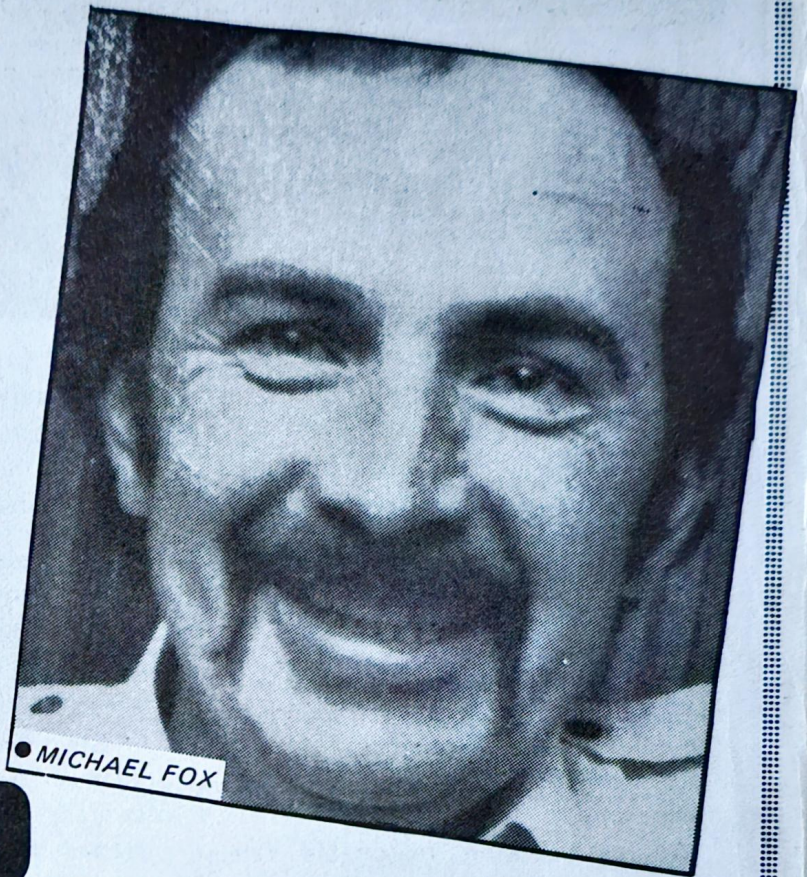


How long is life?



THERE are, at present, 12 republican prisoners serving life sentences and four serving 40 years (without remission) in Portlaoise Jail.

These are: Michael Fox, Sean McGettigan, George McDermott, James McPhillips, Michael Kinsella, Eamonn Nolan, Aaron O'Connell, Seamus Soraghan, Jimmy Gavin, Tony Bryson, Liam Townsend, Tommy McMahan, serving life; Peter Rogers, Thomas Eccles, Pat McPhillips and Brian McShane, all serving 40 years without remission.

The longest-serving republican prisoner in this state is Michael Fox.

Michael Fox, from Dublin, is 37 years of age and is now in his 13th year of imprisonment.

In 1973, he was sentenced along with two others to life imprisonment. One of those, Tom Smith, was shot dead by troops in the jail in 1975 and the other, James Callaghan, who later disassociated himself from the republican prisoners, was released in 1982.

Four others have completed 11 years and although one of those is in an



extremely bad state of mental health he is still being held by the authorities.

It has been strongly suggested to the family of Michael Fox by senior politicians that if he were to renounce his political beliefs he would have an early release.

He is therefore being held hostage for his political beliefs.

The Portlaoise Prisoners Relatives Action Committee is demanding the immediate release of Michael Fox and of the others who have completed 11 years' imprisonment.

We are seeking reasonable release dates for all others serving life sentences. We do not accept that anyone should serve 40 years in prison nor do we accept state-sanctioned murder.

The former Justice Minister, Michael Noonan, is on record as having said that

the average sentence by those given life imprisonment in this state is seven years. Yet he has refused to even grant release dates to those who have served as long as 12 years in Portlaoise.

Portlaoise is an antiquated prison, built in the last century. It is in an extremely bad state of repair and detrimental to the health of all the prisoners but particularly long-term prisoners.

Strip-searches and beatings take place all the time. Most visits allow no physical contact and exercise facilities are extremely bad.

Michael Fox has endured 12 years of these conditions. We say he has served more than enough.

We demand the immediate release of Michael Fox and release dates for all other republican 'lifers'.

RELEASE MICHAEL FOX!