



THE SAME STRUGGLE

NORTHERN IRELAND was set up in 1921 after a guerrilla war between the I.R.A. and British forces. N. Ireland, sometimes called Ulster, encompasses only six of the nine counties of the province of Ulster; these six counties were chosen for the new statelet solely on the basis of a sectarian headcount, to maintain a Protestant Ascendancy. The statelet was ruled continuously for over fifty years by the Unionist Party from their seat of power in Stormont.

The Protestant/Unionist majority was maintained over the years by outright discrimination against the Catholic/Nationalist population, particularly in the areas of housing and employment. Gerrymandering was used where seen to be necessary by the Unionists, and a policy of forced emigration for Catholic/Nationalists was followed.

Over the years, resistance from the minority population was met by the Special Powers Act which included internment without



trial. Peaceful demonstrations and marches were attacked and suppressed by the R.U.C., whom Catholics considered to be the military wing of the Unionist Party.



Duke Street, October 5, 1968. R.U.C. batonning the Civil Rights demonstrators.

OCTOBER 5, 1968

ON OCTOBER 5, 1968, the fledgling Civil Rights Association gathered at the Railway Station in the Waterside, intent upon marching along a route to the Diamond. This march was a major event for them, to test their rights of peaceful protest. An application for permission was filed with the R.U.C., but the then Minister of Home Affairs, William Craig, banned the march.

The Civil Rights Association decided to go ahead with the march, stressing publicly that it would be a peaceful demonstration. Such was the public apathy, that only three hundred people turned up. The group consisted of Republicans, Nationalists, Socialists, concerned individuals and other groups, including the Nationalist M.P. for Derry, Eddie McAteer; the Republican/Labour M.P. for the Docks area of Belfast, Gerry Fitt, a Westminster M.P., local Republican, Sean Keenan, Bernadette Devlin, Eamonn McCann and others.

The march got as far as Duke St., where it was met by a police cordon. The marchers stopped, and began talking with the R.U.C., whom they thought were merely intent on stopping the demonstration. Then, another cordon of police moved in behind the marchers, sealing them into Duke St.

Suddenly, and without provocation, the R.U.C. drew batons and attacked the marchers. From both ends of the

street, the R.U.C. charged, viciously laying into the peaceful demonstrators. But the T.V. and newspapermen were there, to record the event.

That night, a shocked and horrified world got its first glimpse of "Law and Order" in Northern Ireland. In these dreary days of Beatlemania and Carnaby Street, such sights were truly shocking. The

British Press and T.V. described the "vicious brutality of the R.U.C." as they attacked the march, and protested their use of water cannon and riot squads on fleeing demonstrators, to drive them into the Bogside ghetto. The riot which followed, on the fringes of the Bogside, was blamed fairly and squarely on the R.U.C.

"BREAKING THE BAN"

CIVIL RIGHTS marchers grew in numbers as the weeks went by. Old, young, and middle-aged marched shoulder to shoulder to the cry of "One Man One Vote" — (this was a slogan which epitomised the struggle since the State "recognised the fact" that some of its citizens were "more equal than others," and thus, gave them more votes).

William Craig banned all marches through the old walled city of Derry. On the day the Civil Rights marchers appeared in court charged with taking part in the October 5th march, the workers of Derry gave Mr. Craig their answer, as factory after factory, walked out of work, simply to march through the old walled city. Workers, students, schoolboys and the unemployed each took their turn that day in what became known as "Breaking the Ban".

In November 1968, a massive march, estimated at 15,000 was

stopped on Craigavon Bridge, by a pitiful handful of police, standing behind crash barriers. The march organisers made a token gesture of crossing the barriers, to prove it could easily be done, and then negotiated with the R.U.C. to have the barriers removed, and allow the march to move on to its destination.

During this time, Loyalist Protestants were being organised and led by the Rev. Ian Paisley in counter-demonstrations, to oppose any change in the status quo. Mr. Paisley organised his marches and rallies to coincide with Civil Rights demonstrations. His policies were blatantly sectarian, his slogans anti-Catholic, and his supporters totally partisan, even though the Civil Rights Association stated publicly that it was a non-sectarian, non-political organisation, interested only in equality for all.



In defiance Derry factory workers break the ban!

"Derry Journal"
Tuesday 19th
November, 1968.

COURT CASES SPARK OFF DEMONSTRATIONS

THE BAN imposed by Home Affairs Minister, Mr. William Craig, on parades and assemblies within the walls of Derry was defied yesterday no less than seven times as spontaneous demonstrations in support of civil rights brought the city's dockers, girls from the city's shirt factories and unemployed teenagers on to the streets of the banned centre of the city.

It was a day on which chanting demonstrators made the banned area within the walls their own with a series of demonstrations sparked off by the hearing of prosecutions against those who took part in the banned march of October 5.



Derry dockers "breaking the ban" after marching through the city centre to their union headquarters in protest against conditions in the city.

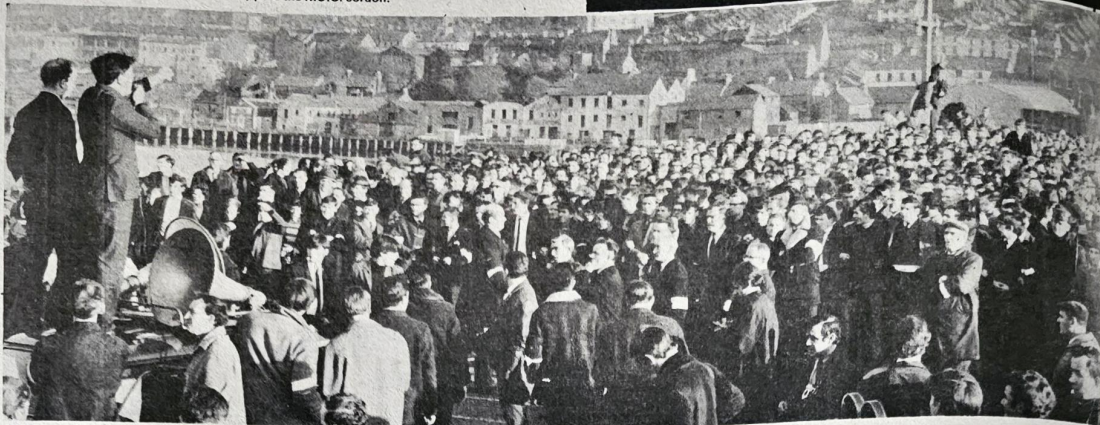
MASS DEMONSTRATION IN SUPPORT OF PRISONERS SUNDAY, 4th OCTOBER, 1981

Womens Assembly and Cross-Border March
1.30 Assemble at Muff, Co. Donegal

October 5th Civil Rights Commemoration
3.00 Assemble at Waterside Station

Organised by National H-Blocks/Armagh Committee

The bridge incident — John Hume addressing a Civil Rights demonstration before forcing their way pass the R.U.C. cordon.



R.U.C block off Ferryquay Street during a Civil Rights demonstration.



Sit-down in Guildhall Square. Addressing the meeting is Ivan Cooper.

“HUMAN RIGHTS: POPE JOHN PAUL II” —

“Who can deny that today individual persons and civil powers violate basic rights of the human person with impunity; rights such as the right to be born, the right to life, the right to responsible procreation, to work, to peace, to freedom and social justice, the right to participate in the decisions that affect peoples and nations? And what can be said when we face the various forms of collective violence like racial discrimination against individuals and groups, the use of physical and psychological torture against prisoners or political dissenters? The list grows when we turn to the instances of the sequestration of persons for political reasons and look at the acts of kidnapping for material gain which attack so dramatically family life and the social fabric. In the world as we find it today what criteria can we use to see that the rights of all persons are protected? What basis can we offer as the soil in which individual and social rights might grow? Unquestionably that basis is the dignity of the human person. Pope John XXIII explained this in *Pacem in Terris*: ‘Any well-regulated and profitable association of men in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual is truly a person... As such he has rights and duties which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable and therefore altogether inalienable.’”

— Message for 30th anniversary of Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 2/12/78.

THE SAME STRUGGLE...

Peoples' Democracy

Another organisation, drawing its members mostly from the student population, was formed, and called Peoples' Democracy. They also were interested in Civil Rights and liberty for all, and stated that they were a non-sectarian organisation dedicated to peaceful protest as a means to their end.

1969

ON JANUARY 1, 1969, they decided on a peaceful march from Belfast to Derry. They filed for and were granted permission, and were supplied with an R.U.C. escort. The R.U.C. continually re-routed the march, often adding miles to their already long journey. The reason for the re-routing was because the followers of Mr. Paisley (i.e. Paisleyites) — were blocking the route at various places.

At Burntollet, just outside Derry city, a large group of Paisleyites, among them, R.U.C. men, and R.U.C. Reservists (then called B-Specials) were gathered with sticks, stones, cudgels, etc., to ambush the march. The R.U.C. did nothing to disperse or disarm the ambushers, but instead advised the marchers (who, at this time, had been walking for days), to call off the march and disperse along other routes, as they couldn't guarantee them protection.

The marchers had a vote on it, and decided to march on ahead to Derry city. As the marchers passed below high ground occupied by the Loyalists, they were met by a barrage of stones and bottles. The R.U.C. bodyguard/escort, ran, as the Loyalist mob swept down upon the marchers. The Loyalists were well equipped and well-armed with an assortment of cudgels, batons, chains, etc., and vastly outnumbered the now exhausted Democracy marchers.

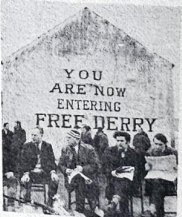
The assault was brutal and vicious, women and men were beaten unconscious by a savage and un-checked mob. But, somehow, they came through, and marched on to the Guildhall Square, battered and bloody, to be met by a massive crowd, who cheered wildly at their approach.

“According to numerous accounts, by the end of the afternoon the last semblance of police impartiality vanished. The officers of law and order joined openly with the Protestant mob, hurling bottles and bricks at people in the Guildhall area. Groups of policemen armed with riot sticks roamed through the city, attacking passers-by at will.”

(Excerpt from Burntollet book, by Bowes Egan and Vincent McCormack)

Long after the riot had ended, and the streets had cleared, R.U.C. tenders and jeeps made their way into the Bogside, in the early hours of the morning. In a district known as “The Wells” (housing mostly occupied by old people), they stopped and ran rampage, smashing windows, breaking into houses, beating people-up, and generally terrorising the district.

The next day, a large body of men, armed with cudgels and hurley-sticks, marched from the Greegan, to put the occupying force of R.U.C. out of “The Wells”. The R.U.C. hastily retreated, and a slogan was chalked on a wall in “The Wells”, bearing the legend “You are now entering Free Derry.”



Street riots became commonplace. During one such riot, the R.U.C. beat-down of a house in William St., claiming that rioters had fled through the house. Finding no rioters, they savagely beat the owner of the house, Samuel Devenney, who died as a result of his injuries.

Arrests and six-month prison sentences accompanied each riot. Few people were caught during a riot, but days or weeks afterwards, as they walked through the town, or went to sign the dole, people were ar-



R.U.C. scurrying among Civil Rights demonstrators.

rested and charged with rioting. Sentences were handed-out, often on the flimsiest of evidence, and sometimes despite massive evidence of innocence.

By August, Derry was a powder-keg. When the Apprentice Boys annual demonstration of Protestant supremacy took place on the 12th August, the city exploded.

Fierce rioting took place, lasting for three days. Thousands of petrol bombs were thrown and C.S. gas was used for the first time. The R.U.C. tried time and again to storm the Bogside, but the rioters behind the barricades, stubbornly defended their area.

On the evening of August 15th, shortly after the B-Specials were mobilised, British troops were sent in.

By then, Belfast was also in chaos, as rioters took to the streets, and petrol-bombing the R.U.C. The police opened fire on the streets. They drove at high-speed through Catholic areas, in Shoreland armoured cars, firing Browning .30 calibre machine-guns. At Divis Flats, they killed a nine-year-old boy named Rooney in his bedroom, when a high-velocity round from a Browning machine-gun penetrated the wall of his flat, killing him instantly. Loyalist mobs rampaged un-checked through Belfast, attacking Catholic areas. They burned down two entire streets housing Catholics in the Ardoyne area, Bombay St. and Hooker St. Refugees streamed south of the border, many ending up in Dundak.

The British soldiers moved into Belfast and Derry simultaneously, quickly erecting “peace-lines”. They were hailed as saviours from the hated B-Specials. But amid the euphoria, warnings were given by Republicans and socialists alike that the British troops were not the saviours of the Catholics, but the last available means to prop-up the Northern Ireland State. The warnings went unheeded.

In the “Bone” area of Belfast, word came of an imminent attack on them by Loyalist gunmen. The locals went to the British army for protection, but got none. The people said that the commanding officer was unwilling to help. The British said that they were stretched too thin on the ground all over the city to do anything.

As a result, the local people contacted the Provisional I.R.A. (The Old I.R.A. had split into the Official and Provisional I.R.A., and operated as separate organisations).

When the attack came it was met in the graveyard of St. Matthew's Church by armed I.R.A. men. A fierce gun battle successfully defended the area, to make their first major impact on the current situation.

THE SAME STRUGGLE... THE SAME STRUGGLE...

THE SAME STRUGGLE... THE SAME STRUGGLE...

RIOTS —
1969/71



Rioting in Westland St./Cable St. junction following the death of Damien Harkin, who was killed in a road accident involving a British army lorry.



British soldiers cornered at Rossville St./William St. junction.



Youths riot at Rosemount Police barracks.



Women being harassed by British troops in Loze Moor Road.

1970

SUCCESSIVE ATTEMPTS to reform the R.U.C. were made by the British Government, but all failed, as they were met by the now famous "wall of silence".

In a final effort, the British Government decided to disarm the R.U.C. and disband the B-Specials. The Loyalists were furious and took to the streets: fierce rioting followed. Loyalist snipers opened fire on the security forces, killing a policeman.

As the rioting subsided, and the streets went quiet, it was expected that the security forces would raid the Protestant areas for the arms used against them.

Amazingly (then), the British army and R.U.C. withdrew, and instead called a curfew (which was illegal) on the Catholic Falls Road district, and proceeded to do a house-to-house search for arms. This was all the more ludicrous when one realised that the Falls Road had been quiet and trouble-free all during the riots in the Loyalist areas. Within weeks, the R.U.C. were re-armed.

In Derry, Bernadette Devlin announced that she was going to address a rally, prior to giving herself up to the R.U.C., to serve a three-months prison sentence for her part in the August, 1969 riots. Instead of allowing her to travel to the rally in Derry, the R.U.C. chose to intercept and arrest her; the place they chose to do this was Burntollet.

Incensed by this action, the Derry people rioted, to be met this time by the British army, and not the R.U.C.

In this, the first major street confrontation, the British army decided to take firm action. The formed-up using their riot-shields, into a tortoise-shell, based on the ancient Roman tactic. They marched up Rossville St. seeming to ignore the barrage of bricks and bottles, until they reached Rossville Flats. There, they broke and ran before a wildly cheering crowd of people.

1971

THE I.R.A. were small in numbers, barely armed, and had made little or no impact on the situation in the North.

The security forces, however, decided that they were a threat, and continually raided houses in Catholic areas, searching for arms. These house-raids usually resulted in the houses being wrecked, and street-confrontations with the local population.

By this time, the British army had announced its decision to shoot-to-kill, anyone using petrol bombs against them.

S.A.S. — THE MURDER SQUAD

APART FROM their obvious role as uniformed operators, the British have deemed it necessary to deploy men in covert operations (known as the S.A.S., armed killers who wear no uniform). Brought into action mainly by the continual cry of 'law and order' and 'beat the I.R.A.' by loyalist politicians and the like; and the failure of the British policies of Ulsterisation, normalisation and lately their criminalisation policy — the S.A.S. operations have been given a licence to kill (irrespective of whom, they will not be accountable to the law of the land). Their British overlords will see to that.

Statistics have already proved this. Like the case of schoolboy John Boyle, aged 16 years, shot in the back by two S.A.S. men, who claimed "he was about to shoot them." John Boyle had returned to the cemetery, where earlier his father had discovered an arms cache and told the R.U.C. The S.A.S. set up an observation post there — they didn't challenge the boy, their policy is shoot first and ask questions later.

Two months after John Boyle's murder, Jim Taylor, a widower, was shot dead. He was also shot in the back by S.A.S. men. His uncle, Mr. Gavin Shuter, said in a statement in the "Irish News" of April 20th, 1979, that "soldiers seem to have a licence to go around shooting anybody they think is doing wrong, which Jim wasn't — and they know it." No charges were brought against the S.A.S. men by the D.P.P.

The S.A.S.' early involvement seems to be deployed in the country areas, but eventually they showed their ugly faces elsewhere.

First to die in Derry at their hands was Colm McNutt, killed by a S.A.S. man in William St., 12th December, 1977. It was later claimed by the British army that Colm was attempting to hijack the S.A.S. man's car.

Next was Dennis Heaney shot dead by S.A.S. men at the bottom of Harvey St., on 10th June, 1978. Three unmarked cars were used by the S.A.S. men. They shot Dennis in the leg first and when he was lying on the ground they shot him three more times in the back.

On Friday, 23rd November, 1978, Patrick Duffy, a married man with six children was shot dead by a S.A.S. squad in an unoccupied house in Maureen Avenue. At the time of his killing, Bishop Daly renewed his concern about the British army's tactic of "shoot to kill" policy and described it as "both cruel and unnecessary."

More recently to die were Charles Maguire and George McBrearty, who died after a gun battle involving several S.A.S. men at the foot of Southway on Thursday, 28th May, 1981.

Here in N. Ireland the S.A.S. is shown in its true light — as a covert murderous operation designed to terrorise the community. Yet in England the British public through the British Press, have hailed them as heroes for their storming of the Iranian Embassy. The British media portrays them as the 'Men in Black' in a mysterious and exciting way. The public are again being fed false propaganda and are blind to the kind of operations they are used for in N. Ireland — a murder squad for a repressive state!

They displayed their ability to do so frequently in Belfast, shooting dead rioters who, they claimed were petrol bombers, a claim often denied by eyewitnesses to the event.

Seamus Cusack and Dessie Beattie were shot dead in

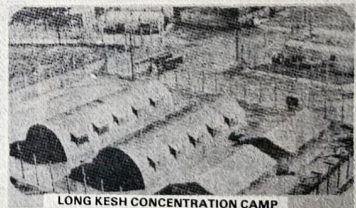
Derry by the British army. The British claimed they were petrol-bombers, local people who witnessed the killings denied the claim. By now, rioting was almost a daily event.

INTERNMENT

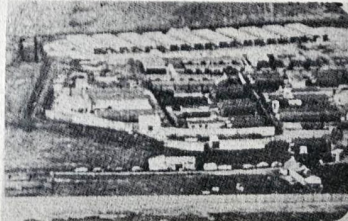
On the 9th of August, 1971, Internment without trial was introduced. In dawn raids, British troops raided houses in Catholic areas all over Northern Ireland, arresting over 300 people.

Fierce rioting broke-out all over the North. Petrol bombs flew, gun-battles raged, and C.S. gas hung like a cloud over everything.

Reports of torture being used, on the men arrested filtered out of the prisons, camps, and the prisonship Maidstone.



LONG KESH CONCENTRATION CAMP



MAGILLIGAN CONCENTRATION CAMP

No-Go areas were again set-up, but unlike those set-up in 1969, these had armed men, I.R.A. men, behind the barricades.

British army spokesmen strenuously denied reports of torture and described as "absolute rubbish" tales of "Hooded Men" being ill-treated by them. (In September 1976, the European Court of Human Rights found Britain guilty of the use of sensory deprivation during the Internment period).

THE SAME STRUGGLE...

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OPERATION MOTORMAN

At 4 a.m., 31st July, 1972, British army launched Operation Motorman, the invasion of the No-Go Areas. The highest concentration of troops ever in N.I. (an estimated 30,000), launched an assault spear-headed by armoured personnel carriers and Chieftain Tanks on Irish housing estates.

tydown; North Armagh; Co. Tyrone.

ANNIE'S BAR MASSACRE

1972 ended with the machine-gunning of Annie's Bar in the Waterside, where four Catholics and one Protestant died and many more were wounded by a Loyalist murder gang.

The assassination of Catholics in Belfast became a nightly occurrence. Elsewhere in the North, the sectarian murders occurred — Por-

No person has ever been arrested for these murders.



Women protesting outside the Embassy buildings, Strand Road during the hunger-strike in Crumlin Road Gaol, for political Status.

1972
ON 30th JANUARY, 1972, 30,000 people marched in Derry to protest against Internment. The biggest ever march, organised by the Civil Rights Association, peacefully made its way towards the Guildhall Square. British troops blocked the route at William St. The organisers decided to change direction and assemble instead at Free Derry Corner. Rioting broke out in William St. and Sackville St., but the main body of people followed the organisers towards Free Derry Corner.



Bloody Sunday — Anti-Internment march moves down William Street.

Suddenly, armoured cars drove out from behind the barriers, and headed for Rossville St. The rioters fled back to the "safety" of the Bogside, only to be chased right up to the High Flats by armoured cars. The troops effectively boxed-in hundreds of people including rioters, on waste-ground between the Flats and William St. Soldiers spilled from the armoured cars, their helmets identifying them as Paratroopers. None of the soldiers carried batons and shields, as riot-control troops normally did. Instead, they all carried rifles. The rifles proved effective clubs as they were used through terrified people.

Without warning, shots rang out — clearly and unmistakably the sound of an S.L.R. rifle (i.e. British army issue weapon). More shots, and then people began to fall. The air rang to the sound of gunfire and screams. Casually, soldiers fired indiscriminately, shot from the hip, into a fleeing crowd.

At the end of the day, thirteen people lay dead, seventeen wounded, one of whom died later.

One man was photographed being arrested and taken into a British army seracen, and was later found shot dead.

The British army claimed

that they had shot dead thirteen gunmen and bombers. Within hours of the onslaught the British propaganda machine was in operation labelling the innocent victims as gunmen and petrol bombers in an attempt to justify their planned genocide.

The Derry Coroner, Mr. Hubert O'Neill, had the final say at the inquest — he said: "It was murder, sheer unadulterated murder."

Stormont fell and direct rule from Westminster was introduced. William Whitelaw became first Secretary of State.

The I.R.A. launched a major bombing campaign and intensified attacks on the security forces. The British army retaliated with tit-for-tat killings of unarmed civilians who they later claimed to be gunmen and bombers. Among those killed was a man in his

fifties, Billy McGreener; a fourteen years-old schoolgirl Annette McGavigan, and a fifteen year-old schoolboy, Manus Deery.

ASSASSINATIONS

In Belfast a wave of assassinations began, carried out by Loyalist murder gangs on unarmed Catholic civilians.

It was later discovered (through a confession to English police by one of those responsible) that the British army used its elite corps, the S.A.S., as agents provocateurs to form the Loyalist murder gangs.

S.A.S. man Ginger Baker (now serving life sentences in an English prison for the murders of four Catholics in Northern Ireland), walked into a police station in England, and confessed to his part in the formation of one of the murder gangs, and the actual murder

of four Catholics. In Crumlin Road Gaol, veteran Republican Billy McKee began a hunger-strike for Political Status equivalent to the status already granted to Internees. More and more men joined the hunger-strike at regular intervals; meanwhile, Billy McKee's condition deteriorated.

As McKee neared the point of death, he was moved to an outside hospital (Musgrave). A rumour swept Belfast that McKee had died; reaction on the streets was swift and violent. Within a short time, the hunger strikers demands were met, but the status was called Special Category Status.

(N.B. This Special Category Status exists to the present day, less than a hundred yards from the H-Blocks where men are dying on hunger strike to achieve it).

1973

INTERNMENT and torture were still being used, when the Diplock Courts were introduced to the scene.

Diplock Courts consist of one judge, no jury and special rules of evidence, which places more onus on the defendant to prove his innocence than on the Crown to prove guilt. The courts were specifically introduced to deal with people charged with "politically motivated offences"; these offences being listed and often referred to as "scheduled offences."

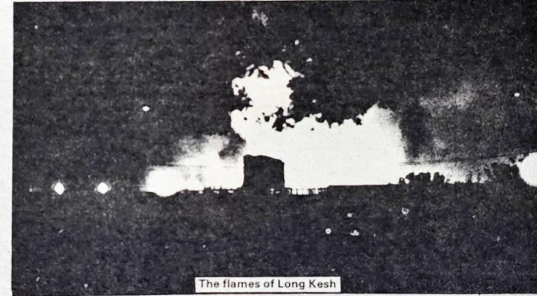
Over 80% of convictions obtained by these courts are based solely on statements (or confessions) extracted from the defendants. The R.U.C. continually claim that these statements are given voluntarily and without duress; the defendants continually allege

duress and sometimes torture being used on them, to force them to make statements.

By this time, all internees were housed in Long Kesh prison camp. The prison ship "Maidstone" was no longer used and Magilligan Camp was being re-built to house prisoners sentenced in the Diplock Courts.

While Magilligan was being re-built, Long Kesh housed more and more "sentenced" prisoners along with internees, and although Crumlin Road Gaol was the main holding centre for remand prisoners, and those awaiting trial, some remands were housed in cages in Long Kesh.

For cosmetic reasons, internment was re-named detention, and Long Kesh prison camp was re-named the Maze prison.



The flames of Long Kesh



1974

1974 WAS dominated by the British Government's first attempt at making minor concessions to the Catholics of N. Ireland in the form of a power-sharing Executive. The Loyalists opposed even this meagre concession, and set about ending the power-sharing exercise by calling a general strike. Various Unionist political parties and Loyalist paramilitaries came together under the name of the Ulster Workers' Council and called for the strike. The exercise was a success and the Executive crumbled. Allegations were made about massive intimidation of workers by the U.D.A., but nothing was ever proved.

Meanwhile, Magilligan Camp was opened to take the over-spill of prisoners from Long Kesh, even though, the new camp was still under construction. Long Kesh was so over-crowded that newly sentenced prisoners from Crumlin Road Gaol were sent to the punishment blocks — not for any punishment but because there was nowhere else to put them.

Overcrowding led to tension. Food, laundry facilities, all deteriorated. The British decided to step-up "discipline" and tougher procedures to deal with the situation, using British

army riot squads frequently, to deal with trivial matters in the cages. The British army were violent and brutal in dealing with the prisoners. In doing this, the authorities totally ignored the advice of the International Red Cross, who warned against such a situation developing. They issued their warnings after visits to the camp in October, 1971, December, 1972, July, 1973 and May, 1974.

Compassionate parole was a major bone of contention. Prisoners were not allowed out to funerals of relatives.

The prisoners protested by refusing food, and then escalating the protest by accepting the food and throwing it over the wire.

On the night of October 15th, Long Kesh simmering for so long at boiling point, finally exploded. The flames could be seen a mile and a half away.

As dawn broke over the camp, the British army launched its gas offensive. Helicopters dropped more gas and circled lower to fan the C.S. gas into the mass of prisoners, most of whom were gathered on the football pitch.

The gas attack was backed-up by salvos of rubber bullets and then thousands of troops poured into the camp. After a fierce hand-to-hand battle, the

prisoners were subdued, and then the real brutality began, as individual prisoners were

selected for beatings. Sympathetic action was taken to show solidarity in Magilligan Camp, Crumlin Road Gaol and Armagh (women's Gaol).

In Magilligan, the prisoners seized control of the camp and burned the administration buildings, kitchens, hospital, laundry, etc.

In Crumlin Road the prisoners barricaded the wing, but were met by rubber bullets, batons and riot troops.

In Armagh the women took the governor hostage.

On 8th November, Hugh Gerard Coney, an internee from Coalisland was shot dead while attempting to escape from Long Kesh.

On 3rd June, 1974, Michael Gaughan died of brutal force-feding while on hunger strike in Parkhurst Prison.



HUGH GERARD CONEY

1975

The ill-treatment continued at Rathfriland and in R.U.C. stations and British army posts until 1975 when Castlereagh was established as the principal centre for brutality. Since 9th August, 1971, British Government spokesmen had been denying any torture or ill-treatment of prisoners. When after overwhelming medical evidence was produced to prove torture and brutality, it was dismissed as "self-inflicted."

The dismissal of medical evidence continued into the courts, especially the Diplock Courts, where undue weight and total belief was given to members of the R.U.C. especially in their assurances that they did not beat prisoners and that any injuries found on the prisoner were self-inflicted.

Even when ill-treatment was accepted as fact, the judges introduced an absurd practice. When presented with a series of "interviews" (interrogations) from 1 to 30, during a seven-day detention period in Castlereagh, the judge often disallows "interviews" 1 to 20 because of ill-treatment; he



"WHAT THE BRITS KNOW BEST"

disallows "interviews" 25 to 30 because of ill-treatment, but then allows "interviews" 21 to 24 and says that the prisoner admitted offences during this time, and sentences him accordingly.

This makes a mockery of justice, since if a man is ill-treated on the first "interview", it conditions him for all other "interviews".

The sentencing policy of Diplock Courts (and all N. Ireland Courts) displays

evidence of prejudice against Catholics (as documented by the Association for Legal Justice).

The fact that no R.U.C. man has ever served a day in jail since 1968 for killing or ill-treating people, is very disquieting and disturbing fact in itself.

During 1975 Merlyn Rees (Secretary of State, N.I.) announced a change in British Government policy. They had decided to abolish political (or special category) status. He

announced that any prisoner convicted of an offence after March 1, 1976, would not be granted "status", but would be treated as an "ordinary criminal." He concealed his mailed fist in a velvet glove by announcing that internment would be ended, and that 50 per cent remission would be introduced. Also, any prisoner who already had political status would keep it, as would those convicted of offences committed before March 1, 1976.

PRISON "discipline" was stepped-up. For breaches of petty rules, prisoners were sent to the punishment blocks. The "breaches" consisted of — refusing to call "screws" "Sir"; not keeping arms by their sides when going to shower or slop-out; not keeping eyes straight in front; refusing to face a wall when told to.

The punishment block means solitary confinement in a cell with no bed, daily beatings; number 1 diet, during full period of confinement.

Letters were withheld from prisoners constantly. Beatings became more frequent. More and more men were sent to the punishment block more frequently. New rules were introduced, e.g., no blankets to be taken out of cells.

The prisoners then used their towels to cover themselves

when going to shower and shave. Another rule — towels must be carried in the hand when going to shower. This resulted in mockery and jeering from screws.

The prisoners refused to wash or shave or slop-out. Excrement was thrown out the window into the yard; at night, the screw flung it back into the faces of sleeping prisoners. Then the screws boarded-up the cell windows to stop excrement reaching the yard. This also cut out all daylight. Urine was poured under the door into the corridor. The screws sealed up the doors. All beds and furniture was removed from the cell. Excrement was smeared on the walls of the cells, so it would not take up vital floor space. Urine soon left all mattresses. e. damp. The dirt strike was on.

1976

ON FEBRUARY, 12th, 1976, Frank Stagg died on hunger strike in Wakefield Prison after 62 days without food. March 1st came and went with no great fanfare. It was not until September that the first prisoners to be denied political status were tried and sentenced.

On the 14th September, 1976, Kieran Nugent, a Republican from the Lower Falls refused to do prison work or wear prison clothing. He went "on the blanket". On 16th September, in order to meet his mother for his last visit, Kieran Nugent put on the prison uniform. During the visit, he removed the garments, stating that he was not a criminal and saying that if the British wanted him to wear a prison uniform they'd have to nail it to his back.

By Christmas, there were over forty men "on the blanket". They were kept in solitary confinement, they

were not permitted to sit or lie on their bed between the hours of 7.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. They were deprived of all reading material, radio and t.v.; they received no exercise; they had to go to the toilet in their cells; they were kept in freezing conditions and served-up inedible food.

Brutality is commonplace, beatings routine, verbal harassment from "screws" merely part and parcel of each and every day.

Once a fortnight the prisoners are paraded individually before the governor to a "kangaroo court", where they are charged with refusing to wear prison clothes, or do prison work. The sentence is, as always, three days confinement to cell; two weeks loss of remission; two weeks loss of privileges.

Number 1 diet consists of — breakfast, a mug (usually half-a-mug) of tea and two dry

1976



First protest on behalf of the "Blanket Men" held outside the Parochial House, Windsor Terrace, by three Derry women who have relatives in Long Kesh.

rounds of bread; dinner, two small scoops of potatoes covered with a ladle of soup; tea, a mug of tea and two rounds of bread; no supper.

For the three-day confinement, beds and furniture are removed from the cells. The loss of remission means that a

person serving twelve years will serve twelve years (instead of six years with the 50% remission).

In 1976, Britain was found guilty at Strasbourg of inhuman and degrading treatment during 1971 and 1972.



'I've always assumed the official line is we put the army's version first and then any other.' — BBC TV news sub-editor

THE BRITISH MEDIA AND IRELAND

"THE BRITISH see Press coverage as an important front on which the war in Ireland is being fought," — General Frank Kitson, counter-insurgency expert.

What this really means is to project the army role as a peace-keeping force between two factions, minimising coverage of violence committed by the security forces. At the same time under-mining the guerilla war by blackening the name of the Republican Cause, blaming the I.R.A. for all acts of violence including those committed by loyalists and security forces and denying the Republican Movement its chance to put across its political viewpoint. A classic example of this can be seen in the British army's handling of the bombing of McGurk's Bar in Belfast, and all the evidence at the time pointed to loyalist activists. (In 1978, a loyalist, Robert Campbell, was given a recommended sentence of 25 years for it.) Yet at the time the British army gave a Press conference asserting that an I.R.A. bomb had exploded prematurely. The main British newspapers, with the exception of the "Guardian", fell for it.

Another example of the British army's influence in the media can be seen in the way the British labelled the innocent victims of Bloody Sunday as petrol bombers and gunmen to the world Press, within hours of their onslaught on that Civil Rights march.

In an article in the "Observer" of 29th February, 1976, by Andrew Stephen, he sums up the emphasis the British puts on the media as follows — "The army alone has more than 40 Press officers operating in Ulster, and they have a back-up staff of over 100. The R.U.C. have a full-time team of 12 Press officers, and the Government employs 20 Belfast-based people, specifically briefed to deal with the Press." — The mind boggles to think how many there are at present?

To conclude, it is apparent that the British media are heavily reliant on British Government and army sources to provide them with 'facts' on what is happening in Northern Ireland.

The taking away of political status from Denis A. McFeely

On 22nd November, 1977, Denis escaped from Magilligan Prison but was recaptured. He was transferred to Long Kesh and placed in the Compound housing Republican Political Prisoners. While on a court appearance for the Attempted Escape from Magilligan Denis was not taken back to his original Compound but was taken to one of the H Blocks and told that he was no longer a P.O.W. and that he would have to wear a Prison Uniform. He refused to do this and stated that he would "Go on the Blanket". As a result of this the Prison authorities refused him the access to his weekly visit.

Early in May 1978 he was subject to what the Prison Officers refer to as "Special Treatment". In an effort to make those prisoners who were on the "Blanket" give up their protest they were given this "Special Treatment". This meant that they would be dragged from their cells and placed in solitary confinement. In the struggle with the Prison Officers Denis struck one of them. After they had placed him in the cell, the officer who had been struck and another officer returned and beat him up. He was also made to stand for long periods after which the beating started again. As a result of this he sustained the following injuries, a split chin, a busted nose and black eyes. These injuries finally led to a state of semi-consciousness. The two "Screws" then gave him a wet towel to wash the blood from his face. As he began to do this he realised that the towel was soaked in urine so he stopped.

He was then made continue to clean himself with the towel. As word began to come out of the prison about the beatings, the family tried in vain to get a visit but could not. They contacted their local Bishop and a number of other

people who were interested in the prisoners and it was only after this that they received a visit. 10 days had elapsed since the actual beatings had taken place. His parents and brother didn't recognise him because of the amount of weight that he had lost, which was at least 1 stone, and also because of his split chin, swollen nose and bloodshot eyes. He was also a very pale colour and was very nervous.

Denis informed his family what had happened and stated that he was still in the "Punishment" cell completely isolated from all other prisoners. He was not allowed any contact with the outside world and the necessary availability of reading material was denied to him. During all this time, which lasted for over a month he was kept on a strict diet of bread and water.

The facts surrounding this case are as follows: Denis McFeely is now being held illegally in H Block. He was granted Political Status by the British Government. He returned this from 1974 until May 1978.

If Denis McFeely had been an ordinary criminal, he would not have been arrested by the British Army, he would have had the right to a trial by jury and he wouldn't have been granted Special conditions. But Denis was arrested

- (a) under the Emergency Powers Act,
- (b) was questioned and ill-treated under the Emergency Powers Act,
- (c) was sentenced by the SPECIAL NON-JURY system,
- (d) was given Political Status in 1974 by the British Government.

THE SAME STRUGGLE... THE SAME STRUGGLE...

1978

"FORCED BATHS AND HAIR-CUT"

"Five prisoners in H Block, Long Kesh, had their hair cropped short and their beards shaved off and were given compulsory baths on Monday, 4th December. Injuries sustained during the treatment were serious. Reports say that they were forcibly dressed in trousers, then taken before a doctor, who, after a cursory examination, told them they 'could do with a wash and a haircut'. It was claimed that they were then held by five or six prison officers 'while a Loyalist orderly close-cropped their heads with electric shears. They were then given a cold bath and scrubbed with brushes by three prison officers. The prisoners were then held on the floor while a prison officer shaved their beards. Their heads and faces were then coated with a white medicated liquid. All five suffered bruises. Joe McNulty of Dungannon sustained a broken nose and sprained wrist. MARTIN HURSON suffered a broken toe. He is still in hospital. His left leg is paralysed due to severe kicking on the spine. He was bruised all over his body and cannot sleep. Tommy Louden, Tommy Bradley and Brendan McManus also were badly bruised."



"THE USE OF DRUGS ON POLITICAL PRISONERS"

"On 23rd November 1978, the Northern Ireland Office admitted that the drug Largactil was used on a blanket prisoner in the H Block. The prisoner was Paul Creelmann from North Derry. Fionnuala O'Connell in the 'Irish Times' quoted Dr. Alastair McDonnell as saying that Largactil was a sedation usually given to schizophrenics. Dr. McDonnell said that if it was being administered to prisoner patients without their knowledge or consent 'then we have reached the same deplorable condition as that which exists in Russia, where similar drugs are given to inmates in their psychiatric prison camps.'"

Other quotes on this page from books on the H-Blocks by Fr. Faul and Fr. Murray.

2,092 Tragic Deaths

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Mr Merlyn Rees former Secretary of State for N. Ireland have recently publicly referred to the 2000 deaths caused by the Provisional IRA. In the interest of accuracy and truth a statistical breakdown of the sad and tragic deaths of the past 12 years might be useful. All human life is sacred, each human life is precious in the eyes of God, each death diminishes us all. Every human life must be protected at every stage from conception to the grave. In order to protect life it may help to study the following breakdown:-

TOTAL TRAGIC DEATHS - 2,092

1. "Security Forces" killed by IRA. INLA etc.	571
2. IRA etc killed by "Security Forces"	79
3. Civilian victims of IRA etc explosions	135
4. Crossfire and accidents due to IRA activity	48
5. Civilian assassinations by IRA etc.	298
6. IRA killed by premature explosions	95
7. People killed by "nationalist" side in early riots'	12
Total:	1,238

1. "Security Forces" killed by Loyalists	13
2. Civilian victims of Loyalist explosions	111
3. Crossfire and accidents due to UDA, UVF	10
4. Innocent people killed by "Security Forces"	116
5. Assassinations by UDA, UVF etc.	496
6. Loyalists killed fighting "Security Forces"	13
7. Loyalists killed by their own bombs	25
8. People killed by "unionists" in early riots	34
Total:	818

Others killed in uncertain circumstances - 36

"PEACE" -

"Peace, unfortunately, remains rather precarious, while it is all too easy to catch a glimpse of the fundamental motives which are ready to threaten it. Where there is no justice — where there is no justice — there can be no peace, because injustice itself is a disorder, and the words of the prophet remain true 'Opus iustitiae pax' (the work of justice is peace — Isaiah 32:17). Likewise where there is no respect of human rights — I mean those inalienable rights which are inherent in every man by his nature — there can be no peace, because every violation of personal dignity favours rancour and the spirit of revenge." — Pope John Paul II — Address to Cardinals, 22/12/78.

"ASSAULT ON LIAM McCLOSKEY"

"On Friday, 15th September, 1978, a 22-year-old man from Dungiven, County Derry, Liam McCloskey, was taken out to the circle of H-Block 3. He alleges he was assaulted by 8 prison officers. Special medical examinations since then has shown that he is totally deaf in one ear and partially deaf in another."

"On Tuesday, 19th September, he was brought out from one wing of H3 for transference to another. He was compelled to undergo another search. Totally naked he was thrown up on a table by four prison officers, one holding each arm, holding each leg, face downwards. This was in order to carry out an exploration of his back passage. A fifth prison officer banged McCloskey's head down violently on the table smashing his nose. He saw other prisoners getting the same treatment."

"Liam McCloskey is a quiet inoffensive little person, always smiling. He is not the type to resist or be cheeky or

start trouble of any kind. His treatment must rank as one of the worst kind of bullying by security forces in the last seven years."

"A statement issued by his family, 25th September, said that two members of the family were allowed to visit him on 22nd September in the prison hospital. They found that as well as a fractured nose he had perforated ear drum causing total deafness in the right ear and there was partial deafness in the left. They were also informed that an ear, nose and throat specialist was being called in to examine him on Saturday. It is alleged that Liam was beaten about the head and body by eight warders on Friday, September 15th, before being put into solitary confinement for three days, the family's statement added."

"It was in this attack that the damage to his ears was sustained. However, no medical treatment for this complaint was forthcoming."

"On Tuesday, September 19th, it is said that during a transfer operation within the prison a number of prisoners were being strip-searched. This involved each prisoner being lifted bodily by four warders, one each limb, and thrown face down onto a table for internal searching. It is alleged that during this lifting operation a fifth warder caught hold of Liam's head and smashed his face onto the table causing serious nose damage."

"The family statement said the visit was stopped after about seven minutes because a prison officer present appeared to take objection to some of the dialogue concerning these attacks and in particular questions as to the identity of the assailants."

1979

THE SITUATION in Long Kesh continued, and had spread to Crumlin Road Gaol and the women prisoners in Armagh Gaol. The women also refused to be treated as "ordinary criminals".

The authorities were no less brutal and vindictive in dealing with women.

LYNN O'CONNELL TO HER PARENTS

"On Saturday morning, 9th February, I was taken from my cell by two female officers and once on the wing was pulled around to be forcibly searched. Before I knew what was happening I was attacked by several male officers and thrown to the ground."

"While I was on the ground I was continually punched and kicked all over my body but particularly on my face. At this stage I felt very heavy throbbing around my eyes and my nose appeared to be bleeding very heavily. After more kicking I passed out and when I came round I was being thrown into a punishment cell. Not satisfied with what they had already done several male officers entered the cell and once again I was continually kicked until I passed out."

"Hours later I was examined by surgery staff. Extensive bruising to my body was noted. Also a severely swollen left eye and badly swollen nose."

HEALTH AND SANITARY FACILITIES

"There are two baths and one shower on B Wing, which meant that it was very difficult to have a bath, and a list had to be made out for this purpose. Anyone wanting a bath had to put down their name and the time they wanted a bath one day in advance. Up to 18 girls could have had baths every day, but after three girls had had baths the hot water would run out and no-one else could have one after that."

"When locked up, protesting prisoners were only allowed access to the toilets once in the morning and one in the afternoon. Warders kept a list of who had been out — after being out once, it was virtually impossible to get out to the toilet a second time."

"B Wing, where the protesting prisoners were held until the 13th February, 1980, is the largest wing of the prison, holding all 38 prisoners on three levels. Only one orderly (an orderly is a criminal prisoner whose task is to clean the B Wing) worked in this area, B Wing, in the last months. Toilets were filthy as was the wing generally. The three hours daily when the cells were unlocked were supposed to be enough time for them to wash themselves and their clothes and clean their cells. There was one brush to be passed around all the prisoners, making it impossible to maintain hygienic conditions even in the cells."

"Many of the girls are suffering from consistent trouble with heavy periods. With heavy periods it is often necessary to use up to ten sanitary towels per day, not to mention the discomfort, pain and difficulty in staying clean."

"The supply of sanitary towels which the girls receive varies according to the whim of the screws. They cannot go and get these themselves but must wait to be issued their ration! The supply is given to each girl on a particular date of the month. If her period occurs earlier than this date, she must borrow from one of the others. Sometimes the girls get 2 packets of towels per month, sometimes only a ration of two towels daily."

"When a fully armed British soldier fires plastic bullets from behind the plated hood of a Saracen armoured car at a 12-year-old girl carrying a carton of milk, he is, to borrow a phrase from Archbishop Runcie 'a hooded man of violence par excellence.'"



WHEN 'MINIMUM FORCE' KILLS

WHILE DEBATE continues on the use of plastic bullets in N. Ireland it is interesting to point out that after a brief tour of Moss Side, Manchester, where some of the most serious rioting took place, the British Home Secretary, Mr. William Whitelaw, said on the question of plastic bullets being used — "I would deeply regret their introduction because they are lethal."

Yet in Northern Ireland, where the British lay claim, plastic bullets are fired at the least excuse, causing as one surgeon in the Royal Victoria Hospital said, "horrendous injuries" — and even death.

The facts speak for themselves:— Since 1975, eight deaths have occurred and many hundreds have been injured. Many of the severe injuries by plastic bullets happened in the April/May period in 1981, when the H-Block hunger strikers died. Four of the eight deaths took place between 25th April and 9th July, 1981 — two of which occurred in Derry — Paul Whitters, aged 15 years, died ten days after being hit by an R.U.C. man at point blank range with a plastic bullet; Henry Duffy, a widower with a family of seven children, aged from 7 to 17 years, died as a result of injuries he received when he was hit in the chest and left temple as he left a public house to go home on the same night that Patsy O'Hara died — an obvious jacobite tactic by the British over the hunger strike issue, to terrorise people off the streets.

In a booklet just published by Fr. Denis Faul and Fr. Raymond Murray on the use of plastic bullets, they conclude — "that during the present crisis in N. Ireland, arising from the failure to implement minor prison reforms the R.U.C. and the British army have been given a free hand to kill, to maim, and to beat up, and in doing so to oppress an entire community."



ARMAGH STARVATION DIET

"Republican prisoners in Armagh women's gaol are starving which appears to be a general gaol policy of starving prisoners in an attempt to force them to come off their protest for political status."

"In a recent communication from the gaol the following breakdown was given, describing the food ration for Friday 9th November: Breakfast: cornflakes and a quarter pint of milk; Dinner: one ladleful of inedible stew; Tea: one piece of liver; Supper: one small

score and a cup of tea.

"This small amount of daily sustenance is currently the routine and although numerous complaints have been made by the prisoners to the prison administration the situation remains unchanged. Because of the regime's denial of food parcels to the protesting prisoners, they are unable to supplement the prison food and are thus constantly in a state of hunger, and some are losing weight as a result."

Quotes from "Women Protest for Political Status in Armagh Gaol"

THE HUNGER STRIKE

1980

On October 27, 1980, seven prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh went on Hunger Strike for five demands —

1. The right of prisoners to wear their own clothes instead of prison uniform.
2. The right of free association with other prisoners.
3. The right to refuse to do prison work.
4. The right to organise educational and recreational activities and to send and receive a weekly letter, a weekly parcel and a visit.
5. Restoration of full remission of sentence.

These demands were not to secure special privileges, but to guarantee the inalienable right of human beings to be treated as human beings.

The men were later joined on hunger strike by three women in Armagh.

During the summer of 1980 as news of a possible hunger strike began to leak out of Long Kesh, the Derry H-Block-Armagh Committee was set up. It quickly grew to include 10 area committees, youth committees, a women's group and many workplace committees. It also co-ordinated the activities of Sinn Fein, I.R.S.P., the Relatives Action Committee and the Felons Association relating to the prisoners.

With the beginning of the hunger strike in October, the Derry H-Block-Armagh Committee was better organised than most areas. The workplace committees immediately planned an industrial walk out for the November 12 Day of Action. For the first time since the Civil Rights days the town was closed and the Guildhall Square was filled to overflowing.

Inspired by the success of November 12, the National H-Block-Armagh Committee called for a National Day of Action in support of the prisoners. Again, on December 10, the town was closed and the Guildhall Square was packed. Besides industrial action the other feature of the campaign in Derry was street protests — every day of the hunger-strike saw at least one street disruption.

In December, 1980, as the seven men neared death (one had lapsed into a coma), an agreement was reached between the prisoners and the British Government. The agreement contained "small print clauses," which the prisoners were assured were a public "face-saving exercise" by the British Government, and that the "clauses" would not interfere with a liberal interpretation of the agreement.



The men ended their Hunger Strike. To test the British Government's good intentions, a complete wing of a H-Block came off the no-wash and blanket protests. They did this at a weekend when no prison work would be done, and when conforming prisoners are allowed to wear their own clothes. The men asked for their own clothes (brought to the camp by relatives), but they were refused. The "small print clauses" were implemented in an attempt to break the prisoners.



June 1970 — Micky Devine is sitting in the foreground, wearing a white hat, with his hand against his face. The occasion is a Civil Rights Association rally in Derry's Guildhall Square, and the speaker is then N.I.C.R.A. chairman Kevin Agnew, now a Sinn Fein activist.

1981

ALL THE TIME, negotiations were conducted between the prison administration, and the O.C. of the blanketmen, Bobby Sands, to resolve the disputes, and end the "blanket" protest. It soon became clear that the British, having gotten over the public (and international) pressure resulting from the hunger strike, were determined to gain victory over the prisoners, and treat them as "ordinary criminals."

On Sunday, March 1, 1981, Bobby Sands began a hunger strike in pursuit of the five demands.



● BOBBY SANDS

On Sunday, March 15, 1981, Francis Hughes joined Bobby Sands on hunger strike.



● FRANCIS HUGHES

It is interesting to note that Francis Hughes fulfilled all necessities under the Geneva Convention which guaranteed him the right to be treated as a P.O.W. when captured. He was arrested, after a shoot-out with S.A.S. men, which resulted in him being wounded. He was wearing a beret and a combat uniform with the word "Ireland" emblazoned on a shoulder flash. The S.A.S. men were not in uniform.

Two more men joined the hunger strike, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara. The great watershed of outside support came when Bobby Sands was elected M.P. for Fermanagh/South Tyrone. 30,000 voters gave the hunger strikers a mandate for their five demands, more voters than elected British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

The Derry H-Block-Armagh Committee called for a Day of Action on April 15th and again thousands of workers walked out in support of the hunger strikers. Many trade unionists came from England in solidari-

ty and for the first time ever British Trades Council and Labour banners were seen in Derry. As the demonstration dispersed peacefully R.U.C. and British army provoked the young people into a riot and Paul Whitters was mortally wounded by a plastic bullet in Gt. James Street. The unrest continued for a number of days and Gary English and Jim Brown were run down by a British army jeep in Creggan Street on Easter Sunday.

After an agonising 66 days, Bobby Sands, M.P., O.C. (Blanketman), died on May 5, 1981.

Next, the man hailed as Ulster's Tom Barry, the man entitled to P.O.W. status under the terms of the Geneva Convention, Francis Hughes, died after 59 days on hunger strike, on May 12.

Joe McDonnell replaced his friend of many years, Bobby Sands, on hunger strike. The prisoners escalated the strike by adding more men, as well as replacing dead hunger strikers.



● RAYMOND MCCREESH

On 21st May, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara died, after 61 days on hunger strike.



● PATSY O'HARA

Next to join the hunger strike were Martin Hurson, Brendan McLaughlin, Kieran Doherty, Kevin Lynch.

Brendan McLaughlin deteriorated very rapidly due to a bleeding ulcer, and was pressurised by the other hunger strikers to give-up his fast and accept medical aid. The reason being that the British would not feel as pressurised as they would after a prolonged hunger strike, and they would claim that his death was by natural causes rather than hunger strike. McLaughlin gave up his hunger strike.



Brendan McLaughlin

Joe McDonnell died on July 8, after 61 days on hunger strike.



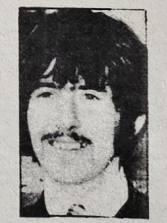
● JOE McDONNELL

Martin Hurson died on July 13, after 46 days on hunger strike, after he developed heart trouble.



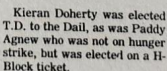
● MARTIN HURSON

Tom McElwee, Paddy Quinn, Michael Devine, Pat McGeown, Laurence McKeown and Matt Devlin, all joined the hunger strike.



● PADDY QUINN

Paddy Quinn, near death from hunger, had a severe attack of epilepsy. His mother and sister found him screaming in pain and near to death, they ordered a doctor to save him.



● KIERAN DOHERTY



● KEVIN LYNCH

Kieran Doherty died on 2nd August after 73 days on hunger strike.



● KIERAN DOHERTY

Tom McElwee died on 8th August after 62 days on hunger strike.



● THOMAS MCELWEE

Mickey Devine died on 20th August after 60 days on hunger strike.



● MICHAEL DEVINE

Pat McGeown lapsed into a coma, and began convulsing with pain. His wife asked for medical intervention and ended his hunger strike.



● PAT MCGEOWN

Liam McCloskey, Pat Sheehan, Jackie McMullan and Bernard Fox were all by now, on hunger strike.



● LIAM MCCLOSKEY



● PAT SHEEHAN



● JACKIE MCMULLAN

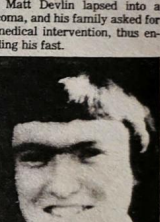


● BERNARD FOX



● MATT DEVLIN

Matt Devlin lapsed into a coma, and his family asked for medical intervention, thus ending his fast.



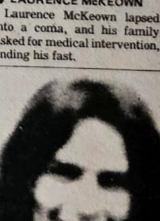
● GERRY CARVILLE

Gerry Carville joined the hunger strike.



● LAURENCE MCKEOWN

Laurence McKeown lapsed into a coma, and his family asked for medical intervention, ending his fast.



● JOHN PICKERING

John Pickering joined the hunger strike, followed by Gerard Hogkins and James Devine.

The basis for a solution

JULY 4th STATEMENT

THE H-BLOCK blanket men, on Saturday, July 4th, issued what they have subsequently re-iterated as a 'very carefully composed statement' which must 'provide the basis for a just, principled and practical solution for all sides' in the present crisis. The full text of the statement is published here.

"We, the protesting republican prisoners in Long Kesh, having replied in short to H. Atkins' statement of June 30th, wish to expand our view of this statement.

"1. The British Government are responsible for the hunger strikes in Long Kesh. The ending of special category status was a political tactic used by the British Government in its attempt to criminalise the Republican attack on British imperialism in Ireland.

"The existence of special legislation, special courts and special interrogation, plus the British administration's refusal to acknowledge a special category of prisoners, all contribute to the placing of the responsibility for this issue on that administration's shoulders.

"Furthermore, the British Government have had ample opportunities during the course of this issue to avoid the occurrence and recurrence of hunger strikes. The Cardinal O'Flaherty N.I.O. talks, and the refusal to honour the December 18th agreement, are prime examples of this.

"2. Lord Gardiner, like so many other Brit-appointed examiners, was sent to Ireland to do a specific job: to recommend the ending of special category status so that legal credibility could be attached to the criminalisation policy.

"3. It is wrong for the British Government to say that we are looking for differential treatment from other prisoners. We would warmly welcome the introduction of the five demands for all prisoners. Therefore, on this major point of British policy, there is no sacrifice of principle involved.

"4. We believe that the granting of the five demands to all prisoners would be forfeiting control of the prison, nor would their say on prison activities be greatly diminished; but the prisoner could have his dignity restored and cease to occupy the role of establishment zombie.

"5. The European Commission on Human Rights criticised the British Govern-

ment for being inflexible and for allowing such an impasse to develop. Flexibility is, in not perpetuating protest but, rather, trying to remove or resolve the cause of dissent which forments such protest.

"6. Mr. Atkins outlines the present work routine under the title 'prison activity.' It is a crude system which Mr. Atkins disguises with flowery jargon. Yet, it should not be a major point of contention between the administration and ourselves. What the British Government recognises as 'prison work' we do not. Therefore, with good-will, 'work' and the achieving of a compatible arrangement should be available without loss of principle. Besides self-education, which would be the main prop in any agreement, we are prepared to maintain our cells, wings and blocks, and engage in any activity which we define as self-maintenance.

"7. Mr. Atkins is either misinformed or exaggerating the free association demand.

"Free association means that there would be freedom of movement within the wings. Supervision need not be restricted. That is a matter for the regime's discretion. There would be no interference with prison officers who would maintain their supervisory role. It must be remembered that H-Blocks are control units, and each wing is built to accommodate 25 prisoners. So it is rather a red herring to control of the prison if the prisoners had freedom of the wing.

"Equally, it is misleading to quote figures of one hundred prisoners presumably associating together. We believe there should be wing visits but we do not envisage ourselves (although Mr. Atkins does) running around the block as we please in large numbers.

"It is unrealistic to expect loyalists and Republicans to integrate satisfactorily together. Forced integration, or the deliberate creation of a confrontation between those who bear arms in respect of their highly conflicting political ideologies is wrong and can only lead to trouble. Even Mr. Paisley recognised this fact

several years back.

"If studied carefully it will be seen that our definition of free association is far removed from what seems to be Mr. Atkins'.

"8. Prison clothes are prison clothes. It is illusory to minimise the wearing of prison clothes to the hailing of the week. Prisoners, like everyone else, sleep, and for most of the other half are forced to wear prison clothes. The women in Armagh wear their own clothes, and there is no objective reason why all prisoners should not be allowed to wear their own clothes.

"9. If we accept that toiletries, and to a lesser extent reading material are essential, then the weekly parcel amounts to 4 lbs. of fruit. That speaks for itself.

"10. Lost remission is a result of the protest and is not connected with the cause of it. As the British Government says, the machinery exists to reclaim it — yet, for some reason, the British Government is being ambiguous on this matter. What constitutes a 'subsequent good behaviour period'? What does one fifth return of remission mean?

"This should not be an area of disagreement, for it does not directly affect the running of the system. But it is of mutual benefit to all whom it affects that full remission is given back to the prisoners.

"In giving our views on what Mr. Atkins said, we have outlined what should be the basis of a solution, without loss of principle to either side in this conflict.

"It could well be that Mr. Atkins has been misinformed about our demands. It certainly appears from his June 30th statement that this is so. We ask all parties involved to study this statement closely. We particularly ask the British to study it. It should not be taken lightly.

"By asking the British administration to come in to discuss a resolution we ask nothing unreasonable. It is common for officials from that administration to visit this prison and converse with prisoners. It has been done before.

"Comrades of ours have died and eight of our other comrades presently face death on hunger strike. Our people on the outside have died and more may die. That is why we seek immediate talks with the British administration to seek a solution to the H-Block protests. It is a reasonable request."

1). We, Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks, have been asked to elaborate on certain aspects of our July 4th statement and are only too happy to oblige.

We again reiterate that we are not seeking elitist or preferential treatment from other prisoners.

2) We are not seeking to take over the prison. It is ludicrous and ridiculous to even suggest otherwise: the evidence of this was clearly displayed in our July 4th statement and will be reinforced in this statement.

3) With neither of these fundamental principles of British policy in question there is no acceptable reason why a solution as envisaged in this statement should not be implemented.

When all is said and done, it is the British, for inflated and grossly exaggerated political reasons, who have the power to end this issue to everyone's satisfaction; yet they refuse to act 'sensibly, humanely, realistically, or reasonably' to resolve this issue.

4) The British refusal to settle leaves us with absolutely no alternative but to continue with this strategy.

Their defiance, in the face of reason based on the reality that an obvious and principled solution exists, challenges the authority of every concerned body in Ireland. It is our opinion that every authority has pursued a moderate approach which the British have treated as weakness and dismissed contemptuously.

If further deaths are to be avoided, more vigorous pressure will have to be applied to the British by the offended Irish authorities, which we primarily pinpoint as the Dublin government, the S.D.L.P. and the Catholic church.

5. There is a vast difference between prison conditions and the prison system. Prisoners can be held in decent conditions but still be treated as sub-humans.

What, in essence, we seek is the upliting of the present Victorian prison system. We are convinced that all prisoners are entitled, as human beings, to retain their dignity and self-respect. The present system, ritually unchanged from the nineteenth century, denies prisoners both.

6) No elaboration is needed on the clothing demand: prison clothes are either abolished or retained.

7. As we pointed out, it takes good-will and the all-important

desire — which breeds flexibility — to end this issue. The British do not possess either; and the stark evidence of this is their dogmatic refusal to parallel, or even incorporate, our views on prison work into their views.

We have already said that what the regime regards as work we do not. Also, an examination of what we propose will reveal that a high level of compatibility exists.

The government's 'What happens when the protest ends?' statement compounds our point that the prisoner is an unopinionated robotic object in their eyes, something whose entire life is totally programmed. The government attitude is wrong and can only lead to more deaths.

As pointed out in our July 4th statement, we are prepared to clean wings and blocks.

As well as that we are willing to do any maintenance work within our capability, such as painting our blocks.

Also, given the facilities, which would not amount to much, we are prepared to do our own cooking within our blocks.

The term 'self-education' seems to have caused some confusion. Basically we define self-education as the right to choose how you feel you should be educated and what subject you should pursue in your education.

It must be realised that until the government recognises education as work, it is almost impossible to participate in cultural or academic education during the prison working day. Usually a prisoner has to forfeit his association to attend a class. Day-time education is available usually only for the educationally sub-normal.

But the machinery for an education system as envisaged by us already exists. We envisage an education system where prisoners of proven outstanding tutorial ability can blend with outside teachers to provide an excellent education system.

It is a fact that the Irish language, which originally was limited to only a few prisoners, has been taught by some of the aforementioned prisoners to 80% of all blanket men. So successful has this self-education system been that Irish has virtually replaced English as the principal language in the protesting blocks.

Likewise, there are blanket men who from experience are exceptionally adept at handi-

crafts and blanket men who are accomplished musicians — all of whom would be willing to pass on their knowledge.

The primary prisoner-orientated education would be the Irish language, culture and history.

Also, we would like to have the choice of the wide range of educational subjects that are available at present to conforming prisoners. There will be prisoners taking 'A' and 'O' level examinations and Open University examinations; and teachers will be needed to provide specialist education. We do not object to this.

As can be seen, a substantial degree of compatibility exists; but it takes the government to meet us halfway, as we have met them, as illustrated above. We are not going to engage in unwearingly demeaning work.

8) There is no reason why we should not have the freedom of the wing for association between the hours of lock-up. It would be of benefit educationally; and, with prison officers guaranteed immunity from attack or rebuke, their supervisory roles would not be diminished.

Segregation is a must if any degree of harmony is to exist within the prison.

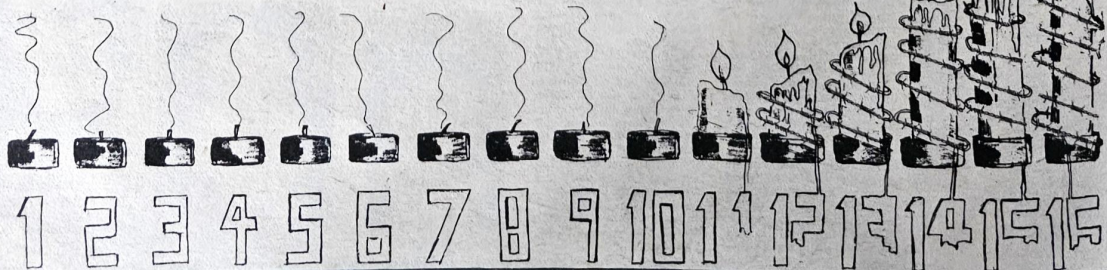
Wing visits should not present any problem to the authorities.

Letters, visits and parcels are at present a privilege to conforming prisoners, to be withdrawn as the regime sees fit. We would like them to be a prisoner's right.

Also, we fail to see why prisoners at one end of this camp should receive a substantial food parcel, and we should receive only 4 lbs. of fruit. We want our food parcel increased to the amount available at the other end of the camp. The only reason for this particular piece of inequality is punitive.

9) Remission, as we pointed out, is only a by-product of this issue. There is no reason why full remission cannot be restored.

10) We call on all concerned in this issue, the British, the Dublin government, the S.D.L.P., the church, and all bodies who were involved in this issue, to respond to this statement. It should not be disregarded solely because we wrote it.



... THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES