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FREE DERRY

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NEWS

No. 7

PROVISIONAL SINK FEIN -- DERRY CITY -- 22 lá Lunasa '75 -- 22 August

"Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and can never have any right in Ireland, the presence in any one generation of Irishmen of even a respectable minority ready to affirm that truth, makes that government forever a usurpation and crime against human progress."
-- James Connolly, 1916

ONE DAY IN MAGILLIGAN P.O.W. CAMP

-- written by a Political Hostage

STEEL GATES CRASH OPEN. Harsh English accents clash with Northern Irish, coming closer to our barred hut door. Jangle of keys. Locks un-bolted, hut lights stab the darkness to reveal two rows of sleeping men and youths. "32, Sir. All correct." The tramp of heavy boots recede and the door slams shut. 32 prisoners lie contemplating the grey, unchanging tin of a Nissen hut, knowing another day begins, an exact replica of the one that went before. Shortly after, our Hut O/C's voice stirs us into action. Feet hit the concrete floor and head into the wind-blasted cage air. A Brit in his tower turns his binoculars to look in upon the Provos arising. He will watch us for the rest of the day. No privacy in a concentration camp. We 80 caged men know that all around us, 600 men, Loyalist and Republican, are going through the same ritual as us. Stand and wait your turn to wash as there aren't enough washbasins. "What's the water like?" "Freezing!" After a cup of tea round the yard in circles we go peering through eye-distorting wire at loyalists in the opposite cage, peering back at us. Here too, they keep us apart. Men go about their work duties, washing floors, cleaning showers, emptying bins. Two screws patrolling the cage watch all this daily

One Day in Magilligan P.O.W. Camp" -- continued

activity but have no say in it. The political status we have was too dearly won to ever accept orders from these bounty hunters. Yesterday, they raided as we slept. Over 100 black uniforms slid through the cage gate, creeping in like the dawn. "UP! Everyone into the canteen!" It is safe to give orders when standing over sleeping men, baton in hand. Men scramble for clothes and half-clad go out past smirking screws. Canteen door locked behind us. Wait. Listen to the "rehabilitators" pulling our beds apart, poking through our clothes, reading aloud our personal letters from home. And you ask why men could be caused to burn down such a place? Hours pass, the tension grows. Eventually the barred door opens and, two at a time, we are taken to the showers. Lines of screws. Stripped, humiliated in the cause of the high God security. Return to our huts to clean up the mess. One man attempts to re-glue a Celtic cross on which he has worked for months. What's going on in the head of a man who would break a cross into pieces, or rip up books? Fear? After finishing their destruction these "officers of the prison service" slink away to ravage other men's possessions in another cage. Typical raid. At least the Brits didn't come today with their dogs and gas. Maybe next week. Try to assess how much damage they have done this time but knowing we will not get anything replaced anyway. All of us aware that this is just another attempt to turn the thumb-screw tighter, to destroy our morale. But being above all these people we smile at our comrades, crack a joke, and carry on.

"Parad anois!" The voice of the drill instructor jerks us back to the reality of this new day. Run to find a place in the drill squad. To orders in our native tongue we march; as Seamus Heaney the poet says: "A people on the march." The binoculars towering above us takes note of it all. The discipline of marching is good for the men as it makes us a body against the system. All the while, men go joyously for visits and return dark-eyed through the gate. Half an hour of reality in a sea of unreality. "Well Sean, what's happening in Derry?" Always the question. The care of the exiled Derryman for his city. "Your mother's house was raided again." Why the hell don't

Magilligan, continued)

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY

they leave them alone?" Tide of anger wells up and is stored with the thousands of other angors that Englishmen in Ireland have created in us. And when the screw snaps "Time up!" you leave your visitors, silently cursing the system and cursing also those who would ask us to lie down under it.

A day passes slowly in a concentration camp as time has no relevance. What do hours mean to a prisoner serving twenty years? But eventually the day drags itself out and at nine o'clock the screws count us and bolt the door behind us. That night, like many other nights, while the Brits and their war-dogs patrol around our cage we get a sing-song going by virtue of the only guitar that we have left after the previous day's raid. In songs of protest of our country we affirm that all the wire, the gun-towers, the Brits, will never break our spirit, or our belief in being Irish in Ireland. So eventually, the guitar is put away, the hut lights go out and the Republican prisoners of Magilligan camp melt away to bed. Even then, the perimeter lights intrude into our sleep and in the distance, the Magilligan train hoots into Derry, the city of our childhood. Not the city of our youth for our youth was spent here, behind the wire. A Brit war-dog howls. A prisoners screams in his sleep, remembering maybe the torture chambers of Ballykelly or Hollywood Barracks. Around us, we are shrouded by the hills of Donegal.

Our thought:

"We hope and pray
That this dread disease
May pass our children by."

-- contributed by an
Irish Political Prisoner
Magilligan P.O.W. Camp
Cage "F"

This week has seen the 4th anniversary of Volunteer Jim O'Hagan, Derry Brigade, Oglaithe na hEireann, who died on active service ten days after internment was introduced in 1971. Like Eamonn Lafferty who died the previous day, he worked and lived for the people. Unselfish even to the extent of giving his own life, he worked tirelessly to end British interference in the form of occupation of our land and imprisonment of our brothers.

Now, four years later, the ideals for which he died still remain unrealised. The ending of imprisonment for political beliefs continues to be a main demand of the Provisional Republican Movement. The withdrawal of enemy troops remains a principle point.

To honour Jim O'Hagan is to support those demands as he did. Not everybody makes the supreme sacrifice, but sacrifices will have to be made to see the eventual re-unification of our land.

-- P.R.O., Séan Dolan
Sinn Fein Cumann, Waterside

TRANSFER BILLY PAGE IMMEDIATELY

Grant Billy Page his POLITICAL
STATUS IMMEDIATELY

Billy Page, held on remand until old enough to be tried in an adults court, is sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of shooting a Brit. Despite the blatantly political nature of these charges, Billy Page has been refused political status. /

SINN FEIN has already taken over the GPO to publicly protest this. Watch for and support all other protest actions organised by SINN FEIN

www.AMERIBUS.COM 10 August 1971 1025

* * * Republicans always remember with pride

* VOL. 111. 6. Oícheáin, 6. Gláisín na hÉireann, Derry Brigade

* Killed on active service 19 August 1971

* WREATHLAYING CEREMONY -- held by Sean Dolan (Waterside) Cumann

Sunday, 24 August 1975 -- City Cemetery -- 3 p.m.

PUBLIC INVITED

OUNT

Kevin Barry-Joe Walker Sinn Fein cumann protests strongly against the action taken by Military Police Thugs on a young deaf and dumb boy who lives near the Rosemount Barracks.

The youth was sitting on a shop window ledge on Sunday last when two Military Police came up to him and asked him what he was doing with a stone in his hand. (The boy was tossing a stone up and down in the air, catching it when it came down).

Of course, when the boy did not answer (being deaf he didn't hear, and being dumb even if he had, he couldn't speak), they registered a sharp blow to the back of his head.

Once again, it shows that even under the truce situation in Derry the Brits get away with as much harassment as they think they can.

-- P.R.O.

Kevin Barry-Joe Walker
Sinn Fein Cumann

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STRAND ROAD-CARNHILL: THIEVES IN THE NIGHT

The criminals who persist in terrorising the Strand Road shop owners with their acts of thieving will when apprehended be severely dealt with.

The latest reports Sinn Fein have received suggest that the robber rogues responsible for the early morning break-ins of the Rock area shops and the Carnhill Mobile Shop will soon -- un-intentionally -- reveal their identity.

The Republican Movement realise that the residents of Carnhill, Strand Road, or elsewhere cannot rely on the protection of the so-called "security forces", and therefore are compelled to intervene on their behalf in order to ensure that the Shop Owners are free to earn their living, without fear of being cheated by the un-scrupulous actions of THIEVES IN THE NIGHT.

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THAT'S WHAT ALL OUR SUPPORTERS SAY...

The Editor of Free Derry News wonders who supports us these days -- I mean, I know you do, but there are those funny wans wearing the rare green-spotted trousers and pretending they are still living in the Jungle (well, they hide behind checkpoints "camouflaged" behind jungle-style netting...) Anyway

maybe they are fed up with their Sandhurst officers always ordering about... What it is I don't know but last week a Free Derry News paper-seller was standing near a checkpoint when one of these green-spotted uniforms comes over and asks if there's was any chance of getting a copy. He was told he would have to pay for it -- thinking that would put them off. But he must have wanted it badly because he actually reached into his pocket and pulled out two-bob and said "KEEP THE CHANGE!"

I mean, that's what so many of our supporters say but we did kind of get a shock from this!

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CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT

And just may kill some Brits too. On Monday night residents of Shantallow were entertained by the antics of those moronic Thugs. One of their camera-happy maniacs was coming round the district with his film and equipment, taking photos of everyone in sight. In fact he was so enthusiastic that he had the Jeep drive him around the area twice. The second time around he or the driver must have been looking at something interesting, because the wheel of the Land Rover somehow caught the edge of the footpath and the Brit Landrover did two somersaults in the air and three Brits had to be pulled from underneath it...

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A chara,

I don't know who to write to but I want to say "thank you" to the Republican Movement for what they did in stopping the riots last week.

No one minded a riot if the RUC or Brits were harassing but in the later part of the week when it got that young fellows were setting fire to our own shops we had a bellyfull. There's no point in that kind of thing.

It's good to know that someone can look after the ordinary people of the district and prevent this carry-on.

-- Slievemore Resident

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ARE GLADLY RECEIVED AND WILL BE PRINTED WHERE POSSIBLE. GIVE TO THE EDITOR OR TO ANY FREE DERRY NEWS SELLER OR LEAVE IN A SINN FEIN CENTRE.