

# Irish political prisoners in Europe Newsheet

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## Irish Political Prisoners in Europe

FUNDS URGENTLY NEEDED



### EDITORIAL

This is the second newsheet sponsored by the Irish Political Prisoners in Europe Group. It is a further effort to highlight the difficulties and hardships faced by Irish prisoners incarcerated in jails in Europe and the anguish caused to family members.

Altogether there are 15 Irish people imprisoned in various countries throughout Europe. Six in France, four in Holland, two in Germany, and three in Belgium. Several, have already been served with extradition warrants and one woman, Donna Maguire, from Newry, was extradited from Belgium to Holland last December. It has recently been disclosed that the US are now seeking the extradition of Gerry McGeough

who is currently in prison in Germany. If this extradition goes ahead it could mean that he will serve long years of imprisonment in America without actually being convicted of any crime there, as happened in the case of Belfast man Joe Doherty.

Families bear the brunt of the hardship surrounding the imprisonment of loved ones and that hardship is magnified when relatives are in jails overseas. The sheer distance they have to travel for visits can be both financially and emotionally crippling for them. Relatives of prisoners in Holland and Belgium have been forced to endure "closed" visits and those visiting Holland cannot claim those visits lost throughout the year. Some of these prisoners are expected to serve as long as three years on remand; as in the case of

the three men charged in connection with the *Eksund* in France. That means that prisoners' families are forced to travel long distances for visits which, as in the case of Holland and Belgium, can take place under "closed" conditions. This adds to the relatives already distressed state.

Our group would ask that people support us in highlighting the conditions under which Irish people imprisoned in European jails are forced to live. We also need financial support in order to finance family visits throughout the year.

Anyone willing to make a contribution or a donation can contact the group at 51/55 Falls Road or phone Belfast 243371

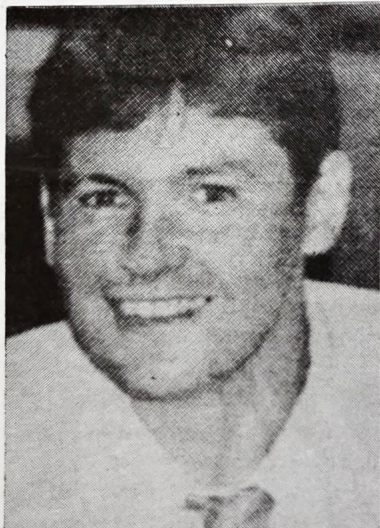
Is mise le meas,  
Editor.

# The Trial of Gerry Hanratty & Gerry McGeough

Gerry Hanratty and Gerry McGeough were arrested on the German/Dutch border on August 30th, 1988. Since then both men have been held on remand in separate maximum-security prisons in Germany. Throughout their imprisonment the two men have been forced to endure intolerable prison conditions, which subjects them to a 23-hour daily lock-up in solitary confinement. At one stage they actually had their hands cuffed behind their backs while exercising in the prison yards.

In August of 1990, the trial of the two men began amidst tight security and, from its onset, it became clear that an element of double dealing was taking place between the German DPP and the RUC. In a document drawn up by one of the defendants, Gerry Hanratty of West Belfast, he outlines the way in which a series of telex messages passed between the German DPP office in Karlsruhe and RUC Headquarters at Knock. Later, a private meeting was requested between the DPP and RUC which took place at RUC Headquarters.

The reason given for such a

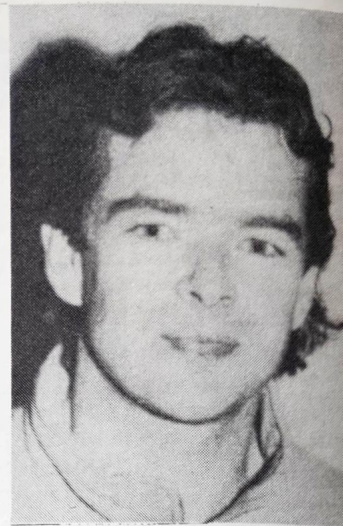


● GERRY McGEOUGH

meeting was that such sensitive information could only be discussed in private. The real purpose of the meeting became apparent later when statements drawn together by both the German DPP and the RUC were presented to the court. The statements made allegations as to the two men's political leanings and contained information about their family backgrounds.

In March 1990, the trial court, sitting in private, ruled that the statements held restricted or secret information and therefore couldn't be used in any German courts. However, this decision was reversed after an appeal by the German DPP. Since then members of the RUC have been allowed to appear in court and make all sorts of false allegations against Hanratty and McGeough. They put forward so called "*intelligence reports*" that claim the two men were members of the IRA, yet they offered no evidence to substantiate such an allegation.

In another twist to the case Sweden, despite being hailed as upholders of the individual's dignity and human rights, handed over confidential papers to the German court. The papers suggested that Gerry McGeough



● GERRY HANRATTY

had made a plea for political asylum in Sweden several years ago, a claim totally rejected by Gerry McGeough himself.

The most disturbing development in the trial to date is the recent call for the extradition of Gerry McGeough to the US. On January 5th of this year, Gerry McGeough was served with provisional extradition warrants which alleged that he was involved in a plot to purchase weapons in the US in 1983. Despite strenuously denying the charges, and the US offering little or no evidence to prove his guilt, it is possible that his extradition to the States could go ahead. One has only to look at the case of Joe Doherty to realise that McGeough could be held without charge for years.

As the trial progresses it is likely that its conspiratorial tone will increase. The two men have already been in custody two and a half years and it could be another year and a half before the trial is completed. It is of the utmost importance that those groups and individuals who are opposed to extradition actively campaign in support of these two men imprisoned in a German jail. Don't allow the US to have their second Joe Doherty.

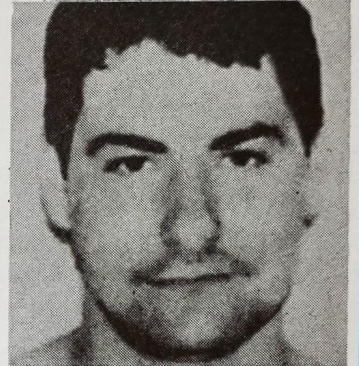
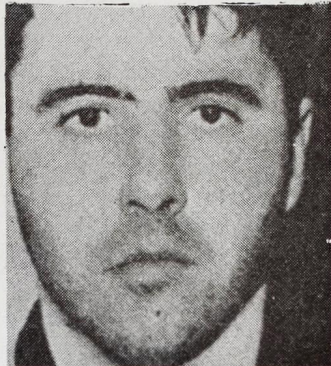
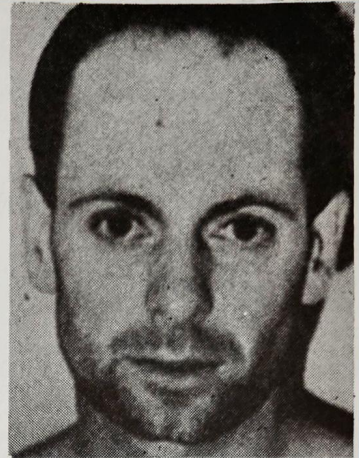
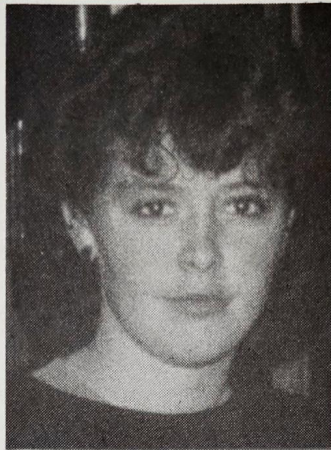
# Holland

**THERE ARE** four Irish people imprisoned in Holland: Donna Maguire from Newry; Seán Hick from Dublin; Paul Hughes from Jonesborough and Gerry Harte from Lurgan.

The four are currently on trial and are held in the same jail at Maastricht where they are subjected to enforced isolation, solitary confinement, and "closed" visits, because the Dutch authorities claim they are high-security risk prisoners. They are allowed no contact with one another and are kept under 23-hour lock-up. Relatives are allowed only a single one hour visit per trip to Holland which results in great financial and emotional hardship.

The prosecution in the case has recently called for the four to be sentenced to 20 years without the possibility of release until that full term has been served. This follows requests for the extradition of Paul Hughes, Donna Maguire and Seán Hick to Germany. Donna Maguire has already been extradited from Belgium to Holland; this was despite the fact that had she been sentenced for what she was charged with in Belgium she would have been set free on completion of her sentence in that country.

On Thursday, February 8th, Donna was assaulted by several policemen whilst on her way to court to challenge this latest extradition warrant. All Irish prisoners in Holland are hand-



cuffed and blindfolded when they travel to court and when Donna complained her handcuffs were too tight she was punched in the face by one of the policemen escorting her. The punch knocked her up against a nearby wall and she received cuts and bruises to her face. When Donna fell to the ground other policemen kicked her about the ribs, yet when her solicitor made a complaint to the court about the incident, the judge refused to take any action

against the policemen concerned.

If past incidents are anything to go by it could be assumed that Irish prisoners held in European jails are being used as pawns in Europe. It appears that some European countries are prepared to hold them without evidence until another country seeks their extradition. In essence, this means that they can be passed around the various countries until one of the countries can come up with enough evidence to convict them.

People who are aware of the duplicity and corrupt nature of British justice could be forgiven for believing that British influence in some of these European countries exists at a higher level than its supposed to.

**Footnote:** We are glad to inform our readers that due to campaigning by the prisoners, their families and this group, the four prisoners are now allowed to associate with each other for one hour per week. We view this as a breakthrough and hope such meetings will become more frequent in the near future.



● Dutch security men outside the court at a hearing in the case against (clockwise) Donna Maguire, Sean Hick, Gerard Harte and Paul Hughes



## An update on the situation of prisoners in France

THERE ARE SIX Irish political prisoners in France, three are currently on remand and three, James Doherty, Gabriel Cleary and James Coll, have recently been sentenced to five years each in connection with the *Ek-sund* case.

The three remand prisoners, Patrick Murray, Donagh O'Kane and Pauline Drumm, have now been in separate French prisons for over a year and a half. French law operates somewhat differently from the legal process here and a presiding judge is normally responsible for building up a legal case against the accused. Germany has already filed extradition warrants for Donagh, Pauline and Patrick and it is hoped the French authorities will refuse to comply with the extradition requests.



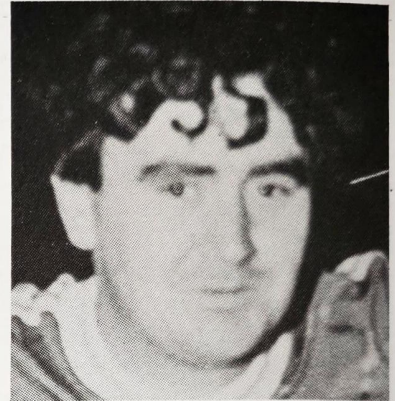
● PAULINE DRUMM

# Three prisoners charged in Belgium

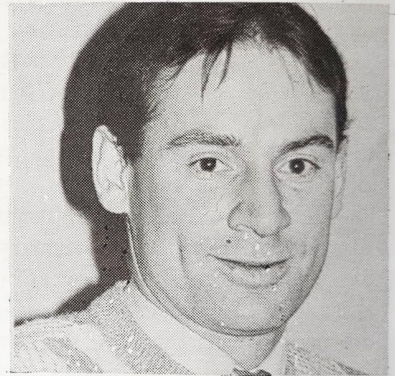
Since the last newsheet was published there have been three more Irish people charged in Europe. Kieran McCarthy, John Daly and Gerry Roche are being held in custody in Belgium following an arms find there.

Recent reports from the three men's solicitors claim that the Belgian DPP is trying to tie the three men in with an incident which happened after their arrest. They are alleging that the men were part of a conspiracy to rob a warehouse, something that the men are strenuously denying.

Following family visits to the three, it was discovered that they, like the prisoners in Holland, are being forced to take their visits under "closed" conditions which allows them no physical contact with family members. It has also been disclosed that only family members are allowed to visit which results in the men only receiving visits when the family can afford to travel. These rules and regulations surrounding visits do not apply to other prisoners in Belgium and we ask that



● JOHN DALY



● KIERAN McCARTHY  
these restrictions be lifted from Irish prisoners.



● James Doherty's wife outside the court

For further information on Irish Political Prisoners held in continental European jails please contact:

Irish Political Prisoners in Europe Solidarity Group.  
51/55 Falls Road, Belfast. Telephone: 243371