

BORDERLINE

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Remember the prisoners



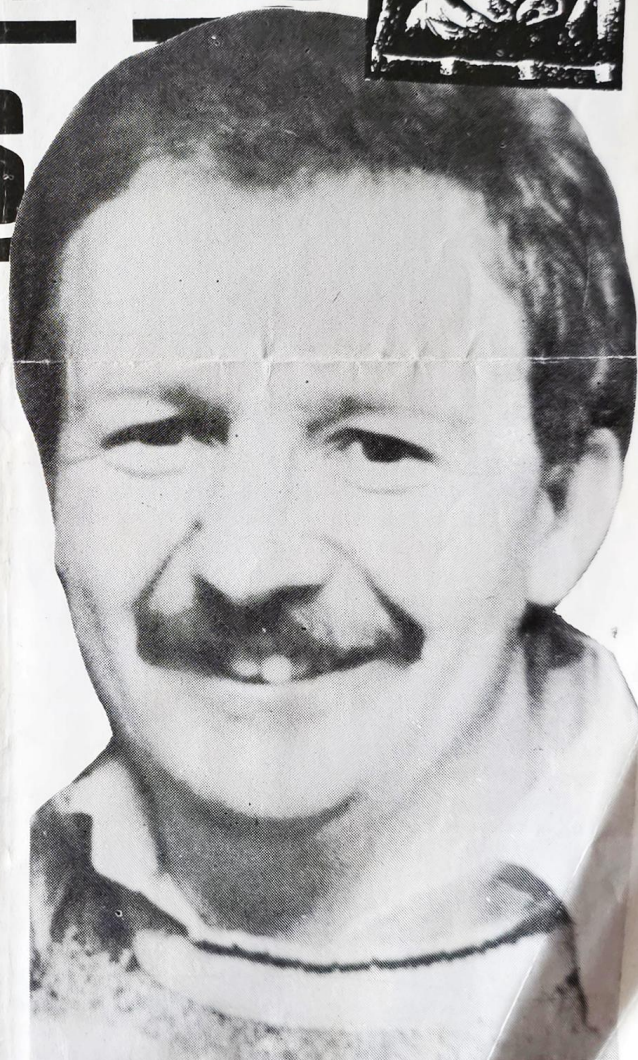
THERE are 800 republican prisoners in British and Irish jails, many of whom are serving life sentences. Most of the lifer prisoners in the 26 Counties come from County Monaghan, some of those from Clones were young men when sentenced 14 years ago. It doesn't matter whether the jail is Portlaoise, Long Kesh or Albany, a life sentence is a cruel act of vengeance.

Some will say they got what they deserved, that prisoners deserve no compassion. This attitude is expressed by a majority of the members of Monaghan County Council who seem to forget that was it not for the sorry political situation none of these people would ever have seen the inside of a prison. The prisoners are victims of political failure in exactly the same way in that Eamonn de Valera, Sean Lemass and countless others were victims in an earlier generation.

An additional reason why we ought to show compassion, for the lifers in particular, is the strain which is put on the families of prisoners. Each week mothers, fathers, wives and children make the journey to Portlaoise, Long Kesh or one of the other prisons. Those with relatives in English jails have an extra finan-

cial and emotional burden to bear. That burden becomes all the greater when their loved one has no release date to which they can look forward.

Much has been said and written in recent years about the plight of lifer prisoners and SOSPs (prisoners held at the British Secretary of State's 'Pleasure') in Britain and the Six Counties. Political and Church leaders have called for release dates. Such calls have presumably been supported by the self-same government which has failed to show any similar concern for those serving life-sentences in the South. The commendable unity and efforts of Clones UDC on this issue have not been reflected on Monaghan County Council where a vindictive hypocrisy seems to be the order of the day.



● George McDermot, Portlaoise POW from Clones

The prisoners and their families deserve our support. In 1989 we should make a conscious decision to redouble our efforts on their behalf.

For our part *Borderline* sends warm greetings to prisoners and their families everywhere and especially to those from Monaghan and Fermanagh.

Hillsborough Treaty

—martial law



“NATIONALISTS can now hold their heads high”. So said Garret FitzGerald and Peter Barry when they signed the Hillsborough Treaty in November 1985. The past few weeks in County Fermanagh, have shown just how high the Hillsborough Treaty has allowed nationalists to hold their heads.

The following is an example of just some of the incidents of death threats, torture, assaults, raids and arrests suffered by nationalists at the hands of British crown forces in County Fermanagh since the beginning of 1989 alone.

At 12.50am on Thursday, January 5th, two Lisnaskea women travelling home from Clones were stopped at Kilturk checkpoint. They were held for an hour and during that time they were subjected to verbal abuse by the soldiers at the checkpoint. Then they were told they could go. One hundred and fifty yards past the checkpoint men with blackened faces and wollen hats stopped them again.

Both women were taken from the car and assaulted. One soldier removed the safe-

ty catch from his rifle and pointed to each woman's head in turn. Both women were again assaulted and their car key was broken in the ignition.

One soldier put tape on to the two windscreens. Then he asked “who's going to break the windscreen”? One soldier stepped forward and said “Mind your heads girls” and smashed the windscreen with a hammer.

At this, one of the women put her foot on the accelerator and the car shot forward. One soldier jumped to the ground shouting to “shoot them”. At this stage the soldiers seemed to disappear into the night. The women went to the nearby phone box and phoned the RUC in Newtown, but they refused

to come out. The badly shaken women then made their way home. A garage estimated the damage to the car at over £300.

Every night since the incident, British soldiers come to the women's house and bang the windows with their guns and verbally abuse their parents. The RUC have admitted that they do not control the area in question, so a state of martial law exists in South Fermanagh.

DONAGH

Soldiers entered a Donagh Bar and broke glasses, they pointed their rifles at customers and threatened to shoot them. They then tried to drag a local man out and he was badly beaten as a local woman tried to help him.

Workmen working in a Donagh House had rifles put to their heads, the rifles were clicked and the men were pushed to the ground and were told they were going to be shot.

Young boys aged about 14 were pushed up against a wall. They were made to remove their shoes and jackets. They suffered verbal and physical abuse and were asked to inform.

Visitors visiting their loved ones in Long Kesh were arrested and held for four hours in a military camp near the prison. That morning the POWs' families had left home at 8am. After the visit four pensioners were held in a very cold aerodrome, without food until after 5pm. They didn't get home until 7pm. During their detention they were asked totally illegal questions, all in a petty, vindictive way in an effort to annoy the prisoners.

A house in Donagh was raided by a large force of British crown forces. During the course of this raid a very considerable amount of damage was caused to the house including the drilling of holes in the floors of the house.

On January 26th a Lisnaskea man was stopped at Kilturk checkpoint. He was told that he would be shot dead and they would let their dogs attack his face so that he wouldn't be able to be recognised by his own mother.

These are just examples of the types of harassment suffered by nationalists in Fermanagh. Scenes such as those depicted above are mirrored throughout the Six Counties on a daily basis. We still have people like Peter Barry and Brian Lenihan, the self appointed spokesperson for nationalists in the Six Counties telling people how to live and how to support the so called security forces.

■ Young girls in the Newtownbutler area are putting themselves in a position in which they are in considerable danger. They are frequenting remote areas with British soldiers and they are being encouraged by an older woman in Newtown. Parents should be made aware of this behaviour and take steps to stop it.

Call for unity candidate

TWO PRIESTS, Fr Des Wilson and Fr Joe McVeigh, along with Linnaskea solicitor and former MP Frank McManus have called on nationalist parties in the Six Counties to support a unity candidate in the EEC election in June. Already they have written to the SDLP and Sinn Fein asking them to consider their proposal and to meet with them to discuss it.

In a statement issued some weeks ago they said that the June election provides a "unique opportunity for nationalists to show the same unity that existed 20 years ago in 1969. It would give all nationalists the opportunity to unite on the single issue of justice and civil rights.

Such a united front would send a clear message to the British government and would once again win a great deal of international support for the cause of justice and peace in Ireland.

It is understood that there are a num-



● Fr Des Wilson and Fr Joe McVeigh

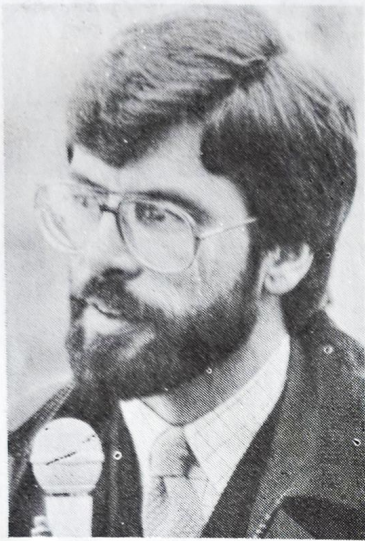
ber of other independent nationalists are waiting for the response from the two who are in support of the proposal but main parties.

IN FOND MEMORY...



John Joe McGirl, vice-president of Sinn Fein till his death on December 8th 1988 pictured in Clones in the 1970s, after being released from one of many terms of imprisonment in the Six and 26 Counties. The boy standing on the right is Volunteer Seamus McElwaine who was tortured and killed by the SAS in a field near Roslea, on April 26th 1986.

FOR THE RECORD...



● ADAMS IN CLONES

SINN FEIN PRESIDENT, Gerry Adams, was the main speaker at a meeting in the Creighton Hotel Clones to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the elections to the First Dail. More than 200 people attended the meeting on Wednesday, December 14th, where Adams outlined the Democratic Programme of the first Dail and compared this to the current policies of the Dublin government.

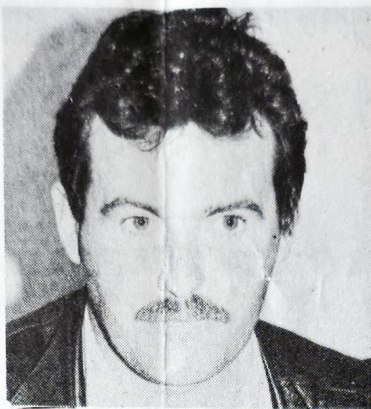
The theme of the lecture was the erosion of sovereignty in the 26 Counties over the past 70 years and Adams pointed to 1992 as a further setback to those who believe in Irish freedom.

In a second address, Sinn Fein candidate in the forthcoming EC election, Caoimhghin O Caolain described how this erosion of sovereignty has led to the present process of extradition. The remarkable thing about the case of Fr Ryan, he said, was that the Dublin government had even considered extraditing him: Had Fr Ryan not been a priest, he said, he would surely have followed Robert Russell in "being handed over to the tender mercies of British 'justice'."



● MAGHERAVEELY AND ROSLEA ROAD-CLOSURES

THE CLOSURE of two roads in the Magheraveely and Roslea



● PAT TREANOR



● PETER McALEER



● FINTAN McPHILLIPS

areas in the month of December shows the continuing British policy of forcing division on communities along the border. Both closures led to muted protests from Fianna Fail and SDLP spokespersons, even though these parties are part of the Hillsborough process which is used to justify further repression.

In a comment following the block-

ing of the main road between Clones and Magheraveely, Sinn Fein Councillor Pat Treanor said that the "vindictive nature of this move is illustrated by the continued bollards which now block the road."



● ROSLEA MORTARS

DESPITE British army saturation of the area IRA Volunteers succeeded in mounting an effective mortar attack on the joint British army/RUC Barracks in Roslea. The attack took place on October 29th when four mortars mounted on the back of a tractor and link-box were fired into the heavily fortified base. Severe damage was caused when all four mortars exploded on target.

In a critical black-propaganda exercise which followed the attack, the RUC in Roslea needlessly moved an extremely sick woman from her home more than an hour later. The woman's subsequent death was abused by the RUC who blamed the IRA, a charge which was vigorously denied by the woman's own family. The establishment media failed, however, to carry the family's denial, preferring instead to become part of a callous and insensitive propaganda exercise.



● CHANGES FOR CLONES

WORK is expected to begin shortly on a major scheme to improve the appearance of the Diamond in Clones. The scheme will cost about £125,000. This will be one of few schemes financed by the International Fund which is directed at community improvement rather than private business interests.

Welcoming the move Sinn Fein councillors Peter McAleer and Fintan McPhillips described it as "a necessary first step in reversing the neglect of border towns by successive governments." The councillors warned, however, that such schemes were not enough on their own and that a major injection of finance is needed to provide jobs for all the young people who are being forced to emigrate at the moment.