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KEVIN BARRY HOUSE, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland.

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1. BRUTALITY CONTINUES IN CASTLEREAGH

In the wake of the Bennet Report, for about a week, the R.U.C. interrogators appeared to have stopped using unrestrained brutality but this respite proved to be short-lived. Reports from victims of interrogations in Castlereagh R.U.C. barracks now indicate that the R.U.C. are up to all their old tricks. What is called 'saturation interrogation' lasting for periods of up to thirteen hours per day is now one of the main methods being used. This means that the police try to 'break' their victims within the forty eight hours allowed and before solicitors succeed to gain access to their clients. The claims of Roy Mason, British Secretary to the North, and Kennet Newman, chief of the R.U.C., of implementing safeguards for those arrested are already shown to be a mere smokescreen. The following is just one sample case, by no means the most recent one:

Joe Deery was arrested under a seven day detention order on Tuesday, 20th March last. He was released on Sunday, March 25th, having spent five days in Castlereagh. He was interrogated for more than twelve hours on each of four days and nine hours on the fifth day. During this sixty hours of interrogation nearly forty different plainclothes men took part in eighteen separate sessions.

For four days, interrogation for Joe Deery was between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.; between 1.45 p.m. and 6 p.m.; and between 6.45 p.m. and 11.30 p.m.

Relays of pairs of C.I.D. men changed over every two hours. This

ensured the R.U.C. were fresh physically and mentally while their victims grew more tired.

Threats to Joe Deery's life were accompanied with the threat to arrest and gaol his 17 year old son Kevin. His interrogators complained of Joe's resilience during the prolonged interrogation but smugly told him his son wouldn't be so tough. Within two weeks of Deery's release the R.U.C. had his son in Castlereagh. He was arrested with three other seventeen year olds in a swoop by British army and police on the Twinbrook area of Belfast.

Interrogation

The interrogation methods used on these youths were entirely different to that used on Joe Deery.

The R.U.C. subjected the youths to deliberately degrading physical and mental ill-treatment. Nearly every interrogation session began with the youths being forced to stand in a humiliating position, either with their backs to the wall and hands pointed upwards to the ceiling, or in a squatting position in the corner of the room. They were forced to stand in these positions for long periods of time.

When they collapsed from exhaustion their tormentors trailed them off the ground by the hair and forced them back into the position again. If they refused to comply, they were slapped across the face, punched in the stomach or punched on the top of their head.

Nearly every question put to them was preceded with a slap across the face. During one session Kevin Deery was choked until he blacked out. When he came round he was flung from one end of the room to the other. During another session he had a black plastic bag put loosely over his head. The light in the room was then switched off and while held by an R.U.C. man with his arms locked behind his back he was beaten by two others in the stomach, kidneys and privates.

During most interrogations, obscene language was used. One youth complained that his interrogators wanted him to drop down his trousers and talked among themselves about watching him going to the toilet. Another youth's mother and sister were repeatedly called whores.

One of the youths, William O'Con-

nor, complained that during one session his head was forced sideways down on top of a table while another R.U.C. man slapped him around the ear causing him to feel dazed and disoriented. For several minutes he did not know where he was.

After three days the R.U.C. charged the youths and transported them to Crumlin Road Jail.

Two Approaches

It can be seen from these accounts that the R.U.C. are using two distinct approaches to interrogation. The method chosen, either saturation interrogation plus threats, as in the case of Joe Deery or degrading treatment plus threats, as in the case of the three youths, depends on the apparent vulnerability of the victim.

There can be no doubt that the reluctantly accepted Bennett proposal which allows solicitors access to their clients after forty-eight hours in R.U.C. custody is causing them a lot of problems.

In the case of the youths, the R.U.C.'s desperation was shown in the way they were obviously trying to break their victims before the forty-eight hour period was over. Although the youths were not brutalised as badly as past victims, they nonetheless underwent a gruelling and exhausting period of interrogation, including physical ill-treatment.

Despite Bennett, sophisticated torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and naked brutality continue to be practised in R.U.C. interrogation centres.

2. ANOTHER RESIGNATION FROM POLICE AUTHORITY

A leading member of the Northern Ireland Police Authority, Belfast solicitor Mr. Donall Murphy, has resigned over what he calls "the unresolved crisis concerning ill-treatment of suspects and prisoners in police custody".

Mr. Murphy represented the Law Society on the 19-man Authority, a public watchdog on the RUC.

It was revealed in Belfast today that he tendered his resignation in a letter to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Mr. Roy Mason.

This latest development is bound to add more fuel to the flames of controversy since the Bennett report on police interrogation methods, and

will add to the pressure on the Chief Constable, Sir Kenneth Newman, to resign.

Mr Murphy quite bluntly says in his letter of resignation that he is not convinced that any action will be taken either by Mr. Mason, or Sir Kenneth to resolve the crisis.

No Termination

Mr. Murphy points out that the grave concern of police doctors, expressed for the first time in 1977, has not as yet achieved any termination of the ill-treatment.

Another member of the Police Authority, Cllr. Jack Hassard, of Dungannon, also resigned recently, because of the failure of the Authorities to investigate brutality charges against the police in the case of John Joseph Rafferty of Dungannon.

Mr. Murphy's resignation is the subject of a lengthy 3-page letter which sets out the reason for his resignation, under eight headings.

Here, Mr. Murphy is obviously referring to Dr. Robert Irwin, who has testified that he personally knows of 150 or 160 cases of prisoners under interrogation receiving injuries that could not have been self-inflicted.

It is also a reference to Dr. Dennis Elliott, who quit as chief medical officer at Gough Barracks, Armagh, because he did not agree with the treatment of suspects.

Both doctors have received massive support from members of the medical profession. Some 20 police surgeons have come out in open support of them

Prima Facia Evidence

Mr. Murphy states that prima facia evidence of ill-treatment from ordinary doctors, police doctors, the Amnesty report, the Bennett report and previous findings of the European Court of Human Rights "stands undiluted and without identifiable culprits."

He also alleges apparent disregard of the concept of policing by consent, the diminishing respect by the public for the judicial system, and suspicion cast upon the integrity of the medical profession.

Mr. Murphy accuses Mr. Mason of failing to recognise the Police Authority's endeavour to act as a safeguard for the community.

He says he has resigned because he is convinced that the Authority is powerless, and without the collective will to do anything about the crisis.

Mr. Mason and the Chief Constable are now in a position where they will have to respond to the serious issues raised by Mr. Murphy, who is described as the legal representative on the Police Authority.

3. TRADE UNIONISTS DEMAND END TO TORTURE

A call to the entire Trade Union movement to keep up the pressure for an end to torture and repression in Ireland and support for the H-Blocks prisoners' demands has been made by a trade Union group in Belfast this week. The ever growing and strengthening Trade Union Campaign Against Repression groups throughout Ireland have been very active for some time in making trade Unionists aware of the extent of torture and repression North and South.

The appeal to Trade Unionists was made by the West Belfast Branch of T.U.C.A.R. in a statement on the present controversy that is raging concerning recent comments made by police surgeon Dr. Robert Irwin. On T.V. programme "Weekend World" recently, Dr. Irwin stated that he had examined over 160 victims who came through Castlereagh. He concluded that they had in his opinion been tortured and that it was not self-inflicted.

Castlereagh

The statement of the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression said: "Of course Dr. Irwin went on to emphasise that only a small number of RUC personnel, about 20 were involved in this torture in Castlereagh. This implies that the RUC as a whole were totally ignorant and even blameless of the torture and ill-treatment. We in TUCAR do not accept this implication, in fact we would state that the RUC as a whole were as guilty as the torturers in Castlereagh as their whole record of murder and repression in the last 10 years has shown, especially regarding the anti-unionist working class areas in Belfast and Derry. The 20 thugs in Castlereagh are an elite torture squad trained by British Army personnel and put there by Mason and Newman in order to try and crush the working-class resistance to British rule in Ireland.

Anyway, Irwin has only mentioned the tip of the iceberg, how many more thousands of young working class men and women have been tortured, but they have been too frightened and intimidated to say so? Over 80 p.c. of the convictions in the no-jury Diplock courts are done through signed confessions. Those convicted are then transported to the horror of the H-Blocks where so many young people are serving life sentences.

Conspiracy of Silence

One of the most significant things to come out of the Irwin controversy is the complete silence regarding the death of Brian Maguire, the 27-year-old trade unionist from Strathearn Audio. Brian was found hanged in his cell on May 12 last. It was Brian's death that sparked off the Bennett

Report (which again whitewashes the RUC torturers). Why is Brian Maguire not mentioned? He was probably murdered by the so-called 20 "evil RUC men" in Castlereagh, Irwin specifically mentions in his statement. We call for an end to this conspiracy of silence by press and media.

H-Blocks

In view of the above points, we in TUCAR call upon the entire Trade Union movement in Ireland to set up their own inquiry into Brian Maguire's death, into torture and the no-jury Diplock courts, and especially into the horrific conditions that Republican prisoners are at present enduring under the prison regime in Long Kesh. Also in light of the 14 picked journalists getting into the H-Blocks it is now open to Trade-unionists to demand access to the H-Blocks. Many of the blanket men are still or were active trade unionists before they were sentenced on the basis of signed confessions.

Torture and repression has gone on long enough. Mason is under pressure; Trade Unionists must keep up that pressure, pass motions at union branch meetings demanding a trade union inquiry into torture and repression. H-Block has been with us long enough. Close it now.

4. LET US RUN OUR OWN LIVES

"The death of anyone is a tragedy which cannot be minimised. The continuing deaths in the north of Ireland clearly call for a radical solution, which can only be that the British Government removes its overall control of the area."

This was stated by well known priest and community worker Fr. Desmond Wilson of Belfast. The optimism of Fr. Wilson and his strong belief in the political maturity of his people is shown in the following article of his which we publish in full.

"The reason why so many people are saying this (above quote) is not because of what Wolfe Tone said, or because of what Robert Emmet said, or Pádraig Pearse. It is simply because as time goes on people in Northern Ireland are becoming more politically mature, more aware of their own competence and more willing to be masters of their own lives. The natural consequence of becoming more politically educated, more experienced and more mature is that people want and need their independence.

Therefore what Wolfe Tone and the rest said must surely be important because of their analysis of the political situation, not because we take our political thinking from them. Our political thinking is our own, and it must be our own. James Connolly could not solve our problems, he lived

too long ago. We have to solve our own problems—he can give people some insights into what politics and economics are about, as can they all, but the decisions must be ours, and ours alone.

Rate of Progress

Translate that into terms which the Protestants of Northern Ireland can understand and the message is the same. They have come a long way since Carson's day, and the rate of progress has been such as to leave the fundamentalist protestant reason for wanting some form of independence gravely lacking in relevance. Hatred of the papacy is not all that important. Fear of being overwhelmed by Catholics who are as fundamentalist as Paisley is, if of far greater importance. But most important of all is the fact that Protestants are feeling, many of them, the same desire not to be patronised, not to be over-ruled, not to be dictated to as Catholics have felt for a long time. The onset of political maturity is painful but it leads to the desire to be free of interference.

Once one recognises the desire for freedom, whether it is "freedom from British Influence" or from "the power of the Dublin Government", as coming from the maturity of people who have learned their politics the hard way, one becomes more sympathetic to all ideas of freedom. People are, one can hope, becoming less tolerant of those who take away their freedom, and especially those who ruthlessly destroy their peace of mind, fill them with fear and in the end kill them or their friends. Obviously a radical solution to political problems is required and this radical solution will have to overturn many of the values which our two societies, north and south in Ireland, have had imposed on them. Militarism is only one of the values which we will have to learn to do without if we are to have any kind of new Ireland. But of course militarism is exactly what this two-headed Christian country will give up last of all.

The Problem

The problem is heavily underlined by what Father Wells said at the funeral of a soldier who had been killed in Northern Ireland. "This young man", he said, "Gave his life for his country, justice, and in an effort to bring sanity into a mad situation." Armies, said Father Wells, were ultimately intended to secure peace and a man who entered the forces gave service to the community. "During the course of that service Kevin has given his life but he was ready to sacrifice himself—greater love than this no man hath, than to lay down his life for his friends."

It would be indelicate to go into a criticism of the assumptions under-

lying this statement; statements by Christians made in the course of an act of worship should be sacred enough to be considered privileged. Clearly, however, there is a problem. How do Christians in Ireland and in England interpret the work of soldiers in Ireland? Are they justified in what they do? Should they be there at all? Is it morally right to induct young men and women into armies where they undergo training for killing for reward? The arguments used against the paramilitaries in Ireland is that they kill other people, and that killing is wrong. But how then can one justify inducing young men and women to learn how to kill for money? The safety of the Fatherland? The prosperity of the Fatherland? The extension of the Fatherland? The formation of an Empire for the Fatherland? The upholding of a regime in Colombia, or Ireland?

There is not one of these questions that the Christians in Ireland have faced, much less answered. And they never will.

Meanwhile the life of Kevin Johnson is taken away, the life of Mrs Johnson blighted, just as the lives of so many of our people have been taken away and the lives of so many are blighted by prison, corrupt courts and false theories of who is the master over whom. And for what? So that the British Government can keep control of one and a half million people for a few more miserable years?

A Clean Break Now

Because at the end of it all, when the British Government does eventually, and reluctantly, remove its control we will no doubt be advised to wave the troops goodbye and to sing to them as if we hoped they would soon be back, as friends, or tourists, or as agents, or something. That will happen when political necessity decrees it should happen, when political necessity requires it. We may easily be left with a situation in which further bloodshed is inevitable. Better to make a clean break now and if more British soldiers are killed it will not be on our soil. We could do with less killing. Let the soldiers be involved wherever the politicians decide, but we have had more than enough.

The death of anyone is a tragedy which cannot be minimised. Yet much of our political thinking is based upon the presumption that some of the people have to die. I remember being appalled by reading how generals at war coolly estimated beforehand how many men they were going to lose. The number did not matter except that it might make victory uncertain. The men actually did not matter. Today things are somewhat different, but only somewhat. It is considered a disgrace for an officer in Northern

Ireland to "lose" any of his men. That seems to be because the war over in Ireland is not about the amount of territory you have control of—if it were about territory, as in the world wars, then success or failure would be counted by the square miles you had, and the number of men lost would be regrettable but of secondary importance. Since the war in Northern Ireland is about attacks on soldiers and capturing enemies, then the number of men is important. That much at least we have learned about how people conduct their wars.

I have a belief that if we all had the courage of what we believe in, the "Northern Ireland problem" would be solved in months, not years. And above all other things, I believe in the political maturity of our whole people.

5. DUBLIN GOVERNMENT DEFENSIVE ON PRISONS

A comprehensive examination of the 26 county system could no longer be postponed, Mr. Sean MacBride, the Lenin and Nobel Peace prize winner, said in Dublin last week. He was summing up at the end of a week-end session of an "unofficial" Commission of Inquiry into the prison system under the Dublin government.

Mr. MacBride was co-chairman of the inquiry which was organised by the Prisoners' Rights Organisation (PRO) and which heard storeis of prison life from former inmates, ex-prison officers, legal people and voluntary organisations. It is expected to reach its conclusions at the end of September. Government Departments and officials who in some way deal with prisoners are to be asked for their views, but the other joint chairman, Mr. Louk Hulsman, a Dutch professor of criminology, and chairman of the Council of Europe's Committee on Decriminalisation, said that he was shocked by the absence of prison staff, police and officials at the inquiry.

Mr. MacBride said there had been no attempt at a comprehensive review of the prison system for over a hundred years. "The time has come when we can no longer postpone a complete review", he said.

The Commission which laid much emphasis on the imprisonment and treatment of, what would be called "non-political offenders", although it also heard submissions on Republican prisoners' conditions, nevertheless took the view that all prisoners are to an extent "political" prisoners. Many offenders were victims of economic conditions, said Mr. MacBride. "Juvéniles formed a high percentage of the prison population", he said. "It would be much better to educate them and provide them with training and jobs instead of

locking them up."

Mr. MacBride said that the political situation had allowed the bureaucracy to take prison measures in the name of security that they would not have been able to take otherwise.

Mr. Hulsman said that the Irish criminal justice system was extremely isolated and defensive. He was "astounded" at the absence at the enquiry of representatives of the official agencies within the system. The isolation was an important obstacle to change.

One of the first tasks of the reform process would be to break that isolation.

Some submissions to the commission strongly criticised what was termed "the extremely closed system that exists between the department of Justice, its Minister and the government which is incommunicable in the extreme".

All the evidence indicates that our prisons are merely places of punishment and the penal process punitive and no better than a system of ridicule. The system is extremely outmoded and demoralising, the hardships extending beyond the prisoners themselves to relatives and families filled with concern for the psychiatric and physical welfare of their imprisoned members.

The families and friends of prisoners are repeatedly treated with indignities as they visit prisoners, especially in Mountjoy and Portlaoise prisons. Extremely long delays in cold and dirty waiting rooms which is humiliating, "almost their share of penalty for visiting a prisoner".

Files of affidavits were also submitted regarding Republican prisoners in Portlaoise and the treatment of persons detained in Garda stations. The commission heard about "severe limitations on information regarding prison conditions imposed by the Justice department and the frightful excesses of punishment and ill-treatment in Portlaoise prison under the last Minister for Justice Mr. Cooney. Prisoners are still made to suffer over and above the penalty imposed on them by the courts. Although it is apparent that the severity of this injustice is not as acute in Portlaoise now as it was a year ago the fact remains that there is no safeguard whatever to deter the authorities of any of our prisons from implementing again the same cruel treatment.

The commission also heard of the need for safeguards for those detained for interrogation purposes:

"This has become more apparent recently as result of the increasing allegations of Garda ill-treatment of detainees. Alleged crimes by certain members of the Gardai—testimonies of which were submitted—should be investigated. The notion of the Gardai investigating complaints against themselves was something totally unreal-

istic and unacceptable.

"One has only to revert to the case in the North of Samuel Devenny who was attacked in his home by the RUC on April 19th, '69 and who died in July '69. Chief Constable Sir Arthur Young in a statement on November 4th, 1970 on the police inquiry into the case, attributed lack of evidence to a 'conspiracy of silence' among members of the RUC. The following day the Prime Minister Major Chichester-Clark called on the policemen involved in the assault on Devenny to consider the wider implications of remaining silent. But silent they have since remained."

A solicitor told the commission that the Curragh military camp, county Kildare, was used as a dustbin where the authorities "would hope to discard decent people who have proved unmanageable or awkward in their criticism of our prisons."

The visiting committee had criticised this unit as being unfit for long-term prisoners. Anyhow, he said, there had to be an objection to the use of the military for civil control.

The PRO, in a submission added that prisoners should have the right to join a union and take part in the political process.

6. GOVERNMENT SLAMMED BY OWN COMMITTEE

Strong criticism of the Dublin Government's rejection of the O Briain Committee report a year ago, was made this week by Mr Ruairi Roberts, general secretary of the Congress of Trade Unions, who was a member of the three-man committee.

The report was that of a government pseudo-inquiry into the safeguards for persons in police custody. It was headed by former judge Barra O Briain who himself criticised the government recently for its rejection of most of the inquiry committee's suggestions to put an end to torture allegations. The government's failure to accept and implement the report's main recommendations, compared with their attitude when in opposition, has been widely criticised as sheer inconsistency and rank hypocrisy.

Why The Inquiry.

The refusal to implement the recommendations made him now wonder, said Ruairi Roberts, why the government bothered to set up the committee at all.

Mr Roberts, speaking on the RTE's "Frontline," described as "wholly inexplicable" the Government's rejection of the recommendation.

"At the present time," said Mr Roberts, "it is the practice that people are brought to a garda station without having the right to walk out and say, 'I am not answering any questions.'

"This is a practical situation and has grown up over the years — one that has no basis in law and is contrary to the constitution. Our very first recommendation was that this must stop."

Mr Roberts said that to reject that recommendation was absolutely absurd. In respect of the rejection of some of the other recommendations as well, he wondered why the committee had been set up.

Another absurd thing about the Government's response, said Mr Roberts, was that it said it would give further consideration to the addendum of the chairman of the committee. "To me that was absolutely meaningless," he said as that addendum was based on recommendations already rejected.

The examination carried out by the committee was worthwhile, he said. It was still as necessary today as it was a year ago to effect the recommendations.

Mr Roberts made it clear that he, like Mr Justice Barra O Briain, had been given the impression by the Minister for Justice, Mr Collins, that a senior garda officer would be appointed to investigate individual allegations of ill-treatment. If these allegations had been sufficient to lead to the establishment of their committee to advise on safeguards against brutality "then they must have been serious enough to require investigation," Mr Roberts said.

Commenting on the recent controversy in which Mr Collins had claimed that Mr O Briain was confused, Mr Roberts said: "If anybody is confused it is the Minister."

The recommendations made by the committee to safeguard suspects in custody were still as necessary as ever and should be implemented now, Mr Roberts said.

In the same programme, Mr O Briain said the Government now appears to consider that maltreatment of suspects did not take place. But they must at least have thought it possible that this could happen and the report recommendations were just intended to make it very difficult to happen, Mr O Briain added.

The establishment of the O Briain committee did not satisfy the demands of the Republican movement or the many civil rights groups and individuals who had been calling consistently for an independent public inquiry into allegations of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees. The International human rights organisation Amnesty International, in its annual report published recently, again expressed its concern at the fact that there has been no public inquiry set up.