responsibility, although I don't have much of a choice because of my imprisonment. Men so often are losing out in not taking on more of this role, not only the responsibility of fatherhood but also the pure joy of it. I recognise that mothers are left to take this supposedly shared role alone.

The whole morning with Karen brought to me the pure essence of being an active father. That day has been essential in strengthening the bond and closeness between us. It has made fatherhood more precious. ■

The burning of Long Kesh

■ By Joe Doherty
(Long Kesh)

WE CANNOT REFLECT on the 1974 burning of Long Kesh without first understanding the circumstances and conditions of the camp, its historic origins as a prison camp — first for internees in 1971 and later on for political status prisoners (special category) — and the overall political situation both inside and outside the prison.

For the past 23 years, Long Kesh has encapsulated the historical prison conflict from the early internment days, the political status phase, and to the H-Block hunger strikes of the early 1980s. Britain's renaming of Long Kesh as the Maze serves to show their embarrassment internationally. But to nationalists, Long Kesh represents the endurance, struggle and spirit of republicanism over several generations.

Long Kesh was once an RAF airfield, 12 miles south of Belfast. In the post-war days, teenagers flocked to its dance hall. British policy makers soon turned the disused air fields and music halls into what reporters would later call a World War Two POW-style

prison camp: tin huts, barbed wire, watch towers, guard dogs. In 1971, Stormont premier Brian Faulkner and British army chiefs soon filled the secretly-constructed corrugated tin huts with hundreds of Irish nationalists — the victims of internment without trial.

Meanwhile, in Belfast's Crumlin Road prison, republicans were reaping victory from their 1972 hunger strikes for political status. Soon hundreds of political prisoners convicted through the special courts were being moved to five cages (compounds) at Long Kesh camp, adjacent to the internees' camp. The republican cages were soon structured along military lines, each cage representing a battalion company, and a camp battalion staff to direct camp policy.

Republicans organised communication lines, escape committees, military training, political lectures and debates and instilled unitary discipline across the camp. While each cage/company staff was in direct contact with the local guard unit, the camp staff dealt directly with the head of the British prison regime, reviewing and confronting the regime on camp conditions.

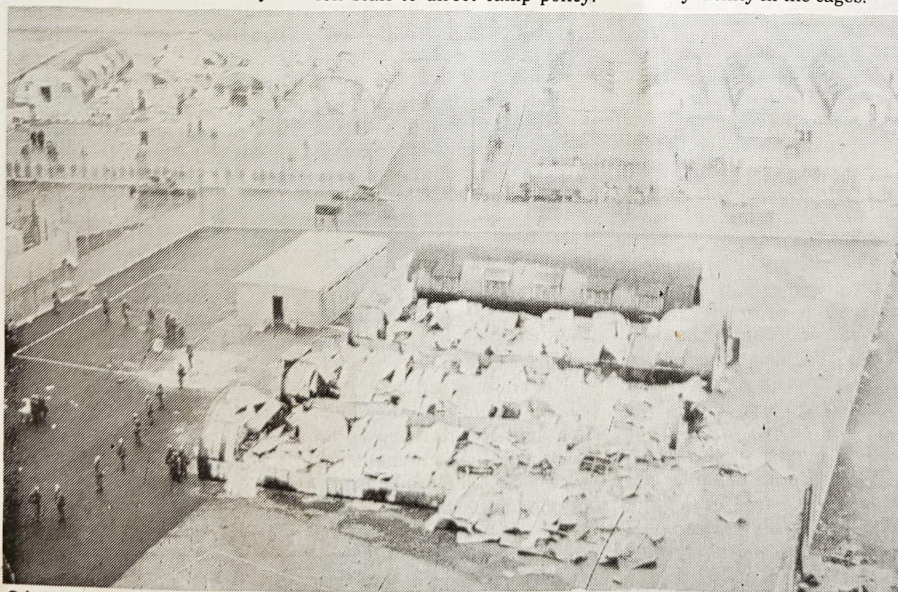
From its earliest days, Long Kesh was deemed uninhabitable for human beings. International human rights organisations such as the Red Cross protested at the conditions. Even an agricultural report deemed the same huts as unfit for farm stock. The huts were damp, underheated, rodent and insect-ridden and grossly overcrowded. Food was becoming a critical issue and was deemed cold and undernourishing. The system of food supply was archaic and inadequate for the number of men and the huge layout of the camp. There was literally no laundry facility in the cages.

Soon the republican camp command, along with the camp staff of the internment phase of the camp, were pressing the prison regime for fundamental changes. Even the small number of loyalists (held in separate cages) joined republicans in a campaign to force change.

The republican camp command handed over a twenty point condition paper to the regime, which included the issues of compassionate parole, British army searches in the internment phase, visiting, the general structural improvements in the huts and the issue of prison food. The prison regime was negative in their approach. After months of failed dialogue, republicans were forced into passive action. By mid-1974, bedding was thrown over the wire fences. The prison food containers soon followed. The regime reacted by stopping all in-coming parcels. This forced republicans down to four rounds of bread per day, as bread was the only food accepted. After months of semi-starvation, republicans were preparing for direct physical confrontation. All personal property was sent out to families, as the camp braced itself for the pending threat of riots and destruction. Each republican company area prepared riot-style squads and medic teams, drilling in red alert exercises, assembling in the yards in military formation, as the whole battalion made ready to move at any one signal.

The regime did eventually respond to some of the demands, which enabled the camp to come off the protest. But there continued a tense relationship between the republicans and the prison regime. Eventually this came to a head in October 1974. Cage 13 was the spark that lit the fire, literally speaking. A local incident between the republican cage commander and the local guard staff drew fists and batons alike. A mini-scuffle erupted. For reasons beyond imagination, the prison guards evacuated the camp and handed over control of the camp to the British army, who took control of phase perimeters.

At first the situation as confusing, as each cage sought information from across the



● Long Kesh after the burning. Note the ring of Brit soldiers on the left

camp. No guards were at their posts and the movements of troops could be heard in the distance. This was in violation of the agreement banning British army incursions into the camp. The semaphore flag system was in full swing, as both internment and political status phases of the camp sought information and direction. Individual cages took evasive action and sent men over the wire of their cages to scout around. They reported back that all guards were gone and that the British army had control of the internal post phones. The line was drawn and the camp moved into action. Smoke and fire were seen far off in Cage 13. Soon the red alert alarms and signals were sent out across the camp. The riot drills we had so diligently practiced for months were now coming into play, as each man moved into his position, rushing to put on prepared riot gear and ready-made shields and riot sticks. In hindsight, it is difficult to really understand the reasons for the order. But the war cry went up: **BURN THE CAMP!**

The darkness of the night soon turned a bright amber red, as hundreds of republicans burned every hut and structure they could lay their hands on. The fires could be seen as far afield as Belfast itself (nine miles in the distance). No sooner was the place alight than each particular company command was given orders to move into defensive positions around the camp. The battalion command took up control of the two football pitches situated in the centre of the camp. Soon both internees and political status prisoners met up on the pitches. Some of the internee cages were trapped down camp and were cut off. But the remaining dozen companies of men moved into assigned position. Republicans awaited orders.

As the camp burned around us the republican command waited on the British army to make their move. There was no sign of any movement from the British side. The British army chiefs realised that it would be futile to enter with such a formidably-organised (however crudely-equipped) republican force in wait. They waited until dawn to make their move, as thousands of troops were flown

into the area for the encounter. Meanwhile, choppers flew the whole night harassing the republicans below with hundreds of dropped canisters of CR gas. The whole place was saturated with fire, smoke and gas. Republicans waited for dawn. It must be noted that CR gas was never used or tested before and this was subsequently covered up by the British. A stream of MoD medical teams were sent in to do tests on men the following year — nothing has ever been published.

As the fires smouldered and the night faded, the dawn air was cold and dew lay like a damp blanket over the camp. The excited spirit that was so prevalent during the night of fires and war cries was fading too. The stark reality was settling in, as hundreds of weary republicans were called into position. Formations were set up in relation to the best defence of the pitches. Soon the misty, hidden winter sun had risen and all were on their feet. The British army were approached for negotiations. When we captured the prison hospital, many non-republicans were taken captive. An offer was made to hand them over. The British army would not negotiate. They were set on capturing the camp.

The choppers flying in formation over the camp indicated the British army's first move. CR gas canisters were fired from fixed positions across the perimeter, as out of the gassed mist came thousands of heavily-gearred troops, steel helmets, visors, gas masks, riot sticks and rubber-bullet guns. It was an impressive khaki wall of force. It was a starkly cold sight. They were organised and moved at a determined centurion pace. Soon all hell broke loose, as the choppers searched out targets on the ground and the troops inched forward firing rubber bullets and gas. A Saracen armoured troop carrier roamed the place knocking down all fortified barricades.

The battle lasted most of the early morning. Many small pockets of republicans were cut off and captured by snatch squads. British army personnel,



● Some of the republican inmates in Long Kesh after the burning

too, were captured, gas continued and rubber bullets penetrated the makeshift shields, plunging into heads and bodies. Republicans were forced back, foot by foot, under the massive weight of superior numbers. The British cut off the runback to the top end of the camp, a prepared escape route out of the pitches. While several hundred men escaped, the remaining three hundred were trapped. Huddled into the corder of the pitch, subdued, the mountain of crushed bodies awaited the final assault. There was one last rush to troops, firing every gas and rubber bullet gun they could muster. The air was so thick with gas that no one could see any possible escape. Batons were thumped across any head that could be seen and rubber bullet guns were fired into selected faces. Blood and vomit were everywhere. Coughed screams were ignored about the victorious and revenge-filled screams of British troops. Several men were seriously injured in this attack, sustaining broken limbs and the loss of eyes.

The bloodlet over, the remaining conscious republicans were dragged and beaten to the surrounding wire, each individually beaten and spread-eagled against the wire. And there they stood spreadeagled for the next eight hours; those who dared to fall were again beaten.

Meanwhile, the top end of the camp had fallen. The whole camp was now secured and in the control of the British army. Where are they going to put us, we wondered. Nothing stood in the cages, not a stick or brick. After routine beating sessions and forced marches back into the cages, the British suddenly pulled out, leaving republicans to fend for themselves. Although injured, cold and hungry, the republicans pulled together, quickly organising a

system of shelter for the night under the rain. Morale was high. The following day, squads of men set about tearing at what was left of the mass of rubble for any wood or tin sheeting to construct a shanty town. A mancover was pulled up to create a crude toilet. Sanitation had to be

secure, no matter how the conditions were. This was to be home for the following months. Soon, among the rubble, republicans organised a system for bathing, sharing whatever water they could procure. The badly injured among the men were confined to a special makeshift hut. Republican structures maintained a continuing mode of disciplined resistance and unity.

POSTSCRIPT:

During that shanty-town era, internees in Cage Five, using fallen rubble as a cover, set to tunnel under the main perimeter. On the night of 6 November, 1974 republican POWs made their way out under the cover of darkness. Alerted, the British army post opened up on the escaping men. While three escaped, Volunteer Hugh Coney from Coalisland, County Tyrone, was shot dead.

While Long Kesh burned, other republican commands in Magilligan, Armagh and Crumlin Road prisons rose to the occasion. They tell their own similar stories.

By Christmas 1974, republicans were relocated in a new phase. A new campaign was under way to better the conditions. The following year, while the camp settled into normality and as internment was being phased out, a new construction was under way beyond the bottom perimeter of the camp. Not the accustomed corrugated tin sheets but a mass of prefabricated concrete sections were edging their way outwards, taking a strange 'H' shape. Yet again there entered another phase of republican POW resistance, fought by many of those who took part in the night of 15 October, the night Long Kesh burned for the world to see. Again, the resistance of republicans prevailed. That is the ongoing history of Long Kesh. ■

My granda

■ By Jimmy Thompson
(Long Kesh)

MENTION THE NAME Jackie Quinn to any of the people from Sailortown and you'll hear stories of a man who would have made it to the top of the boxing world had circumstances been kinder. Sailortown, like many dockside districts, turned out fighters in and outside the ring. None better than the late great 'Rinty' Monaghan, who was born, reared and lived out his days in this community that he loved. Not even being crowned 'Champion of the World' could drive Rinty from his friends and neighbours.

Jackie Quinn started life as John McGreevy in 1910 and 19 years later became the undefeated Irish flyweight champion before moving out to become the bantamweight champion six years later. Now this story isn't about John McGreevy the boxer, but John McGreevy the granda whom I loved up until his death in 1985. Although I only shared 17 of those years with him, they were 17 years of admiration and fear — not fear of the man, but of his blackthorn stick, which we younger ones felt across our shins when we were caught smoking or if we took without asking, especially from his bottle of brown lemonade which you could always find at the side of his chair. More often, it wasn't even his blackthorn that we feared, but his sharp tongue which reduced us young ones from boyish bravado to silly wee boys. This was usually after we did something selfish or were just being cheeky, be it shouting at the neighbours or running mad in the streets and annoying the old people, secure in the knowledge that our granda was a champion boxer who would come to our rescue — if you call being railed up the street to apologise to one of the neighbours as being rescued.

My earliest memories are of a well-dressed man with spit-polished boots, cap, blackthorn stick, scarf tied around his neck and a dog at his side. Dogs were his second love after boxing. I especially remember being wakened one cold frosty morning at about six o'clock to go hunting. I must have been seven or eight at the time. However, the night before we went, me and my cousin Fra were sent to bed early and like any young children about to go on an adventure into the countryside to chase rabbits and foxes, we spent most of the night imagining what would happen the following day. Our uncle John had told us that there would be lions and tigers around and that we would have to be careful of them — so we really did think of it as an adventure.

Morning came and we were awoken by our granny Dolly and told that our granda was waiting on us. When the time came to go we were bundled into the back of the motor, which belonged to my granda's friend Sammy, along with the dogs. Reaching our destination it started to rain, but it wasn't long before we got the dogs unleashed and let them get on with what they were bred to do — hunt. This adventure that I'd waited on for weeks, turned out to be one of the best times I'd ever spent with my granda. Looking back on it now I can see how even the grown-ups acted like kids, running through the wet muddy grass with not a care in the world and later sitting under a tree drinking hot soup and eating sandwiches. We were treated as equals and not just two kids brought along for the sake of it. In hindsight, I'd see it now as more of a bonding process than anything. However, to cut a long story short, Fra and me ended up wet, muddy and cold with rabbits stuck under our arms. These brave creatures that had eluded the dogs for so long soon found their way into my granny Dolly's stew.

My mother Kathleen was forever scolding us young ones whenever we complained about the water not being warm enough to

wash in. She'd tell us about our granda standing in the back yard at the crack of dawn, stripped to his waist, bent over a basin of ice cold water and washing himself with a bar of carbolic soap! Of course these lectures went in one ear and out the other, though I was to witness this strange ritual the morning me and Fra got to go on one of the hunting parties. It must have been just as my mother had witnessed in the back yard of 17 Pilot Street all those years ago when she was a child. To this day, whenever I smell carbolic soap, I still see this tough old man stripped to his waist in the back yard, bent over a basin of ice cold water. At the time I viewed it as "look at this ould crackpot!", whilst I'd be waiting for the gas boiler to heat the water. I realise now that this was as natural to him as it was for me to wait on the water warming. But then we did come from two different generations, he from one where no work meant no food and I from one where no work meant having to trail myself over to the fridge.

Other times I remember having the feet walked off me when I accompanied my granda John on some of his daily strolls down to the docks. Our first port of call was to visit my uncle John. I'd sit patiently on the quayside, whilst father, son and a few other men engaged in conversation on whatever the day's topic was. However, I paid little heed to their talk. I was more anxious to continue our journey further up the dock, and in particular to the wood yards, where an old friend of my granda's would hand you ten pence and a handful of sweets if you were lucky.

One of the most memorable things about our strolls along the docks was the yarns my granda would tell. One in particular I remember happened during the '30s after the Catholic workers from Harland and Wolff had been attacked during one of the many pogroms that the nationalist people became accustomed to. A couple of young men stole over to the Queens Island on the East Belfast side of the docks in a rowing boat and let loose a few rounds at the loyalist shipyard workers. I asked him was he one of these young men, to which he replied: "Who needs a rifle to fight, when you have two fists." I've often thought about this and concluded that this is easy to say when you have two good fists and in today's struggle fists are no good when it comes to stopping British army and loyalist bullets. Another ould yarn that comes to mind is of the half-cat half-rabbit that is said to roam the docks. Now never having seen this strange cross breed, I cannot disclaim its authenticity, although the same tale was probably doing the rounds when my mother was a child.

Castle Street was one of my favourite walks with my granda, as Victor's Café was also situated there, when he would treat us young ones to a bowl of ice cream. Just up from it was Fenton's Butchers where he did his shopping for meat. He claimed that their steak sausages were the best in Belfast and somehow he never left without securing a bag of scraps for his dogs. Whilst on one of these trips a large bomb went off in the city centre which meant we couldn't pay Victor's a visit. On our way back home he told me of a time in Easter 1941 when a German bomb landed in Pilot Street just a few feet away from his home. It was immediately set upon by the local priest from St Joseph's who threw all sorts of holy water and prayers at it. I remember asking him did it explode to which he replied: "If it had exploded then you'd be standing here talking to yourself and Pilot Street would be a memory to those who knew it."

German bombs landing in the middle of this close-knit community was nothing compared with the degrading exercise known as "schooling", where age and experience meant nothing unless you were willing to stand a few rounds of drink, or in some cases pay

■ Illustration by Paddy Flood (Long Kesh)



the ganger a few shillings for the privilege of working. This involved queueing from early morning with dozens of other men in the hope that the ganger would call your name out. However, this normally depended on you already having paid the ganger for previous work (this usually took place in one of the many pubs that littered the Docks area). If you have seen the film *On the Waterfront* then you'll get a picture of what life was like for the dockers. In their times of coming to Belfast, both James Connolly and Jim Larkin walked the cobble stoned streets of Sailortown and witnessed at first hand this humiliation of man by man and strived to stop dockers accepting these conditions to secure a day's work. In 1912, when my granda was two years old, Connolly contested the Dock Ward. He was to poll 905 votes against 1523 unionist votes — no mean feat since the whole loyalist machine was called out to defeat this "mouth piece of Irish socialism" who dared call for equal right for all workers regardless of race, colour or creed. Connolly's role in the political history of Sailortown is one of enormous historical value, considering the historical prominence he was later to achieve.

On the religious front, you couldn't pass any large workplace

without noticing the usual 'No Catholics required'. Is it any wonder that in the 1930s Belfast got what was probably its first peace wall in Nelson Street which runs from 'Little Italy' and ends at Sailortown. The wall was nothing more than sheets of corrugated iron that were put up to keep loyalist mobs out at the height of one of the bloodiest pogroms that ravaged the city at the time. It was in these circumstances that my granda lived his early life.

My granda being a lover of dogs was frequently seen with one at his side, which brings me to a story that I was told by my aunt Marie. Whilst living in Springhill my granda had this large Irish Wolfhound. One night a squad of Brits were lurking in the back gardens when one of them was confronted by the dog. Being somewhat startled by such a large animal, he gripped his rifle with both hands in an attempt to shield himself. The dog being none the wiser took this for a friendly gesture, snapped the rifle out of his hand and set about eating it. Although the Brit got what was left of it back after rapping the front door and asking for it, it wasn't so easy hiding his embarrassment and having to explain to my granda and his superior officer how he came to loose the weapon in the first place. Nowadays they'd just shoot the dog!

My granda's final years were probably the cruellest that fate could inflict on a man who whole life was one of sweat and blood. For a stroke ravaged his body, something that to me was unthinkable as he had always been a pillar of strength. I got a phone call the

day after he died whilst on a work trip and returned to Belfast right away. I didn't go straight home when I got off the train, but paid a call to Sailortown and walked around the few remaining streets. I'm not ashamed to say that I shed a few tears when I stood facing the empty shell of 17 Pilot Street, the house where I was born.

On the day of his funeral I felt more pride than sorrow, for whilst carrying his coffin along with my older brothers and our cousin Fra, I looked about me and saw the faces of old and young men from the boxing world with tears in their eyes. It was then that I realised how much he was respected by those who knew the man John McGreevy and by those who only knew the boxing name Jackie Quinn.

I find it fitting to give the last say to John Campbell, the Dock-side poet, with the final verse of his tribute to my granda, entitled *The Hardest Game*:

*"When he finally fell it was with no disgrace
For he took on a champion we all must face,
He battled well, but the last count came
And we lost a legend of the hardest game."* ■

Courts of Flaw

VARIOUS surveys have consistently shown broad unionist support for and nationalist distrust of institutions like the RUC, their interrogation centres and the judicial system, differences which illustrate the divisive nature of British involvement in the Six Counties. A cursory examination of the role these institutions play highlights their central position in maintaining and consolidating unionist values and ethics. It would be an understatement to say that nationalists find it difficult to identify with, much less support, the ethos of the RUC as forces of the crown or the judiciary as defenders of the realm.

Although the term 'conveyor-belt system' is another victim of a cliché ridden; nationalists are all too aware of its reality — the impersonal shunting from interrogation centre to Diplock Court to political prison. It has been used since the foundation of the state to stifle political opposition and allow unionism to lurk in the shadow of the empire. Repression is as common as rain in the North, it has permeated our lives to the extent that we no longer seem aware of its existence.

An example of this is when people ask: "What's it like in jail?" The usual reply is: "Ach, it's hard to explain, you'd have to be there to understand." This isn't very enlightening and the refusal to be drawn into conversation on it implies an acceptance of one's fate. Questions

like that put you on the spot — if you say: "It's sound, no problem," people might think you're putting on a brave face to disguise the distressing reality of riots, cockroaches and beatings. If you say: "It's desperate, I can't wait to get out," you're dismissed as watery, someone who can't do their time. A confusing situation, but in reality the twilight zonish slide from interrogation to court to jail is just as confusing for the unwilling participant. Such is the nature of all-encompassing repression that as it removes us physically from our home environment into one which is overtly restricting to us, we are already psychologically conditioned into accepting the situation. We feel at home immediately!

ARREST

You can be arrested any-

where, anytime, at the whim of an armed gang. You need quick reactions to decide if they are loyalists of the official or unofficial variety; the official type, the RUC, are heavily-armed, highly-sectarian and ruthless. Ditto the unofficial loyalist, so you can appreciate the dilemma. In the name of community relations, the RUC usually hand out friendly beatings on the way to the interrogation centre.

INTERROGATION

As your clothes are removed for forensic tests, you wonder what law of the universe dictates that you had to be wearing Oxfam Long Johns the day you were arrested. After surgical removal they are replaced by a massive boiler suit and laceless size eleven trainers.

For up to seven days you will be interrogated for 14-15 hours a day. This is carried out by teams of detectives who appear to be sponsored by Primark. Their job is to get you talking so that you'll eventually admit to something. They achieve this through fear, violence, trickery or a combination of all three. After 25 years they're a real bunch of pros. (You'd be entitled to ask "pro what?" given the number of restricted files ending up with loyalist gangs.)

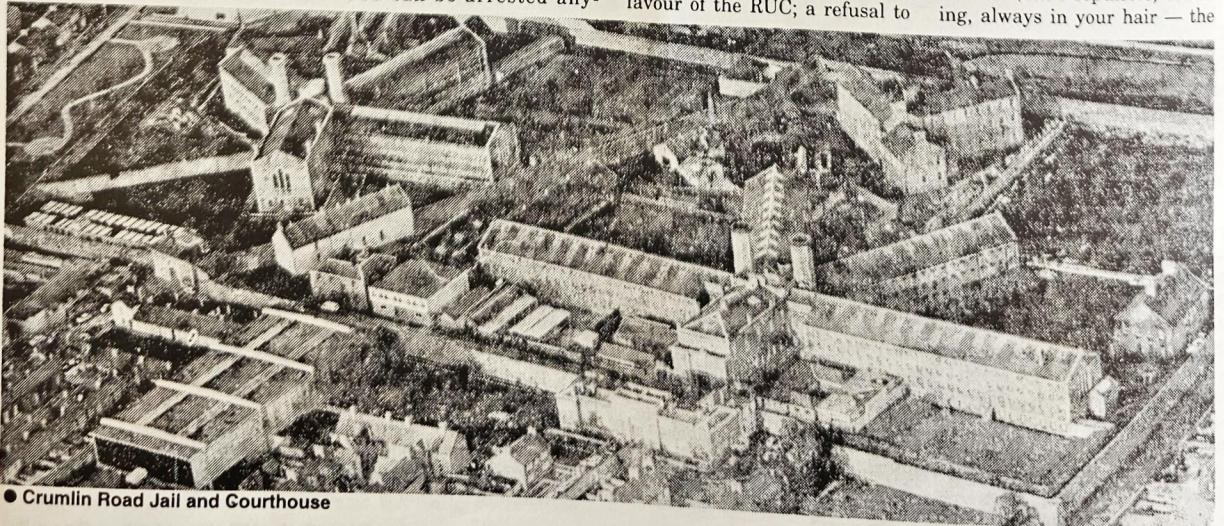
The law skews heavily in favour of the RUC; a refusal to

■ By Declan Moen
(Long Kesh)

answer a question can be taken by a Diplock judge to imply guilt; an element of force is permissible and statements do not require corroboration from other sources. There is one brief respite, a concession to sandal-clad liberals — you can speak to a solicitor every 48 hours. This entails ten minutes with a mountain of forms while your brief wonders if legal aid will pay for the coffee you've just received. A second concession to liberal provo types is the presence of monitors in each interrogation cell. These are normally used as coat hangers by the CID fashion victims and conveniently, they don't record interrogations. Other detectives are instead posted to watch the screens. Their job is to rush in and save you from a beating should their stressed-out colleagues become uncharacteristically rough. They never seem to make it though, apparently they keep tripping over the guide dogs. Truly never have so many done so much for Sir Hugh.

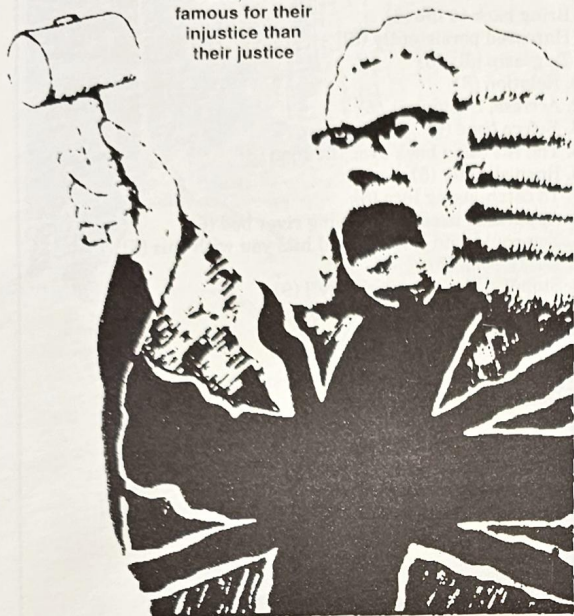
REMAND

Crumlin Road Remand Jail is a nightmare — two years in the company of screws and cockroaches (one's repulsive, crawling, always in your hair — the



● Crumlin Road Jail and Courthouse

● Diplock Courts, a tool of the Orange state, more famous for their injustice than their justice



other's an insect). Since 1976, there has been a continuous battle for segregation as the prison administration continue with their illogical policy of forced integration of republican and loyalist prisoners — a battle which has led to serious injury and death for some remand prisoners. (This summer the administration eventually conceded failure and at present remands are housed in one of the segregated H-Blocks).

While on remand you have unlimited access to legal experts. Not qualified ones of course — in any gathering of POWs there's always one or two self-proclaimed lawyers. Unlike real solicitors, these characters don't exist for money though you'd gladly hand over every penny if you thought it would keep them away. When your real solicitor tells you that you've a good chance of getting bail, your comrades fall about laughing and not for the first time, you realise what cynics prisoners are. Bail courts follow a well-rehearsed pattern. The prosecution state you're a notorious IRA figure, the RUC confirm this and make wild claims about the damage you'd do if released on bail. Cue the defence who declare your innocence and say that they can

prove that at the time in question you were involved in charity work with blind horses. The judge interrupts, refuses bail and wonders aloud why public funds are wasted on useless cases like this.

Bail courts are always empty, yet by some miraculous process the evening newspapers manage to publish the full embarrassing details. Headlines like 'Bomber bail attempt' or 'Terrorist in court' catch your eye. As you read on, you eventually realise that it's you they're referring to. Individual cases may become newsworthy affairs but over the years, the thousands of cases rushed through the courts are reduced to mere statistics.

TRIAL

POWs approach a trial with muted feelings. You're glad to be out of Crumlin Road Jail after two years, but know that you've to face a politically-biased judiciary. Of all the repressive tools available to the British government, one of the most successful has been the use of Diplock Courts. It is the one area resistant to change and absolutely impervious to challenge — what can a body do? Take them to court. Having said that, Diplock judges are independent — one was in the

SAS, another was a member of the last unionist junta, a third once famously remarked as a defence barrister that you should "*never expect justice from a Diplock Court*". They preside without a jury (every other area under British sovereignty uses a jury) and often demonstrate an uncanny ability to dismiss tainted evidence from their minds. Their powers of concentration are such that they can apparently absorb information even when asleep. Like their counterparts in the Old Bailey, Diplock judges are a select group of elderly males, who range in age from young sparky 70 year olds to seasoned oracles of 80 plus. Of course, if we all sat on our arses all day we'd all live to 110... They are referred to as "*My Lord*" by barristers who compete to place on record crawling platitudes referring to My Lord's wisdom, good memory [he turned up] and fetching wig. You wouldn't naturally associate the judiciary with a sense of humour but when they crack a legal witicism in court the barristers almost split their stripey trousers laughing. It reminds you of the truism that a rich person's joke is always funny. These then constitute the shock troops of the British government's policy of criminalisation.

Diplock Courts are associated with long sentences of the spoken kind. Judges enjoy forcing the accused to listen to three hours of senile ramblings [as an anaesthetic] before the coup de grace is applied and it serves a useful purpose. There then follows a peculiar practice; after a guilty verdict, the court adjourns for a period to allow you to speak to your barrister who is, unsurprisingly, highly embarrassed by failing to get you justice. The purpose of this interval is to give you the opportunity to apologise to the court. Picture the scene — you're in a dirty cell with a jinx of a barrister, the man upstairs is preparing to hand out a massive sentence — and they seriously expect you to go back and say: "*It's a fair cop, guv.*" After demonstrating that the law is an ass, a Diplock judge expects you to go down on your knees and kiss it.

A big consolation is the fact that you're entitled to an automatic appeal. These are heard

by three judges. Instead of one anti-republican right-wing fanatic, you get three; surely a dangerous lurch towards the liberal provo alliance.

CONCLUSION

And so to Long Kesh. One thing I'd say about this place, it leaves you with plenty of time to wonder about the meaning of life and other great imponderables; for example what hate-filled person came up with the idea of tinned skinless tomatoes. But enough of such weighty matters, the propaganda of criminalisation is firmly dismissed here. Hard struggle and effort have culminated in conditions more suited to political prisoners.

As republicans have endured British jails for centuries, this history has a residual effect on traditional indifference to doing lengthy sentences. POWs who complain about being framed are teased as someone who can't do a minute. In my opinion, this attitude lets the enemy off the hook — the Guildford and Birmingham cases illustrate the potential effect of public pressure on corrupt and outdated legal systems; the question is, are we, as republicans capable of launching a sustained attack on these repressive structures? The problem, I believe, is that we've grown used to and accept by default that authoritarian laws are a natural by-product of our resistance, we have blinded ourselves to the fact that we aren't second-class citizens to be interrogated, sentenced and imprisoned under special laws, courts and prisons. We have a right to fair play and justice. Indeed, at this point in our struggle, more right than most. We fought for these concepts outside and we should continue to oppose bigotry, hypocrisy and double standards whenever we meet it. Perhaps now, as we take the first steps towards a new form of struggle, we will clearly see that state repression is primarily aimed at political opposition and will remain in place despite the cessation of military activities by Oglagh na hEireann. With this in mind, we should examine how we can dismantle the framework of oppression which has given the North a false sense of stability.

As we're starting out from the moral high ground it should be downhill all the way. ■

Here's Young Willie with a mic

A family day
Glad to see the young ones
Take an interest
Tea and buns in Ballygawley.

Good clean fun
Nothing strange 'bout papist bashing
Not against the law
Practically is the law
Religious ceremony
Remind them who's the boss.

We were here two thousand years ago
Beat them 1690
in '20 were delivered
Lost tribe of Israel.

Cuchulainn's our hero
Defended Ulster
From the Fenian hordes
And thon Jezebel
Queen Maeve.

My Grandmother was Irish
Then the country moved
You're confused.

Someone told me
I was here this morning
Five o'clock
Cap and all
Don't know
Who milked the cows
I'd almost swear I did
But sure
Who cares
I'm here now.

A family day.
Nice to see the youngsters
Take an interest
We'll march home
Down some Fenian's road.
Tea and buns at the lodge.

■ By **Tarlach O Conghalaigh (Long Kesh)**

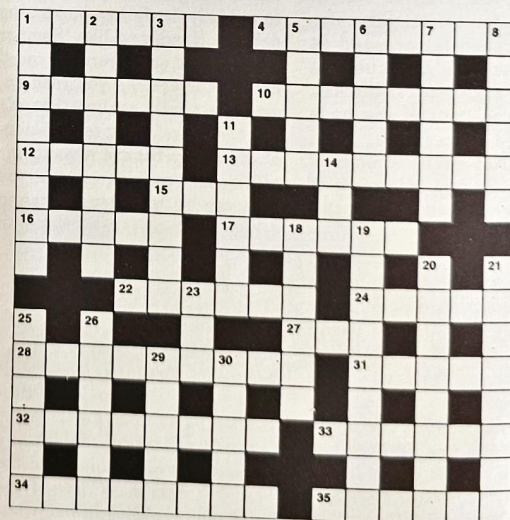
Crossword

ACROSS

1. Bring back to life (6)
4. Harassed persistently (8)
9. To gossip idly (6)
10. Relation (8)
12. Actress, Sophia (5)
13. Before time (9)
15. The rat came back over the road (3)
16. Burn slightly (5)
17. To catch, using lure (6)
22. Apparatus used for cleaning river bed (6)
24. You could find love if cupid hits you with this (5)
27. Rocky peak (3)
28. Stop the blaze, "completely"! (9)
31. Any exclusive social class (5)
32. Eased off (8)
33. Able to exist successfully (6)
34. People with high opinions of themselves (8)
35. Ogles (6)

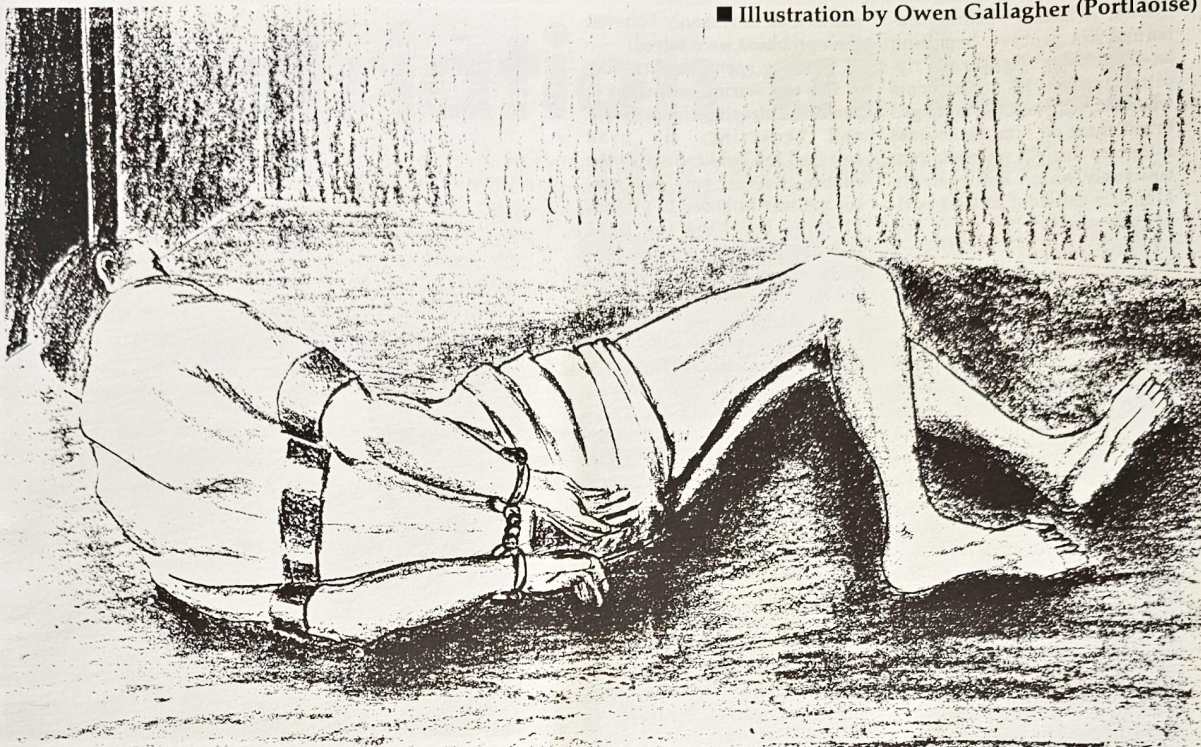
DOWN

1. Without pity or compassion (8)
2. Old soldiers (8)
3. Offer one's services? (9)
5. Weird (5)
6. Another name for the friendly islands (5)
7. Get out of bed and rebel (4, 2)
8. Refused all knowledge of. (6)
11. To unroll or unfold (6)
14. Spoil (3)
18. To move unsteadily (6)
19. One who believes government should be abolished (9)
20. An angry pub? (8)
21. Adds sugar (8)
23. Shorten the shelf (3)
25. In short supply (6)
26. Send a letter (4, 2)
29. Boredom (5)
30. Unsuitable (5)



ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Revive, 4 Pestered, 9 Tattle, 10 Grandson, 12 Loren, 13 Pre-mature, 15 Tar, 16 Singe, 17 Entrap, 22 Dredge, 24 Arrow, 27 Tor, 28 Cease-fire, 31 Castle, 32 Relented, 33 Viable, 34 Ecologists, 35 Stares.
DOWN: 1 Ruthless, 2 Veterans, 3 Volunteer, 5 Eerie, 6 Tonga, 7 Rise up, 8 Denied, 11 Spread, 14 Mar, 18 Teeter, 19 Anarchist, 20 Crossbar, 21 Sweetens, 23 Elf, 25 Scarce, 26 Mail to, 29 Ennu, 30 Inept.



PADRAIC FLEMING

■ By Martin Ferris
(Portlaoise)

PADRAIC FLEMING was born in Swan, County Laois, approximately ten miles from the town of Portlaoise. An active Volunteer, he was arrested in 1917 and sentenced to five years imprisonment for republican activities and detained in Portlaoise Prison. When he became aware of Thomas Ashe's death on hunger strike, on 25 September 1917, Fleming immediately demanded to be treated as a political prisoner. His demands were rejected. At that particular time, he had been ill and was detained in a hospital cell. While there, he formally requested the Prison Board to treat him as a political prisoner. Failure to do so would lead to a protest, he warned. When he had not received a reply after ten days, he demanded to be returned to his own cell. As soon as he got there, he refused to wear the prison uniform. His protest had begun.

Fleming, now clad only in a shirt and blanket, refused to do prison work. As a consequence, he was placed in a punishment cell where the blanket was taken from him. In the cold and empty cell, naked except for a shirt, a relapse of his illness soon followed. The prison doctor showed concern and directed that he be provided with adequate bed clothing. This was delivered to his cell.

Fleming decided to intensify the protest and went on hunger strike. Many concessions were offered to him, but the authorities refused to concede the right to wear his own clothes. He continued his protest. It was a display of courage and defiance which other prisoners found inspiring, some of whom responded to his example. The authorities threatened to use the cat-of-nine tails on him and

once more left him naked in his cell. This time his health deteriorated to such an extent that the authorities were forced to release him in November 1917.

Upon release, he immediately reinvolved himself in republican activities and consequently, was reimprisoned to serve the outstanding part of his sentence in May 1918. When he arrived back in Portlaoise he was informed that he would not be recognised as a political prisoner. Fleming viewed this as a matter of principle and declared his proposed resistance to all prison rules. He was again placed naked in his cell from 7am to 8pm without bed or bed-clothes. Every morning the screws forcibly attempted to dress him in prison uniform, but without much success. Throughout these ordeals he was frequently brutalised but regardless of the personal consequences, he continued to resist. In desperation, the prison authorities put Fleming in iron manacles in an attempt to keep the prison uniform on him. They

also used a body belt to strap his arms to his body. He was left like this throughout the entire day, making it necessary for him to eat his food from the floor like an animal.

On occasion, Fleming, in a display of unimaginable strength, managed to break out of the iron manacles and the body belt, remove the convict's uniform and tear it to shreds. In retaliation, the authorities placed him what were known as muffs. These were leather flaps and straps which bound the body and arms so rigidly that it paralysed the muscles and tendons. Somehow he managed to break out of these too. A special set of muffs were then placed on him which made it impossible for him to eat. He responded by going on hunger strike. When the Republican Movement was made aware of this, they ordered him off the hunger strike. He was then placed under medical supervision and an attempt was made to have him certified

insane. It failed. Fleming continued his protest, breaking loose from strait jackets and ripping up convict's uniforms whenever the screws managed to get them on him. Sometimes it took up to eight screws to continuously watch and restrain him. His constant battles periodically affected his health and on many occasions the doctor's intervention almost certainly saved his life.

In the summer of 1918, Shortt, the Chief Secretary for Ireland visited Portlaoise Prison. The result of his visit was the construction of a special cell which later became known as 'Fleming's Cell' or as it was then known 'Shortt's Stronghold'. This cell was designed to enable the screws to leave Fleming without a special guard. Located on the ground-floor (E1), the cell had the ceiling removed, thereby incorporating the cell directly overhead (E2) into one cell. To deny Fleming access to broken glass, which he frequently used to cut his way out of the straitjackets, the window of the ground floor cell was bricked up. The only natural light to the cell was coming from the window of the cell overhead which was approximately 16 feet from the floor.

A new ceiling was built, sloping at an angle of 45 degrees from the base of the overhead cell door to the ceiling of the overhead cell. It had a light bulb in the centre with a special spy hole to observe Fleming from above. From this position it was like looking into a pit. A special radiator was put into the cell to protect Fleming from the cold which threatened to make his bad health even worse.

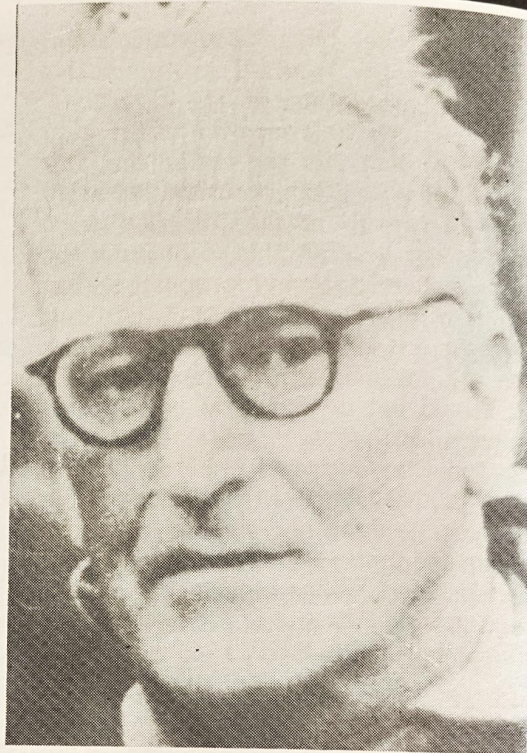
This radiator became known as 'Fleming's piano' following Fleming's habit of interfering with it and rendering it unworkable. The screws were continually trying to repair it, but Fleming always found some novel way of disabling it. The authorities resorted to encasing the radiator in a wooden jacket to prevent Fleming from gaining access to it, but this too failed. If there was a way around it, Fleming found it. Finally, in an attempt to frustrate Fleming's efforts, the radiator was encased in cement. With the special cell complete, the

authorities mistakenly believed their problems were solved.

Fleming spent the first day in this cell tearing bedclothes to shreds, destroying the mattress and bedspring. He even smashed the light bulb with the rubber chamber pot. This rubber pot was intended to prevent Fleming breaking the light bulbs and glass in the cell windows. When the screws opened the door for the first time, however, Fleming tossed all the broken material, torn blankets and uniform out onto the landing. A special concrete bed covered with timber was introduced. He was again placed in a straitjacket and the dreaded muffs. On occasion he even had his hands handcuffed behind his back. Despite all these restrictions he continued to amaze everyone by extricating himself from them. Many a time he had to be shifted to the hospital cell, having become ill due to his exertions. Once recovered and back in the special cell he resumed his one-man war against the policy of criminalisation. Finally on 1 January 1919, the British authorities deemed Fleming entitled to political status. He was transferred to Mountjoy Jail from where he successfully escaped on 29 March 1919.

This specially-constructed cell remained as it was then until 1980. It was to serve the same brutal purposes against IRA prisoners in the 1940s and also in the 1970s. Padraic Fleming found himself imprisoned again in 1923 during the Civil War, this time by former comrades, in Mountjoy Prison. He was in the cell next to Ernie O'Malley. O'Malley in his book, *The Singing Flame* refers to Fleming's bad health:

"During the night he often



● Ernie O'Malley, who paid tribute to Padraic Fleming in his book, *The Singing Flame*

had heart spasms, his body grew rigid, his speech became incoherent. If anyone would touch him during an attack he would regain control; if not he would feel as if his heart was slowing."

He could lie inert for half the following day as a result. To help Fleming during these seizures it was necessary for someone to reach in and touch him physically. A small hole was made in the wall between the two cells for this purpose and O'Malley had on occasion to do just that. Fleming's heart had been seriously damaged by the excessive exertions he had put his body through in defying

the Portlaoise Prison regime's efforts to break him. Padraic Fleming's tremendous strength, courage and indomitable spirit remain an example and an inspiration to all political prisoners in their struggle for justice and political recognition.

Fleming had a long career as a republican activist. After the signing of the treaty on 12 December 1921 and prior to the Civil War he acted under Michael Collins. Tim Pat Coogan mentions Fleming's involvement in the execution of Sir Henry Wilson in June 1922 in London in his book on Michael Collins. Apparently Peig Ni Bhraonáin who was one of Collins' couriers, met Fleming who gave her a letter purporting to be an offer of a job as a waitress in Woburn House, London. In fact it was instructions for Liam Tobin who met her at Euston Station in London. One week later, Sir Henry Wilson was shot dead.

Again during the Civil War Fleming was active with the republican forces. His involvement continued long after this, resulting in his imprisonment with Ernie O'Malley in Mountjoy Jail. ■

Thorn

Grief, it hangs on, come Autumn
bits fall. When the winds

of time shake old branches,
they release decaying copper flakes,
that float down side ways. Brushing memories
whispered to forgotten images, mirrored
forever on glazed eyes.

■ By Frankie Quinn (Long Kesh)

Repatriation at last

■ By Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson
(Maghaberry)

IN LATE JULY, Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson were among a number of republican prisoners transferred from jails in England to Maghaberry Jail in the Six Counties. This was the culmination of a long campaign for repatriation mounted by their families and human rights activists. Here Ella and Martina explain what repatriation means to them and their families after the long years of isolation in England.

WE WERE MOVED to Maghaberry Jail from England on what is called a "temporary extended transfer". This means that on a six-monthly basis we will be reviewed for a second six-monthly stay in Maghaberry or returned to England.

One of the ramifications of this kind of transfer is that any matters to do with our release and parole will be controlled by the Home Office as opposed to the Northern Ireland Office. This in effect means that we won't be able to avail of any of the parole or release schemes that are now in operation here. The temporary extended nature of this transfer means that any internal prison discord involving ourselves while we're here could result in our immediate return to England.

Another factor of this kind relates to our being held in a separate wing from other republican prisoners. While we wouldn't choose to accept these conditions willingly, the chief benefits of transfer for us relate to the welfare of our families. The transfer campaign is designed primarily to help our loved ones sustain their relationships with us while in prison.

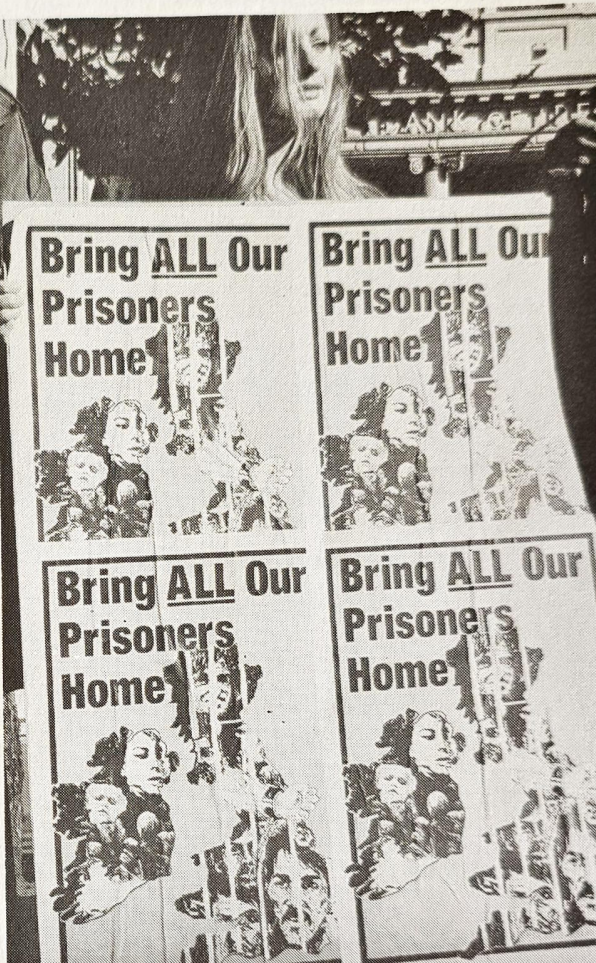
Out of the prisoners who have actually been accepted for transfer, only a few have actually been moved. Southern prisoners who have no relatives in the Six Counties have all been refused. Given that the 26-County government has failed to ratify the treaty on repatriation, the only hope that southern families have of visiting their loved ones in a jail nearer to them, is if maximum pressure is put on this government. When it was announced that movements were afoot, the families with republican relatives in

prison in England believed that all the prisoners would be returned. However, when it emerged that only a few were going, the disappointment was heartbreaking.

Seeing how greatly our families are benefitting from our transfer accentuates how much the families of southern prisoners are losing out. For instance, on the very first visit we could see the difference in the type of interaction we had with our families. All of us were more relaxed for a whole lot of reasons — things like reduction in travelling time and expense, and the much lessened anxieties about possible arrest and harassment. The very fact that they were able to be here visiting on the afternoon of our arrival made all the difference in the world to the kind of visit we had and, looking at the clock in the visits room as they left, we knew they would be home within a couple of hours.

This uplifted us to the extent that it dawned on us just how much pressure we had all borne deep down over the years.

Since that day we have had many visits, meeting relatives we haven't seen since our arrest and even meeting nieces and nephews who hadn't been born before our arrest. Such regular visits mean that our visitors don't have to endure that sense of loneliness when leaving us. It also means the pressure is alleviated from them because other people, who couldn't have made the journey



to England, are liable to travel here.

From that very first day here we were struck by what other prisoners in Ireland would take for granted. We were able, for example, to get daily news from RTE, Ulster TV and the Irish papers. We are already noticing how this is countering the years of isolation in England, an isolation that is still being endured by our comrades left behind. Our heightened awareness of this consequence of our imprisonment abroad reinforces our belief that the improvements need to be made in this area. Being so removed from the

traffic of prison communications, the needs of such isolated prisoners should take on a priority, given that prisoners here have relatively immediate access to events on the ground. TV, radio, newspapers and visits ensure that prisoners in Ireland are able to stay abreast of events.

As time goes by we're finding it increasingly difficult to even consider the possibility that the six-monthly reviews might result in our being sent back to England to that type of isolation once again. But while these reviews are enforced that possibility hangs over us all. ■

The pain of child abuse

RECENTLY, vast media coverage has highlighted the issue of child abuse. While most of this coverage concentrated on the more public and controversial cases involving paedophiles abroad, it also included some in Ireland — in the Six Counties as well as the 26 Counties. This recent attention has given me the courage to speak about my own personal experience as a victim of child abuse. I still want to, or need to, remain anonymous however, and after 20 years this underlines how distressing it is for me and for others like myself who have suffered. I find it extremely hard to come to terms with my experiences in my own mind, let alone deal with the knowledge that my family, friends and neighbours might be aware of what happened to me. For me, it's very much one slow step at a time towards some sort of "recovery" and I hope that this article will be the first step along that road.

My experiences began as a seven-year-old child. I was as normal and mischievous as most children of my age and having been brought up in a strict household I was taught to respect my elders and "betters". Like any child, I believed that grown-ups knew everything and trusted their judgement without question. One adult in particular, abused this trust. He was always kind and playful towards me, how could I as an innocent child perceive his intentions? He walked around unconcerned, so smug in the knowledge that I could never tell. Who would my parents believe should it be discovered? They would never doubt this man — he would never be capable of such acts.

This thought, and his many threats, made me feel very frightened and unwanted. With no one to turn to I suffered in silence. I wanted to be on my own where I would hold my pillow tight to my face and cry. No one could hear me then or see my face, my shame.

I still find myself reaching out for that pillow when I recall my suffering. I believed him when he said that it was me who'd done wrong. My dad would kill me if he ever found out — that is what I believed.

I felt many things during that period without understanding why.

I felt lost, alone, frightened and vulnerable.

How I yearned to be comforted and to feel loved, but how could I tell my parents? I still cannot bring myself, not even for this article, to outline in detail the form of abuse that I was put through by this person.

As I got older, everything was a constant reminder of what had happened to me as a child. Paranoia played with my mind. Grown-ups playing football with young lads, school-teachers paying too much attention to a particular pupil and even older boys baby-sitting, had ulterior motives in my mind. That part of my life was unstable — why me? I kept asking myself.

I felt like a freak because I knew of no similar experiences to my own. I needed to feel that I wasn't the only one but then the issue was taboo! I had nightmares where I'd wake up sweating and crying which really worried my parents, but how could I explain to them what was wrong with me?

My school work suffered. I shied away from people and became reclusive, trusting no one. When I was 15 or 16 years old, when most young boys discover girls, I met with more problems.

One night while out with a girl she began to touch me — suddenly it wasn't her touching me, it was him again. I pushed her away and ran home where I needed to be on my own.

For the first time I discovered that it wasn't just a psy-

chological problem I had, but a physical one also. I have encountered many problems which I feel are directly related to this period of my childhood and I wonder if it will ever end. One man used his power as an adult to abuse and hurt me for his own personal satisfaction, never once thinking about the nightmare I would suffer for the rest of my life.

As can be seen from my personal account my hurt continues, but what of the person who abused me? How has he handled the last 20 years?

Given that the issue of child abuse has never been fully explored or understood, it is virtually certain that he has never been confronted and therefore would still pose a threat to young children, possibly a greater threat because he feels he can get away with it. Now that I am an adult, I don't feel the public are concerned enough about addressing this issue and I still fear being labelled a freak if I were to identify myself.

I've since read quite a bit on the issue of child abuse and paedophilia and I was shocked at first to learn how these abusers of young children are treated once they are caught (which is seldom). In most cases the abuser is given a short prison sentence with no counselling available while they are in jail. Counselling is only available to those who are sentenced to four years or more and because of the lenient sentences that child abusers receive most don't fall into this category.

It is inevitable, therefore, that more children will face a nightmare of sexual abuse because the offenders have not been made to confront their problems, even within a controlled environment. According to a leading expert in dealing with sex offenders, Ray Wyre, (who runs the only rehabilitation centre for offenders in Britain — the Gracewall Institute in Birmingham) there are more than 2,000 sex offenders waiting for release from prison

who are capable of similar offences and who could even go on to kill their victims.

"Paedophiles have the highest re-offending rate of any category of criminals, most commit a similar crime within three years, because they believe they are doing no wrong."

He further states, *"Most paedophiles believe that the children they abuse welcome and enjoy the experience."*

I and thousands of others are testimony to the fact that this most certainly isn't the case. What we have had to endure physically and the mental anguish which we continue to suffer, probably for the rest of our lives, is hard proof of that.

Looking back, I wonder if my parents would have coped with such a complex and delicate situation if they had been confronted by it? They had little or no understanding of child abuse then, nor do they have any greater understanding of it today. Would they have brought him to court?

Statistics show that families are almost never willing to bring the abusers to court for numerous reasons. Some believe the child will get over it, that the abuse will somehow disappear from the child's mind. (The recorded facts prove the contrary.) Others don't wish to have their family stigmatised.

Another reason is that you have to be able to prove beyond reasonable doubt that you have a winnable case. Remember it's a child's word against that of an adult.

The most common reason, I believe, is that the family may feel that the child will only have to endure further hurt and suffering should the child have to go to a court room to relieve their horror.

Some, but not all court buildings, are equipped with facilities known as a tele-link, which goes some way to help children give evidence in child abuse cases. They should be introduced into all courts.

We all have a responsibility for the sake of our children to

By a Reader (Long Ke)

confront abuse, particularly own community.

There are ups, no downs, up the issue, eye to eye, will we help those who have suffered from the nightmare.

There are who suffer who have to come out of the abuse, but we'll not let it happen. I believe we know of at least one child abuse case where the child was prosecuted, a few, I believe, indicate widespread abuse is a serious issue isn't it?

How do we change? respond to the child's needs, deserves the influence, powers of the issue should be a tory counsellor, great centres first, a proper counselling available have been.

The seems to be a But as shows, away from refusing by being learning reality of by it, was to thwart child abuse.

a personal experience

■ By a Republican POW
(Long Kesh)

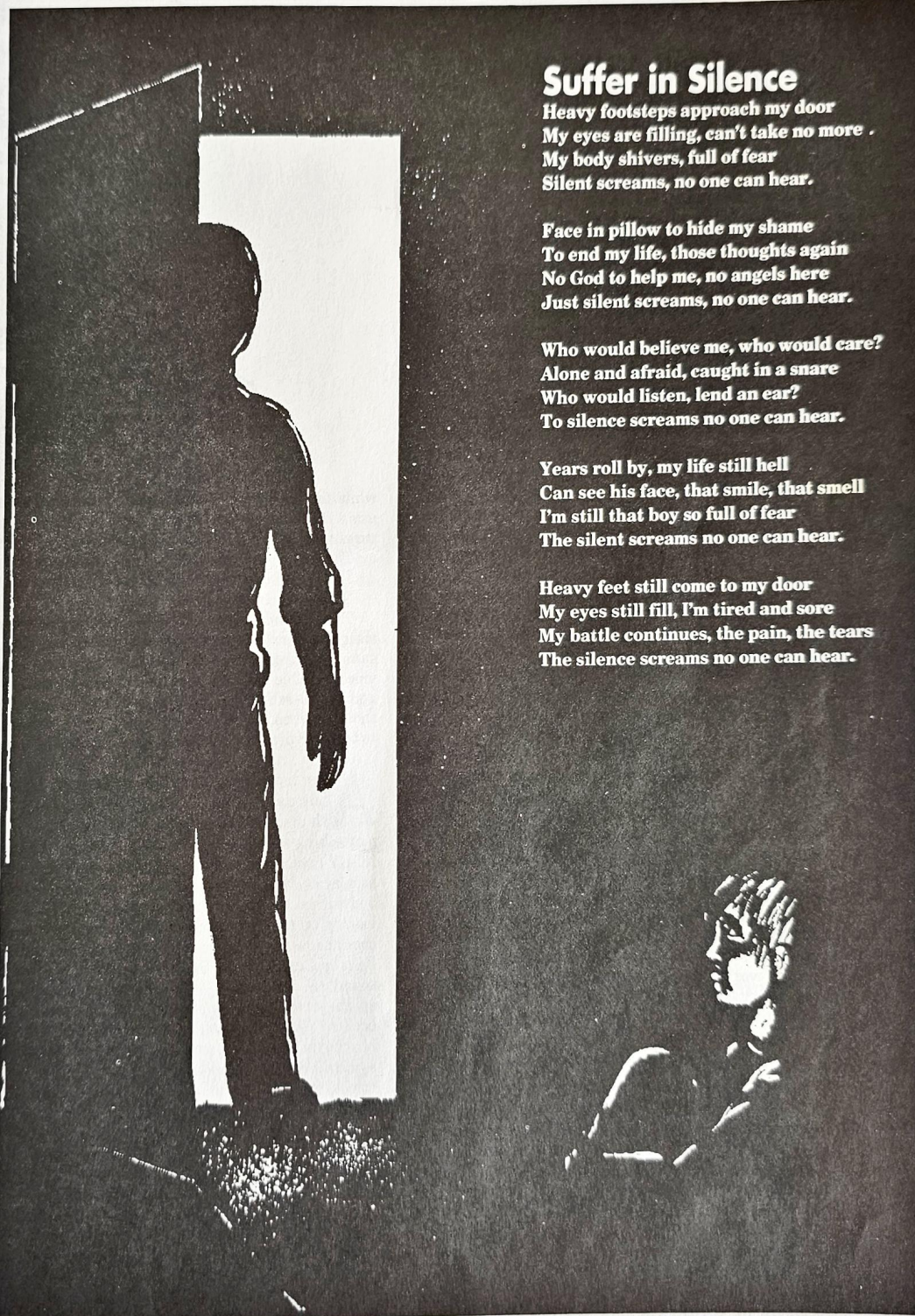
confront the issue of child abuse, particularly within our own communities.

There should be no cover-ups, no disguising or dressing up the issue. If we turn a blind eye to it, if we ignore it, how will we ever understand and help those, like myself, who have suffered and help save others from having to go through the nightmare of child abuse.

There are many (like me) who suffer in silence. Like me, they have the same reluctance to come out and say they have been abused for fear of the reaction we'll get from our communities. I believe that most adults know of at least one person, possibly more, who have suffered child abuse. Yet how many of these adults know of cases where those involved have been prosecuted or imprisoned? Very few, I believe, which gives an indication of just how widespread the problem of child abuse is and how such a serious issue isn't being confronted.

How do we go about initiating change and getting people to respond and treat child abuse with the seriousness it deserves? People in places of influence must use whatever powers they have to highlight the issue. Prison sentences should be increased and obligatory counselling should be introduced in prison. There is also a great need for rehabilitation centres for sex offenders. But firstly, and more importantly, proper counselling and professional help should be made available for those children who have been victims of this abuse.

The subject of child abuse seems to be strictly taboo, one to be swept under the carpet. But as the recent coverage shows, it exists and won't go away simply by ignoring it. By refusing to ignore its existence, by being concerned about and learning to understand the reality of the suffering caused by it, we may, however be able to thwart similar instances of child abuse. ■



Suffer in Silence

Heavy footsteps approach my door
My eyes are filling, can't take no more
My body shivers, full of fear
Silent screams, no one can hear.

Face in pillow to hide my shame
To end my life, those thoughts again
No God to help me, no angels here
Just silent screams, no one can hear.

Who would believe me, who would care?
Alone and afraid, caught in a snare
Who would listen, lend an ear?
To silence screams no one can hear.

Years roll by, my life still hell
Can see his face, that smile, that smell
I'm still that boy so full of fear
The silent screams no one can hear.

Heavy feet still come to my door
My eyes still fill, I'm tired and sore
My battle continues, the pain, the tears
The silence screams no one can hear.

VISCERA OF A VIDEO MAN

■ By JJ McCleave (Long Kesh)

OF ALL the roles which structure our tightly-knit republican community behind the wire, the video-man's job represents the most complex, lying as it does at the interface between advanced VCR technology and the heart of the republican struggle. What does this role entail? Let me explain.

In fact I'll begin by explaining what it does not entail. For example, I don't get out to purchase the video tapes. The governor apparently did not like the idea of me travelling to Dundalk to hire my tapes! Nor do I fix the machine when it breaks down which it does quite frequently, although some comrades are of the impression that high-tech wizardry and even a few miracles are part of my brief. Mind you, they also expect me to fast forward through the commercial breaks and supply them with cups of tea and digestive biscuits during films! So why the complexity? Just read on.

I awake in the morning full of the joys of life and greet each of my comrades with a friendly nod as I wonder what life has in store for me today. After a quick wash and breakfast, I join the long queue waiting to read *The Irish News*. Unlike the others though, who are eager for an update on current affairs and the latest sports results, I turn immediately to the TV page for a lengthy perusal of the day's viewing. Then I check the previous night's recordings and log them in my video book. I'll spend ten minutes looking for this sacred book, eventually finding it propping open a door, under a pile of freshly laundered clothes on the snooker table or somewhere equally safe from the screws, where it will have been placed by some of our more security conscious comrades.

The video book is carefully lined, beautifully dog-eared and has more republican fingerprints on it than in all the files in Castlereagh! I begin by logging the name of the recorded programme, how long it lasts and the number on the tape where it begins, ie if it begins at the start of the tape it will be 00.00 and so on. Some of the more conscientious video men will also include a brief description of the programme and possibly even including a star rating. I'm not the conscientious type so I excuse myself by explaining that in my view the ratings are so subjective they only lead to confusion. Normally after this I go for my daily run in the yard with JP McAllister, who as well as being my constant running companion is also a member of Greenpeace and reckons he is a bit of an expert on world pollution. I find the run very relaxing and his conversation stimulates my brain which makes it easier for me to memorise the complete TV page of the *Irish News* — an acquired availability all video men must master.

After the run I have a shower and it's normally here where I have my first close encounter of the day. As I'm rubbing the shampoo from my eyes I might hear a cry, "mo chara, mo chara"; and looking up will see a comrade hanging over the shower door.

"Mo chara there's a good show on tonight will you tape it for me?"

I ask what time it's on, and usually get the name of the cast, the directors — sometimes even the wardrobe staff.

"Yes a chara I'll do my utmost," I rely and off skips a satisfied customer.

Later on I'll be met with other requests for the same show described alternatively as "a classic" or "a complete and utter load of manure". Some comrades will tell you they saw this show outside,

HAVE YOU SEEN
MAD MAX II BEFORE?

I'LL GIVE
IT AN HOUR
AND A HALF

while the hard-line revolutionaries will say: "Bloody videos, when I was outside we fought a war — no time for TV or stupid videos. Anyway I heard about that show — it's not too bad."

Then, at around dinner time I'll be ambushed!

"What's going on at dinner time mo chara?"

"Can I put a video on?"

Two comrades come out of the cells opposite each other and ask their questions simultaneously. Their choice of viewing will not be the same of course and after spending ten minutes explaining that the video machine can only show one tape at a time I leave one satisfied and one dissatisfied customer in my wake. (A variation of the above theme is when I try to explain to two men it's a scientific impossibility to tape two programmes which are on at the same time.)

After lunch I generally take things easy with a nice cup of basic buy coffee. Then I stroll out to the yard and notice the sun is shining so I gather all the necessary gear for some very serious sunbathing — Factor 89, or something to protect me from those harmful UV rays, a Mary Black tape and my portable Sony walkperson. As soon as I've spread my blanket, covered myself in the protective cream and turned the music up full blast the sun suddenly disappears, and looking up to glare at the offending cloud, I'll be met with a bronzed comrade blocking my sunlight and doing an impersonation of a Sinn Féin spokesperson on British TV — plenty of lip movement, but no sound! (Not any more! — Ed.) Removing my earphones the Sinn Féin spokesperson suddenly sounds like a DUP man as a thundering voice booms: "What are you taping tonight?" After about 20 seconds I get my hearing back, count to ten and respond through gritted teeth: "Is there something that you would like me to tape?" The bronzed comrade comes closer, kneels beside me and drops his voice a few hundred decibels.

"Are you listening mo chara," he whispers. "The wife was up today and she was telling me about this programme tonight. It's all about bald men and how they still retain their sterility even after the old hair goes. Is there any chance of getting it taped?"

Who was I to explain to my follicularly challenged comrade that being sterile wasn't such a good thing? After all I'm only a wing video man, so I know a thing or two about impotency! I promise to try my best to tape the programme and vow to watch it myself for if I pull any more of my own hair out I'll need a few morale boosters!

Sometimes I get so frustrated in this job, only 3.30pm and the day



has been full of so many complications. I head into the canteen for a light snack where I am approached by your man. Now let me tell you about your man. He knows that he can only ask for one programme at a time because there are 25 men on the wing. Well he begins with the usual line — how's yourself my friend and that's not a bad day out there.

"What can I do for you?"

"Well there is a cracking show on tonight, I seen it myself a few years back, really good story line — you would never guess the ending."

After about ten minutes I ask him does he want it taped? He replies and I quite,

"I thought you were taping it!"

I reply no and he takes off indignantly down the wing. What can I say, your man reckoned I would tape it after that big build-up, then come and ask for something a wee bit later on, if you please!

After my snack I go to the cell to try and sort out what I can actually tape. Disaster! A clash — three programmes are on at the same time — the video man's nightmare. I go to the screws and ask them to phone H-Block 5 hoping the video man there can help me with some of the programmes. The rely is usually yes, so I tell two of the lads about the shows they have asked for will be taped. They tell me not to bother — they saw the two shows before anyway!!! I make my way over to two other men and tell them the programme they ask for will be taped. They congratulate me for being on top of things and even offer me tea. Mr Sterile's show can be taped also and he grins like a gorilla with an attitude problem. He asks me would I like a wee biscuit with my tea as it looks very wet.

I programme the video and head down to my cell. The next morning as I'm checking for the numbers to put into the book I find that all the previous night's viewing has been changed due to a live sports coverage, the said sport being golf. Panic, fear and every other conceivable word you can think of spring to mind. I rush down to my cell, hop into bed and decide to play it by ear.

An hour or so later one of the lads comes to my cell and asks me have I checked the video yet?

I lie. "Ah no, a chara, why's that?" He tells me about the live coverage of the golf and how all the lads are cursing the Brits for rescheduling the previous night's viewing. I smile to myself, get up out of bed and dander down the wing greeting each comrade with a nod as I do so. And so begins another day in the life of a H-Block video man. ■

IMAGINE THE DAY

Imagine the day

When the sun was shining,
The comradeship strong,
When some were joyous,
Triumphant even.

Imagine a day

When a bit of liberty was achieved,
The overwhelming atmosphere,
Some significant point conquered.

Imagine that day

When soon joy was turned to sadness,
The atmosphere engulfed
With the grief only death can bring.

Remember that day,

For a friend he lay dead,
His youth, symbol of our strength and
hope,
Extinguished by a coward's gun.

No more we see his smile, feel his joy,
Experience his hope.

But remember that day

When a bit of liberty was achieved.

■ By Mary Ellen Campbell (Maghaberry)

The limits of human endurance

■ By Gerard Hodgins
(Long Kesh)

Gerard Hodgins participated in the blanket protest and the 1981 Hunger Strike. Here he reflects on the universality of the experience of imprisonment and its impact on the human spirit.

*This too I know — and wise it were
If each could know the same —
That every prison that men build
Is built with bricks of shame,
And bond with bars lest Christ should see
How men their brothers maim.*

(Oscar Wilde, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*)

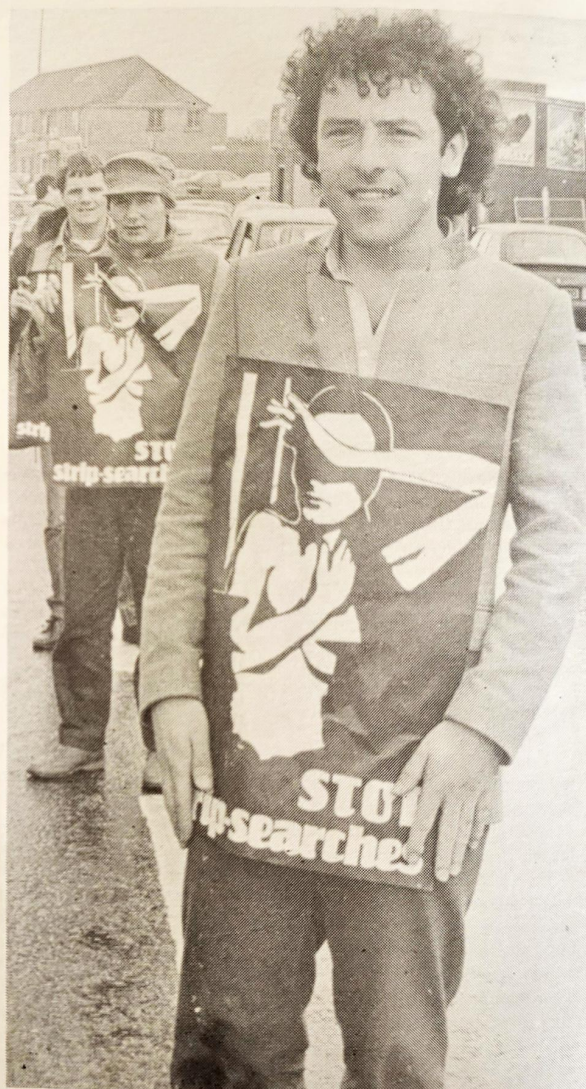
THERE IS something perversely universal about the experiences which people from various cultures endure when they are robbed of liberty and cast into the role of prisoner. The life of stability which once seemed so permanent is suddenly overturned and there begins a nightmare descent to the nadir of our existence — the corollary of suddenly having a steel door slammed on you, as four drab concrete walls echo its thud in mocking contempt of the impotence the situation imposes upon you.

Dostoevski defined man as a being who can get used to anything. We can adapt to sudden and traumatic changes in our circumstances and rally our energies to protect and preserve our lives and our dignity. Our instinct for survival ensures we can recondition ourselves into acceptance of the vicissitudes of life in a traumatic environment — not an acceptance of defeat or despair, but rather an acceptance of the reality of a situation we find ourselves thrown into, an acceptance which helps us to formulate the strategies and patterns of behaviour necessary for our survival. The mind initially will even seek to trivialise and make light of serious predicaments in order to absorb the full gravity of the situation in a gradual and rational way. The mechanism of the mind is a wonderfully complex thing which helps us to assimilate changes in our circumstances through a process of initially denying the immediacy

of their impact and subsequent consequences.

Prison is an institution which tests the mettle of a man or woman to the limits of endurance. The psychology of the prisoner and guard can be identified with in almost any cultural setting, the pettiness of restrictions imposed and the brutality inflicted upon a man or a woman in a small concrete tomb, hidden away from the gaze of the world is all part of the one big tapestry of defilement; be it in a rotten hole in Lebanon, a secret cellar in Argentina, a Gulag in Russia or a H-Block cell in Ireland. The fate of the prisoner is always one of a brutalising existence, where, robbed of every vestige of identity, a battle takes place for the soul of the prisoner as ignorantly sadistic guards attempt to break the spirit.

There is a battle between the different elements of the mind for survival. Every minute of every day of every year is a con-



● Gerard Hodgins on a anti-strip search picket

stant struggle with the demons of despair which seek to enervate the very zest for life in the soul of a man and reduce him to a broken shadow of his former self. Time has no real significance, days are only broken in their never-ending tedious cycle by the arrival of food at meal times; night and day are the same nightmare of isolation,

total confinement in a malignant void of nothingness which constantly hovers around you trying to enter your body and rob you of your dignity as a human being.

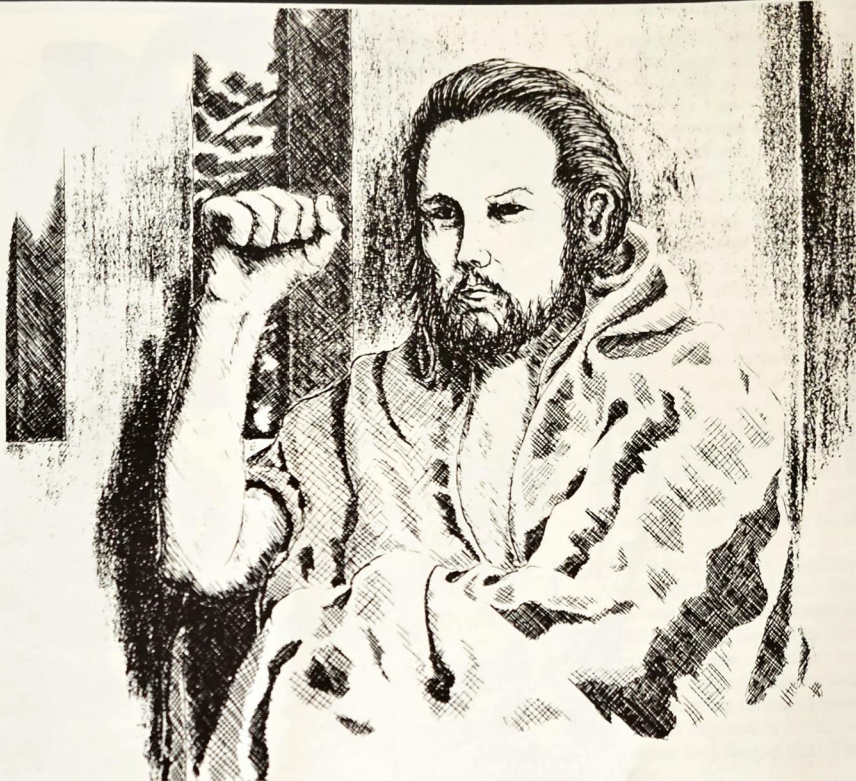
Reading Brian Keenan's account of his time in Lebanon, I found myself constantly identifying with the

expressions of his torment and reliving the days spent on the blanket, when we endured sensory isolation on a par with what Brian endured. I found myself constantly identifying with the expressions of his torment and reliving the days spent on the blanket, when we endured sensory isolation on a par with what Brian endured. I found myself reading his eloquent words and at the same time picturing in the reflections of what was done to him, the reflections of our own experience — in particular the pain of hearing people being beaten and how that sound was infinitely worse than the actual pain of being beaten oneself. The shock, the trauma, the emotional turmoil of hearing a friend being kicked and punched amid the frenzied screams of screws paralyses with fear; a knot forms in the stomach and spreads out over the body in paralysing terror and rage. Every man experiencing similar emotions is invariably forced to reach deep down inside of himself to search out the strength to not yield to the brutality and the insanity which such turmoil can induce.

The struggles to maintain the dignity so necessary for our sense of worth (without which we could not survive the hardships of imprisonment) are an essential ingredient of the prisoner's world. Communication, the need to interact with other people is of paramount importance. Prisoners will go to extreme lengths just to establish contact with a fellow victim, despite the fact that, when caught, the penalty is usually more brutality inflicted by sadistic guards. It is almost as if screws fear the ability of a prisoner to communicate, fear the relating of experiences among prisoners. In any situation of total confinement almost the first order of screws is: No talking. Simultaneously, the first priority of the prisoner is: Establish contact with other prisoners.

The need for contact, for communication via conversation, singing, games, humour and sharing of experiences, is essentially to survival. One must construct a world within the vacuum of nothing-

■ Illustration by Terry Boyle (Long Kesh)



ness and despair to give some sort of temporary meaning in order that one can surmount the obstacles of adversity. Americans were schooled in this during the Vietnam War. The necessity to have communal activities if captured, to maintain an identity in the horrors of the prison camps; and this lesson proved invaluable as it reduced the numbers of American servicemen broken by imprisonment in comparison to those during the Korean War.

Anger and memories are the main weapons in the arsenal of resistance to fight off the unrelenting depression of isolation once the indignity of imprisonment has imposed itself, an anger which is expressed through the indignation at being reduced to a puppet which some guard will try to manipulate and abuse; and memories of the life that has been left behind, but which nevertheless serve as the greatest catalyst for survival in the human spirit, the only salvation for a soul confined to a tomb. Brian Keenan discovered this in the hell-holes of Lebanon. In his darkest hours, rather than sinking into the mire of defeat, he discovered that his memories would come



● BRIAN KEENAN

flooding back to him "to give the mind some sort of positive egress" out of the horror. The H-Blocks which will forever stand as monuments of shame to Britain's personal policies in Ireland, gave birth to a thousand dreams of love and freedom which could only be

nurtured in the hearts of men denied those most precious of entities. In the darkest days it was the indignation at what was being done to us which tempered our resolve to survive and with the indignation the memories of those we loved and the life we dreamed of cocooned us against the barbarity of our jailers, and still fortifies us today in our struggle for daily survival.

Prison is a unique experience — trying to write about it can never convey the full intensity of all that it entails. The words can sometimes be constructed to create a window of observation for the outsider, but it is something which must be experienced to be fully understood; the raw ear of the brutality, the grinding despair of isolation, the impotence and frustration of being locked away from loved ones, the loneliness of an existence marooned from the rest of humanity. But above it all is an indignation at the audacity of the oppressor to try and strangle the dream which compels so many people to seek out an existence based on social justice. The prison world is a nightmare world, it is designed to cauterise all that is human in man. ■



The Field

■ By Gerard Magee (Long Kesh)

IT WAS a glorious sunny Twelfth of July, as the food trolleys came rolling into H5. They were lifted onto the canteen tables and off came the dixie lids, revealing to the peering eyes — 21 delicious sirloin steaks, our special treat to mark the historical occasion. In reflection, I said to Bean Murray at the opposite side of the table: *"If King Billy had lost the Battle of the Boyne, we wouldn't be getting steak for our dinner today!"* Bean immediately responded by claiming: *"If King Billy had lost the Battle of the Boyne, we might not be here today!"* An interesting point, I was thinking, as I helped myself to a succulent slice of sirloin, some mixed veg (carrots and turnips) and my usual helping of spuds.

With the new arrivals from the Crum, Phil Manning and Phil O'Neill, taking up a large amount of elbow room at my usual table, I planted myself down at the table where Jimmy McAllister is normally located. I then proceeded to work my way through this tasty meal and pondered on the uniqueness of having a slice of sirloin on the menu. I was intimately familiar with the procedure which led to its arrival on my plate, due to

some brief work experience in a meat plant, but more particularly due to my childhood memories in a field beside home.

I can recall my father lifting me up above the hedge when I was around three years old, and my eyes staring in wonder at the big black cows in the field. I was later to claim this field as my own, even though I was familiar with a local farmer by the name of Fleming who leased the land and owned the cattle. I spent so much time in this field that I knew every square inch of it, unlike Mr Fleming who only made an occasional visit to inspect his herd. From our garden fence, the field sloped down a hill and was surrounded by hawthorn hedges on all sides. At the bottom, a small stream flowed across, with a few ash trees along its bank. It was a very private and hidden-away field, some distance from roads or houses.

My father had occasional work to do in the field; a water trough which split one of the hawthorn hedges was on the same mains water supply line as our house. From time to time, the cumbersome drinking habits of Mr Fleming's cattle led to a burst pipe or the ball-cock within the trough needing repair. On the opposite side of the field from the trough there was an old stone wall, with a higher hedge behind it. My father once stood at this wall and said: *"The men who built this wall are long dead and gone."* I thought about the poor men who would have put long hard days of slaving labour into building this wall with little or no reward; and now they were long dead, gone and forgotten. It was a sombre thought, those decomposed skeletons lying deep in the earth and no one left around to appreciate their hard work. I felt guilty about knocking a rock out of place, so I carefully put it back again; I didn't want those poor men turning in their graves.

The changing seasons would bring along their own characteristics. During the summer the field would be lush and green with clover and a bright carpet of wild flowers, daisies, buttercups and

dandelions; where orange tip and tortoise-shell butterflies floated around the somnolent herd of grazing cattle. The smell of manure plops and the fragrance of the blooming wild flowers gave off a special scent of the Irish countryside. In contrast, the cattle would be off the land during the winter months, and the field would have the Christmas card look during the frost and occasional snow. I'd often enjoy a walk down the snow-covered field, watching the bullfinches and blackbirds feeding on berries, and the exposed rabbits scurrying to the nearest hedge. A mirage of footprints in the snow revealed quite a lot of hare and fox movements during the night.

From an early age I developed the habit of hand-feeding the cattle from the fence at home, despite my mother's warning about ringworm, a skin disease which cattle sometimes get. I soon got to know the pattern of Mr Fleming's farming. He was into beef cattle, as opposed to dairy farming; and this entailed a two-year cycle in which heifers and bullocks would be fattened up from calf, sent to the market and eventually to the butcher's shop. However among the changing herd of bullocks and heifers remained this old cow that calved every year or two. She was known as 'the blue cow' by Mr Fleming and myself due to her unique slate-blue markings. I watched with great fascination as the blue cow would tentatively look after a newly-dropped calf as it struggled to get to its feet.

It didn't take long to get to know each individual heifer and bullock every other spring, as a new young herd was deposited in the field. Some would be very timid, while others were tame and easily hand-fed from the fence. One year I discovered this bullock to be exceptionally tame, and I called him Toot-to. There are no explanations why I chose this name, it just fell out of the sky, so to speak! Most of Mr Fleming's cattle were Friesian, mostly black with white markings. This breed is very popular due to its milk-producing capacity, though not of the same quality as that of the dark yellow-brown Jersey's or the red and white Ayrshires. Toot-to was nearly all black, with a distinctive white front leg.

Just like silage, fresh heaps of grass cuttings collected by the lawnmower were a favourite recipe for these healthy young cattle. As I often fed Toot-to, I called him by his name and was able to rub his nose,



stroke his chin, ears and neck, and let his course tongue lick a lump of sugar from my hand. Eventually this close hand-feeding could be carried out in the field, and occasionally I'd give him a juicy stalk of rhubarb as a special treat. The months rolled on and the bond of friendship with my special pet grew. Gradually through time Toot-to began responding to his name. I could stand on the fence and shout "Toot-to" down the field several times; and he'd lift his head, flick his ears and then leave the herd, walking alone slowly up the field for a specially-prepared meal and all the devotion in the world.

After about eighteen months I noticed that Toot-to was putting on considerable weight, though it didn't concern me as the rest

weren't too far behind. I was however wondering if those extra meals were beginning to show. Then one morning in mid-Autumn I discovered that Mr Fleming had removed the entire herd from the field, causing immeasurable depression as I feared that Toot-to and the rest were on their final journey.

However, I felt that it was a bit early and several weeks later I was cycling past another field about a mile away when I spotted the herd again. I was overcome with joy; within seconds I was off the bike and over the fence to make a special reunion with Toot-to. Like old times he preferred to eat whatever I held in my hand, even though the grass was very much the same as he ate off the ground. I was to return to this field a number of times until one day I discovered to my shock and horror that Toot-to was gone. He was the only one missing from the herd and I was totally heartbroken. I knew this time for sure that Toot-to was on this final

fateful journey. I cycled home slowly that day with a heavy heart and fond memories of a pet called Toot-to.

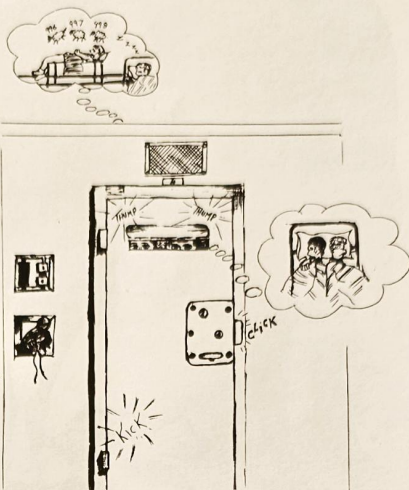
Today the field is no longer in existence; the old stone wall, the stream, the ash tree, the hawthorn bushes and water trough, and especially the memories of Toot-to are all buried under a new road, built to meet the expanding needs of urban development. Passing motorists will travel through, oblivious to a life which went on there before them.

Meanwhile back at my dinner table in H5, I pierce my last piece of sirloin steak with my fork, top it up with some veg mixed with the last of my spuds, and down the neck she goes. With the satisfying meal complete, I pour myself a cup of tea and drink to the memory of Toot-to and my field. ■



TEAR-JERKING MOMENTS, RIBENA AND SUPER-DUPER IDEAS

■ Illustration by
Seán Connolly (Long Kesh)



RINTY, Jim O'Carroll and Anto Murray were dandier around the yard and Rinty says: "I heard this is supposed to be a good film tonight."

"Whose in it?" asks Jim.

"Robert Redford and your woman Demi Moore."

"What's it called?" Anto asks.

"Indecent Exposure," Rinty replies. A Freudian slip or just wishful thinking?

Another film shown recently was *Sleepless in Seattle*. Hatchet Maguire and the lads were following every soppy detail and many's a heart missed a beat when the Empire State Building appeared all lit up as a Valentine's heart. Hatchet, to break the tear-jerking moment and engulfing silence broke in, in a very quavering voice: "I mind that building whenever Hong Kong was hanging off the top of it."

The first night of the 24-hour unlock, the first in the H-Blocks' history, Karl Crossan was in his cell strumming away on his guitar. In comes Paddy McGiloway with his own guitar to make a night of it. He gives the cell door a tug after him, but... disaster... the door swings too heavily and both Paddy and Karl are locked in. But the screws were already away with the keys so that was them for the night, and on the historic occasion of every man in the camp not being

locked up, the two of them were behind the door.

Everyone likes to get away from the hectic pace of prison life once in a while.

Paddy McMahon's preference is for a nice relaxing bath. And why not?

It's hygienic, unlike smoking; it doesn't annoy anyone, unlike the music fans; there's no brain damage involved, unlike the soap operas. The only problem is, we live in a hard water area, and Radox Bath Salts are banned by hard-hearted NIO mandarins. But never let it be said that our republican community left a comrade in need. A few of Paddy's friends suddenly discovered some "red stuff", guaranteed to satisfy the professional bath man. Paddy duly tried it out and reported back; not too many bubbles but a nice blackcurrant fragrance — in fact the most relaxing bath he's ever had behind bars. And the mysterious substance? Ribena.

What's it like editing the largest selling political quarterly in Ireland? "Wee buns," said Felim as he finally departed the H-Blocks to take up residence in the outside world, leaving *An Glór Gafa* to the tender mercy of his three stooges, Micheál, Pod and Conor.

The following evening Micheál and Pod convene an editorial meeting (Conor is in a

different block, but sends revolutionary greetings). They spend half-an-hour brain-storming ideas for potential articles and agree that Felim's baking analogy isn't far off the mark. "But what if these brilliant ideas have been used before?" wonders Micheál, ever the optimist.

"No chance," replies Pod. "These ideas are too super-duper original." (All Short Strand POWs talk like this.)

But they decide to check the back issues just to be on the safe side. Reconvening a week later, there's good news and bad news.

"I knew our ideas were super-duper original," says Pod.

"Although I could only find three back issues for 1993."

"I could only find three issues for 1992," says Micheál.

"And Conor only found three for 1992."

"Curiouser and curiouser," says Pod. "It's the same for 1990."

"More and more curious," replies Micheál, who likes to be pedantic. "Maybe I should look up 'quarterly' in the *Scrabble lads'* dictionary."

But no, there it is, quarterly — produced or occurring in each quarter of the year. It seems that there is a missing issue of *An Glór Gafa* each year. What's going on?

Is there a special issue, for certain eyes only? Is it a clever ploy to keep MI5 intelligence gatherers distracted? More to the point, are the ever-loyal subscribers being ripped off?

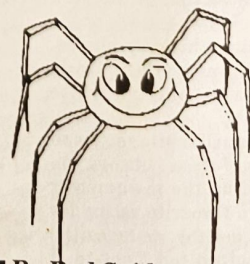
The public have a right to know! "Never mind the public," declaims Pod. "What about the editors?"

The editors launch a major investigation a la Alan Sugar and mobilise their vast network of agents (ie they ask Red Spider to bribe people with Custard Creams). But they encounter a stone wall of Stalker proportions. In desperation they send a parolee to the Bahamas where Felim is attending yet another book launch. Word comes back, after gulping down his rum and coke and before disappearing behind a sand dune, Felim was heard to mutter: "That Brian Campbell always was a chancer!" The illustrious founder of *An Glór Gafa*? Never!

Finally, a bewildered and red-eyed editorial board approach Red Spider with a motley collection of facts, figures, half-truths, damned statistics and pure fantasy. Red painstakingly pieces everything together. Now for the first time, the full story can be revealed. Apparently in all the media hype and publicity stunts surrounding *An Glór Gafa*'s first appearance on the streets, an over-enthusiastic Brian Campbell labelled the magazine a "quarterly". Yet only three issues are published each year. This subterfuge has been kept up by a succession of cynical editorial boards ever since. Confronted with the facts, Pod retorted: "It's not my fault. Anyway what about *Fortnight* magazine — it only comes out monthly!"

Meanwhile, late into the night Micheál can be heard in his cell muttering: "Big buns, huge buns, císti ollmhóra, gynormous buns..."

At least the subscribers still get their four copies for a measly £5.30. But what Red Spider wants to know is: Why have there only been two issues this year?



■ By Red Spider
(Long Kesh)

Whither South Africa?

FOR WELL over 30 years the struggle in South Africa against apartheid had the sympathy and support of millions throughout the world, not least in our own country. Now it would appear that this struggle has successfully been brought to a conclusion and those who marched, boycotted or went on strike against the White regime might feel justifiably satisfied. Certainly as Mandela spoke as president, with the site of his former imprisonment on Robbin Island in the background, few could fail to be aware of the momentous change which had taken place.

So far as the campaign against the worst manifestation of racist oppression were concerned, the struggle is over. Everyone now has a vote and the majority has chosen to elect an ANC government. In many ways, however, the struggle is only beginning. South Africa is a wealthy country in African terms, but it contains a massive Black population which suffers rates of unemployment, mortality, ill-health and lack of education as bad if not worse than in some of the poorer African countries. These problems have been identified as the most urgent to be addressed by the new regime, and indeed it could ill-afford to ignore them given the role played in the liberation struggle by the Black working class and its powerful organisations, principally the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the Communist Party.

Even with the presence of those organisations within the ranks of the new government, there are bound to be tensions as people look for the early fulfillment of material needs long neglected over the years of White rule. It will be interesting therefore to see how the ANC manages to balance the demands of their working-class supporters with the constraints imposed by the ruling economic elite, which of course was not up for re-election and the international financial agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank. Another problem will be posed by those staking a claim to special treatment on the basis of ethnicity, namely the Zulus loyal to Inkatha, and those

Afrikaners demanding a White homeland.

One of the advantages which the ANC has, lies in its very diversity. Unlike many other African Liberation Movements, including some which styled themselves socialist, it is not confined to any particular ethnic or tribal group, with even the Zulus far from united

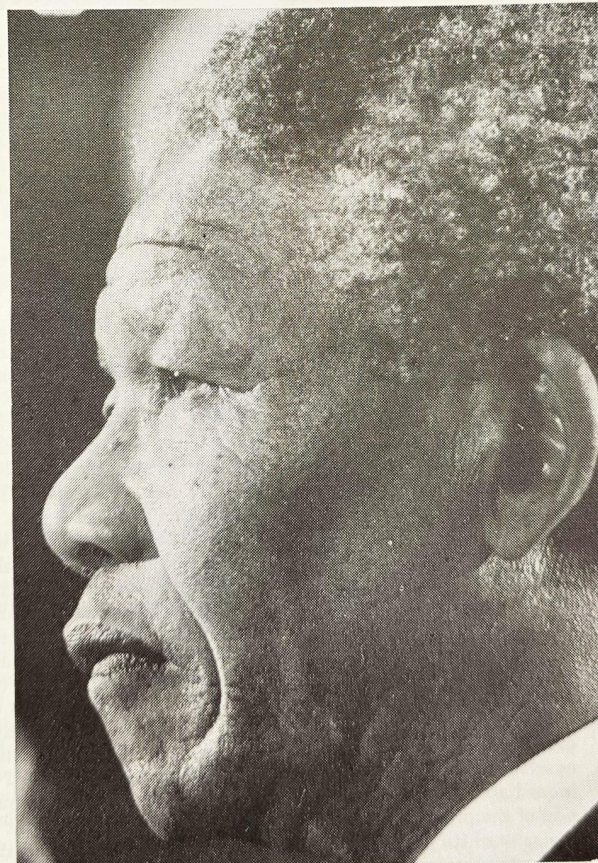
behind Buthe. Often in the past national liberation has in reality meant the victory of one tribal elite not only over colonialism, but over other groups within the borders of the independent state. Even today Kenya remains largely in the hands of a corrupt Kikuyu clique which inherited power from Kenyatta, while everyone knows what is going on in Burundi and Rwanda. Unlike those movements the ANC has been committed to the notion of a nonracial state since its foundation and those Whites and Indians found within it are more than token liberals.

Throughout its history many of the leading ANC activists have been of other than Black African descent. Indeed that, along with the

■ By Maitiu O Treasaigh (Portlaoise)

anti-communist hysteria, was what led the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) to set itself up as an alternative leadership. It is ironic then that some Western Trotskyists, casting about for new heroes, ought to have chosen a group whose idea of revolution seems to have consisted of opening fire on White civilians although not with any great deal of success. There has also been much talk of the ANC and the Communist Party having sold out, although this probably has more to do with others' perceptions of what the South African struggle was about than any change within the movement's leadership. At the same time it has to be recognised that the relatively peaceful nature of the transition to democracy was aided by the understanding arrived at between the ANC leadership and the De Klerk faction within the Nationalist Party. The latter was more in tune with the interests of the ruling class, whose concerns are centred around the economy, and chose to break with the reactionary elements unable to abandon the trappings of white supremacy. At the end of the day it matters little to De Beers whether the political leadership is Black or White so long as no one tries to take their diamond mines away from them.

That brings us to the crux of the question as it is seen by the left. By agreeing not to proceed with an immediate socialisation of the South African economy have the Mandelas and Slovos betrayed the revolution? Whatever about Slovo, that cannot be said of Mandela. He has never claimed to be a revolutionary socialist, although he has said that he favours extensive state control of the economy to direct the ameliorisation of the plight of the Black poor. Slovo on the other hand was prominent in leading the South African Communist Party onto the path of reform and has abandoned the goal of leading a socialist revolution from the moment of the downfall of apartheid. There



● ANC and South African President Nelson Mandela. The skill showed by the ANC in negotiating the transition to democracy should be an example to revolutionaries everywhere



● The new South African government cannot afford to ignore the Black working class

are, however, elements within the party who are impatient with this soft line and that is where many of the tensions will arise.

While it might be nice for socialists looking at things from a distance to dwell fondly on the prospects for proletarian revolution in South Africa, being conspicuously unable to achieve the same in their own countries, matters are not so simple when it comes down to brass tacks. For one thing, the working class has not taken power, and for another, administering an economy like South Africa's in the interests of its people is not as simple as putting civil servants onto its Board of Directors. Because of the way in which power has been transferred, what in effect took place was a compromise between the White ruling class and the predominantly Black political leadership which represents differing interests, ranging from those of the radicalised organised workers to the growing Black middle class and business interests. Central to that promise was an understanding that the economy would not be subject to widespread nationalisation. The problem then for the

ANC will be how best to balance all of these conflicting interests; the justifiable demands of the workers for a share of the wealth they create, against the ambitions of Black business and of the old elite.

Given that the repercussions of the collapse of the European socialist block have not yet been fully analysed, much less understood, it would be asking a lot to expect that the South African leadership would be about to solve all the problems of centralised planning and the lack of democracy which existed in those countries in an economy that neither possesses the human resources nor the organised demand for a modern developed socialist economy. Recent history has proven that socialism will not come out of conditions of underdevelopment and South Africa in terms of social services, health and education is clearly an underdeveloped country in which the immediate tasks are the solution of the problems facing the majority of its people through the utilisation of existing resources rather than through the massive disruption which

would be entailed by wholesale nationalisation. The experience of other African countries has been that unless the state can administer the economy more effectively than previous owners and at the same time ensure that the means are available to provide much-needed social services, that nationalisation can in fact worsen the situation.

Perhaps the ANC might look to the example of the New Economic Policy which Lenin saw as the solution to problems of underdevelopment in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. Lenin realised that the Soviet Union was not ready for full-scale socialisation and was content to allow forms of private ownership to continue so long as the state maintained overall control of distribution and planning which meant that resources created in the private sector could be directed to areas of need, for purposes of either investment or social provision. In some ways this has been what the socialist regime in Zimbabwe has tried to do, with more success than many of its neighbours, but it also bears similarities with the experience of some of the developing Asian countries like South Korea, Taiwan and Sin-

gapore which although committed to a strict policy of noncommunism, nonetheless gave the state a predominant role not in ownership, but in planning. Perhaps if the ANC were to pursue such a path while at the same time building a layer of technologically and administratively efficient cadre committed to the social goals of the revolutionary movement, then at some future date the prospects for a more radical departure may have matured.

In the meantime, those who have followed developments in South Africa with sympathy and solidarity will be watching to see how the ANC copes with this new challenge. In a world dominated by 'the new world order' and in which socialism no longer seems to provide a ready-made alternative economic system, that challenge will be at least as great as the one overcome during the years of struggle. Having said that, the great skill displayed so far by the ANC in negotiating the transition to democracy may well provide an inspiration to revolutionaries elsewhere who are prepared to take imaginative steps to surmount apparently insuperable problems. ■



Nor Meekly Serve My Time Beyond The Pale Publications £9.95

THE ROOTS of prison struggle in Ireland are deeply entangled within the overall political situation. One has only to look back to the days of Ashe or McSwiney to confirm this. The period between March 1976 and 1981 however is the one which I feel history will deem as the most important. *Nor Meekly Serve My Time*, written, compiled and edited exclusively by prisoners, is a firsthand account of this period which historians should use as primary source material.

The period covered by the book (1976-81) was a grey area for me as I was only nine years old. Even at this young age, however, I was aware of a prison protest and my memories of the hunger strikes are still vivid today. In later years I developed a proper understand-

ing of the historical significance of the period though some gaps remained. These gaps were filled in prison where I met many comrades who had personal experience of the blanket protest and hunger strikes. This book brings home the experiences of the participant in this struggle.

The British government's three pronged policy of criminalisation/Ulsterisation/normalisation was at full flow and the prisoners were a major obstacle in the way of this imperialist juggernaut. Thatcher believed that this obstacle could be shifted by using brutality. This belief and the assertion that the IRA had played its "last card" was to show once again how Britain underestimated the will and resolve of Irish prisoners of war.

Nor Meekly Serve My Time is the testimony of some of the men who took part in the blanket protest during the hunger-

strike period. These accounts begin with men who were sentenced after March 1976 and cover all stages of the protest which culminated in the deaths of the hunger strikes. The reader may be surprised by the honesty of the personal accounts contained in the book.

One can almost feel the tension and hear the clang of cell doors as they open and shut while the screws move from cell to cell dishing out their daily dose of brutality. Ciarán McGillicuddy's (who at 16 years of age was the youngest blanket man) description of a particularly savage assault brought tears of anger to my eyes. This book should be read by everyone who wishes to fully appreciate what these men endured and the abuse the human spirit can absorb.

Like most written accounts of the hardships endured by Irish political prisoners there are light-hearted interludes. Tales of sing songs, bingo nights, story telling and other forms of entertainment give us an insight into the day to day lives of the blanketmen.

An example of the extraordinarily close bonding which developed among the blanketmen and of the selflessness of Bobby Sands is illustrated in the account by Thomas Loughlin who describes how Bobby won some respite for his comrades from the forced hosing at the hands of sadistic screws. On one occasion when the screws put the hose into Bobby's cell he stood upright, refusing to take cover and received a severe soaking. The end result was an extremely ill Bobby and an extremely worried governor who was then forced to stop this barbaric practice of hosing naked men (albeit temporarily).

The graphic account of the hunger strike and the matter of fact way the men talked of death seems almost unreal. Leo Green, who took part in the first hunger strike, gives an account of his experience. The physical aspect of refusing food coupled with the psychological battle with the screws provides rate and remarkable reading. I experienced every emotion while reading the blanketmen's accounts and was at times overwhelmed with a great sense of pride.

I would recommend this

book to anyone who is interested in a true and honest account of this historic period in prison struggle.

■ By Tony O'Neill (Long Kesh)

Trials by ordeal

IT IS commonplace that when it comes to things Irish, the British take leave of their senses. No better — or worse — example can there be of this racism than the attitude of the British judiciary to the prosecution of Irish people on political offences. Human rights, truth, fair play, actual evidence, all go out the window in the priority to convict.

Trials By Ordeal is a comprehensive account of all the Irish political trials in Britain during the present conflict. It links each case thematically, scrutinising the police investigation, the conduct of the DPP, the role of forensic scientists, the trial themselves, the compliance of the media, the court of appeal and the Home Office.

The book shows that the cases of the putatively rectified miscarriages of justice — the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Maguire Seven, or that of Judith Ward — are not isolated cases, and that those convicted in the 1980s and 1990s did not receive fair trials. Indeed, in January 1993, the *Sun* newspaper announced the arrest of one Irish suspect, Patrick Murphy, in the following manner:

"Detectives were hailing the arrest of the 52-year-old Irish taxi driver as a major breakthrough against the IRA... The man is thought to be the brains behind a number of bombings in the capital including the Victoria Station outrage in February 1991 which killed a man. He will also be quizzed about the Downing Street taxi bomb in October last year... A senior security source said: 'We received first-class information which suggests he is a very big fish.'"

Patrick Murphy was charged. Fortunately for him some friends remembered that he was at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting on the night that police had him out on a bombing mission. He himself couldn't remember where he had been.



● *Trials by Ordeal* shows miscarriages of justice in Britain are not just isolated cases

The charges were dropped and he was released. But what if he hadn't been able to establish an alibi?

British judges reserve the most severe sentences for Irish political cases. Thirty years is the 'going rate' for a conspiracy to cause an explosion: 15 months (plus early release) if you're a British soldier who shoots dead an Irish youth on the streets of Belfast.

This book, by the Irish Prisoners Support Group, contains the submission that the group made to the Royal Commission (announced after the Birmingham Six had their convictions quashed).

However, the group warns: *"The signs for the future are not encouraging. Four years after the release of the Guildford Four, the legal and political establishment are putting into place a system which is removing a suspect's safeguards and will inevitably lead to further miscarriages of justice."*

■ **By Danny Morrison**
(Long Kesh)

New Internationalist,
May 1994

THE NOW legendary flexible deadlines at *An Glór Gafa* offices means that this review will be slightly dated by the time you read it. The May issue of the *New Internationalist* has thrown its authoritative spotlight on our struggle. It's as heartening as it is unexpected: a serious journal gives credit to the republican peace process. Whatever next? *"RUC in collusion with loyalists,"* Hendron claims?

The *New Internationalist* is a respected international affairs periodical with a progressive

outlook and a policy of reporting on *"the unjust relationship between the powerful and the powerless in both rich and poor nations"*, coupled with a belief in *"...debate and radical change"*. It overwhelmingly focuses on Third-World issues, so just what this says about our putative First World status is anyone's guess.

The editor, Chris Brazier, acknowledges that an issue focussing on this conflict has been attempting to raise its head since the 1970s, but for various reasons, notably internal political opposition to such an issue and apathy, the attention we deserve has been slow in coming. It is a sad, but true fact of life for Brazier in common with many others that it was as if he had become unsure, anesthetized to *"a never-ending insoluble problem of two warring tribes"*. In the era of the sound bite we have all been reduced to the simplest terms, the most convenient definitions. Still, the Six-County issue is a successful effort so I'll avoid using inverted commas to indicate politically-loaded terms. Republicans are willing to compromise and in keeping with the spirit of the times I'll do my bit!

The collection of articles is well-written and refreshingly free of cliché and sensationalisms. There are several pages of actual information, statistics and graphs which help to make the range of issues covered fairly comprehensive. One feature relates the opinions and perceptions of people who view the struggle from various foreign locations. One N Mandela of Soweto is thus quoted:

"What we would like to see is that the British government and the IRA sit down to resolve problems in a peaceful manner."

Some well-known writers and commentators have weighed in with solid articles. Bill Rolston on colonialism; Liz Curtis reports on one European border which is not coming down quite so smoothly; and Nell McCafferty hopes that women will get a better deal in a united Ireland. Could they possibly get a worse one than they have at present? For more details on these articles you'll have to read them for yourselves — editorial constraints inhibit me from elaborating too much, you'll be glad to hear.

Chris Brazier has contributed an article of his own which is worth the cover price (£1.90) alone. He combines an outsider's view of events (*"I was profoundly shocked by the extent of the familiar presence on the streets of Belfast — it was more intrusive than anything I have seen in the Third World, South Africa included"*) with a perceptive look at loyalist opinions. He begins with Gregory Campbell. Poor Gregory, not one of life's great thinkers, he brings a whole new dimension to the term Neanderthal:

"I'd say another 15 to 20 Loughgalls and the violence is over."

Meanwhile, on the Shankill the mood seems less certain — for some. It would be wrong to describe opinions there as fluid, much less speak of a sea-change but there are creeping doubts about former certainties — Britain's intentions for one. A sense of betrayal was obvious. *"We're questioning what we're loyal to now,"* one man said. Another contemplated the notion of minority status for unionists and wondered what rights they would be afforded. No one was seeking to embrace a unitary state, but at least they

were questioning the permanency of the union. As Brazier points out:

"Loyalists cannot go on living their lives by a permanent negative — they need to negotiate their own future with Britain and Ireland rather than hoping the problem will go away if they say no long enough and with sufficient fury."

Martin McGuinness employs flexibility and determination in equal measure in a brief, but lucid interview. The language is moderate and he speaks of a willingness to negotiate and compromise — a willingness that can only be put to the test if he is engaged in dialogue. Compromise must involve more than one party. There are no predetermined outcomes, claims McGuinness and a unitary state is only *"a possible scenario"*. Building a lasting peace and accommodating the unionist people is what republicans are now about. Contrast this approach with Gregory Campbell's above. However, as McGuinness rightly points out:

"The effective unionist veto as enshrined in the Downing Street Declaration must be removed."

Telling it like it is. The time for rhetoric and sloganising is long gone for all sides in this conflict — it only induces inertia. Onwards towards an inclusive dialogue '94!

By the time you read this the May issue of *New Internationalist* may not be easy to get your hands on — it's worth tracking down though.

■ **By Tim Brannigan**
(Long Kesh)

● This review was written before the IRA cessation of military operations.

QUOTES

"President Clinton has hailed the cease-fire as the dawning of a new era and the backing of his administration as well as the large Irish-American community is seen as crucial to the peace hopes." **Someone who clearly understands the importance of the IRA's historic announcement.** — *Irish News*, 2 September 1994.

"I am very confident it will hold." **Jean Kennedy Smith** (American ambassador to Ireland) speaking on ABC's *Good Morning America* programme when asked about British worries. — *Irish News*, 2 September 1994.

"The IRA have come out and they have said they are ending their campaign. They have ended their military operations. I hope it will receive reciprocation because we have to remember that the violence came from other sides as well." **Tánaiste Dick Spring** stated that it was Dublin's view that there was "a complete end to the violent campaign of the IRA." — *Irish News*, 2 September 1994.

"Let us have the words first

"Just a little more.

"I am not absolutely sure they are precisely there yet." **An obviously nervous John Major** trying to appear tough. — *Irish Times*, 5 September 1994.

"Let us not reduce this historic moment to a niggles over word games. I want Mr Major to seize the moment. It was a courageous statement from the IRA. Let Mr Major show courage himself.

We have sent a number of messages to Mr Major seeking to reassure him. He needs to grasp this opportunity." **Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams**, explaining that the British had been assured that the cease-fire was genuine and accused their ministers of wanting further unnecessary pledges. — *Daily Express*, 7 September 1994.

"Pressure mounted on Mr Major to accept the cease-fire as permanent when the United States Vice President Al Gore said he believed it was. Speaking at Shannon Airport after meeting the Irish Prime Minister, Albert Reynolds, he said he believed Dublin's

interpretation of the IRA statement was correct." — *Guardian*, 8 September 1994.

"My gut reaction is the cease-fire is for real." **Ulster Unionist MP John Taylor.** — *Daily Mirror*, 10 September 1994.

"The clear message in Whitehall was that, as Mr Major declared yesterday, the government still wants to hear the IRA say expressly that violence has ended for good." — *Belfast Telegraph*, 15 September 1994.

"Governments around the world understand the importance of what has occurred, but despite the best efforts of Mr Reynolds, John Hume, President Clinton, Dick Spring and Vice President Al Gore, London's nitpicking continues.

"Each time someone from Sinn Féin has tried to deal with the British versions, Mr Major or Mr Mayhew or Mr Hurd change their version of what is required. It is obvious that British 'confusion' is contrived.

"We have learned to be patient, but this does not mean that we are fooled by the British stance. There should be no doubt but that the niggling and hair-splitting, the claims of confusion by senior British ministers are nothing more than tactical manoeuvring.

"It should stop now. We are at a decisive moment in Anglo-Irish relations and in efforts to end this long conflict." **Gerry Adams** — *Irish News*, 15 September 1994.

"I hope they have the courage and remove the ambiguities and make the clear statement that everybody is waiting to hear." **John Major** — *Newsletter*, 17 September 1994.

"I believe the cease-fire will hold in all circumstances." **Martin McGuinness** within hours of Major's latest statement. — *Newsletter*, 17 September 1994.

"If there is a clock ticking, it is on Mr Major's credibility. Does he want peace or not?" **Mitchel McLaughlin** dismissing a warning that the three month

MORE QUOTES OVERLEAF

count-down to Sinn Féin's inclusion in the talks could only begin when the British government are convinced of the permanence of the cease-fire. — *Irish News*, 17 September 1994.

"Mr Major made it clear when he visited Northern Ireland on Friday that he was still waiting for a categorical assurance from the IRA that their cessation was permanent before the clock would start on the three month count-down to Sinn Féin's acceptance in talks." — *Daily Express*, 19 September 1994.

"We had, just over a fortnight ago, an indication from the IRA that they have given up violence. They have said they have given up violence in all circumstances and I hope that is true.

"What we are waiting to hear is that they have given up violence in all circumstances for all time." John Major — *Newsletter*, 20 September 1994.

"Mr Major told the BBC he believed the IRA was trying to find its way to making clear that it wanted to give up violence for good. 'Once that has happened we are on a path where, in due course, Sinn Féin can join political talks,' he said.

"They could settle the matter immediately by making it clear that what they have said is meant to convey that they have given up violence for good. The moment they have said that, we can enter into preliminary talks. If they were to say that today, we could be talking at or around Christmas'." John Major — *The Guardian*, 24 September 1994.

"It is good that John Major appears to be inching his way towards an acceptance of the inevitability of talks with Sinn Féin.

"The sooner Mr Major matches his words with

deeds, the sooner the peace process can move forward." Gerry Adams — *Newsletter*, 24 September 1994.

"I want to see a permanent peace.

"I've spent my life struggling, with others, to get the conditions for a permanent peace. I'm not interested in any temporary suspension." Gerry Adams — *Speaking on ABC's Good Morning America* programme, 25 September 1994.

"I have said throughout I have no doubt the IRA campaign is over. Sinn Féin has described my interpretation as correct. All anyone has to do is not only read the IRA statement and its definitive commitment to the peaceful and democratic process but look to the statement issued by the Taoiseach, Gerry Adams and myself after our meeting, all totally committing ourselves to the democratic process and that the problem can only be solved with unionist participation. That language could not be clearer.

"I want to see dialogue between all elected parties beginning as soon as possible." SDLP leader John Hume when asked about the continuing British reluctance to accept the IRA cease-fire was permanent. — *Irish News*, 26 September 1994.

"They are working behind the scenes, in front of the scenes, beside the scenes, above the scenes and below the scenes." Gerry Adams when asked by a reporter if the British were working against him in trying to obstruct his access in Washington. — *Irish Times*, 29 September 1994.

"One of the most distinguished world leaders to come to the United States." New York city comptroller Mr Alan Hevisi on the Sinn Féin president's visit to New York. — *Irish Times*, 29 September 1994.

WAGTAIL

Swift like summer lightning,
Bold yet weary,
Your movement seems hyper,
Distinguishes your characteristic.

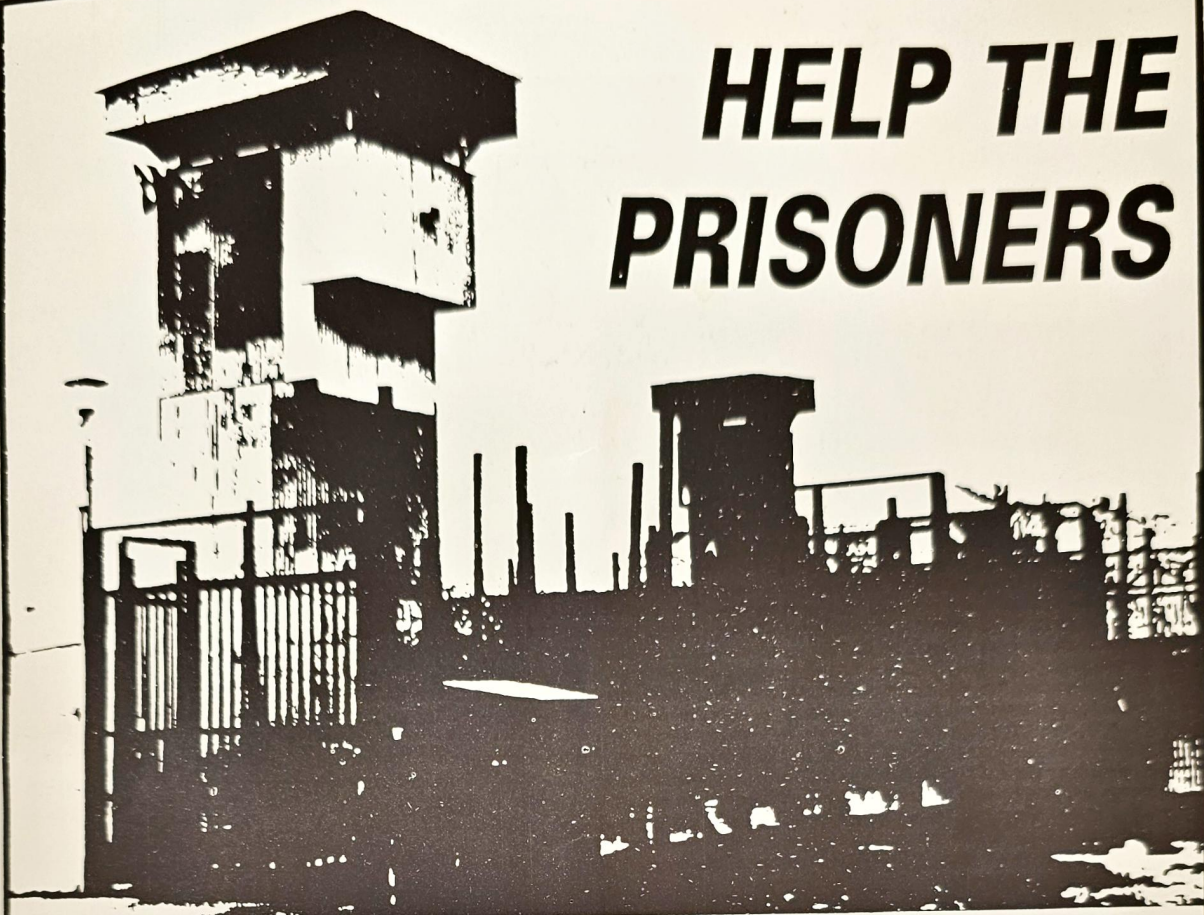
I often wonder,
Is your constant appearance

Greedy,
Or is it
You are feeding some young life,
Dependent, needy?

Whatever,
I'll gladly share my daily ration
Two minds,
A single thought.

■ By Tony Doherty (Long Kesh)

HELP THE PRISONERS



**SUPPORT
An Cumann
Cabhrach
&
Green Cross**

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

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

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

or

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

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