

CONCERNED

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF FERMANAGH CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE COMMITTEE.

PAY
NO
RENT
PAY
NO
RATES

No. 107

Saturday, 6th October (De Sathairn, 6 Deireadh Fómhair), 1973

ARE YOU CONCERNED?



Orphans Lisa and Orla Cassin, having lost father to Long Kesh and mother to Armagh Jail.

IN what way does the continuation of internment affect you? It is now with us for over two years. Have you thought of this? Remember the record, "Men Behind the Wire"—the wild rush to get one. How often it was played to the cheers and claps on the dance hall floor when the band performed it. Do you ever play it now? Has it lost its appeal? "Every man will stand behind the men behind the wire." Had those words any meaning at all for you? It is indeed sad if the only interest you had in that record was the gaiety of the music and the words were just empty as far as you were concerned.

REALITY

The reality of the moment is that as we enter the winter of 1973 hundreds of men are facing their third winter in that horrible place, Long Kesh, that has been described as a "hell hole", an abomination, by an American bishop, who declared that even in his experiences of torture camps in Red China and the notorious prison camps of war-time Japan he had not seen such "abominable conditions" as he saw in Long Kesh. For just one brief moment just try and think of Long Kesh concentration camp, its remote location, set in the heart of hostile country as far as the vast majority of the hostages and their families are concerned. Terrible is the strain on the men and boys held there—day follows day, week follows weeks, the same camp staff, the foreign soldiers armed to the teeth, the mean-looking Alsations, the watch towers, the barbed wire, the cold and dampness, the longed-for visits of loved ones, the food parcels, the feeling of unbelief that this is really happening in one's own country; all add to the terrible torment.

Now consider the 1,000-plus men, women, boys and girls held in English and Irish jails, the savage sentences imposed on them, and try to imagine the numbers affected by their imprisonment and internment or detention. A recent research showed that for each person jailed at least 10 are "affected"; this includes immediate family (wife, children, mother, father, brothers, sisters), but excludes in-laws and cousins. It is a startling fact—it means that at least 10,000 are directly involved, not to mention the numbers who have to leave home due to British Army harassment.

One of the greatest strains of internment is that of men who worry constantly about their homes, their families, the jobs they have lost and the bills that will have to be paid someday, while others grow because income is available no longer.

We are all inclined to forget the strain on that most resilient of humans, the housewife. Can you imagine what your home would be like if your husband or your father were taken from you and put away, never to know when or where he will be released again?

Can you imagine what difference it would make in your home if the salary that was available weekly suddenly were to disappear, while you had to continue to provide on the money given you by the state, while you had to find money to apply proper food and other facilities for your man in jail?

Can you imagine the hopelessness that prevails among women when they are forced to live like this for any length of time (two years now in some cases)? Think about it.

Think about this one, simple side-effect of the abomination that is internment. Think about it and when you have done so, do so again. Can you help, and, if so, how?

It is not always the financial draught that is felt most. Indeed, it would be fair to say that the effect on the wives and children probably would be the strongest factor of all. It is all very well to sympathise with them, to worry about the effect it will have. Psychologists tell us it will be a long time before these things can be assessed properly. These effects are happening now and they are unpleasant, to say the least.

Children who are fatherless tend to get out of control at the best of times. How much more, then, when the mother has to chase the establishment for more money; to take herself off to one of the many prisons or camps, usually wasting the best part of the day, just to see her husband; and having to leave the children behind in someone else's care.

WILL YOU HELP?

Ask yourself this. Do you care enough about your fellow humans, your fellow Irishmen and Irishwomen, to do something? You don't have to agree with the reasons for or against internment to have

some thoughts about those innocents who are hit so hard, so wrongly, so harshly, by it. Do you? Come on. It is a straight, fair question and deserves a straight, fair answer.

Are you doing anything or are you just going on your own smug way, letting them take care of themselves?

Yes, you can help in lots of ways, particularly with the Internees'/Prisoners' Dependants Fund, which the British would love to see fold up completely and which will fold up if you do not help. You can help by sending subscriptions to your local or county Internees' Dependants Fund, by helping to organise and support fund-raising functions or public collections. Most important of all, you can help end the evil of internment by supporting anti-internment protest marches and making your voice heard by the collaborating politicians in your demands for an end to collaboration till Long Kesh is closed.

TOTAL VICTORY FOR HUNGER-STRIKERS

THE Republican prisoners in Mountjoy Jail on Thursday issued a statement which claimed "total victory" for the demands of the men who had been on hunger strike, including segregation from other prisoners.

It was learned reliably that the removal of the Republicans to a new prison at Arbour Hill is under active consideration by the Government.

News of the agreement between the Republicans and the Deputy Governor of Mountjoy, acting on behalf of the Government, was given in a statement taken out of the prison by Mrs. Rita O'Hare, wife of Belfast Republican Gerry O'Hare, who was one of the hunger strikers.

The statement said that the Government had granted all the concessions they sought, including segregation from non-political prisoners, free association, remission of sentences, and the terming of them as "special prisoners". All punishments were to cease and visits, parcels and letters were to be restored.

STATEMENT

The statement says: "At 4.45 p.m. on Wednesday, October 3rd, the prison governor stated that he wished to speak to all the hunger strikers, and the rest of the Republican prisoners engaged in the passive resistance campaign. He had received a communication from the Free State Government which stated: (1) Segregation would be given. The non-politicals would be moved out in a few days. (2) Free association to be granted immediately with late nights negotiable with the Prison Governor's office. (3) Remission of sentences automatic as they, the Free State Government, consider that by maintaining our own wing that this constitutes prison work.

"At this point the Governor withdrew, and our Prison Council met to decide on these offers. At this point there was no mention of political status, or special category, said the statement. Clarification was sought by our representatives, E. McThomas, Joe Cahill and Sheamus Twomey, on this question at 5.45 p.m.

"At 7.00 p.m. they were sent for, and informed that whilst the Free State Government had never in its history labelled persons they recognised because of certain peculiarities such as Northern men, etc., and by granting our other demands, we were 'you are in a different position to other persons'."

Letters to the Editor

VOICES FROM LONG KESH

To the Editor,
ConCERNED

Dear Sir,

As the struggle for Irish freedom continues on the streets of Belfast and other areas of occupied Ireland, a daring escape was attempted by six Republican prisoners from what can only be described as Long Kesh "MILITARY" concentration camp. I use the term Military because all civilian administration in the camp has broken down and is in fact non-existent. This can be seen not only in the use of the British Army to recapture the escaped men, but also in the follow-up search at 6.30 a.m. the following morning.

All movement in the camp was suspended for the day as Military Police, RUC Police and British Army Storm-troopers invaded the compound from which the men had escaped, and also the other compounds in that area of the camp. Over a thousand troops and police were used in what was seen as the most intensive search operation carried out in the camp.

We were taken from our huts after having been strip-searched by Military Police, and herded into the canteen, having to pass through the usual gauntlet of baton-wielding soldiers and Alsatian dogs. After a time we were then ordered out of the canteen and made stand against the wire. The soldiers were then ordered to close in, anyone not standing in the required spread-eagled position, or not stretched enough, depending on the soldiers' attitude, became a target for insults and the customary blows to the legs. We were informed that this exercise was to give a "head-count"; we had been already counted twice.

During this time the camp Governor and his numerous assistants looked on from outside the wire. We were then ordered back into the canteen, passing through another gauntlet. After a while we were taken one at a time from the canteen to be photographed by an ARMY photographer, then returned to our huts.

There we found the familiar scene after such a raid—personal belongings missing or destroyed, photographs defaced, and handicrafts confiscated.

The extensive use of such a large number of army and police is seen as a great embarrassment to the camp authorities; all their attempts to hide the truth which is Long Kesh have been a failure. Whether they change the name or change the uniforms, Long Kesh always was and still is a British Army run and maintained concentration camp.

Ise mise, le mais,

P.R.O., Cage 17

Cage 17, Long Kesh.

Dear Sir,

We the Republican prisoners have received some very disturbing news to the effect that it is the intention of the prison management, within the next month or so, to replace some of the warders within the Republican cages here at Long Kesh with British Army personnel.

This is a situation which would be completely unacceptable to us and which would be a motivator of unending strife leading to violence and possible death within the camp. We the Republicans will resist such a move by the strongest possible means available to us—hunger strikes, refusal of visits, parcels, etc.

Just this morning we have been subjected to a pre-dawn raid by a baton-wielding British Army search party. Men were awakened from their sleep and made to wait in a canteen hut for several hours while their property and sleeping accommodation was ransacked by the troops. Personal items inevitably went missing, taken by the raiders as souvenirs to decorate their billet, where they are regarded as captured trophies.

On their return from the canteen to the huts, men were made to run the gauntlet of jeering, jibing British troops, several suffering the indignity of a kick or blow from a baton, and on this occasion the Alsatian guard dogs, for which there is no discernible purpose except to further intimidate the prisoners, were urged by some of their handlers to attack several men, with the result that one man had to receive hospital treatment for a wound inflicted by an animal, and another narrowly missed serious injury when a dog snapped at him, taking a piece from his jacket.

This sort of activity would seem to be a preview of things to come and we would, therefore, appreciate your help in highlighting these further instances of maltreatment to the already severely harassed inmates of this concentration camp, Long Kesh.

P.R.O.,

Sentenced Republican Prisoners.

Long Kesh.
29/7/73.

Dear Sir,

I would most urgently request you to use your office to attempt to bring pressure to bear on the authorities regarding the plight of the sentenced Republican prisoners in Long Kesh. Our position at the moment is one of desperation and all attempts to negotiate better conditions have been futile. The treatment we are receiving leaves us in no doubt as to the cold, calculated planning which has gone into these attempts to break the men here. The most glaring attempt, and the one which has caused the most suffering, is the lack of medical treatment. Men needing specialist and surgical treatment have been fed on promises and pain-killers for almost a year now and the agony these men endure is impossible to describe. I will quote you one example of the treatment a sick person can expect here: DAVE HILTON, dislocated collar bone, 16 weeks on pain-killers and has not been to an outside hospital. This man has suffered so much that he feels specialist treatment at this stage would still leave him paralysed on one side. This is typical and not an unusual example. This lack of medical treatment in itself would be bad enough, but coupled along with the fact that the authorities have refused to issue us with clean bed linen makes for an intolerable situation. The authorities have shown a particularly callous attitude on this matter since we moved here and have attempted to degrade the men by giving them dirty linen to lie on. When we pointed out that this was a serious health hazard and refused to accept it, it was withdrawn and the men were left without. This got even worse and the laundry changes became further and further apart. The situation in our cages at the moment is that no one has been offered clean bed linen for a month now and the men are sleeping with a couple of blankets thrown over them. This applies to young, old and sick alike and people recovering from illnesses have not the comfort of a clean bed to lie on.

Another of the most glaring aspects of the official policy of abuse and harassment is the non-existence and refusal of the authorities to provide educational facilities. Voluntary workers visiting the camp have been harassed in every way possible. One particular worker remarked that the camp education officer sounded more like the camp security officer and she felt that his sole function was to veto any work being done to help the prisoners. We inside know this to be a fact and the situation is so ridiculous that none of us have ever been able to see the education officer. We have pointed out that if this so-called education officer stands out of our way we will make our own arrangements, but this was refused.

I will finish this letter by again urging you to do all in your power to alleviate the distress in this camp which houses 1,500 men, by bringing our plight to public attention and thus embarrassing the authorities into doing something. This is a humane issue and not a political one and we are not looking for a political platform. The demands we are making are not ones which could not be met; all we are asking for are the basic human requirements to which we are entitled. I would like to thank you for your interests and statements made on our behalf in the past and also to thank you in anticipation of any help you can give us in the future.

Yours,

P.R.O., Long Kesh

Dear Sir,

Since January of this year, when we arrived in this place, we have been fobbed off with sheets and pillow-cases which, although we were told had been laundered, were so filthy that one would be forgiven for mistaking them for cleaning rags. Despite constant protests, the situation never improved, until finally instead of attempting to solve the problem, the prison staff washed their hands of the entire matter, leaving us for the past three weeks with no bed linen whatsoever.

There have been cases, all too often, of men in poor health being denied appropriate medical treat-

ment and, on many occasions, men who were optimistic enough to attend a medical parade were merely offered sarcasm from the "medical" staff. This "treatment" has, already, cost two young lives, and we wonder how many more must be lost before the public becomes aware of the real attitude of our "guards".

On a recent search of Cage 16, members of the prison staff went on a souvenir collecting spree, and appropriated the materials which we use for our hobbies, leaving us with few means of combatting the soul-destroying boredom of this vile place. As if that were not enough, they also removed pens and a gold Sovereign ring of great sentimental value to its owner.

This is merely a small glimpse of the reality of life in Long Kesh concentration camp, in which men who are sentenced to terms of imprisonment of up to fifteen years are expected to live.

Yours faithfully,

P. Lawrence O'Neill, P.R.O.

Cage 16, Long Kesh.
28/10/73.

A FERMANAGH CURATE WRITES

Dear Mr. Editor,

As a priest serving as a curate in Fermanagh I must congratulate you on your courage in exposing discrimination irrespective of its source. Your article "The Bishop Tickle in the Church" was particularly good and timely. I, as an obscure country curate, might be permitted to add my voice in condemning the incredibly double standards practised by some of our senior clergy who purport to speak for people like me. I am not an intellectual or writer and could not, even if I wished, obtain the publicity for my viewpoint which some of my fellow priests enjoy. I do not, nor cannot in conscience, support the views expressed by another priest, "Erne Sense". Your readers will be glad to know that for every "Erne Sense" in the Ministry there are twenty priests who really care and pray for the internees and the political prisoners; he does not speak for us. Many of my fellow priests have spoken to me about methods to prevent "Erne Sense" from doing our ministry, mission and our credibility among the people of God harm.

I feel that I must take this opportunity to state categorically that the Church of Jesus Christ cannot and must not have anything to do with firing squads, internment camps, unfair court trials which obtain in the South under the Offences Against the State Amendment Act or in the North in the Secret Tribunals. All these evils have been condoned and sometimes advocated by "Erne Sense"; they are condemned by Jesus Christ and by Vatican 2. When men are convicted after a fair trial and sent to prison the Church of Jesus Christ demands that they are treated and respected as humans at all times, that they are not in any way demeaned or degraded by prison authorities. This is not happening in some prisons in Ireland today.

I apologise for intruding on your valuable space. Laity can be assured by me that most of the clergy are behind the suffering prisoners and people on the run. They are God's people. If the senior clergy have failed in their duty to speak out against the fulminations of Bishop Tickle and the excesses of "Erne Sense", that must be their responsibility; don't blame us. One thing is certain; if "Erne Sense" had deviated one tenth as much from Christ's teaching on behalf of the suffering people in prison and their poor families as he has on behalf of the men who send out firing squads and open internment camps in Dublin, he would have been rebuked long ago by the senior clergy, some of whom are living in the Middle Ages. I will be able to sign by name when our leaders finally wake up.

God bless your work.

Catholic Priest

Parochial House,
Co. Fermanagh.

P.S.—I am sure that fellow priests who are cleverer than I am, among them "Erne Sense", are not using their talents on behalf of the ordinary Irish people, but instead by their efforts and writings are comforting the British oppressor, Mr. Whitelaw.

NOW WE KNOW

Dear Sir,

Your article in last week's ConCERNED regarding the Castlebar incident clearly showed why feeling ran high in the area. The burning of a Tricolour (Orange—White—Green), the singing of obscene derogating songs by six of the ten party group—"To hell with the Pope boys"—entitled them to the punishment they received. I have holidayed in the area for the last 16 years and never have had anything but good relations.

Liberal Fermanagh Unionist

SOUTHERN DIARY

RICHARD Burke's new-style schooling for 26-county children must be already under way. I can do no better in proving this than quote from the September issue of the Macra na Tuaithe "News-sheet" in full. Prepare yourself for some shocks.

An article in the "Newsheet", referring to school-books issued to children in Limerick, states: "School isn't like what it was in my day," as the man said. He's dead right. Even more right than we thought until we saw some of the books being used in one particular school by eight and nine year olds in third and fourth classes.

We became mildly interested when we saw one book had "Policeman" instead of Garda and became positively intrigued when we encountered this gem: "Now write a few sentences of your own about what happens on Guy Fawkes Night". As we always say, you can't beat making education relevant to the real life experiences of the pupils.

But there was more to come which clearly showed us the giant step forward taken by this school into the realms of the new environmental studies programme. A sample letter is shown which includes: "After tea I want to show you my new cricket bat." This is definitely to be recommended for Limerick kids who never heard of the All-Ireland.

But all was not yet lost. A story in another book headed "St. Patrick of Ireland" held definite promise. The second sentence began: "Everywhere in that country . . ." But you will be relieved to hear he did get rid of the snakes. Fair dues.

A little story in one of the books tells us that a boy called Angus went to school yesterday for the first time. It continues: "He was rather bewildered by the experience." Little wonder.

Come to think of it, wasn't it an awful pity that when St. Patrick banished the snakes from Ireland he didn't put a few text book writers in their place.

Well, that's what the "Newsheet" article says — what can anyone say in comment, except, perhaps, God Help Us.

DUBLIN politicians, getting over the excitement of the visit of Britain's Blundering Boatman, are thinking in terms of a return to work at Leinster House. It's been a momentous holiday, national and international happenings occurring on a grand scale, but it's back to the daily grind of sneer and counter-sneer in the Dail.

Already there are rumours a-million—a strong one about a possible defection of a disillusioned Coalition TD which would reduce the Government majority to a measly single vote—and the fringe gossips are having a whale of a time. Questions also abound—will Cosgrave reshuffle so soon, or won't he? Will someone rock the boat spectacularly this session, especially on the question of the arrest and harassment of Republicans?

Fianna Fail Indians have a quiver-full of arrows ready to aim at the Government cowboys, whose seemingly impregnable ring of covered wagons now shops a gap or two, while Big Chief Forgetful Jack prepares his lance for a tilt at those well-known "goodies", Conor and Garrett. Forgetful has no intention of smoking a pipe of peace with those ranchers.

Meanwhile, back in the country, the electorate is puzzled. There has been a sudden concern for the people by Fianna Fail Cumainn. Matters of lighting, bad roads, traffic congestion, etc., which were beneath the notice of those exalted types at the beginning of the year have now assumed the status of matters of national importance.

There has never been such concern about the public good. County Managers are finding themselves having to provide answers for things they pushed under the carpet, with official approval, many moons ago.

Everyone knows there is a local government election next June and one could expect the usual vote-watching concern about local matters, but this beats the band. Could there be something bigger in the wind?—the possibility of a General Election, perhaps, with Fianna Fail emerging as the "Party which Cares". Most political observers would dismiss such a suggestion out of hand, but the signs are there just the same.

We might get some idea when the arrows start flying. If they are tipped with venom watch out for war-talk in the wig-wams. Forgetful Jack might get the idea that the palface cavalry are too busy in the lodges of the North and points east of the territory to come to the aid of the embattled cowboys. Can't trust them Injuns, you know.

SDLP: THE PLACEMEN SEEKING TO BECOME HIGHER PLACEMEN

by S. Mac EIREANN

THE announcement of the attempted exhumation of Stormont, the fixing of a vexing date to start the attempt, came as no big surprise to me. The clamour of the SDLP placemen seeking to become higher placemen came as sweet music to Whitelaw's ear. They wanted government now at last. The lolly looked good, they had the chasers, so why wait? To hell with principles, the riches of idealists, money we want, said they. Wasn't one of them heard to say a long time ago, "This is only the beginning"? An idealist listening to him thought he meant what he meant and agreed with him. The idealist not too long later realised that the placeman and he were not of one mind.

"WHAT IS THAT TO US?"

The obviously implied insult in Britain's fixing the memorable date, 5th October, as the date appropriate for the attempted exhumation will go unnoticed by the placemen. England just loves that "What is that to us . . ." Chief Priests/Judas kick in the teeth reproach AFTER the foul deed. But if you follow me, then do not expect to see what I am trying to get over to you carried any further, for you may search every tree in Ireland and you won't find ONE SDLP placeman who, "Going out, hanged himself." The SDLP placemen are 1973 Judases and NOT the good old kind capable of remorse if not sorrow.

"GOVERNMENT NOW AT LAST"

As I have already stated, the announcement of the happening came as no surprise to me. Upon hearing it made, my thoughts leaped backwards and I found myself lost in history which this time was not biblical. I found myself comparing certain political parties with certain political personalities. I thought of two Lords, not biblical, British. I thought of Lord Clarendon, who was sent to Ireland as Viceroy in 1847. He was sent with conciliatory speeches and the expressed desire for "Government now at last". I thought of Lord Mountjoy, who came to Ireland long before Lord Clarendon and who was not successful in giving Ireland to England because he was of crude character and lacked political economy.

Clarendon's system was more in the spirit of the nineteenth century and consequently more sophisticatedly sinister. Mountjoy's system was more in the spirit of the sixteenth century, unsophisticated, crude, and for that less sinister.

At 9.15, minutes after the radio newscast, I had clumped the SDLP placemen under the cloak of Lord Clarendon and all of the Unionists under the cloak of Lord Mountjoy. I did the job in seconds and the amount of energy expended was negligible. It is scarcely necessary for me to tell you which clump I despised the more. Would you agree with my clumping?

THEN I THOUGHT . . .

Yes, then I thought what a pity ALL SDLP supporters have failed to grasp what is happening with that same tragic darkness which has driven so many SDLP supplicants to curse the day they voted, with minds befogged by promises of the pre-election six, to issue a licence to betray to a gang of grafters. I thought, too, that even if Willie Whitelaw had done nothing more than getting the SDLP off the ground he most certainly merits England's gratitude and a tap of the Royal Blade. Yes, Whitelaw deserves credit. The SDLP placemen deserve contempt. They have notoriously and shamelessly abused your trust.

Eight million Irish eyes are watching the SDLP party's descent. Not comfortable for placemen seeking to become higher placemen. Four or five times as many more Irish eyes around the world are watching. The millions of questioning eyes seek an answer to the question: "Declare yourselves on the Northern Constitution Act". The mere suggestion of readiness, the mere hint of willingness, to cooperate in making the Constitution Act work, should and I am sure would be seen as criminal folly and deserving of massive condemnation. For Britain must not be allowed to imagine that the presence of a few SDLP tailor's dummies dressed in minority clothes, just to give the old Stormont shop a new look, is going to solve the "Irish problem". A new bandage on an old sore will not bring healing. Britain may use the SDLP Clarendons of 1973 to create "Government now at last", but the ploy will be no more successful than were the conciliatory speeches of the Clarendon of 1847 under whose cloak I clumped the SDLP placeman.

By the time you read this much may have happened. I feel nothing will have happened which will make what I am writing now irrelevant then. Indeed I hope you will not have even more reason to share with me a depression which I now feel. If on 5th October the SDLP accept to live in a grotesque world of make-believe which transforms reality into illusion, then all Ireland will have cause to be concerned.

REVIEW OF CASES OF INTERNEES

ONLY 35 OUT OF 600 CO-OPERATE

A STATEMENT by internees in Long Kesh says that only 35 out of more than 600 of their number have agreed to co-operate in the reviews of their cases by Commissioners, as provided for by the Emergency Provisions Act.

The internees who continue to protest against their imprisonment without a fair trial, say that since August the Secretary of State has attempted — no doubt with his eye on a fair trial for Britain when their case opens at Strasbourg on 2nd October — to pretend to the public at home and in Europe that he was conducting a review of the internment cases.

The statement adds: "Owing to the stupidity of their own lawmakers the British cannot carry out this simple propaganda exercise. The internees themselves can, and are actually preventing, the whitewash operation. No review can take place under the legislation as it now stands unless internees consent to appear before the review tribunal."

The internees ask: "Why should we consent to stand again for another secret "trial"? The only fresh "evidence" available is our attitude to the Whitelaw regime or the Commissioners. We consider that it is unjust and immoral to ask us who are not convicted of any crime to give undertakings about our future conduct or places of residence. This is what the review tribunals are about. They are a return to the system of Advisory Tribunals presided over by Judge Brown under the Special Powers Act."

They describe the review operation as just "whitewash for the Strasbourg judges" and claim that if Mr. Whitelaw was really serious about ending internment that he could review the cases personally under Regulation 36 without the farce of a "retrial" before the Commissioners.

The statement said internees were dismayed to find some people in public life floating certain ideas to enable them to sidestep the promise of "no settlement until internment is ended".

Phrases like "a substantial number of releases", "a beginning of the phasing out of internment" and "why hold men who have abjured violence?" were appearing in statements from time to time. Had these people forgotten that internment without a fair trial is unjust and immoral in itself?

No modifications, secret review Commissions, concealed witnesses, demands for undertakings from people convicted of no crime (in some cases acquitted by the courts)—could change the fundamental immorality of internment in itself.

GREEN LIGHT FOR BORDER INCURSIONS

THE Provisional IRA, in a statement issued through the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau, quoted what they claimed to be a memo from the Department of Foreign Affairs to the British Embassy in Dublin, dated 21st August last, dealing with a request from the British to land helicopters in Border areas.

According to the statement the memo read: "Memo 321-80-2-5VII. The Department of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the British Embassy, and with reference to the Embassy's Notes No. SLD-301-1-AIR dated the 2nd and 8th Aug., 1973, has the honour to confirm that clearance has been granted for the overflights and landings, detail of which were given in the Embassy's notes."

"The Department of Foreign Affairs avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the British Embassy the assurance of its highest consideration."

Referring to the weekend visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Fitzgerald, to New York, the statement says that "Mr. Fitzgerald's denunciation of the IRA in New York was as pathetic as Messrs. Lynch and O'Malley. Like both of these gentlemen, Mr. Fitzgerald learned that Irish-Americans do not suffer fools like him lightly. His stupid attempt to paint the British Army as a peace-keeping force will be derided at home and abroad."

JAMES CAREY

Select Grocers and General Hardware Merchants
Crown Paint and Wallpaper Specialist
PHONE: LISNASKEA 337

When in Lisnaskea, call at . . .

FRANK'S BAR

Home of Traditional Song and Music

MAIN STREET

LISNASKEA

IRISH-AMERICANS SCOURGE FITZGERALD IN NEW YORK

by SEAN CRONIN

THE National University of Ireland Club rented the Prince's Room of the Americana Hotel here on Saturday evening for Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald's talk on "Ireland and Irish-Americans". Pickets at the hotel's Broadway entrance chanted slogans and visitors lined the steps watching them. The placards said: "Remember Derry", "Free the Hunger Strikers", "Victory to the IRA". The cops stood around and kept everybody moving.

There were three sets of pickets. The largest was from Irish Northern Aid, which supports the Provisionals. The veteran Jim Skeffington from Tyrone led a detachment of Officials. The National Association for Irish Freedom, American arm of the Civil Rights Association, sent representatives.

At 5 p.m. on the hotel's second floor a scattering of N.U.I. club members, led by Moyra Casey, waited for the Minister. Some wore evening dress and name tags. In the Imperial Room next door, the Bible Society was meeting. A tall, solemn man saw an N.A.I.F. organiser hand a press statement to a reporter in the foyer and said: "If you are giving out these things here, don't give them to our people. They wouldn't be interested."

At 5.15 the long room was fairly empty. There was a bar but few were drinking. The man who covers the UN for UPI ambled in. "I remember when Ireland was a power in the UN," he said. "When Ireland spoke they listened. Not any more."

At 5.20 the Minister arrived, the CBS man sat him at a table and held out a mike. "Is it true, Mr. Minister," he asked, "that the IRA is threatening to bomb the Republic if the hunger strikers aren't freed?"

HUNGER STRIKE

The Minister seemed taken aback. "The policy of the Provisionals has been to avoid action in the Republic," he said. "I know little about the hunger strike. I've been away for some weeks—travelling in Europe before coming to the UN."

"The CBS man asked, 'Some people here are out of touch with events at home,' the Minister said. 'It is somewhat sad that there should be such a gap between the Irish at home and those demonstrating here. The people in Ireland have rejected almost unanimously the IRA and its actions.'"

BAD READER

Dr. Fitzgerald read his speech. He spoke in a monotone. This was his first time in America, he said. He was going to be short for he had to catch the 7.10 train to Boston. The script ran for 11 pages; at about page seven a woman's voice came from the back of the hall.

"No one understands one word you are saying," she said.

A club officer urged her to be quiet. The Minister raised his voice somewhat as he said, speaking of the Provisionals: "This new and militant group launched a campaign of bombing and shooting in Belfast and Derry."

A woman in a green dress stood up. "It was not a new group," she cried in a Kerry accent. "Joe Clarke belongs to it and he's from 1916."

A man moved quickly to her side and there was a muttered argument in which the woman could be heard saying: "I'm not emotional. I will not leave. I want to hear what he has to say."

MINISTER LIES

The Minister read on: "Rarely has any political movement so much in the public eye been so totally and utterly repudiated by a people," he said. Page 10 of his script was missing and there was an awkward mid-sentence pause. Paddy McKiernan of the Consul-General's office stepped up with a new script, and four minutes later the speech was over.

KNEW NOTHING

The questions began. Seamus Naughton of the NAIF wanted to know about two Strabourge case witnesses arrested by British troops in the North; he gave their names as Bradley and Duffy. The Minister knew nothing about it. The Strabourge complaint was not being withdrawn. "I can give you an absolute guarantee on that."

"Mr. Fitzgerald, what about England's role?" a woman called from the back.

"I'm answering five questions," the Minister said. "give me a chance. I've visited Northern Ireland..."

"Once," the woman said.

"I've talked with Catholics and Protestants and extremist Protestant leaders."

"Don't talk about Catholics and Protestants," a man said. "Talk about England."

"A girl identifying herself as 'a Catholic from Northern Ireland who had always looked to the Free State for help,' asked why the "self-sacrificing, non-violent protest" of the hunger strikers in Mountjoy was being ignored by the Government.

They were in jail under Irish law and the Government was not going to give in to blackmail, the Minister said.

IMPASSIONED ADDRESS

The chairman, a tall, affable young man, clearly had expected nothing like this. Up to now no club member had asked a question. A short, balding, elderly man was trying to catch the chairman's eye. "Please, Joe," the chairman said, "ask a question and keep it short."

Joe Reynolds, 35 years in America, delivered an impassioned address on the evils of Partition. The Minister, leaning against a wall, listened urbanly. "As far as we are concerned," he said at the end. "The Irish people have voted overwhelmingly for peace."

"As president of the club I'm now calling the meeting to a close," the chairman said.

The women in the back began to sing. "Take it down from the mast, Irish traitor, you have brought on it nothing but shame..." Two strongly-built young men tried to come through a door from a kitchen, a bulky FBI agent moved twifly to block their passage. He pushed them out the door again.

The Minister left to catch his train. The tumult died away. One of the women questioners, Bridget Brannigan from Armagh, says she has a brother in Mountjoy. She pickets Bord Fáilte's offices on Fifth Avenue every day.

THE 'SKEA SCENE

LORD LONGFORD and Mary Whitehouse are half-way round the bend lately over the increasing use of those four-letter words. Laudable though their anger may be, we in the 'Skea Scene have no desire to join in the great debate. However, it has come to our notice that our people are using four letters—not a word, thank God—but four letters in their everyday conversation. We feel it is our duty to inform you that, though still at the examination stage, theologians think that the letters may be obscene. In future, then, if we are tempted to say S.D.P. we should pause for a moment, especially if children are present, lest we are giving scandal.

The perils facing the Brits in our county have made it necessary for weeping Willie and his henchmen to import a medical unit complete with doctors, nurses and operating theatre. The new building sited at St. Angelo's is surrounded, of course, by a cloak of secrecy. We managed, though, to penetrate the curtain and discovered that 'Skea is to the fore in sending its quota of casualties. A simple Saracen patrol from Lisnaskea to Newtown seldom returns unscathed; they've been known to run out of road, too, and even three times on the seven mile trip. Night duty at the pig house has its hazards also as sentries, frightened out of their skins, fire at shadows in the yard, and depending on the accuracy of the guard, morning light may produce a comrade lying shot in the backside. Off-duty Brits live dangerously too. An afternoon's relaxation in Sylvan Hill has more than just the natural risks associated with such pastimes and some poor soldiers are often quite cut up about it afterwards. We are told, of course, that the injuries were sustained while the trooper was peeling potatoes. We can't for the life of us understand how: the last chappie who was shifted from Sylvan Hill to St. Angelo managed to cut himself where he did if he was merely peeling a lock of spuds.

Derryman Robert Taylor's statement that the Civic Guards had a soft spot for the UDA, coupled with Donegan's open invitation to the Brits, will no doubt sound strange to the people in the Border towns. How pleasant it is for the Clones and Belurbet folk to know that the death and destruction in their towns was caused by good friends. We wonder if the people in North Donegal will likewise be impressed.

Congratulations to Cork on their all-Ireland victory: hard luck, Galway, but never mind, you'll fight again. Our visit to Croke Park brought back memories of some of the great games of the past. We chatted with former half-backs Mussen and Mahon, we waved to old-timer half-forwards Kinlough and Keenan. And we even had a nod for two old has-been's half-wits, Cosgrave and Childers.

See you.

MIXED GRILL

"WHAT will you give me that I may betray Him." For centuries Christians everywhere remember with horror those dreadful words of the informer Judas. For thirty pieces of silver he sold our Divine Lord and Master—delivered Him up to his enemies. The nemesis which overtook the traitor, we would say, befitted the crime. He hanged himself and St. Matthew tells us that while thus suspended he burst open and his intestines fell to the ground.

Today, almost 2,000 years later, we have Judas again raising his ugly head in the persons of our present informers and we have men in high places calling for more informers. On 19th September, Pat Cooney, Minister of Justice in the Southern Government, speaking about pursuing the IRA, appealed for people to come forward and "inform" the Security Forces of all illegal activity. He went on to emphasise and upgrade the hideous word "inform" and to state that he deliberately chose and used that word. Furthermore, he branded as cowards honest people who would not stoop to sell a fellow countryman. In Cooney's English—they were guilty of pusillanimity. He belongs to the "Ministry of Talent", so why not search for an occasional jaw-breaker?

In the mixed grill which is Cosgrave's Cabinet there is Paddy Donegan, Minister of Defence, encouraging the British Forces to cross the Border on reconnaissance flights, in other words to hound down Irishmen. He also told young Irish officers at a Commission Ceremony that they would probably find themselves doing Border duty in defence of the State, meaning, of course, that they must be prepared to co-operate with British forces in their murderous activities—activities which could lead to further assassinations of Northern Catholics or perhaps bombing of border towns on the Southern side of the Border. But Donegan could stretch obedience too far. I am reminded of the Galwayman, Constable Lee, R.I.C. Barracks, Listowel, who in 1920 stood up against the Divisional Commander, Colonel Smyth, who had just given orders for the murder of Irishmen. Up stood Constable Lee saying: "In your ignorance, sir, you forget you are addressing Irishmen." Throwing down their caps and belts he and fourteen other policemen left the barracks.

A British paper recently carried a feature on "The typical Irishman" in Britain! It went on to say it was a pity that the typical Irishman in Britain was not the typical Irishman in Ireland. It went on to grade the image which Paddy has built up in the last ten years. I wonder what kind of images do our Paddy ministers convey to our exiles in Britain. After the next election one of them might get a job in the British Secret Service and the other could join the Paras if he cannot find a cavalry regiment where he could bring up the rear on a tinker's ass.

A thought for all informers—1st November is "All Saints' Day". It is also the anniversary of Kevin Barry's execution. Kevin, we feel sure, ranks high among the saints and I would recommend the pusillanimous Pat to draw inspiration from Barry's noble sacrifice.

Turn informer and we'll free you—but Barry proudly answered "No".

Utterly Disgusted

"PEANUTS FOR PECK"

FORMER British Ambassador Sir John Peck has joined the board of Edmund Dillon and Co. Ltd., wine and spirit merchants. Do any of our readers know where this Irish firm is based? Do any of our readers know why an Irish firm should appoint the former representative of Enemy No. 1 to a £2,000-plus per annum job?

Please let us know at 3 Queen St., Enniskillen.

FERMANAGH CITIZENS' ADVICE SOCIETY

WON £5 EACH

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS:

MARY McCAFFERY,
Tagues Hill, Fivemiletown,
Co. Tyrone

BERNARD FITZPATRICK,
Hermitage, Magheraveely,
Co. Fermanagh