

The

CAPTIVE VOICE



An Glór Gafa

Vol. 3 No. 2

Summer 1991

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The Voice of the Irish Republican Prisoners of War

'I'll wear no convict's uniform...



...nor meekly serve my time'

The CAPTIVE VOICE

An Glór Gafa

The Captive Voice An Glór Gafa is a quarterly magazine written in its entirety by Irish Republican POWs currently being held in Ireland, England, Europe and the US. It is published by Sinn Féin's POW Department.

Irish Republicans have always recognised that resistance to British misrule does not end upon their arrest. The battles to be fought and the tactics to be employed may change but the enemy remains the same. In the words of our comrade Bobby Sands:

"The jails are engineered to crush the political identity of the captured Republican prisoner, to crush his/her resistance and transform him/her into a systemised answering-machine with a large criminal tag stamped by oppression upon his/her back, to be duly released on to the street, politically cured — politically barren — and permanently broken in spirit."

The establishment of this jail journal is a tribute not only to our families, friends and comrades, whose strength and support have been inspirational to us all, but also

is a clear recognition that we are what we are — political prisoners, unbroken in our deep-rooted desire for freedom.

The Captive Voice affords us a platform and an opportunity to present in print our views on those topics and issues which affect daily life both inside and outside of the jails. The magazine contains political analyses of current national and international affairs, culture, short stories, poetry and the latest updates on prison-related campaigns and issues. Satire and humour can also be found within the special features, cartoons and artwork illustrations.

We have been pleased and greatly encouraged by the response to the magazine. It is hoped that the sharing of our feelings and experiences through the pages of *An Glór Gafa* will be both beneficial and enjoyable for all our readers.

We are determined that our message and our *Captive Voice* shall be heard by many.

— The Irish Republican Prisoners of War ■

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In our last issue the drawing *Trial by Media* was done by Jim Doherty and Martin McLaughlin

Cover Illustration



No Convicts Uniform
By Terry Boyle (Long Kesh)

We welcome correspondence with ideas, suggestions or comments on the contents of *Captive Voice*/*An Glór Gafa* or on any subject of concern to prisoners

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The

CAPTIVE VOICE



An Glór Gafa

On the 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising the 26-County government didn't want to know. Fianna Fáil — the self-styled 'Republican Party' — didn't want to know. All the more reason, therefore, to praise the work of the organisers of Reclaim the Spirit of 1916. They not only commemorated Easter Week in a popular and imaginative way with events throughout Ireland, but they drew lessons for Irish society today. If one takes the hope and promise for the future contained in the 1916 Proclamation and compares it with the achievements of the 26-County state it is not difficult to see that the ideals have been left unfulfilled. Even if we long ago lost any illusions about politicians living up to the aspirations of that revolutionary moment in our history, they remain to be judged by the simple, everyday expectations of how a society treats its citizens. The 26-County state has failed abysmally and is a travesty of the concept of independence.

Reclaim the Spirit of 1916 are to be applauded for raising their spotlights to focus on modern Ireland. Simply looking back is of no benefit. Anniversaries must also be seen as opportunities for a critical examination of the present and for debates around paths to the future. The events of Easter Week have a striking relevance to Ireland today and that is why those in power were too embarrassed to stage a serious commemoration.

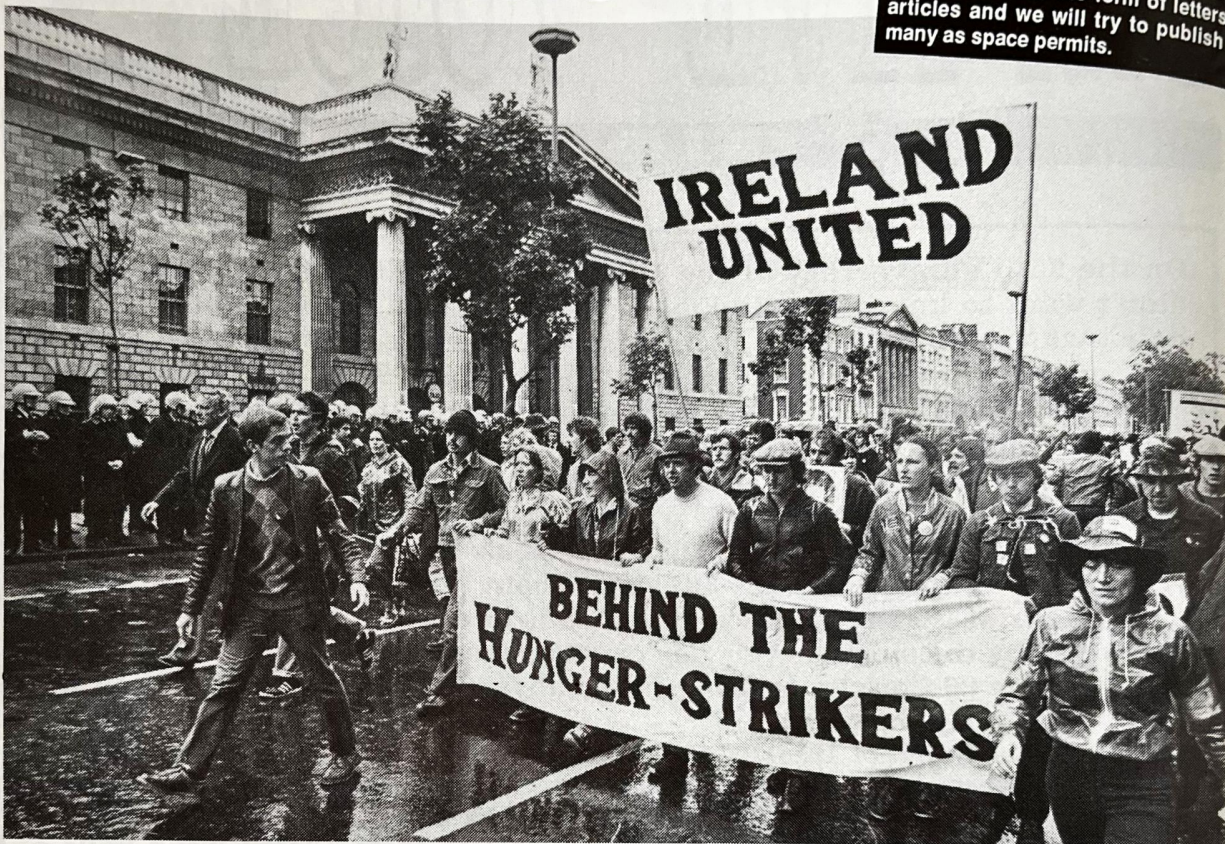
This year also sees the 10th anniversary of the death on hunger strike of ten POWs in Long Kesh. For today's Republicans 1981 is a year of many tragic, sad and inspirational memories. We each remember the slow deaths of our comrades in the battle against the criminalisation of our struggle and we each remember the rising anger against those who let them die. For many individuals the hunger strike was a turning point, just as it was a turning point in the history of our movement.

As with the 75th anniversary of 1916, the commemoration of 1981 should relate to today, to the achievement of the Republic. We should critically examine our present situation and debate how our movement can bring about the victory of our struggle.

Anniversaries must not be fleeting gestures. They represent a chance to bring people together in order to build for the future. That necessarily begins with analysis and debate. Therefore in this issue of *An Glór Gafa/The Captive Voice* we examine the legacy of 1916 and 1981 in a way which we hope will carry the spirit of those years into the future.

TEN YEARS ON

Ten Years On: An Glór Gafa/Captive Voice seeks to be a forum for political analysis and debate around issues of interest to Republicans. Below we publish an article drawn up by a number of POWs in Long Kesh. We welcome responses to it in the form of letters or articles and we will try to publish as many as space permits.



IN THE MIDDLE of the Brooke talks is a quiet time to consider the struggle for Irish self-determination. Ten years on from the death of Bobby Sands, where do we stand?

In the Six Counties 20 years of struggle has produced a deformed little state, as if it wasn't deformed enough already. It defies a simple class analysis because its administration and institutions are predicated on 'the fight against terrorism'. One only has to listen to the pronouncements of the NIO ministers responsible for areas such as education and economic development to realise how much policies are calculated for their effect in marginalising support for the Republican struggle. Maintaining the Six Counties by force is costing the British untold millions and tarnishing their name in every corner of the world.

So why don't they simply

pack up and leave? What could possibly attract them to remain here? Hasn't Peter Brooke said they have no strategic or economic interest in Ireland? There may well be a body of opinion within the British establishment which would be only too glad to be rid of Ireland, as Enoch Powell has long argued there is. But even if this view were to prevail, they would not simply phone for a fleet of Hercules transport planes and fly out of Aldergrove Airport. The British may say this is because they fear the political consequences — both domestic and international — of being seen to accept the IRA's terms. They may also cite the danger that Loyalists would not meekly ac-

cept such a fate, nor be easily disarmed.

But an examination of Britain's colonial history would tell us that if they were thinking of withdrawal, their main concern would be to ensure that a régime to their liking is left behind in Ireland. Part of that process — the major part — would require the neutralisation of the Republican Movement, and in particular the crushing of the IRA. But if that were done, why would the British have to withdraw? Their problems would be solved — albeit temporarily — and there would be no need to tackle the thorny issue of the Loyalists. With the same logic, calls for the IRA to lay down their arms is simply a call for the continued existence of the Six-County state, for without any forces ranged against their presence, why should the British leave?

Let us for the moment therefore, view Britain's presence in Ireland as a desire to maintain stability. Whether that stability is best maintained by continued partition or by a United Ireland free from revolutionary political influence is largely irrelevant given the long-term view taken by Britain. In other words, no matter what the details of the British intentions, the practical effect for Republicans is the same — we have no place in their New World Order.

UNRULY NATIVES

Ireland has always been part of Britain's imperialist duties, made all the more troublesome by being part of their 'United Kingdom' and containing a fair share of unruly natives. If Ireland were populated by clones of Charlie Haughey and Mary Robinson (perish the thought!) the British could happily slip

away and leave them to keep the country safe for capitalism, Coca-Cola and Karaoke Nights. But life is rather more complicated. Ireland has the highest rate of emigration in the Western World, the highest per capita foreign debt in the world, the most tenacious guerrilla army in the world, endemic and deeply entrenched discrimination, unemployment, poverty and potholes... stability there ain't.

The most obvious manifestation of instability in Ireland is political violence and it is not difficult to see why the British focus their energies on bringing it to an end. How? In 1984 David Miller, a British political scientist, wrote a paper entitled *The Use and Abuse of Political Violence* in which he said:

"Any government's authority, we hardly need reminding, rests ultimately on its capacity to protect persons and property from the invasions of others. Acts of violence go straight to the heart of that authority. Of course the response need not be to concede what those using violence are demanding: indeed it would very rarely be wise to do so overtly. Depending on the political situation, it may be possible to suppress the users of violence by force, or on the other hand to reach an accommodation with other more moderate elements in the same camp as the men of violence. The second possibility seems often to occur in the case of separatist movements, for instance: the gunmen create a situation in which the government is both able and willing to deal with 'respectable' politicians in the region concerned."

In an Irish context: seek by every legal and extra-legal means to crush the IRA and do a deal with the constitutional nationalists to undermine political support for Republicanism. That is the British strategy. It governs their actions from everyday harassment of Republicans on the street to the latest round of stop-go talks.

The British strategy is helped enormously by the objectives of constitutional nationalism. The 1981 hunger-strike had a major effect in polarising nationalism. The SDLP leadership, the Catholic church hierarchy, politicians in the 26

Counties and the nationalist middle class reacted with horror at the radicalisation of the people as they rallied in support of the prisoners. The demonstrations attracting tens of thousands and the growing mass movement threatened the power of those who ruled over us until they clearly saw their main objective as the defeat of Republicanism. These 'constitutionalists' have sought to contain the freedom struggle while still wearing the cloak of nationalism.

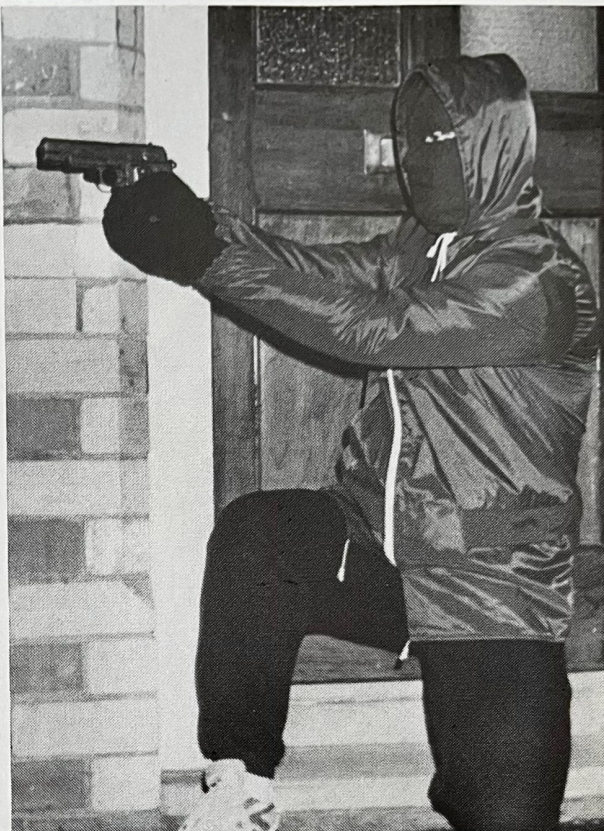
FORUM REPORT

First came the *Forum Report* in response to the surge in support for Sinn Féin. Months of deliberation produced three options — confederation, joint sovereignty, or a unitary state (the preferred option) — which were dismissed in one minute by Maggie Thatcher's "Out, out, out." The 'constitutional nationalists' quietly folded away their tattered cloak and in the years since then have aligned themselves with the British agenda.

Their common interests, enshrined in the Anglo-Irish Agreement, require an internal settlement for the Six Counties with an 'Irish dimension' which, it is hoped, will win the support of enough nationalists to marginalise the Republican Movement. Any compromises, no matter how feeble and meaningless (for example, giving Dublin a so-called consultative role in the affairs of the Six Counties), were given in response to our efforts, but within a process designed to defeat us.



● The Forum report was the first response to the surge in support for Sinn Féin



● The power of our armed struggle is that it forces the Brits to do something

The immediate problem for the British strategy was the intransigence of the Unionists, who have always been unable to countenance even the slightest hint of an 'Irish dimension'. The current talks seek to shift Unionist thinking that extra inch, to where the SDLP will have gone the final mile to abandoning any national aspi-

ration. Regardless of the outcome of the talks the dynamic is clear; it is towards an internal settlement. The irreformable state can be temporarily reformed. In the smoke-filled rooms of *réalpolitik* stranger things have happened.

Where does all this leave the Republican Movement? Where does our power to influence events lie? It is a question which goes to the heart of our movement.

Effectively since 1981 our struggle has had an overtly political as well as a military dimension. The rise of Sinn Féin as an electoral force came on the wave of support generated for the hunger strikes. It promised a leap forward for our struggle because it was becoming clear that victory could not be attained with a military campaign alone.

The power of our armed struggle is that it forces the Brits to do something, but without necessarily guaranteeing that that something is what the armed struggle set out to



● Reliance on electoralism as our primary political thrust has shown up its limitations

achieve. A low level guerrilla campaign requires a mass political organisation to further its objectives if it is not to be politically outflanked. In Ireland that organisation has to mobilise support North and South if it is to have the power to force its objectives onto the agenda. Put at its starkest, without a mass movement in the 26 Counties a United Ireland on our terms is impossible. 1981 promised such a movement. It has not happened. Why?

ELECTORALISM

One factor is Sinn Féin's electoral strategy. It is not that we are wrong to be involved in electoral politics — far from it, for such involvement is an essential tactic of the struggle. However, reliance upon electoralism as our primary political thrust has shown up its limitations, while the unrealistic expectations which we allowed ourselves to indulge in have had a demoralising effect. Many in the Republican leadership have spoken of the need to involve ourselves in the

people's day to day struggle and not become simply another set of political opportunists seeking votes at election time, but how much have we put that into practice?

It we look at Sinn Féin, its past was as a semi-clandestine organisation which acted as a support group for the IRA. It was straitjacketed by dogma — theories and doctrines correct once and for all time — and had a very weak culture of political debate and criticism. Such an organisation can benefit only at times of great political upheaval, and then only temporarily. Active revolutionaries must learn that the world is ever-changing and must be guided by the realities of today. If we don't, we become relics.

Consider absenteeism; a holy writ passed down through the generations with biblical reverence. It was finally abandoned in 1986 and was an important step in clearing obstacles to progress. However, many Republicans did not come to support its abolition out of their

own critical analysis and we as a movement still have a long way to go to rid ourselves of the thinking that the Republic can somehow be gained in spite of what Republicans do.

If one test of a revolutionary organisation is how capable it is of adapting itself to the new tasks which history continually throws up, then Sinn Féin in the years after the hunger strikes was entirely unsuited to building mass support in a new political environment.

A revolutionary organisation can only grow when it is in constant touch with the needs and demands of the people of no property, when it has an ideology grounded in that real experience, and when it has activists able to perform an organisational and leadership role.

Revolution in a modern western society is such a complex, many-faceted project that it can only be successfully undertaken by the mass of people steadily demanding control of more and more areas of their lives. Our future as revolution-

aries lies in our ability to organise the people's radical agenda.

FLEXIBLE

We must progress by analysing the experience of our activists through structures of open debate and discussion so that we are constantly involved in a process of developing our strategy according to political conditions. We must be flexible in our tactics in order to apply leverage in areas most vulnerable to our power — that is something which cannot be decreed from above. We must always be in a collective learning process because only a living party which learns how to be self-critical can hope to grow.

There is an underlying fear that open debate and criticism will call into question the role of the armed struggle. We don't believe that fear is justified. It is not the armed struggle which has hampered our development in the 26 Counties but our lack of a programme on everyday issues like housing, unemployment, health, etc.

In the 26 Counties we still do not prioritise what we have recognised as essential now for some years: the need to work with people around the issues which are of immediate concern to them. To present someone with an intellectual argument that their poverty, unemployment and powerlessness is the ultimate result of imperialism is not the way to bring them to awareness. Mobilising on the national question in the 26 Counties must be something which grows out of the people's own struggles. We can't impose a consciousness. People learn through struggle, through being in conflict with the forces which oppress them. That is how Republicans in the Six Counties have become aware and politicised, through confronting the many facets of state oppression.

Our lack of effectiveness in the 26 Counties must be understood and overcome if our struggle is not to drift into crisis.

Ten years on from the hunger strike of 1981, 75 years on from the Easter Rising we once again have a heavy responsibility. Our task is to be decisive and clinical in learning how to seize the initiative. History ignores its spectators. ■



Wouldn't it be nice if everyone forgot about it?

Máitiú O Treasaigh
(Portlaoise)

According to that towering intellect, Mark Cagney of 98 FM Classic Hits, let's have 'less talk, more music', because 1916 is all about 'man fighting man' and we should forget about it. That would appear to be the consensus within polite circles regarding the 1916 Rising in this the year of its 75th anniversary.

The hoary old revisionist chestnuts have also been regurgitated for the occasion. Basically stated, 1916 was an aberration which disrupted the peaceful evolution of Home Rule; the Rising was an unpopular attempt at a coup by extremists; Pearse was a Catholic fanatic obsessed with the imagery of Christ's crucifixion; Connolly was an embittered little man who abandoned social-

ism and threw his lot in with a bunch of maniacs; and finally, the majority of people preferred the Brits.

A more subtle distortion of history is that made by Fintan O'Toole of the *Irish Times*, who sees the anniversary of 1916 in the following light: "1991 is not just the year of the 75th anniversary of the Rising, it is also the year before 1992. Whatever it's right and wrongs, 1916

started something in blood and banners and glorious symbols which we are just about to end in ECUs and exchange rate mechanisms and the free flow of goods. They may not have known it, but what the men and women of 1916 fought for was an Irish seat at a European table." It takes a peculiar form of intellectual arrogance not only to state that people put their lives at risk for something they did not understand, but to try and claim that the logic of a rebellion against one imperialist domination must lead to our submitting to another, ruled from Brussels instead of London.

Much has also been made of the contrast between the official

pomp and ceremony of the 1966, 50th anniversary and the miserable apology for a commemoration staged this time around. Again, the neo-colonialist mentality addresses this issue in terms of our growing maturity and rejection of 'triumphalism'. But, to be quite blunt about it, to celebrate the Rising in 1966 was safe. The 26-County state was in a position of relative prosperity and social stability while the Six Counties was in a state of torpor. Also, the subjective factor of a vigorous revolutionary movement was absent so that to revive memories of past revolution posed no immediate threat to the established order.

DOWNRIGHT DANGEROUS

The 75th anniversary occurs at a time when for the 26-County establishment to officially acclaim the Easter Rising would not only be hypocritical as it was in 1966, or embarrassing as it has always been to shoneens of John Bruton's ilk, but downright dangerous. For the past 20 years or so the Six Counties has been in a state of war, with the IRA as the spearhead of a nationalist revolt against partition. During this period the 26

Counties has been drawn deeper and deeper into the counter-insurgency strategy of the Brits. Censorship, special courts, Garda repression, extradition and a massive spending on border 'security' are only some of the ways in which the state collaborates in Britain's war. Ideologically, this has been reflected in historical revisionism, led by a small clique of anti-national academics and journalists, but which finds an echo in all facets of life. For the authorities to turn round now and launch a glorification of 1916 would be to set back two decades of carefully planned and implemented distortion. It is quite simply impossible for them to do so. One does not have to be a genius to see the relationship which can be made between the Republicans of 1916 and the Republican Army of today, and it is a relationship which the authorities are not keen to highlight.

The reason why the establishment are perhaps now more willing to voice criticisms of the republican tradition to which in the past they paid lip service goes beyond their immediate preoccupation with defeating the Republican Movement. The ruling elite in the 26 Counties is now so closely tied to the political and economic interests of imperialism that they no longer have the same ideological hang-ups about abandoning 'cherished principles', which in the

first decades of its existence still formed a large part of the *raison d'être* of the state.

Until the 1960s the 26 Counties, particularly under Fianna Fail, maintained a policy of relative economic independence, military neutrality and a left-of-centre social policy. With the opening up of the economy to multinational capital and its submergence in the EEC, as well as its increasingly collaborationist stance regarding the war in the Six Counties, the ruling class has wholeheartedly adopted the outlook of its masters in the centres of imperialist power. Anything that conflicts with that outlook has to be eradicated. Imperialist policy towards Ireland demands capitulation to Britain's occupation of the Six Counties, the exploitation of our land and labour at cheap cost to foreign capital, and the destruction of our culture so as to facilitate our becoming more fully 'European'.

In denigrating 1916, therefore, our enemies are pursuing a project which we must fully understand before we can engage and defeat it. They have already admitted that they perceive us to be the main obstacle in their way, which is one reason why they are so anxious to obscure the connection between ourselves and the men and women of the Easter Rising.

How do we define the relationship between 1916 and the

modern Republican Movement? To answer this question we must first understand what the Easter Rising meant.

The men and women of 1916 did not have a democratic mandate to take up arms, if by democratic we understand the occasional casting of votes in parliamentary elections. What they had was the mandate all oppressed people have, to oppose by whatever means necessary their own oppression. Revisionism has prompted the unchallenged view that the Rising was overwhelmingly unpopular, but more recent works, including that of Professor JJ Lee, show that this was far from being the case and that what we now take to be verbatim accounts of public reaction is often propaganda written after the fighting had ended. What is beyond question is that a revolutionary situation existed at the time, fuelled by a working class rebuilding its strength after the 1913 Lock-out, and by growing discontent with the imperialist war. The massive upheavals of 1917-'23 did not then come about simply as a sentimental reaction to the executions. The leadership of the Rising understood the situation in which they decided upon an armed insurrection, and were not psychotics who believed they had no chance of success. That they faced overwhelming odds, particularly in the aftermath of MacNeill's

countermanding order, is certainly true, but the Rising itself was never meant to be some kind of blood sacrifice. The greatest tragedy of Easter 1916 was that so many of its best thinkers perished before the mass insurrection of the following years.

PRACTICAL AND PROGRESSIVE

Far from being the romantic and reactionaries they are often portrayed as today, the leaders of 1916 were practical and progressive men and women with a clear view of the kind of Republic they were striving for. Pádraig MacPiarais was a radical educationalist, way ahead of his time, and someone who showed in his writings, particularly those of the last year or two of his life, that he was developing towards a socialist understanding of the oppression he saw around him. Many of the others had histories of support for the radical labour and women's movements. Eamonn Ceannt, for example, had staunchly defended the Dublin workers in 1913 against the vicious attacks of Arthur Griffith. Of all the leaders, however, it was undoubtedly James Connolly who had the keenest understanding of the tasks of the Irish revolution, and whose ideas have the greatest relevance for us today. This has always been understood by our enemies, from the Dublin



● Irish Volunteers 1913 — The men and women of 1916 did not have a democratic mandate to take up arms, what they had was the mandate all oppressed people have, to oppose by whatever means necessary their own oppression

bosses' leader William Martin Murphy who demanded Connolly's execution, to his modern-day counterparts in the 26 Counties.

Connolly understood that the nationalism of flags and borders held no hope for liberation for the Irish people. "Ireland without her people means nothing to me," he said. In his book, *Labour in Irish History*, he showed how the class interests of the leadership of the national movement came to dictate its outcome. Thus it was that representatives of the native landowners and capitalists from Grattan to Redmond betrayed the interests of the common Irish people. Only the people of no property could be trusted to settle for nothing less than full independence and sovereignty, but to do so they must first ensure that their interests would be at the head of the movement. That is why Connolly supported the Rising and formed an alliance with the most radical sections of the IRB and Volunteers. It is worthwhile pointing out that Connolly's warning about allowing the leadership to fall into the hands of those whose interests made it impossible for them to break with imperialism was fulfilled by the Free State counter-revolution.

Connolly also attacked those so-called socialists who held that the national liberation struggle had nothing to do with the labour movement. That position is reflected in the modern ICTU leadership and amongst the Labour and Workers' Parties. Spring and de Rossa say that workers should ignore the issue of partition and concentrate on fighting for better living standards. In reality this has led them to support imperialism both on a political and military basis, and to accept the dependence of the 26-County economy on foreign capital.

In seeking to establish the Republic proclaimed in the 1916 Proclamation, our movement must be committed to implementing its objectives in a modern context. "The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and opportunities to all its citizens and declares its resolve to pursue the

happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government which have divided a minority from the majority in the past." This is a clear commitment to the creation of an egalitarian, secular society free of the sectarianism and social inequalities rampant in both the partition states. That can only be achieved when we have won national unity and sovereignty and begun to administer the economic, social and cultural life of the nation in the interests of the majority of our people, and not those of the native elites tied to the interests of imperialism and foreign capital. We have encapsulated our goal in the long-term strategy of creating a 32-County democratic socialist Republic.

TAKE ARMS

There are, of course, no short-cuts in the struggle. The fundamental problem remains, as it did in Connolly's time; how to rid ourselves of the British occupation. Our movement supports the right of the Irish people to take arms against their presence, but we also recognise the necessity of building a broad basis of support for a withdrawal. That basis of mass support is clearly present though currently unharnessed. In the 1989 European elections, for example, over the whole island of Ireland radical republicans, socialists and nationalists campaigning on a platform opposed to our domination by imperialist interests, won over 10% of the vote. Yet on the same day, Sinn Féin gained less than 2% of the poll in the 26-County general election. There is then a definite contradiction between those who would basically agree with us on fundamental issues such as partition, extradition, the EC, multinationals, etc and those who are prepared to give us their wholehearted political support. While we must continue to strive to win those people



● Connolly attacked those socialists who held that the national liberation struggle had nothing to do with the labour movement

to our movement, we must also be prepared to work alongside them in an alliance incorporating the different strands of radical anti-imperialism.

In order to build such a movement for Irish self-determination we must link partition and the overall denial of our sovereignty to other issues, particularly as they affect ordinary people in the 26 Counties. At present there are over a quarter of a million workers unemployed, a million live in poverty, thousands of small farmers are on the verge of being driven from the land, while the state encourages a culture of national inferiority and subservience designed to have us accept whatever is thrown at us. With the advent of increased European economic integration after 1992, these problems are set to become more serious, allied to the possibility that the safety valve

of emigration may be closed off, thus increasing the likelihood of serious unrest. The situation then may not be unlike that which confronted the men and women of 1916, except that our enemies will be facing a revolutionary movement that has already come through a severe test over the past 20 years.

By providing the leadership necessary to weld together the oppressed sections of our people, and by unequivocally voicing their demands, the Republican Movement can ensure that not only will the vision of Easter 1916 be fulfilled, but also that the political inheritors of Redmondism and Free Statism do not climb back into power once more on the back of the Irish people. There will be no more stepping stones or rotten compromises on the road to the Republic. ■



Irish agriculture at the crossroads

By Sean Lynch
(Long Kesh)

THE IRISH agricultural industry today faces its most crucial crisis since the days of agrarian struggle for the land back in 1870-1907. The problems today are not dissimilar to that period nor are the causes much different.

Agriculture is of fundamental importance to the economy of Ireland, as evidenced in its contribution to the national output (Gross Domestic Product). The agricultural sector contributes 10.3% of Ireland's GDP whereas the EC average is 3.2%.

The dependency on agriculture today is a legacy of our colonial past. During the mid-1800s when most European countries were industrialising, Ireland's infant manufacturing base was crippled by the English colonists in the interests of establishing and protecting their own base. So while England's industry thrived, Ireland in this period was relegated to the position of producing food exclusive for the English market.

When agricultural prices fell due to the major expansion of farming in the United States, this caused disastrous results for the tenant farmers of Ireland. Many thousands were

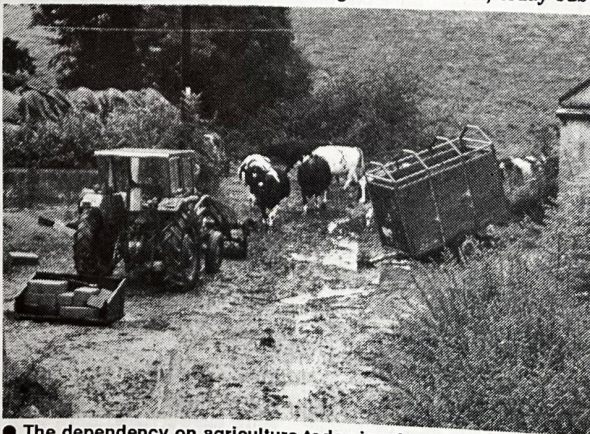
forced off the land to make room for farming on a large scale. The agricultural classes of Ireland suffered one of the worst periods in their history, while famine and emigration drained away a large portion of tenant farmers.

At the same time the country was denied the possibility of

gaining revenue because of its non-existent manufacturing industry. The country's power to accumulate capital was reduced to a minimum. Ireland's products were determined and prices fixed as a consequence of English economic and political conquest.

SUBSERVIENCE

Any analysis of the farmers' plight today contains echoes of their circumstances in the latter part of the 1800s. One hundred years ago Ireland's agricultural economy was subservient due to English colonialism; today sub-



● The dependency on agriculture today is a legacy of our colonial past

servience stems from the integration of our economy into the structures of the European market and the resultant destruction through unequal competition from giant multinationals.

Those who advocated Ireland's membership of the EEC in 1972 promised it would bring prosperity to our agricultural industry. During the 1970s the European market system encouraged farmers to expand and concentrate on dairy and meat products. Brussels determined what farmers produced and regulated the prices of their products through a mechanism known as the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). This system stimulated mass overproduction at a price which outstripped the market's capacity to absorb it. EC agriculture production increased by 5% per year whereas consumption grew by only 2%. The surplus was bought by the EC to maintain price levels and placed in intervention, a practice which led to the creation of what became known as food mountains.

Membership of the EC has had a very uneven impact on Irish farmers. The CAP system has benefited only a small percentage, with the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer. The system of guaranteeing prices through intervention means that the more you produce the more you get in the form of price support. The larger, more commercial farms get the greatest income injection through this system. 80% of subsidies and benefits have gone to the wealthiest 20% of farmers.

In 1984 soaring food mountains and spiralling storage costs threatened the fundamental basis of the CAP system. 30% of the total agricultural produce of the EC was held in storage — 420,000 tonnes of beef, 187,000 tonnes of butter and 333,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder.

DEATH KNELL

The EC was temporarily able to reduce the 1984 food surplus by releasing the products cheaply to non-EC countries and cutting back on quotas and subsidies. By 1990 the surplus had again risen to alarming proportions, bringing the CAP structure to the point of

collapse and leading to major discussion by the Eurocrats in Brussels on how to reform the system. Their response has been to reduce still further subsidies and quotas on all dairy and beef products, which could mean the death knell for the remaining middle and small farmers of Ireland.

Again in Irish history the majority of farmers, particularly the smaller ones, are vulnerable to dependence on foreign markets which don't reflect their interests or needs.

To date, Ireland's membership of the EC has brought anything but prosperity. There is now reduced production threatening bankruptcy and mass exodus of those working on the land. The total number of those dependent on agriculture fell from 261,000 in 1973 to 160,000 in 1989 and is projected to fall to 90,000 over the coming decade.

Farm incomes fell by £200 million between 1984 and 1986 due to reform of CAP. In 1989 the National Farm survey showed that the average level of income earned from farming was only £6,900 per farm or £133 per week and 60% of farms earned less than £5,000 or £96 per week, at a time when industrial earnings averaged £216 per week.

CATASTROPHIC

As many as 2,000 farming families have been made bankrupt since Ireland entered the EC. Many of them found themselves in financial difficulties and paying the price of deciding to expand during the 1970s. Because of the illusionary boom many farmers paid exorbitant prices for land and find they cannot now meet repayments. Land prices were forced up to as much as £3,000 per acre only to be reduced to £1,000 in the late 1980s. The farmers were sold out by the banks as a consequence of the crisis within CAP.

The cost of CAP to the Irish consumer should not be overlooked. Subsidising farmers' incomes and guaranteed prices for products meant falsely inflated food prices, sometimes by as much as 300%.

The Irish shoppers contributed £700 million per year more than necessary on EC



● With 1992 fast approaching Ireland's agricultural problems will intensify rather than diminish

food. The Irish taxpayer also paid £140 million per year to CAP, much of which was spent maintaining the food mountains.

The present proposals by European farm ministers to reform CAP by reducing subsidies and quotas on dairy and milk products by as much as 30% will be catastrophic for Irish agriculture. The Irish farming organisations agree that even at 30% cuts, more than 50,000 would have to leave the land by the year 2000.

Ireland is most vulnerable to CAP cuts as no other country in the EC comes even close to Ireland's position in terms of the importance which beef and dairy products have to the national economy. While France and Germany are the largest gross producers of these products the agricultural sectors make only a relatively small contribution to their respective national economies.

PERIPHERAL

This country is also disadvantaged because of its peripheral position; any reduction in the CAP pricing system would have a greater negative impact in Ireland than in those countries in central Europe which benefit from proximity to markets.

With 1992 fast approaching, Ireland's agricultural problems will intensify rather than diminish. With the opening up of borders to unrestricted free trade Ireland's bargaining power will be further eroded. Direct government intervention into the economy, already severely limited, will, by 1992, be illegal. Large multinational companies are already buying up smaller viable companies in preparation for the intensive competitive market post-1992. One example is the takeover of the 26 Counties' largest meat packers for £21 million by a monopoly for three large corporations which operate from Brazil, USA and Germany.

Our politicians are forecasting that 1992 and the free market will be the panacea for the country's agricultural crisis, just as they did prior to us entering the EEC 20 years ago. Since then they have sold out the country's most vital asset. Never has any 26 Counties' government had a farming policy orientated towards domestic needs. Their only policy was "leave it to Brussels" which has meant a short term cash bonanza to a small commercial section of those employed on the land. No doubt the politicians will continue to fail not only the farm-

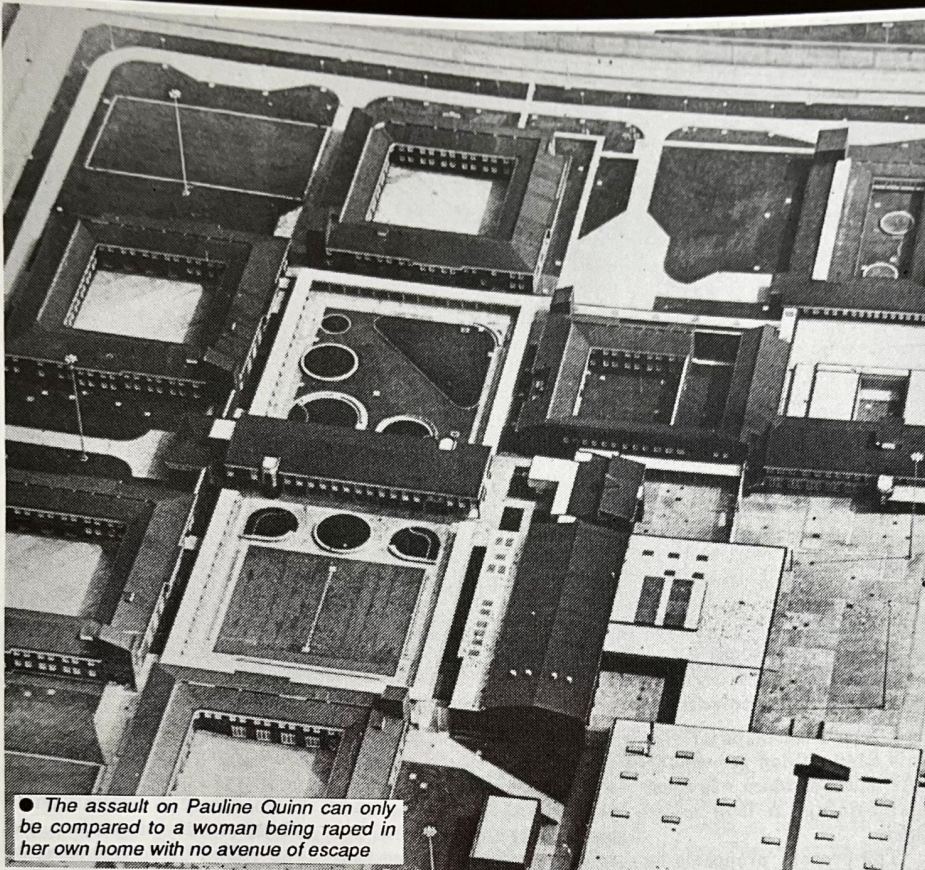
ers but a large section of the working-class people of this country. They have reduced the economy to that of a Third World country: dependent and controlled by foreign capital with increasing concentration on selective products, deepening foreign debt and blatant exploitation of the country's resources.

Only through a sharp break from the unequal trading mechanisms — by which Ireland's land and labour are exploited and local food production is geared towards crops for export to accumulate large profits for multinational corporations — can we have any hope of ending the farming crisis and utilising Ireland's vital asset in the interests of its people.

SHAMEFUL

It's a shameful and immoral system when less than 6% of the major natural resource of fertile soil is used for growing crops and £850 million worth of food is imported each year, including one of Ireland's oldest crops, the potato.

Unless drastic changes are made in relation to the farming policy, the people who have tilled the land for generations will be left with just two alternatives — live in a state of poverty or sell out. ■



● The assault on Pauline Quinn can only be compared to a woman being raped in her own home with no avenue of escape

Maghaberry strip search sexual assault

ON FRIDAY, April 24th, Pauline Quinn was returning from a visit when she was called into reception. Her grandfather had been buried that morning and her visit had been with a close family friend and a family member. It was classed as a compassionate visit. She was naturally enough distressed at her granda's death and it was an especially harrowing time for her as her brother had recently been murdered.

On arrival at the reception area Pauline was told that she would be strip searched. She asked for a reason as this wasn't normal practice after visits (in fact she had just been searched on leaving her visit). She was told that it was governor's orders, but when

she pressed for a specific reason why the governor would give such an order, none was given. She asked at least three times to speak to the governor and was told by the PO (Principal Officer) in charge that there would be no governor to see her. Pauline said if that was the case she was refus-

ing to be strip searched until she could speak to a governor and be given some explanation.

At this point she was set upon by eight screws (one PO, two SOs (Senior Officers), one MO (Medical Officer) and four female warders). She was dragged to the floor, her clothes were forcibly removed and she was pinned down naked. The so-called Medical Officer removed a sanitary towel from Pauline, took it aside and searched it. At this stage Pauline was still on the floor and extremely distressed. The MO told Pauline to open her legs, which she refused to do, feeling particularly disgusted at the suggestion. The MO then opened Pauline's legs herself and searched between them, then she ordered the other screws to "turn her over" and she parted the cheeks of her behind and searched her anus.

POWERLESS

While this was going on the other women on the wings could hear Pauline's screams and shouts, but were powerless to

reach her and give assistance.

That this sexual attack has taken place has outraged and horrified everyone in the jail. That it could happen to anyone of us has left us feeling very vulnerable.

Pauline was cut and bruised and badly shaken. When she got back to the wing she was then physically sick. She saw a doctor that evening who had to prescribe medicine to ease the pain and relax her. While her physical injuries will heal, it will take a long time for the emotional sores to heal. She has very recently lost two close members of her family and this attack will do nothing to help her. Pauline has been through a very traumatic experience. She has had to re-live the humiliation every time her story is told and it is only because of her anger and her determination that this must not happen to anyone else that she is able to repeat it. She has lodged a complaint with the NIO and has placed the matter in the hands of her solicitor. The NIO has denied that the assault took place, yet it is the subject of investigation within the jail.

We find the whole episode disgusting and are appalled that Pauline Quinn was stripped and internally searched in this way. We find it particularly offensive that we have to look at the screws who attacked her as they continue to go about their duties. We are repulsed that a person who classes herself as a member of the medical profession took part in this assault. Her participation only serves to undermine the role of the medical staff in the jail, who have little credibility as it is.

We can only, without exaggeration, compare this assault on Pauline to a woman being raped within her own home and having no avenue of escape. If this attack had happened outside a jail and the assailants identified, they would be at the very least arrested. We are sickened that Pauline's attackers are still supervising our visits, in contact with us in all areas and, worst of all, reassuring themselves in the knowledge that they were 'only doing their jobs.' ■

**Republican POWs
(Maghaberry)**

A last time

By Michael 'Dikel' Gorman
(Long Kesh) ■

Michael 'Dikel' Gorman was arrested in 1978 and later sentenced to life imprisonment. When he arrived in Long Kesh he immediately joined the Blanket protest. In the summer of 1981, at the height of the hunger strikes, he spent a few days in the prison hospital being treated for a foot injury. Here he describes meeting Joe McDonnell, Kieran Doherty and Martin Hurson.

THE NOISE of a trolley wakened me in the morning. Apart from the rubber trolley wheels squeaking in the distance the place was deadly silent. The spy slit in the door opened, prying eyes locked with mine for an instant, then the flat slammed down.

Later that morning an orderly came into the room with his mop and brush and cleaned the place. The mechanical way of life in jail goes on, it seemed. I tried to start up a conversation and asked how the lads were but I got no response. Then on the way out the orderly, to my surprise, gave me five cigarettes and whispered, "Joe says don't be smoking them all at once, and give him a shout during lock-up." He then hurried from the room.

Lock-up was at 12.30pm. I went to the pipes and rapped the wall, first gently then harder.

"Here, do you want a fucking hammer in there?" shouted Joe.

He's in form. Moments later he thumped loudly on the wall.

"Are you there, Nail-in-the-boot?"

I resisted the urge to tell him I was away home.

"Aye, I'm here."

"Just as well you didn't say something else for I'd have killed you if you had," he chuckled. "Listen," he said, "with a bit of luck you'll be getting out tonight to see Top of the Pops. We've had a yarn with a big MO and if he's on tonight you'll get down to see us for a yarn, okay?"

"That's great."

"Right, kid, I'm away over to the other side to spoof with Big Doc. See you tonight then?"

"Aye, I'm looking forward to it."

The rest of the day flew by. I did nothing but pace the floor since getting the scéal about



● JOE McDONNELL

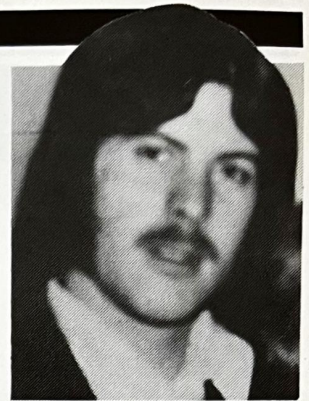
that night. Before I realised it evening had come and I was trembling with nervous anticipation. I could feel my heart thumping. What if that MO isn't on? Please be on so I can see them, I wished to myself.

The door opened and an MO shouted "Association time!" Before he could say another word I was out through the door and to my embarrassment halfway down the corridor the wrong way.

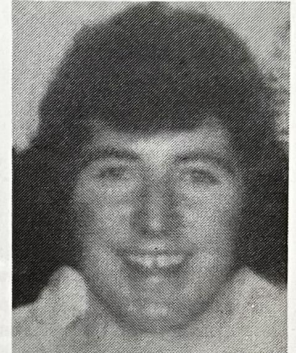
"Here, kid," said the MO, "it's this way, second on your left."

As I turned to head in the right direction I saw Big Doc and Joe at the far end of the corridor laughing and shaking their heads. I moved slowly towards them, my legs and feet like lead. As I got closer I saw the smiles on their faces.

Waves of emotion flowed through me. When I reached



● KIERAN DOHERTY



● MARTIN HURSON

them Joe and Doc put their hands out. Reaching out I touched and gripped them in my own. It was all too much, my feelings took over, my bottom lip quivered and the tears flowed. Tears of joy at seeing them, tears of pity for the suffering they and their families were enduring and tears of caring for two dying comrades with whom so many others and I share a bond which no amount of time will erase. Arms enfolded and comforted me; I lowered my head, ashamed. Big Doc told me to let it out. Joe said,

"Hey, gurney gub, don't be wiping your snatters on my fancy bath robe," then laughed, lightening the mood.

In the TV room we sat down at a table and lit cigarettes. They both wanted to know who was in H6.

So one by one I went through the names; between the three of us I'm sure there were some ears burning in H6 that night.

I asked them how they felt things would go in the coming weeks and months. Joe looked at me and quietly said the Brits wanted to think they would break us; "they haven't since the Blanket started and they fucking won't now."



● Joe McDonnell's wife, Goretti, two children, Bernadette and Joseph, and brother Frankie, at his funeral



● Dublin 1981 — support for the hunger strikers spanned all 32 Counties

I looked at Big Doc who smiled gently and nodded his head in agreement. For a few moments everything went quiet and we sat there just looking at one another; my eyes roamed their faces, their eyes roamed mine. The sound of boots in the corridor intruded upon the moment. The MO entered the room, "time to lock up kid, there's a governor coming down." I rose wearily touching them both on the shoulder lightly as I did so.

"Get to flip out of here before you have the both of us gurning," said Doc.

"See you on Sunday at Mass," said Joe.

At the doorway I paused and looked back, then turned and walked up the corridor to my room.

Sunday came none too soon; the days between had been agonisingly slow. I shouted to the lads a few times and got no replies but they sent me newspapers each day. Their coughing had become my constant companion and it had got steadily worse over the last few days. I couldn't stop from shuddering each time it rang out. Mass time came and I headed for the TV room where it was being said. As I walked through the doorway Doc and Joe were seated directly in front of me; to my left I saw what looked like a pile of blankets on a wheelchair.

As I passed by a slight coughing sound came from the blankets, stopping me dead in my tracks. I cast a puzzled glance towards Joe and Doc. Joe told me it was Martin Hurson and that he was very ill. In the foreground Fr Toner was kneeling, saying prayers softly; candles burned on top of the makeshift altar, their flickering cast shadows and their burning smell filled the room. I searched with my eyes for Martin's face. Reaching out I touched it — he was warm

and looked peaceful and at ease. I moved away and sat beside Joe and Doc.

"Why is he so warm and wrapped up like that?" I asked.

Doc replied that Martin had picked up some sort of bug and had to be kept wrapped up to keep him warm, and that he had been coughing badly.

Mass was a somewhat solemn affair. Very little of what Fr Toner said registered with me because my thoughts were on the three men next to me



● The funeral of Martin Hurson in his native Tyrone

and my prayers were for them. I lifted my head to see Fr Toner come round the altar with a little platter and move towards Martin. I watched as the communion was lifted and touched to Martin's lips. Lowering my head I felt a deep sadness sweep over me at the sight. Then Fr Toner was in front of me, sorrow etched on his face. He left the communion, I closed my eyes and offered my tongue.

After Mass I passed a few words with Fr Toner. In the middle of our short conversation a harsh wheezing cough filled the room. It was Martin. On their knees one on each side of the wheelchair were Joe and Doc talking to him, their voices seeking to soothe him. What a sorry, pitiful, moving and heart breaking sight. I felt humbled at it yet so proud for them for their loving and comradely gesture.

Big Doc rose, called me to the side and handed me a *beart* (package) of tobacco.

"That should keep you going for a while, Dikel. We don't know when we'll get to see you again but hopefully it won't be long."

We shook hands. Joe and Martin were already back in their rooms.

That evening sleep didn't come easy; the sound of coughing wakened me continually through the night. Monday morning came and so did the doctor to examine my foot. My heart sank at his words, "You can go back today."

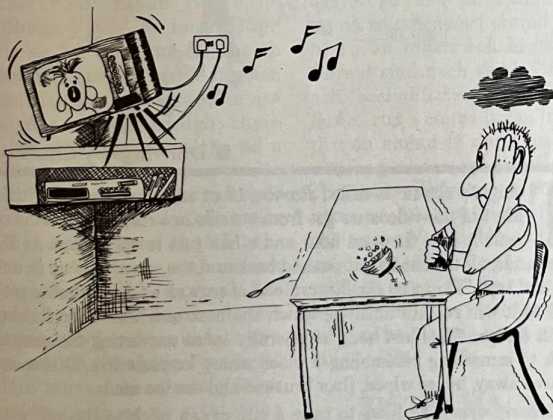
When he left I rushed to the window and called out to Joe and Doc. No reply. Half an hour later an MO arrived with my clothes and stood guard as I dressed. As I pulled on my prison issue boots another MO joined him. They flanked me on either side as I left the room. Down the corridor I turned quickly and walked to the door of Martin's room and lifted up the flap. In seconds they were upon me but not before I looked through to Martin lying on his side and shouted goodbye. I hope he heard me. The same goes for Joe and Doc; as I was pulled along the corridor I shouted out to them. I want to believe they heard me because that was the last time I was to see them alive. ■

A day in the life

Noel Garlick
(Long Kesh)

SATURDAY MORNING and I am wakened as usual by the brush being banged against the cell door. Big Johnny, one of the wing's fitness fanatics, is sweeping the landing and letting us know that the morning work has started and that we should be up and about. Normally I don't lie on but Saturday was always my day for relaxing so I don't see why it should change just because I am in jail. I can occasionally lie on because of the way our wings/communities are organised. No one has specific tasks of work allocated to them; it is left to each of us to realise that the wing, floors, dishes and toilets don't clean themselves. And as we all make use of these facilities, we all should then participate in the upkeep of them. Just as at home, the work continues throughout the day, so if you miss out in the morning you can redeem yourself sometime during the day.

There is music blaring from the canteen as I go in to get my breakfast. The TV's dancing off the shelf with some kids' pop show blasting out. I thought there was a party going on, but the canteen's empty. Being strongly opposed to meaningless noise I switch it off. In walks Gerry, switches it on, plays *Danny Boy* on the buttons while changing channels, finds nothing he likes and walks out, leaving the TV blaring again. On a normal morning I would have made a little remark, like "Can you play any other instruments?" but as I'm not fully awake I'll just wait till he's out of sight and switch it off again. I hurry up and finish my breakfast because this on/off game could last all day.



Once I've had breakfast in me I go for a wash. Alan, the screw in charge of the wing - well, he thinks he's in charge of the wing and nobody has the heart to tell him otherwise, but that suits us all - is standing beside the washroom. As I approach he says, "I see your up." Half asleep and all as I am, I somehow realise I am up. I wonder to myself is this part of prison policy; "All class officers are to inform prisoners that they are out of bed." (Rule 9, Subsection six; Para 11). I wouldn't be surprised, they've

got crazier rules than that in here. Being the civil, pleasant person I am, I go along with the joke "I'd a rough night last night, etc." This usually leads into an hour long conversation ranging from football to football.

Alan goes on a teabreak. That's a joke — their whole day's one long teabreak. I go back to the cell trying to remember what it was I was going to do. Sure what does it matter, I'd a wash yesterday!



As I walk past the big cell there seems to be a bit of crack going on, so I head in there. Now let me explain about the big cell. When I say big, I don't really mean big — it is two ordinary cells knocked into one. It has a Hi-Fi, a TV and soft chairs. And as Republicans are nothing if not innovative, there are also two jail beds adapted into settees.

Someone says, "I thought we'd get the big pitch today." The next best thing to going to the big pitch is talking about going to the big pitch. Now the big pitch really is a big pitch. The jail has two full size all-weather football pitches which we get to use on a fairly regular basis. The standard of play in the last match is usually the topic of discussion. Just now the midfielders are getting ripped out for sloppy play. Duff claims he played a defensive midfield role, but Felim claims the only time Duff is defensive is when he is being criticised. In the middle of the ensuing argument someone sticks his head round the door to say the dinner's on the table. "Well, scrape it off and put it on plates." some smartass remarks. That murders the conversation so everyone dives for the door to show their contempt for such a poor joke.

As well as the big cell being the haunt of football critics, it is put to more constructive use during the day. During most teatime and dinnertime lock-ups there will be a *rang* (class) of some description going on. These can range from an introduction to Republican Wings for new arrivals, to Irish history or socialism. Even during our evening association period the cell is used by the wing Sinn Féin Cumann to hold discussions on various subjects. Recently, we have discussed Articles 2 and 3 of the 26-County Constitution, and the relevance of Sinn Féin in Irish politics.

The prison officers get their dinner from 12.30-2.00pm so I lock up to do a bit of studying. I really lock up to get a sleep, but guess what, the TV is at it again.

It's 2 o'clock, the screws are back, the TV's now turned down and I still didn't get a doze. Ah well, sure I'll go out to the yard and get a bit of fresh air.

It is a great place to get away from everyone and everything. A lot of men don't like the yard because it is so small and confined

with high, closed in fencing. I once heard a country man compare walking round the yard to "a hen running round inside a creamery can." There are usually some maniacs (read Fitness Fanatics) running round, which means I end up dizzy walking round the middle of the yard to keep out of their way — you get a better walk when you can get right up to the edge. The Six Counties must be full of men who walk along the footpath hugging the walls. Or maybe it's just me, perhaps I shouldn't investigate this theory too deeply!

I join on with big Paddy. We usually walk hours together discussing anything from the day that's in it to politics, education and even sport. Paddy's a great man for the GAA, so sometimes we talk about how such and such a county has done. Being from Newry I vary my allegiance between Armagh and Down depending on who got the better result.

From the GAA we go on to discuss the current batch of rumours. I think rumours originated from jails. There's hardly a day goes by that there's not one being beat about. Our current batch includes the closing of the H-Blocks during the next few years, but that one's being on the go since the place opened. Anyway, it's worth spreading, because the screws are more concerned about it than we are. If this place closes hundreds of them will be paid off. The latest rumour is that the tea's up, so we'll all head back to the wing to see what delights await us.

Lately the screws have been sending us the 'menu of the day' first thing in the morning. I avoid looking at it for two reasons. (1) I like surprises, and (2) knowing the menu can ruin your day as you then have nothing to look forward to. On the other hand there are those amongst us who seek out the menu to have something to complain about.

Micky: "What's the grub today?"

Tom: "Chicken."

Micky: "Jesus, since this chicken disease was discovered we've been getting nothing but chicken."

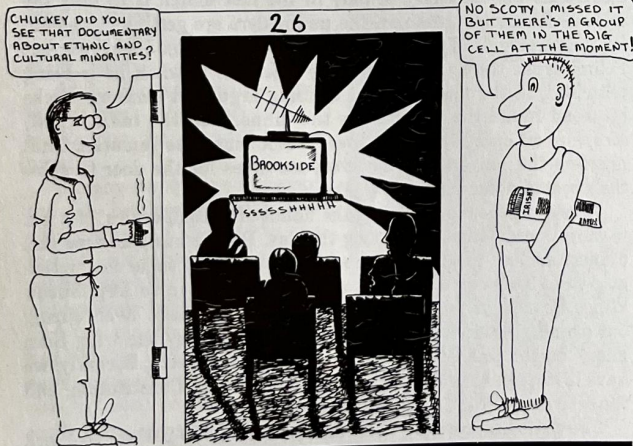
Tom: "Aye, between foul pest chicken and Sellafeld fish, I think the Brits are working on a long term project of mass food poisoning."

See what I mean? Even if the screws sent steak up every day someone would say they were trying to give us mad cow disease. In fairness, there are occasions when the jail cook does try to masquerade as a chef. One particular time I remember he sent us up a dish with some french name, Henery La Chariot or something like that. After a few of us sampled it, it was renamed — aptly, I believe — Henry The Cat, and that was even by me who is well known for eating anything that doesn't move when its on the plate.

envelope leaves the bunch. All eyes quickly glance at the name on the envelope to ascertain ownership. At my own table it's not even worth a glance, all the letters are usually for the same man (I'm not going to name him — he's obviously popular enough as it is). Do I hear shouts of "dry your eyes!"? I thought so. Anyway, this takes us to another lock-up. The 'officers' have another break from 4.30-5.30pm. Maybe this time I'll get a sleep.

It's 5.30, the doors are opened again. There's a squad in the big cell watching *Brookside*. As it's officially summer in the Blocks the yards have opened again for night time use. Some lads go out for a dander before the video comes on. The video (we have one in each wing) is in use most nights. We watch either something we taped off TV while we were locked up — anything after 8.30 at night has to be videoed — or what is termed an outside video. This doesn't mean we watch it in the yard; the jail hires video tapes from an outside video shop. We get one of these every four days (who said the NIO were cheapskates?).

Another reason for looking forward to the outside video is that we get a party! Now, don't get excited, I don't mean we get a party in the sense of a party. We get a cup of watery lemonade (Basic Buy!), a bar of chocolate and a bag of crisps. Before you jump to conclusions we buy the stuff ourselves. Each wing is run on a communal basis; all jail wages are centralised for use by the wing. This ensures that men who find they cannot afford some item (for example, tobacco) can be catered for. It also means that items such as tea bags, coffee and cereals are the common property of the wing to be used as and when someone wants them. It is this pooling of jail wages that enables us to have our 'party' with the video. It's really only a little treat and most of us look forward to the 'outside' if only to get a bar of chocolate.



■ Drawings by Chuckey

Tonight's classic is called *Rambo 12* or some such exciting title. Most of the videos we get from outside are crap, but most of us usually give them an hour and a half just to make sure. As the video ends, all the chairs get pushed back and the crowd gets up in unison and says "That was the biggest load of crap we've ever watched yet". And so it will remain until we watch the next one. The video finishes about 8.00pm. This last hour is generally spent converting the canteen back to something resembling a place where humans live. Dishes are cleared away, tables wiped, floor brushed and the tea made.

Nearly everyone likes to take a cup of tea back to the cell with them at 8.30. It helps to wash down the feed of sandwiches they take back. Sometimes you would think the doors weren't going to be opened for a week, the pile of stuff the lads take back with them, and since flasks have become available at the jail shop it means we can have tea at any time during the night. So now, extra supplies have to be brought in. Hang on while I leave these couple of pieces down to the cell (Well you have to eat!) Anyhow, the *ceannfort* has just called *faoi ghlas* so I'll go back to the cell and settle in for the night. *Oíche mhaith*. ■

Hang on, there's a distraction, the mail's just come in. The mail comes in every day as we are sitting down to our tea at 4.00pm. The screw hands out the letters to the nearest man who then gives them out. He throws the letter on the appropriate table and everyone pretends they are uninterested, yet their eyes follow the distribution from table to table, watching his hand as the

Ceachtanna na hagoide

Le Caoimhghín Mac Cathmhaoil
agus Peadar O Cuinneagáin.
(An Cheis Fhada)

BHI SCAIFTE againn inár suí sa chillín mór ag eachtraíocht eadrainn féin tamall beag o shin. Thosaigh muid a chaint ar an eachtra is déanaí i bpríosún Bhéal Feirste nuair a chuir duine éigin a daoradh le fiordhéanaí an cheist, "*Cad e d'fhoghlaim sibh i rith na hagoide i gcoitinne?*" Bhain a leithéid de cheist preab as duine nó beirt a bhí i láthair.

Tá a fhios ag an saol mór faoin agóid pluide agus faoin dá stailc ocrais ar dhóigh ghinearálta ach fuair muid amach cé chomh glic, cé chomh díoltasach agus cé chomh cruálach agus a thiocfadh leis na Sasanaigh a bheith.

Ar feadh sé bliana, ar bhonn laethúil, bhí muid ag troid in aghaidh an pholasáí coirpíochta a bhí siad ag iarraidh a chuir i bhfeidhm in éineacht lena gcuid polasaithe eile an cogadh a choinneáil taobh istigh de 'Chúige Uladh', nó taobh istigh de na Sé Chontae le bheith beacht; agus tabhairt le fios don domhan gur saol normalta atá againn. Ach ar ndóigh, theip glan orthu na polasaithe úd a chur i gcrích.

I rith na hagoide ar fad agus thar tréimhsí an dá stailc ocrais chonaic muid cé chomh tábhachtach agus cé chomh cumhachtach agus a bhí tacaíocht na ndaoine taobh amuigh. Níl amhras ar bith ann ná nach n-éireofaí lenár n-agóid féin mura mbeadh na daoine siúd amuigh ar na sráideanna ag déanamh agóide ar ár son. Thuig muid fosta nach dtarraingeofaí mórán poiblíochta ar an ainchás seo againne mura mbeidís ann. Ach an gné is tábhachtaí le tacaíocht na ndaoine siúd ná gur thaispeáin siad don domhan, as a láithreach ar na sráideanna, ar dhóigh dho-

bhréagnaithe nach coirpigh sinne agus nach bhfuil saol normalta anseo.

Chonaic muid go ndéantar rudaí léir nach bhfuil chomh soiléir sin iontu féin go dtí go bhfeictear an scéal ina iomláine; bíodh siad beag nó mór.

Nuair a bhí na coimhádóirí ag tabhairt greadála dúinn, mar shampla thuig muid go raibh níos mó ná 'ligint don fluath' ann. Bhí siad ag iarraidh an agóid a scrios. Bhí a fhios againn go raibh an dubhfluath ag na coimhádóirí orainn mar ní raibh iontu ach biogóidí. Chreid siad nach raibh ionann ach "*sceimhlitheoirí dúnmhara-facha*" rud a cuireadh ina luí orthu ón chéad lá dar thosaigh siad ag obair mar 'oifigigh phríosúin'. Deirtear go mbris-eann an dúchas trí shúile an chait agus b'amhlaidh an cás ag na coimhádóirí agus iad ag tabhairt greadála dúinn, nó ag baint feidhme as modhanna eile a bhí ní ba mheasa ná an greadáil!

SISTEAMACH

Ce gur iad na coimhádóirí a rinne na gníomhartha seo níorbh iadsan amháin a bhí freagrach astu. Bhí páirt nach beag ag Oifig Thuaisceart Éireann sna gníomhartha seo uilig ní bheadh na coimhádóirí, dá mhead dá mba mhaith leo e, ábalta ruid ar bith a dhéanamh



● Ciaran Nugent (ar dheis) an chéad chime poblachtach a dhiúltaigh éadaí príosúin a chailteamh

ar bhonn sistéamach i ngan fhios d'údarás an phríosúin. Ba í Oifig Thuaisceart Éireann a thug 'cuardach os cionn an scatháin' isteach i measc modhanna déistíneacha eile agus, ag an tús dhiúltaigh na coimhádóirí an corr ghreadáil a thabhairt amach ach sin a mbeadh ann.

Bogadh roinnt fear ó H3, H4 agus H5 go dtí H6. Chreid údarás an phríosúin gurbh iad ceannairí na hagoide iad agus

bhí siúl acu go laghdófaí sprid na bhfear eile. Méadaíodh ar líon na n-ionsaithe díreach ina dhiaidh sna Bloic H3, H4 agus H5, ach sheas muid go daingean le chéile, nó thuig muid cad a bhí taobh thiar den ghníomh sin, agus roimh dheireadh na bliana tháinig na fir siúd ar ais inár measc.

Bhí muid cleachta le cora crua an tsaol istigh sna bloic seo againne. Bhí a fhios againn go mbeadh Oifig Thuaisceart na

hEireann ag síor-iarraidh seasamh na bhfeair luide a bhreiseadh trína gcuid ionsaithe. Bearradh ár gcuid gruaige dár gcloigne. Níodh muidne in aghaidh ar dtola, truaillíodh ár gcuid bia, cuireadh stad lenár gcuairteanna míosúla fiú sular fhág muid an sciathán agus bogadh muid ó sciathán go sciathán ar bhonn rialta, agus cuardafodh ár dtóin os cionn an scatháin lena linn.

Bhí uaireanta ann nuair a bhí rialtóirí (gobharnóirí) agus ionadaithe Oifig Thuaisceart Eireann i láthair ar an sciathán nuair a bogadh na cimi agus nuair a tugadh greadáil dóibh, rud a chruthaigh, gan amhras, go ndearnadh gach aon rud le beannacht Oifig Thuaisceart Eireann. De ghnáth ní bhíodh siad ann ach ba chuma ann nó as dóibh os rud é go raibh Oifig Thuaisceart Eireann taobh thiar den iomlán. Nó tuigeadh *"fad a bhíos an cat amuigh bíonn na lucha ag rince"*. Ach chan ag rince a bhíodh siad ach ag imirt brúidíulachta.

DOLUBTHACHT

Fuair muid amach nach dtiocfadh linn bheith muiníneach as na Sasanaigh agus bhí sé níos soiléire ná riamh nuair nár sheas siad lena mbriathar ag deireadh an chéad stailc ocrais. D'éirigh an seachtar stailceoir as a gcéalacan i ndiaidh dóibh cáipéas a fháil ó na Sasanaigh. Ach bhain na Sasanaigh ciall eile ar fad as, rud a d'fhág an scéal i bhfad Eireann ní ba mheasa, nó tuigeadh nach raibh lá rúin acu an cheist a fhuascailt in am ar bith.

Rinne muidne mórán iar-rachtaí teacht ar réiteach idir deireadh an chéad stailc ocrais agus tús an dara stailc ocrais. Ach ó chríochnaigh an chéad stailc ocrais shíl údaráis an phríosúin go raibh muid domheanmnach, lag agus trína chéile. Chuir siad, faoi stiúir Oifig Thuaisceart Eireann, constaic i ndiaidh constaice romhainn. Tugadh cead dúinn ár gcuid éadaf féin a fháil isteach ach dhiúltaigh na coimhádóirí ár gcuid éadaf a ghlacadh onár gclanna. Sa deireadh, thug dolúbthacht na Sasanaigh orainne dul ar stailc ocrais arís.



● Ard Oifig an Phoist, Bhaile Atha Cliath — "ní éireofaí linn murach na daoine ar na sráideanna ar ár son"

Tá sé breis agus deich mbliana ó tharla na stailceanna ocrais istigh anseo sna Bloic H. Anois nuair a amharcann muid inár dtimpeall tá na coinníollacha a bhí á éileamh againn, tá na coinníollacha sin ann; caitheamh ár gcuid éadaf féin; caidreamh idir sciatháin; litreacha, beartanna, cuairteanna; gan obair, shuarach phríosúin a dhéanamh agus bheith scartha ó na dílseoirí. Ach cé go bhfuil na coinníollacha istigh anseo i bhfad níos fearr ná mar a bhí siad thar bhlianta na hagóide amharcann muid ar na coinníollacha seo againne mar fhianaise bheo dár ndeichniúr comradáif a fuair bás. ■

Tá a fhios againn nach bhfuair, agus nach bhfaighidh muid rud ar bith ó na Sasanaigh gan troid agus gan

fobairt a dhéanamh mar a rinne ár gcomradaithe. Ba é sin an ceacht is dáiríre a d'fhoghlaim muid.

Foclóir

ag eachtraíocht = yarning
 ar dhóigh dhobhréagnaithe = in an irrefutable way
 ag tabhairt greadála = beating (giving a beating)
 ligint don fhuath = venting hatred
 go mbriseann an dúchas trí shúile an chait = everything takes after its kind. The leopard never changes its spots.
 Os rud é go = seeing as
 Fad a bhíos an cat amuigh bíonn na lucha ag rince = when the cat's away the mice will play.
 Teacht ar réiteach = find a solution
 Nach raibh lá rúin acu an cheist a fhuascailt = they had't the slightest intention of solving the problem

Quotes

"The removal of Articles 2 & 3 from the Irish Constitution would delegitimise the basis on which the right to independence and sovereignty was claimed and would pave the way for Irish re-entry into the UK." — **Kevin Boland**, former Fianna Fáil government minister. *Irish News* (11/5/91)

"It's supposed to be about 'winning the hearts and minds' — easier here than in South Armagh." — **British army Marine among refugees in Iraq**. *Sunday Independent* (4/5/91)

"Fear of the IRA can not only win votes, you can use it to justify all kinds of repression. Because of the Troubles (sic), we now have an extremely efficient, secret commando force, able to seek out and destroy unarmed people in broad daylight and get away with it. We have censorship laws which are not only authoritarian but very silly, succeeding mainly in providing work for actors who can do a Northern Ireland (sic) accent." — **Weekend Guardian** (11-12/5/91)

"If the Irish government wants to prevent more Birmingham Sixes, Guildford Fours, Judith Wards, there's one thing they can do, stop extradition now. The English sys-

tem of justice isn't fit to judge an Irish dog show — it's too rotten, too evil, too corrupt." — **Paddy Hill**, one of the Birmingham Six, speaking at a civic reception for the Six in the Mansion House, Dublin. *Irish News* (20/5/91)

"I joined the British army for a job. I didn't join the army to murder and shoot little children." — **Former British soldier Bob Harker** speaking at a Ban Plastic Bullets press conference in Conway Mill, Belfast. *Irish News* (28/5/91)

"I remember the brave men on their hunger strike,' he says of the IRA protest in Long Kesh. He went on to say that 'when peaceful methods of resistance are smothered, it is hardly surprising that people turn to armed struggle to continue the fight for independence.'" — **Jean-Bertrand Aristide**, new President of Haiti. *Irish Times* (27/4/91)

"You will never get your green hands on Ulster soil. Ulster will remain British at the end of your little dialogue." — **Cedric Wilson**, DUP, shouting at SDLP leader John Hume as he entered Stormont for talks with Peter Brooke. *Irish News* (1/5/91)

"Enormous intellectual integrity and openness... an indefinable quality of decency... a vast reservoir of rural talent." — **Former Workers' Party member and current Fine Gael media adviser Eoghan Harris** describing the FG Parliamentary party. *Sunday Tribune* (21/4/91)

"KICK THE TIN"



■ Davy Glennon (Long Kesh)

OUL BELFAST STREET GAME

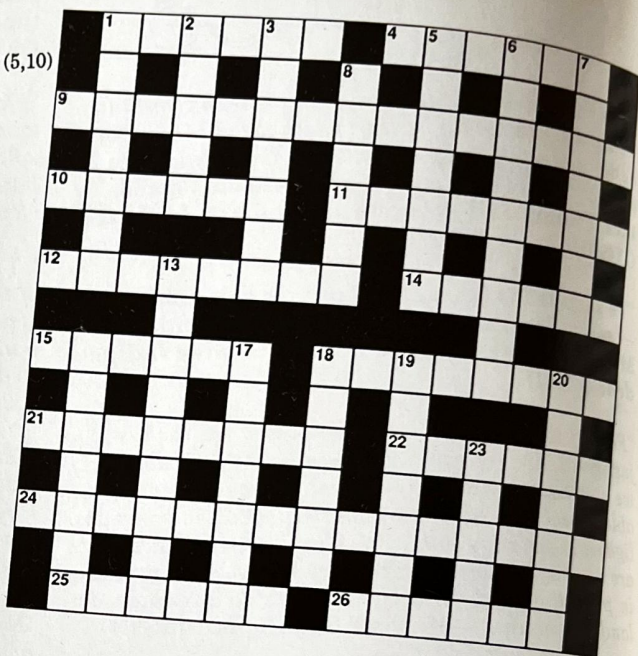
Crossword

Across

1. Speak incoherently, like a British secretary of state (6)
4. Plaster used for coating outside walls (6)
9. 26 Counties don't take sides. Principled position in danger? (5,10)
10. Obstacle (6)
11. Type of spice or tree (8)
12. Male insecurity complex? (8)
14. Advise strongly (6)
15. Lures and entices (6)
18. Mary and Peter's name — are they related? (8)
21. Small marks of different colours (8)
22. Sailing boats (6)
24. Brit attempt to smother truth (5,10)
25. Most cunning, craftiest (6)
26. Emphatic tension? (6)

Down

1. Triangular shorts in the Caribbean? (7)
2. Founded or situated (5)
3. Songbirds (7)
5. Forename of Lord Mayor who died on hunger strike (7)
6. British Labour PM in 1970s (9)
7. Al fresco (7)
8. Diplomatic representative of the Vatican (6)
13. The practice of saying one thing and doing another (9)
16. Daily ..., tabloid with Tory-appeal (7)
17. Chooses (7)
18. What the temperature was doing in Easter Week! (6)
19. Captain ..., "sent to Coventry" by Land Leaguers (7)
20. Acquires (7)
23. Hindu class system (5)



Answers on page 31

QUIZ

- 1 How many Republicans participated in the 1981 Hunger Strike in which ten POWs died? (a) 23; (b) 33; (c) 43?
- 2 Rajiv Gandhi was the third 'Gandhi' to be assassinated in India. Name the other two.
- 3 Which British Lord, who helped negotiate a settlement in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), was vetoed by the Unionists as a possible chairperson in the Brooke talks?
- 4 Who was the 'Mother of the Nation' recently sentenced to six years imprisonment after a much publicised and controversial trial by one of the world's most corrupt legal systems?
- 5 In what year was Nelson's Pillar in Dublin blown up?

Prizes of a year's subscription to *An Glór Gafa* plus a £5 book token will be given to the first three correct entries opened on our closing date on September 15th 1991. The names of the winners will be published in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* and in our next issue. Answers to Spring 1991 Quiz: 1. Frank Stagg; 2. Broad Water Farm; 3. Winston Churchill; 4. Terence Mac Swiney 5. Paddy Hilliard.
WINNERS: Micheál Mac Donncha, Dublin; Tom Hartley, Belfast; Dermot Sloan, Coolock.

Mail day in Kaisheim

Save it for later
 like the good testament
 says
 bad wines first, good stuff
 stays.
 Save it for later.

Save it for later, like the H-
 wing woman says
 work on the trivia quickly
 but a decent letter can last
 you days... and days...
 and d...
 Save it for later.

I'll save it for later
 as your words are a little
 special

and the thoughts within
 probe
 so I'll save it till later when
 the
 guard shoots the bolt
 or when I'm soaking in the
 bath
 perhaps in the Hofgang and
 that dreadful
 circular, endless path.
 I'll save it for later
 maybe 5am when the world
 is mine
 quiet and still.
 But again I could read it
 now and end the
 suspense.

**Gerry Hanratty
 (Germany)**

The puzzle of Sinéad

Republican POWs,
C Wing, Maghaberry.

IT CANNOT be denied that Sinéad O'Connor is a talented singer/songwriter, having achieved No 1 fame throughout the international music world with the song penned by Prince, "Nothing Compares 2 U". The album from which the song comes has also been widely acclaimed in its own right. As a result, she has picked up several awards in various categories over the past year, including several MTV awards, Grammys and *Rolling Stone* readers' and critics' polls awards.

Recently, Sinéad has received a lot of bad press due to her outspokenness. She made a statement condemning the Gulf War and, as a result, was virtually branded Public Enemy No 1 by the British media, not least by that most infamous of tabloids, the *Sun*. Not satisfied with just telling her to keep her mouth shut, the *Sun* took the opportunity to cast up interviews given by Sinéad during the 80s in which she expressed pro-Irish Republican sympathies. Indeed, such was the venom of the attack on her that even the *Irish News* was motivated to leap to her defence by devoting an editorial slot to her.

While Sinéad has courage in standing up for herself and speaking her mind — which she has every right to do — one wonders would she say the same things again, given the reaction of the media.

Recently she was interviewed on the *Gay Byrne Show* on RTE Radio and was heard to retract her pro-Republican sympathies and indeed to put them down to immaturity! Was this a response to the British gutter press in an attempt to endear herself (once again) to them? If so, we fear she is sadly misguided.

MIXED-UP

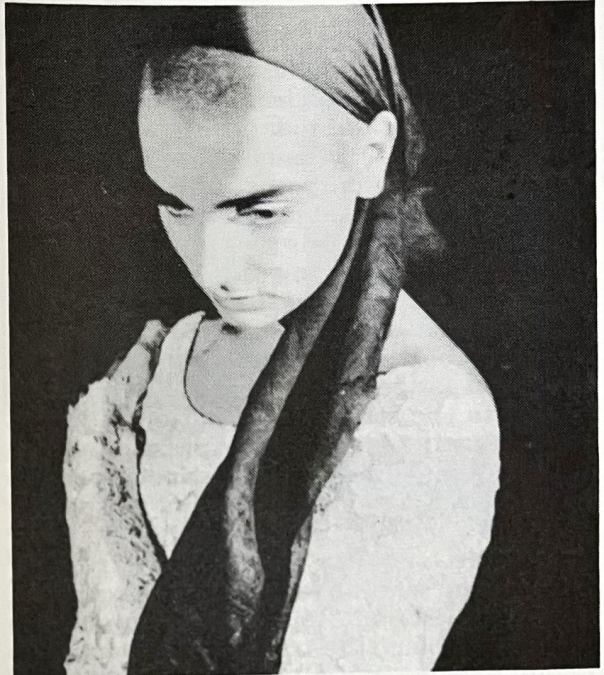
Sinéad has recently moved to the States and set up home in Los Angeles. She was interviewed by David Wild of the *NME* where she was again given the opportunity to air her views.

It has to be said, Sinéad is puzzling. On the one hand is

the image of an attractive, confident woman, a successful feminist who knows where she is going in life. On the other hand you have the woman herself in a trendy LA restaurant making some very curious statement: "Men have no balls — Men are all the same — They are all full of shit." No doubt Sinéad has met her fair share of undesirable men in her time, but to write off the entire male population with such generalisations is hardly what one expects from today's thinking woman.

Then, in the next breath, she drops the line, "Of course I would like Lancelot to come along and sweep me off to his castle, you know I am getting on a bit." It really is difficult to work out whether Sinéad is just trying to live up to the image of what she perceives to be a successful feminist when, in actual fact, what she really holds dear is the romantic notion of 'happy ever after' endings, or if she is really full of shit herself. Sinéad's attitude towards men is full of contradictions, as can be seen in the conflicting statements she makes on the subject. It portrays an impression of a very mixed-up and sometimes angry young woman.

To be fair, Sinéad O'Connor, having achieved major solo success in a male-dominated world, is perhaps finding it difficult to fit easily into that world. She rejects the falseness and insincerity which is prevalent in the showbiz scene and instinctively yearns for the honesty of the people back home in Ireland. It seems Sinéad is basically confused about what she wants out



● SINEAD O'CONNOR

of life. For example, she uprooted herself from her London home and moved to Los Angeles, which is probably fair enough, except that she cannot work out why she moved there at all.

SKEPTICAL

One cannot help being skeptical about Sinéad's view of her physical image and her reasons for adopting such. Asked about her hair, or rather lack of it, she says she would only think of growing it long in order "to get some man to fall madly in love with me." This is hardly a statement one would expect to hear from a so-called feminist.

Is she being truthful or just plain coy when she says of herself, "I think I am really hideous and ugly." It would seem she could perhaps be fishing for a compliment. Instead of a severe case of The Emperor's New Clothes, maybe what we actually have is a severe case of 'the lady doth protest too much.'

Whatever her state of mind, Sinéad certainly has a flair for writing her personal experiences into her songs and, by do-

ing so, has found her way into the hearts of a wide audience of listeners. However, while she has as much right as the next person to air her views, she might be better advised to decide one way or the other what those opinions are before making sweeping statements, especially on radical issues. At least if she is consistent in her opinions she can be respected for them. If not, she will continue to be seen as a troublemaker, a label which she may find hard to remove once it becomes firmly attached.

In the conclusion of the *NME* interview she states that "I need to be whoever I was a year ago before all this happened" and perhaps that single comment gets right to the heart of the matter. She cannot, nor do we suggest she would want to, undo what has taken place over this past year. She can however work at finding a niche for herself in her new-found world of fame and fortune, a niche in which she feels comfortable and secure so that she may emerge with confidence, in control of her own destiny. ■

An Teanga

Why study and learn Irish in today's modern world? Some would argue that while it may have some historical relevance, it isn't of any practical use today and should merely be retained — museum-like — for historical and cultural purposes. As a Nationalist, as a Republican, and particularly as a POW, I take exception to this type of argument. As Nationalists, studying the history of the Irish language gives us a significant insight into Ireland's history itself. As Republicans, we view the struggle to retain and revive the Irish language as being inextricably linked to the struggle for national liberation. Learning Irish is an expression of the Irish culture, unique and distinct from the one imposed upon us by Britain. As such, it becomes a weapon in our struggle for freedom. This has been particularly true for those of us who have taken to learning it while imprisoned. Being in prison and being able to place the Irish language into the context of our overall struggle was a vital ingredient for me when I set out to learn it at the third attempt.

This ingredient was missing on the two previous occasions that I put my mind to learning Irish. My first attempt was as a 13-year-old conscript in a classroom with a teacher who demonstrated more of a sadistic interest in wielding his strap than he did in teaching us Irish. My second attempt came as a naive, fledgling member of Sinn Féin at 15. Despite these failings, however, I retained a basic desire to learn the language. Nothing more came of it until I found myself in Crumlin Road Jail with nothing but time at my disposal. Learning Irish gradually took on an importance as I began to see it more and more as a part of the overall reason why I was in prison in the first place.

It is perhaps easier for POWs to identify with the Irish language than most, particularly the prisoners of the Blanket and hunger-strikes' period. After all, prisoners and the language had much in common. The language has witnessed a consistent effort on behalf of the British throughout history to

have it effectively removed from Irish life. The tactics used today by the NIO are somewhat more subtle than those used during the days of the conquest of Ire-

**Eddie Seeley
(Long Kesh)**

land, but the objective remains the same — to remove one of the last vestiges of our identity as a sovereign people.

Treatment of Republican prisoners has followed similar lines. They also have been persecuted over the years in a concerted attempt to break their spirits and will to fight on. The tactics used today are also more subtle (with the exception of Crumlin Road) than those used during the barbaric years of the Blanket protest and hunger strikes when brutal, naked force was used to try and conquer the POWs. But, like that of the language, the objective remains true — to remove the issue of Irish POWs from the political agenda. The failure of British policy on both counts can be seen from the fact that both the Irish language in the Six Counties and the POWs are in stronger positions than ever.

INTEGRAL PART

It was hardly surprising then that these two elements converged so solidly during the period of the Blanket and hunger-strikes. Learning the language became a way of letting their oppressor know that

the POWs wouldn't be defeated. Learning Irish signified their determination not to be broken. It was one of the few things that could not be taken from them. It became a form of resisting the enemy. The bond developed between prisoners and the Irish language during those dramatic and traumatic days has, to a certain extent, filtered through to the present generation of prisoners.

Although perhaps not as vibrant today as it was then, it would be true to say that the language has, nevertheless, embedded itself firmly into our prison culture. It has become an integral part of prison life. Our present system of learning is very much a mutual learning process; leaning away from the old teacher-pupil methods used in the past. Our emphasis is on collectively using whatever Irish we possess, no matter how limited, and building upon that. Even a person not desiring to learn Irish will still leave here with a fair amount of it instilled into his everyday vocabulary.

Learning Irish in prison today, however, still presents its problems. We don't have the brutal aggression against it now that was present during the Blanket days but the attempt to deter us from speaking and learning Irish has never waned. It has simply taken a new form. Today we face constant discrimination in relation to anything Gaelic. We are barred from speaking Irish on visits, or corresponding in letters in Irish, or even playing Gaelic sports. Irish books, periodicals and newspapers are constantly being censored, resulting in long delays in these items reaching us. In a case taken recently by Republican prisoners, Judge Carswell upheld the above discriminatory practices. These measures are seen as an attempt to weaken our resolve and commitment towards learning the Irish language in prison.

They will fail, just as other attempts to crush our commitment to the struggle in general have failed in the past. The Irish language, for us, is part of that struggle. It has become an integral part of our everyday prison life and culture. It is here to stay. We refuse to be deterred from studying and speaking a language that is rightfully ours. ■



● The Irish language has firmly embedded itself into our prison culture

OBITUARIES

Frankie Quinn (Tyrone)
(Long Kesh H3)

The frequency with which shoot-to-kill incidents have occurred in Tyrone makes the county now virtually synonymous with this lethal tactic. A long litany of such fatal events stretches back over the years, the deaths of the Loughgall martyrs being perhaps the most poignant for many years.

The most recent victims were IRA Volunteers Pete Ryan, Lawrence McNally and Tony Doris. All three were on active service when they lost their lives. The likelihood of such a fate is a daily hazard faced by Volunteers. It is something the IRA views as inevitable in a war situation and which its soldiers resign themselves to. Therefore, the questions that need to be raised by the shoot-to-kill policy should not centre upon whether the IRA expect to operate in a risk-free environment; rather, the focus should be upon the 'rule of law' under which the British sanctimoniously declare their forces to operate. The British violation of their own laws is so persistent a feature of their rule in the Six Counties that no further elaboration is required here.

PETE RYAN was renowned in Tyrone and abroad. Coming from a strong Republican background, he joined the IRA while

still in his teens. His operational prowess struck terror into the hearts of the British forces. Many Republicans who have come through the interrogation centres can testify to the enemy's intense interest in Pete. After a long period on the run throughout the 1970s he was finally captured in 1980 but soon escaped from Crumlin Road prison during the hunger strike era of 1981. Unfortunately he was quickly recaptured by the collaborationist régime in the South and forced to serve seven and a half years in Portlaoise. While there, he was profoundly affected by the Loughgall massacre in which he lost at least two exceptionally close friends — Jim Lynagh and Padraig McKearney. Few were surprised that Pete took up active service again upon release.

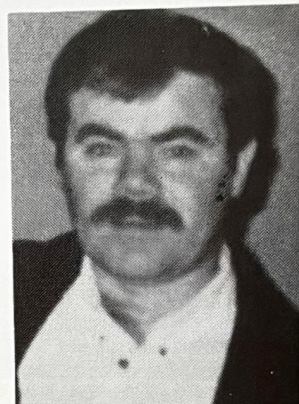
LAWRENCE McNALLY also hailed from a Republican family. He too joined the IRA as a teenager, and together with



● Voi LAWRENCE McNALLY

Pete Ryan proved to be a scourge to the British. On the run from an early stage he avoided capture and at some point in the early 1980s went to America. He returned to Ireland after the death of his brother Felim, who had been gunned down by Unionist assassins and immediately immersed himself in the armed struggle.

TONY DORIS was the youngest of the three. Also from a Republican family he entered the ranks of the IRA at an early age and, in spite of his tender years, he had by the time of his death accumulated a wealth of experience. Many of his comrades were of the opinion that Tony possessed great leadership



● Voi PETE RYAN



● Voi TONY DORIS

potential. Keenly politicised, he had a firm belief that without armed struggle the British presence in Ireland would continue unabated. For this reason he remained adamant, while held in Crumlin Road prison on a trumped-up charge, that he would continue upon release to work within the IRA to secure the removal of the British.

The malevolence of the British state in pursuing a shoot-to-kill policy has left its cruel imprint on Tyrone. Yet the very fact of its continuance is evidence that it has not succeeded in what its strategists had intended. That it will not succeed is guaranteed by the determination of IRA Volunteers like Pete Ryan, Lawrence McNally and Tony Doris. From them others draw inspiration.

To their families, comrades and friends, the Republican POWs extend deepest sympathy. ■



● IRA Volunteers flank the coffin of Lawrence McNally — their determination guarantees the failure of the British shoot-to-kill policy in Ireland

PRISON NEWS

EXTRADITION

DESSIE ELLIS continues to be the victim of legal and political duplicity. A judicial review on May 23rd of a magistrate's decision to substitute new charges for the ones on which he was extradited ruled that the matter should be considered by the presiding judge when the trial opens in October. Frantic attempts by the British DPP to have the original charges reinstated were unsuccessful.

If the British government were to proceed with the two new charges on which Dessie was committed for trial in February it would mean the breaching of the speciality rule in extradition arrangements between the 26 Counties and Britain. Under the rule of speciality an extraditee may be prosecuted only on those charges specified on his or her extradition warrant. It would also be a breach of international law.

It is now up to the 26 County government to call for the immediate release of Dessie Ellis and to face up to the fact that an Irish man or woman who is charged with a political offence in Britain will never get a fair trial. The injustice surrounding Dessie Ellis is simply the latest evidence to prove the overwhelming case for ending extradition arrangements with Britain.

TRANSFERS

BRITISH soldiers convicted of crimes — including murder — in the Six Counties are immedi-

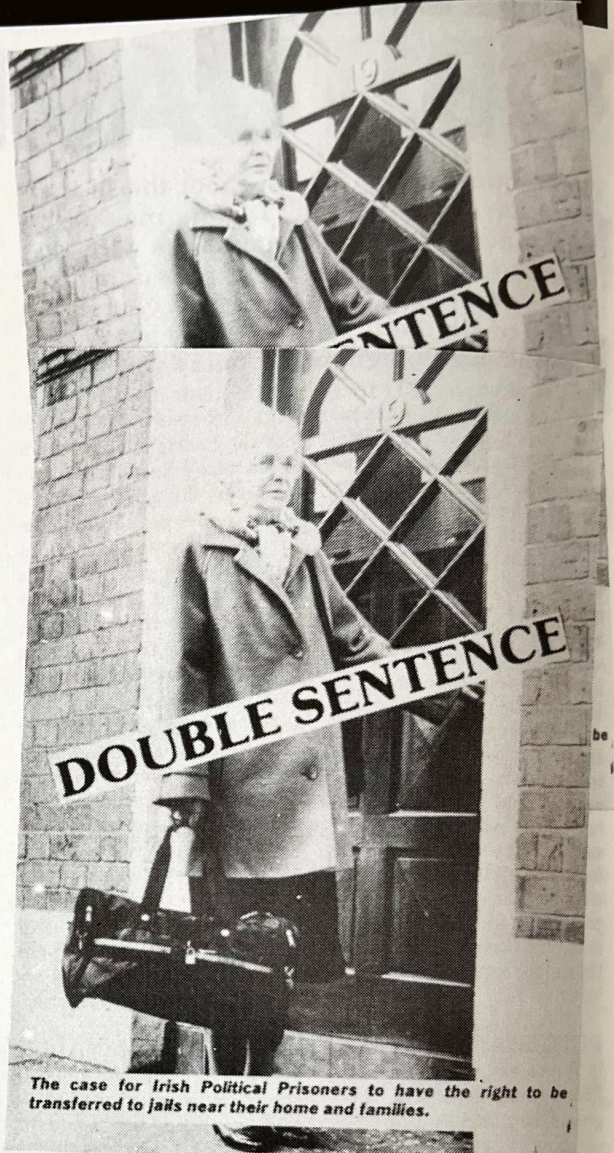
ately transferred to a prison near their homes in Britain to serve their sentences. For Irish POWs in English jails the policy is entirely different.

Irish POWs have repeatedly had their requests for transfer to Ireland refused. Their families, relatives and friends are forced to make long, expensive journeys from Ireland to visit them. In the Six Counties the DHSS covers only part of the payment for two visits a year; in the 26 Counties the position can be even worse as families must apply for discretionary grants from their local Health Board.

As well as the financial hardships, visitors must endure the fear of arrest, strip-searching, anti-Irish racism, transport delays and the exhaustion of travelling. They sometimes find that their loved ones have been moved just hours before the visit to another jail many miles away. Normal visits are impossible after all the hassle.

This inhuman treatment of prisoners and their families will continue until the British agree to transfer Irish POWs and the 26-County government ratify the 1983 Council of Europe Transfer Treaty.

Recently an independent group made up of relatives and friends of Irish POWs launched a booklet called *Double Sentence* to raise the plight of the families of Irish prisoners held in English jails. The aim of the group is to win the basic right for all prisoners to be transferred to a prison near their home. ■



The case for Irish Political Prisoners to have the right to be transferred to jails near their home and families.

● The booklet *Double Sentence* is available from the Committee for the Transfer of Irish Prisoners, PO Box 303, Tomb Street, Belfast BT 1.

Midday Raid 1983

By Eamon Nolan
(Portlaoise)

Heavy boots clang and crash
On metal stairs. The doors,
The shouts, the scraping stools,
Ring out a warning.
Behind a practised mask,
I stand and wait.

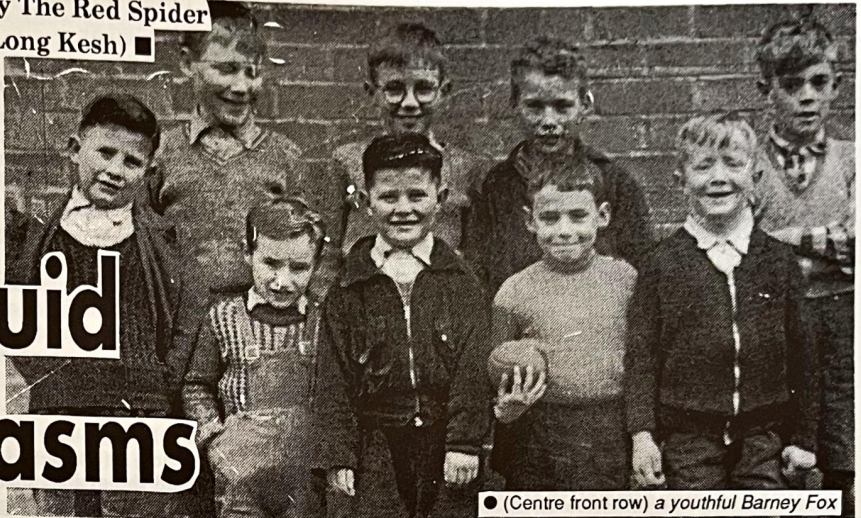
Wordless, seeking anonymity
In numbers, you remove
The things I use
To stamp my mark on uniformity.
You throw them carelessly,
In an undignified heap.

I wonder at the rubbish gathered,
My mirror to the world.

So you strip away the public me.
My clothes in struggle,
Until I stand naked.
My fear; alive,
Exploding in my gut,
Is thumb-held in the dam.
My pride sees victory
In down-cast eyes.
I still defend my corner
As you leave.

Football, Flowers, Fairy Liquid and Orgasms

By The Red Spider
(Long Kesh) ■



● (Centre front row) a youthful Barney Fox

Big Fergal is rather fond of flowers and plants, and of one plant in particular. It sits in his bedroom at home in Lenadoon where he had tended it from it was a little seedling until his arrest. On visits and in letters he inquires lovingly about its health, making sure it's getting properly fed and looked after. Recently his mother sent him a photograph of it. There it sat beside the window, its large leaves shining, looking very well indeed. Fergal showed it off proudly.

"Is it a rubber plant?" one of the lads asked.

"No," said Fergal sharply, "it's a real one."

Another of the lads was showing off a photograph.

"Look," he said, "my family got me a hi-fi for my birthday."

"No, no," said Pat, lifting his head and slowly wagging his forefinger, "they got you a photograph of a hi-fi for your birthday."

In the Crum the screw opened Harry's door to allow him to go for a shower. Harry grabbed his soap, shampoo and towel and hurried out. He greeted Jim in the next shower, stepped under the hot water and started to wash himself. After a minute he said, "Here, Jim, this is the strangest soap. There's no lather off it or nothing."

"Let's see," said Jim. Harry handed the soap over. Jim looked at it carefully, smelled it and broke it in two. "No wonder," he said, "this isn't soap, it's cheese!"

The artists were having some trouble with their drawing of the 1916 Proclamation. No matter what they tried or how careful they were, they couldn't keep the lines of writing parallel. There was only one thing for it — send for Mickey.

Mickey can make anything. Throw him in a couple of lemonade bottles, a spool of thread, some sticky-backed plastic and a handful of those wee plastic bits from the ends of Bic pens and before you can say 'Blue Peter badge' he'll have made a yoke that brings him his breakfast and mops the floor.

An orange squeezer? Think, think, bang, bang, cut, saw, glue, hammer, stick, stick, bend. Hey presto, an orange squeezer that drains and filters the juice and pours it into equal measures. Christmas decorations? Draw, draw, cut, snip, scissors — starbursts of colour all over the wing. The Proclamation should be wee buns.

He set to work and for days and nights the wing waited. Rulers, set squares and rubber bands disappeared into his cell. Then, he emerged. The articles gathered round. It took two men to lift the contraption and another one to operate it. Using parallel rulers on a complicated sliding scale it certainly seems to have solved the problem. Men are currently being trained in its use and the first drawing should be available in good time for the 80th anniversary.

Censorship is a terrible thing, to be challenged whenever it arises. For the past number of months it has reared its ugly head in this jail with Barney Fox frantically hunting down all copies of this photograph of him. The last one in captivity has recently fallen into my hands so, to strike a blow for freedom of expression, I have decided to publish it.

The photograph is noteworthy in that Barney has changed so little in the 35 years since it was taken. He may have a few more teeth and his ears are certainly a bit smaller, but he is instantly recognisable, especially since he still wears that jacket (it fits him now).

The lads in H7 suspected an attempt at mass poisoning. As they ate their tea they suddenly gagged and choked at the terrible taste. Was someone trying to lace their food? After a while the explanation emerged.

Danny, that world famous Republican, author and bon vivant, had decided it was time he helped out with the chores in the wing. So, at dinnertime, he had offered to do the dishes.

Remembering the many Fairy Liquid adverts he had seen on TV, Danny filled the sink with dishes, turned on the tap and reached for the green liquid. But the bottle was almost empty, so he hunted round for some more. His eyes fell on a five-gallon drum. With great difficulty he heaved it up to the sink and poured in a pint or

two. It didn't smell like it was supposed to, but he carried on regardless. He dutifully washed, dried and stacked the dishes. He smiled, content. The plates smelled clinical. The drum had contained full-strength disinfectant.

He's still a bit green, but I'm sure the lad will learn.

What have Johnny Gilmour and Nancy Reagan got in common? The same hairstyle? They both hate George Bush? No, they both have great faith in hocus-pocus. Johnny checks his stars every morning, carries *Old Moore's Almanac* in his hip pocket, and wouldn't dream of venturing out without a good squint at his tea leaves. He was walking round the yard with Mickey Tic-Tac the other day discussing the likelihood that David Icke's predictions of world catastrophe would come true. Johnny explained that the planet was feeling pain but Mickey would have none of it. Finally, in exasperation, Johnny declared, "But sure Tic-Tac, the whole world is just one giant orgasm!"

One of our best areas for sales is Glasgow, so we were surprised to find 60 copies of our last issue returned unsold. However, our puzzlement turned to sympathy when we read the accompanying note:

"Enclosing some unavoidable returns which would have been sold at Parkhead if Celtic hadn't done so poorly this season." ■

LETTERS

Letters to:
Brian Campbell No. A160 or
Felim's O'Hagan No. A733
H-Blocks, Long Kesh, Country Antrim

In our winter 1990 issue we published a letter from Máirtín O Muilleoir who argued that articles in Irish should not be translated into English. He stated that translation "makes Irish redundant — a second-class language which is only relevant if translated into the dominant language", and he went on to appeal for respect for the rights of Irish speakers by dealing with them in their chosen language. We asked for readers' views on the subject and below are the replies we received.

A Chairde,

Some months ago I would have agreed entirely with what Máirtín O Muilleoir was saying, but now I can only make my argument against on the grounds of my own present position.

As someone who agrees with the promotion of Irish and realising its significance in the overall struggle. I never took the bother myself to learn the language, and that despite the fact that I played an active part in founding a Gael Scoil in my own town of Cobh in 1986. I often said to myself that if I ever ended up in jail the first thing I would do would be to learn Irish, assuming of course that the jail would have been Portlaoise.

Now that I find myself incarcerated in a foreign country where it's rare to find English spoken I can assure you that it was with delight that I received my first piece of reading material from the home country last night, which was an *AP/RN*, *Captive Voice* and *Iris*.

I was very appreciative of the dual language articles. As there are only three of us Irish people here in the prison and even if one of us had fluent Irish we would be unable to teach the others as we are normally isolated from each other with the exception of the odd chance contact. So I'm afraid that my lessons will have to wait for another time. I think it should be kept in mind that there are many solidarity

groups here in Europe, the USA and other countries that benefit from the translated articles also.

**Kieran McCarthy,
Antwerp Prison,
Belgium.**

A Chairde,

As a reader who possesses competent, though not fluent, *Gaelige* I must agree with Máirtín O Muilleoir's point that full translations of articles do render the Irish language redundant simply because reading the English translation is an easier option.

May I suggest that the translation be replaced by a brief *foclóir* giving the meaning of the more difficult, less common words contained in the article.

I feel this would benefit all readers. It could be ignored by our fortunate fluent comrades and be of immense assistance to the rest of us. Those who are learning *ár dteanga féin* at the moment would be encouraged to read the articles as, with the accompanying vocabulary, such Irish as they already possess will enable them to read an article which they might otherwise dismiss as being of a too advanced standard.

**Irene Delaney,
Co. Leitrim.**

A Chairde,

Essentially I agree with

Máirtín O Muilleoir, ideally it should not be necessary to translate from Irish. However, as I have at present no Irish myself, I would be totally excluded from a number of articles. I am trying to learn Irish, but as I live, and have always lived, in England, and am surrounded by non-Irish speakers, it is proving extremely difficult. From my own point of view, I find it very helpful to have the translation, not only so that I may read the article, but also that it helps me recognise words. I don't just go straight to the English, I always look to see how much of the text I can recognise and understand.

I have bought the usual books and tapes available for Irish learners, but I am sure there is nothing that can ever be as helpful as having Irish spoken by those surrounding you.

Perhaps Máirtín O Muilleoir will offer to help me learn Irish? Then maybe one day *An Glór Gafa* will appear in Irish in its entirety!

**Lucy Chisholm,
Suffolk,
England.**

A Chairde,

I disagree with Máirtín O Muilleoir's opinion that it somehow diminishes or dilutes in some manner the Irish language when it is translated into English for the reader who does not read Irish. Most Irish-Americans I know don't speak it as they never had much, if any, exposure to it. Your articles provide such exposure and sparks interest in it when reading the articles in both languages. Signs in most countries give messages, etc, in more than one language and it doesn't affect their culture's language in any adverse way.

I read an article in *The Irish Reporter* which also talks about the Irish language and is worth reading. I've taken an interest in my Irishness that now includes learning the languages. And I owe that to the articles in

An Glór Gafa, and *AP/RN* that also publishes *Progress in Irish* on its pages. The argument given in the letter against translating articles in Irish was not a valid one in my opinion, and the current practice of translating them should continue.

**Gary James Boyle,
Lewisburg,
Pennsylvania,
USA.**

Dear An Glór Gafa,

This is quite a common debate in Wales with various organisations having various solutions: some translate everything Welsh to English and English to Welsh; some give a brief summary of the Welsh article in English; and some just publish articles in whatever language they are submitted; and some do the same as you in translating any Welsh articles into English not vice versa.

The second solution has an obvious advantage in that if someone has an interest in the subject of the article it gives them an extra incentive to learn the language. Translating articles from Irish to English but not English to Irish is relegating Irish to a second class language and Irish speakers into second class citizens, as they can only read some of the magazine whereas English speakers can read all of it.

Having said that, perhaps it is fitting to translate Irish article to English, after all what can be more captive than a voice constrained by the languages of its oppressor.

**Nina Wilson,
Bangor, Cymru.**

A Chairde,

I am not a fluent Irish speaker but I do find that when the articles in *An Glór Gafa* are not translated I can read them with the aid of a dictionary and actually learn from them. I agree with Máirtín in that the articles should not be translated. However, I do think that a short 'dictionary' at the end of each would have the effect of making them more attractive to read, (who wants to be going back to a *foclóir* every two minutes?).

Yes we should deal with peo-

al readership who sadly have little knowledge of *Gaeilge*. Therefore I would cast my vote in favour of translating articles in Irish into... American!

**Gerry Bogaard,
Clifton Park,
New York.**

Dear An Glór Gafa,

I think they should be translated. I think it would be a shame for anyone to miss reading and understanding one word of *An Glór Gafa*.

My sisters, husband and I have been taking Gaelic classes for six months so I am still struggling with the irregular verbs, aspirations, etc. It is a great help to have the English translations available.

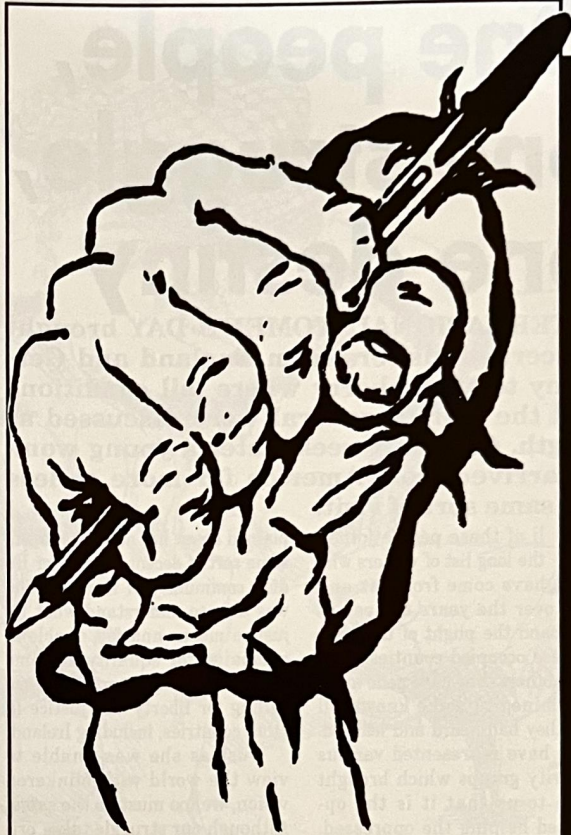
Also Gaelic classes are not available everywhere. We were lucky enough to find someone willing to teach us in her home. It is not a formal class offered through a school. The closest formal Gaelic class is about 700 miles away making it impossible to attend formal lessons.

**Anne Parks,
Conyers,
Georgia,
USA.**

Dear An Glór Gafa,

As an American I am unable to speak *Gaeilge* (Irish) or read or write the language. Therefore, I would hope you would continue to translate those articles written in Irish to English. I understand the resistance on behalf of some people to give up the cultural identity of the language and have it despoiled by its translation into English. However, in my view, more not less communication is beneficial and we do not truly need another 'Tower of Babel' syndrome where everyone speaks a different language so none of us can talk. I'm sure I do not appreciate the political ramifications involved but it seems to me if one is to publish his or her work rather than just posting it on their cell wall, the more people who read it the better.

**Jim Hooley,
Loves Park,
Illinois,**



MANY thanks to all the correspondents for airing their views, and for the kind comments about the magazine. The majority wish to retain full English translations so, illogical people that we are, we have decided to dispense with the translations altogether! Seriously though, having discussed the issue ourselves we believe Caoimhín's and Irene's suggestion has much to recommend it and so in future a short *foclóir* of the more difficult words and phrases will accompany all Irish articles.

We apologise to Gerry, Anne, Jim, Lucy, Kieran and Gary for seeming to ignore their opinions, but we are persuaded by the argument that the rights of Irish speakers should be respected. We believe the inclusion of a short *foclóir* fulfills that aim while at the same time making articles accessible to those not totally fluent. And for those with no Irish at all — perhaps you'll be spurred to learn by the thought of what you're missing!

ple in the language they have chosen to use as their own, but the language will remain a minority language as long as it is kept within the confines of those already with Irish. A little dictionary at the end of each page would, I feel, encourage non-Irish speakers to tackle the article, while, at the same time giving the language the position it deserves.

In finishing, I would like to add a remark or two on Máirtín's reference to Iceland. Firstly, Icelanders are avid readers, in any language as many are bi- if not tri-lingual. So many books are published there as a result of an overall campaign to protect all aspects of the native culture. TV is something which is only broadcast for a minimum amount of hours each week, foreign companies are only allowed to expand to a certain predefined degree and so on. If we were to adopt the same attitude to our culture as the Icelanders do to theirs then I'm sure we would see an improvement not only in the position and treatment of our language but in many other spheres as well.

**Caoimhín de Bhailis,
Cork.**

A Chairde,

There is no arguing that the Irish language should stand on its own. However, one must recognise that *An Glór Gafa* is a publication with an internation-

One people, one struggle, one destiny

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY brought concerned visitors from England and Germany to Maghaberry where jail conditions and the war in general were discussed at length. Only two weeks later a young woman arrived from America for more or less the same sort of visit.

All of these people joined the long list of visitors who have come from far and wide over the years to hear at first hand the plight of the Irish in these occupied counties. Like many others they have gone away determined to make known all that they had heard and learned. Some have represented various minority groups which brought home to us that it is the oppressed helping the oppressed. One woman from London ex-

plained about her attempts to win some sort of decent life for her Indian community in England. She was able to understand what injustice means and felt unable to campaign for equality at home without also supporting those calling for liberty and justice in other countries, including Ireland.

Just as she was unable to view the world with blinkered vision, we too must do the same. Although our struggle takes priority with us we must look be-

Ailish Carroll
(Maghaberry)

yond the boundaries and examine conflicts on an international scale. We are not the only nation suffering due to imperialism and capitalism. Once this war has ended and we have successfully driven the British from our land, we then have the task of establishing a socialist Ireland. We must create an Ireland where all the citizens are guaranteed, in the words of the 1916 Proclamation, "...religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts..." As this is being achieved we must also reinforce our links with other groups and countries who had, or are continuing to have, their own war or rebellion. James Connolly and Karl Marx both adhered to 'proletarian internationalism' declaring that the workers of the world must unite in order to achieve liberty and socialism the world over. Why should greed take prece-

dence over compassion and mutual aid, they asked.

COMRADES IN ARMS

In order for capitalism to thrive it must continue to keep the masses divided by tricking us into accepting the class system internally and exploitation internationally. It succeeds only by organising us into sections and creating conflict between us. We then forget who the real enemy is and thus suffer by our ignorance.

But together we can bring an end to the divisions created by capitalism. By looking at the struggling races across the world and seeing them for what they really are — our comrades in arms — and not the enemy that Britain or America would have us believe, then we shall achieve true socialism and peace. As Grenada's Maurice Bishop reminds us, we must "pull down those artificial barriers of colonialism and develop that oneness and that unity" that is so essential. He continues; "we are one people with one struggle and one destiny."

Our visitors on International Women's Day would certainly recognise the wisdom in the words of Connolly, Marx and Bishop; so must we. ■



● International Women's Day brought visitors from England, America and Germany to show their solidarity with the women republican prisoners in Maghaberry prison

MY LEFT FEET

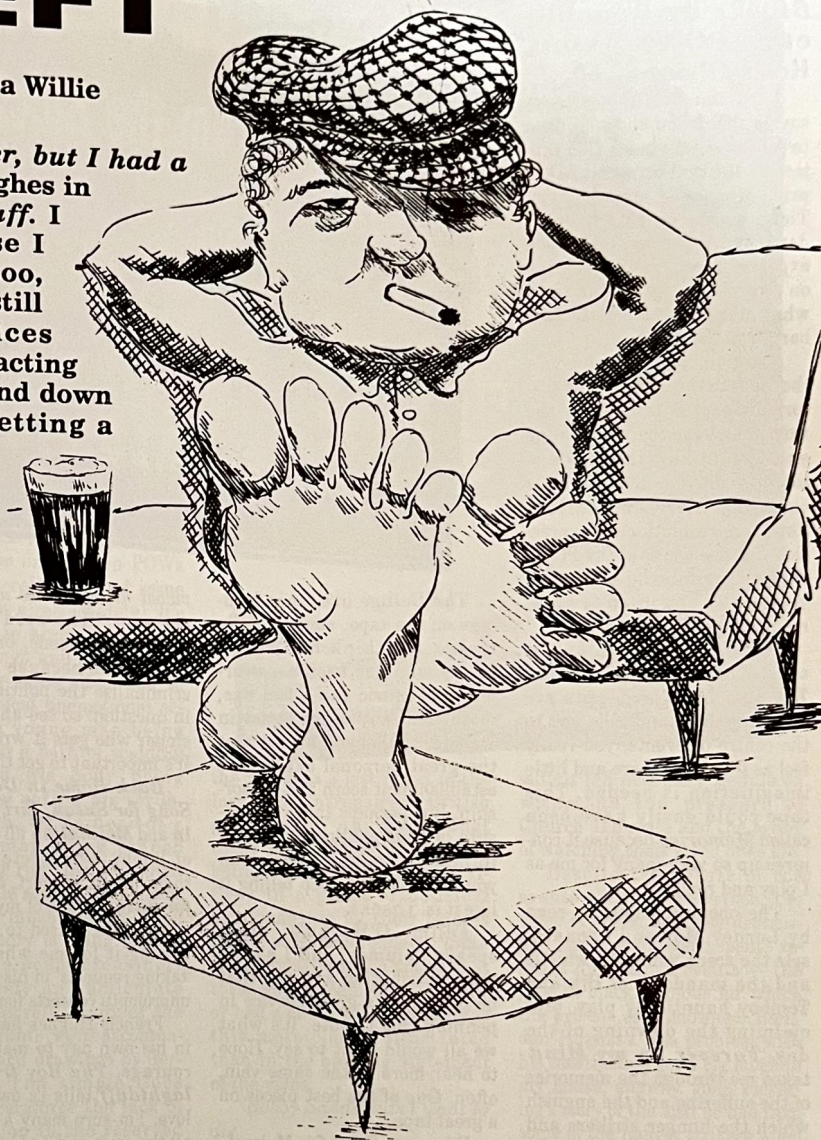
Da Willie

"I COULD'VE been a footballer, but I had a paper round," says Yosser Hughes in *The Boys From The Blackstuff*. I know how he feels, because I could've been a footballer too, but I had two left feet. I've still got them but nobody notices much anymore. I've given up acting the young fella, running up and down football fields and never getting a pass. These days I dream of what might have been, not what could be.

I blame my Ma, she was a terrible footballer. My Da was supposed to be good but he was 94 when I was born and didn't really get the chance to show me any tricks. It's a pretty good trick having a son when you're 94, I suppose, but that's got nothing to do with football. Anyway, growing up with two left feet can be a fairly traumatic experience, and in my case it has left some harrowing memories. Every time I think back on that bastion of fascism they call the school yard, where physical perfection and physical talent counted for everything, my toes curl (all in the same direction). Those are supposed to be the best days of a person's life, and they probably are if you can play football or fight.

The good footballers in my class were kowtowed to, crawled to and ball-licked, except for one who came from Scotland — he got the shite kicked out of him by half the class for having the neck to tell the teacher that he intended to be a professional footballer. Not a very smart thing to say, as he found out. The good fighters had respect but that was just common sense on behalf of the rest of us. One lad who was good with both his fists and his feet was known as "Joe, Mate" (said with a scrape and a bow), while another lad who was very civil and quiet and happened to be the smartest in the class was known as "that fat bastard".

I was practically unknown to my classmates, not being the forward type, but while they might not have remembered my name at times, they were never short of alternatives whenever I missed a sitter on the pitch. I was always a good candidate for a slap on the back of the head when the teacher wasn't looking, and in the yard the up-and-coming 'good fighters' used to begin their careers on me. I used to sicken them by starting to cry right away, then they'd leave me alone. Once I made the



mistake of swinging my boot but, as usual, I missed my target and he beat the crap out of me. After that I concluded that the best form of defence would be total and unconditional surrender.

Outside school wasn't much different. I couldn't get a game of football in the car-park unless it was my ball, and even then I was always last picked. There's a certain humiliation about being left standing against the wall on your own, then to be told "you're doing nets anyway." I'll always remember the way my Ma used to look at me when I'd ask her for the money for a new ball. She'd look down at my feet and then up into my eyes as if to say, "catch yourself on, son." My brothers had even less success with the football. One couldn't run because he had a bad chest and the other

couldn't run in case he'd fall and break his bottle of wine. He's well pickled now.

Those were bad times alright. I couldn't even walk like a hard man to try to attract the women. My feet kept getting tangled up and I would end up shuffling into some shop doorway. I was showed up more times than enough. Then I met my 'pearl'. She didn't seem to care about my strange feet — maybe because she had a face that sunk a thousand ships — and we fell for each other right away, like two peas in a fountain. We're still together after all these years and our big son — our pride and joy — has inherited my footballing talents and his mother's unique looks. He's in Long Kesh now for this, that and the other, so if any of his mates read this maybe you'd be kind enough to give him our regards. ■

Music from the Blocks by Republican POWs (Long Kesh). Price £6.50.

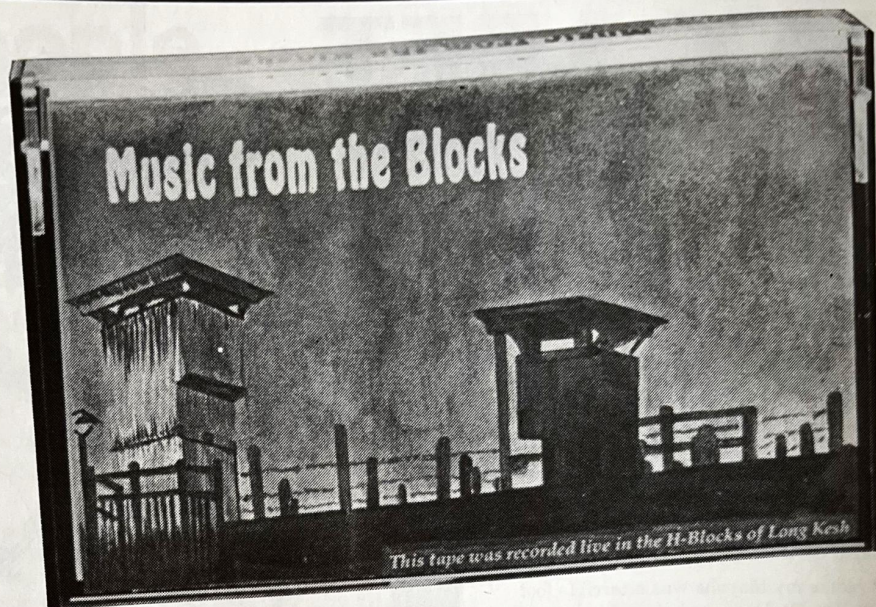
I couldn't start this without saying thank you and well done to all those who made this project a reality. For me, it takes pride of place in my collection. The music is well up to standard, and better in fact than I expected given the limitations on recording facilities. But since when have limitations been a barrier to these troops?

Emotion is only just below the surface throughout this historic tape. It is tangible in the words spoken, the songs sung and also in how the music is lovingly played. The talent is certainly there and culture finds fine revolutionary expression. Let the words of the POWs themselves tell the tale — 10 years on — and listen to statements of the time...

When I played the tape, it affected me as much as the book *Ten Men Dead* had. Both are very emotional and take you to the centre of events; you really feel as if you are there and little imagination is needed. This tape could easily have been called *Memories* because it conjures up so very many for me as I play and replay it.

The opening sequence, read by Lorney Mór and Leonard, sets the scene while the whistle and the mandolin of Bik and Tomboy hauntingly play, proclaiming the dawning of the day. *Forever on my Mind* takes me through the memories of the suffering and the anguish which the hunger strikers and their families faced. Flashbacks come of faces and events surrounding the funerals, which I only saw later after our '83 escape. I think of the lead-up to, and periods of, the hunger strike and my heart aches for the comrades lost as I silently mouth their names and my heart speaks as a tear offers its own silent tribute.

Galtee Mountain Boy is an old favourite and Tipperary and its people come to mind: Pat Hackett who did such torturous years on the Blanket in England; and Ella O'Dwyer, a co-accused of mine doing life in Durham, with her tales of H-Block/Armagh Campaign marches.



The Deluge like other numbers on the tape, automatically makes me think of Christy Moore who has been a powerhouse of music and I feel has, more than any other artist in Ireland, challenged injustice at the great personal expense of establishment scorn and censorship. But perhaps that's a measure of your politics and truthfulness in Ireland. Good man yourself, Christy, keep telling it like it is. Thanks.

Felim O'Hagan's poem speaks volumes, and I salute this contribution and say that he did us all a great service in penning this tribute. It's what we all would want to say. Hope to hear more in the same vein, often. One of the best pieces on a great tape.

Bik wrote *Song for Marcella* which some gremlin changed to *Freedom's Song* (no, Bik didn't choose the word gremlin — he was more controversial). Marcella, of course, was the pseudonym used by Bobby Sands. This is a lovely, moving song — you can tell how much Bik puts into it — not an easy song for him to sing given how close he and Bobby were. A great song with a message.

90 Miles from Dublin Town is the one song I feel I have to criticise, not because of how it's sung or played but because I challenge a lyric in it, a wrong lyric which makes me cringe. "...confessions that con-

victed me of crimes which were not mine." The word should be offences, or deeds, or acts, but not crimes because that is to criminalise the political actions in question. So see and pull any singer who gets it wrong — eh? It's important to get that right.

Back Home in Derry, Sad Song for Susan, Eiri an Maidin and *McIlhatton* all remind me of Bobby, who wrote and sang them in our concert. *Sad Song for Susan* is one of my most precious songs. I used to ask Bobby to sing it for me when he was 'taking requests' in his sometimes impromptu concerts for us.

Francis Hughes had a legend in his own day to match is own courage. *The Boy from Tam-laghtduff* tells its own story of love. I'm sure many a home was all the more sad and empty never to see him cross a welcome threshold again. He lives on in our memories and the song is well performed on this cassette.

Monsters, Devils, Strangers — a powerful song sung by Bik and backed by a lovely instrumental — adopts the international dimension which embraces struggle everywhere the oppressed seek justice. More internationalism is in the song *Victor Jara* about the Chilean activist who in ways was like Bobby. Their common love of the oppressed and talent for music sets them in a similar mould. Of course each met a similar fate: murdered by the

forces of oppression.

The Mick Hanley song, *Terrorist or Dreamer*, was new to me and I was struck by the impact of its lyrics. This a great song well sung and I'll not spoil it for you — just listen to it.

While *The Time Has Come* may have meant the end of the torment for our comrades on hunger strike, it represented the beginning for the families and loved ones left behind. I wonder if they know they are never alone, and that their loss was our loss? I hope they do know, and are told often.

Bobby spoke for us all when he penned the phrase — so full of meaning — *tiocfaidh ár lá*. For him, *Eiri an Maidin* was a prophetic look into the future (translates: "...when our day comes, perhaps I won't be alive"). He recognised some of us would not see it, but it was never a personal thing, but a gift of freedom for generations coming after us. If we did not see it, so be it. But it would be fought for and won. That remains our legacy ten years on.

The words of reflection by those who made the tape speak for themselves, but I speak for myself when I say thank you, thank you for giving what surely is the most historic tape we could have. Good luck for the future. Keep on pluckin'!

**Gerry McDonnell
(Leicester)**

The H-Block Hunger-Strike (VHS video) by Republican Publications. Price £21 (includes commemorative issue of IRIS)

For many people this video will be a painful reminder — as if a reminder were needed in this anniversary year — of the days and weeks and months of the hunger strikes. The personal reminiscences told on film will, no doubt, evoke their own memories, thoughts and feelings — perhaps long-buried feelings which were 'put away' in order to allow them to carry on in a struggle which is still to be won.

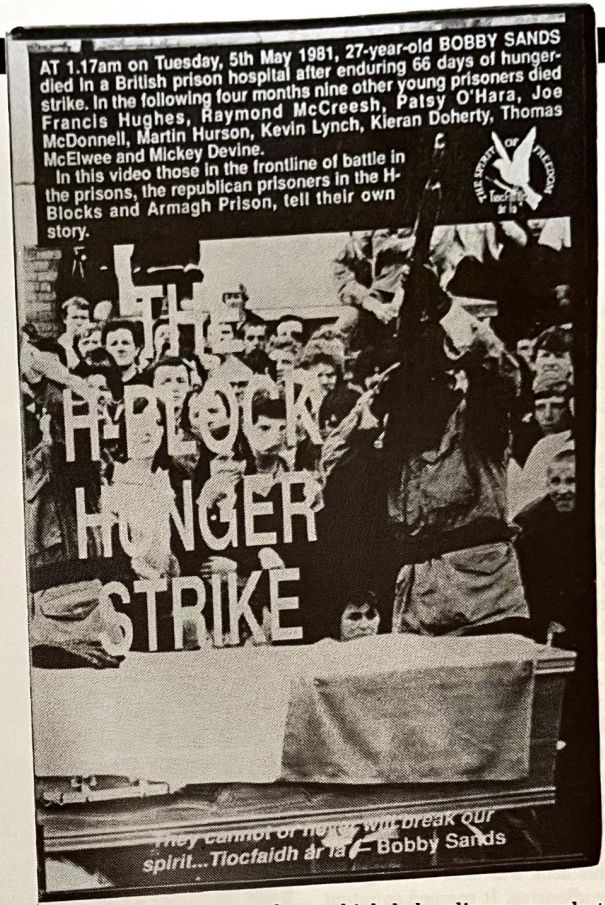
I watched it as someone who wasn't there, who wasn't involved and who didn't fully understand what it was all about at the time. My only personal memory of the period was the terrible sick feeling in my stomach as each death was announced and the realisation that the British government were quite prepared to sit it out. Subsequent study and discussion of the hunger strikes have brought me to an awareness of the historical facts and an understanding, perhaps limited, of the political context in which the events took place. However, it's a difficult thing to imagine the unimaginable — to have any idea of the immense courage and commitment, not only of the hunger strikers but of their comrades and their families. In some ways, the book *Ten Men Dead* gave an insight into those feelings. This video goes a step further in that it is based on the personal accounts of people, in their own words and with the benefit of ten years reflection. Although, when you listen to some of the participants, it is apparent that, in their own minds, the hunger strikes could have been yesterday, so clear is their recollection of small incidents and little smatches of conversation.

For those people who have no knowledge or understanding of the period and its political consequences, either because they were/are too young or because they have chosen not to think about it, the video is an invaluable educational resource.

Both hunger strikes are set in the context of the British policy of criminalisation and their plan to use the prisons as the 'breakers' yard' of Republicanism. The narrative, written by Laurence McKeown, Leo Green and Leonard Ferrin, traces this policy from the removal of Special Category status in 1976 to the beginning of the Blanket protest, the no-wash protest and finally the hunger strikes. It details the rise of the Relatives' Action Committees and the National H-Block/Armagh Committee and the political watershed all this represented for Sinn Féin. All of this has, undoubtedly, been told before. What makes the video different is the personal account given by participants in the events of that time — members of the RACs, of the NHB/AC, of Sinn Féin, of men and women POWs (some now released and some still without a release date). It's one thing to know that there were beatings and brutality — it's another thing altogether to hear an almost unemotional account of a young man being thrown into a bath of scalding water and his body being rubbed raw with a big scrubbing brush. Or to hear of a young woman being pinned down under riot shields by half a dozen male screws. The horror is made so much greater when the later story is being told on film by the heart-breakingly young, lively and articulate Mairead Farrell. Many of the verbal accounts were accompanied by pencil drawings by Terry Boyle. The simple lines served to reinforce the lack of open emotion in the reserved and unadorned verbal accounts. It was almost as though the events were so painful and so terrible that any attempt to express this through words or tears would be doomed to failure and therefore was not even attempted. Or it may have been, as John Pickering suggested on film, that those involved couldn't afford to let themselves go because the struggle was still 'up and running'.

LOVE AND HUMANITY

The words of Brendan Hughes made it very clear that the decision to begin the hunger strikes was taken from inside



AT 1.17am on Tuesday, 5th May 1981, 27-year-old BOBBY SANDS died in a British prison hospital after enduring 66 days of hunger-strike. In the following four months nine other young prisoners died: Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Thomas McElwee and Mickey Devine. In this video those in the frontline of battle in the prisons, the republican prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh Prison, tell their own story.

the prison as a last resort in the face of an intransigent British government. Any notion that these were foolish young men, being offered as human sacrifices in a game of political brinkmanship by their leaders on the outside is rendered totally vacuous. As is the notion that these young men were 'fanatics' or had a death wish. Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in the opening statement of the video:

"Bobby Sands didn't want to die.

Bobby Sands wanted to live.

Bobby Sands had an awful lot of living to do."

Or in the accounts of conversations with Tom McElwee when he was very close to death about getting married, or Micky Devine's close to final words about the kind of Ireland he wanted to live in.

My only criticism of the video, and it's a small one, is that the inclusion of some of the relatives would have given further insight into their heroic fortitude and their love of their sons, husbands, brothers, etc. It would have allowed some understanding of the circumstances and political realities

which led ordinary people to withstand the pressure of Church and state and the agony of watching their loved ones die.

Despite the nature of the events which it describes, the video is not in any way depressing. Many of the participants recount humorous events — the type of black humour for which the prisons are renowned. Brendan Hughes's wee problem with his constipation got a big laugh in my house, anyway. John Pickering's story of the visit he had from some of the hunger strikers when he was in hospital is not only funny but displays a bond of love and humanity between the prisoners that we on the outside can only wonder at. The humour is, of course, combined with a deep sadness brought on by the cruel waste of such talented individuals — a waste which continues today. But as you listen to the beautiful *Freedom Song* in the final minutes of the video the overall impression you are left with is of strength, courage, love and a determination to win. The makers surely couldn't have hoped for anything more — congratulations to them all.

Jeanette Findlay, Glasgow.

Biting at the Grave
by Padraig O'Malley.
Published by Black-
staff. Price £11.05.

Sometimes being too close to an event can be a hindrance to objective study of it. This being so, perhaps a prisoner is not the best person to review Padraig O'Malley's book *Biting at the Grave* which deals with the Hunger-strikes of 1980-'81. However, having been so close to events also has its advantages. Firstly, it allows for a better understanding of some of the intricacies of the situation, something that might be missed by an outside observer. Secondly, it is useful to have an idea of the factual side of things, especially when so much of the period will be distorted for propaganda purposes. Lastly, and most importantly, having been so close to events allows us as prisoners to take issue with some of the more outrageous claims as to the motivation and purpose behind the hunger-strikes.

The first reaction on reading this book was that it was grossly offensive. It seemed so intent on belittling the whole prisoners' struggle and so tied up with explaining away the events of the period in terms of psychological babble that it seemed to have missed the whole point. But a second reading revealed the book to be only merely annoying. Annoying in the way O'Malley uses the period to trot out his own preconceived notions as to the roots and causes on the conflict here. While O'Malley claims in the book that it was a "voyage of self discovery", there is little evidence to substantiate this. Instead, it appears that he began the book still clinging to his beliefs as to the nature of the war that he first articulated in his 1983 book, *The Uncivil Wars*, and he finished it thinking no differently. His basic notion is that the struggle in Ireland is fairly pointless. He rationalises this idea by accepting the British premise that the main struggle here is between Catholics and Protestants and consequently his book examines the hunger strikes from how it affected these relations.

But the hunger-strike, if anything ever was, was a clas-

PADRAIG O'MALLEY

author of *THE UNCIVIL WARS*

PADRAIG O'MALLEY

author of *THE UNCIVIL WARS*

**BITING
AT THE
GRAVE**

The
Irish Hunger Strikes
and the
Politics of Despair

sic example of the struggle between Britain and Ireland. It has its roots in the Irish/British struggle, it took the path it did because of the attitude of Britain to Ireland and its consequences will affect British-Irish relations for a long time. But instead of recognising this O'Malley concludes that, "The hunger-strikes brought into sharp focus the religious dimension of the conflict..." While it must be said that he does not completely leave out the role of the British and that he is aware enough to recognise that the British must go, he fails to see this as any sort of solution. Instead he doubts that a British withdrawal will solve anything as, in his opinion, the Irish lack the inventiveness to create any-

thing new. It must be said that as long as people like O'Malley perpetuate the myth that the conflict here is a religious one first and foremost then the British will continue to sit back and claim their role as that of 'peacekeeper'. Until the British are revealed in their true role as coloniser the Irish are unlikely to have any opportunity to test their inventiveness.

But what of the book itself? Firstly, one of the most annoying and persistent features is the factual inaccuracies that appear. Each on its own is irrelevant but when taken together they do make one wonder as to the research that went into the book. Secondly, O'Malley tries to use psychology to explain away the actions of the hunger-strik-

ers, coming to the conclusion that in the end it was simply loyalty to the other hunger-strikers that made them continue their protest. To support this thesis O'Malley draws up a set of extremely tenuous links joining all ten of the dead hunger-strikers. Apart from the fact that he has people meeting other people in situations that just didn't occur, his links tell us nothing. In fact, if any ten Blanketmen had been selected at random a similar set of links could have been drawn up. The facts of the matter are that despite what O'Malley claims, not all of the ten men were acquainted with each other and it was irrelevant even if they were. What O'Malley misses is that it was the actions of the British and the refusal of the prisoners to accept those actions that carried the hunger-strikers through. Instead of spending pages trying to understand the mind of each individual hunger-striker, something that is impossible now, he would have been better trying to explain why the whole concept of criminalisation was and is anathema to Irish Republicans. It is here that the roots of the hunger-strikes lie, not in psychological studies about alienation or group loyalty.

OFFENSIVE

Thus O'Malley seems quite prepared to accept the word of anyone willing to disparage the hunger-strikers. He quotes a purported conversation between Fr Sean Rogan and Bobby Sands in which Rogan claims to have made a point that Sands couldn't answer. But needless to say we only have Rogan's word for it that it ever took place. On the intervention of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, O'Malley takes their interpretation of events as gospel despite the fact that for once both the prisoners and the British were in agreement in saying differently. In this section of the book he portrays the prisoners' determination to win their rightful recognition as one of wishing for the deaths of their comrades. But there are some even more offensive passages. A quote from Paddy Devlin, who is described as a 'Catholic community leader'

(sic), stands out. He says when referring to protests in support of the hunger-strikes; "Then they lifted money for the hunger-strikers — they wanted the money to buy them food or something?" To add further insult he adds; "With the money they would buy petrol — or personal things." O'Malley allows such utterances to pass without comment, which says something about his own sentiments.

One of the central themes of the book is that the hunger-strike was about more than simply the five demands. So what's so startling about that? He seems to think that Kieran Doherty saying; "Oh, the demands, there is a lot more to it than that!" is some sort of major discovery. Anyone who was around at the time knows that the five demands were simply the minimum required to allow the prisoners to live their lives in a dignified manner befitting their status as political prisoners. If, in order to achieve this, the whole prison system was reformed then so well and so good. The whole point is that the issue became what it did due to the British. The hunger-strike could have been resolved at any time by the conceding of the five demands and this could have been done long before the issue became such a major one. The British chose to let it grow into a battle of wills. O'Malley can't see this at all.

In conclusion, O'Malley's book is not one that Republicans or indeed anyone interested in the hunger-striker period will find useful. It is too unbalanced and too hostile towards what the hunger-strikers represented to be taken seriously. Indeed, at times I found myself wondering why this book had ever been written. It offers nothing new as regards insights into the period and indeed how could it when it borrows heavily from the much more admirable *Ten Men Dead*. However, perhaps O'Malley wanted to put his tuppence worth in, to get his dig in at dead men. There will be other books written about the hunger-strikes, some of them better than *Ten Men Dead*, some of them worse. This is definitely one of the worst.

Eamon MacDermott
(Long Kesh)

RED MICK

The day I first met you

(to speak to that is)

you were slowly dying.

Not something which was immediately noticeable on your face

but then you had only begun to die and that was why we were together in that room

because some thought they could stop that death

stop it by appealing to what they saw as the

weaker element in the fight.

Two days later we realised that they consisted of

a small degree of sincerity

a large amount of naivety and

had loyalty to political and

ecclesiastical masters

rather than to the dying.

They will have taken away with them

an image of you

distinguishable features most likely,

just as others who knew you will define

you in various ways

as the child born on 20/5/54, who

grew up in Springtown and then the

Bog, the

brother of Margaret, husband of

Maggie

father of Mickey Junior and Louise

friend of Noel

associate of Eamonn,

each will have their own story to tell.

But it was many years later that I read these details of your life

for they were unimportant at the time we first met

our world being very much of the present and future

and reminiscences were for later when sleep would not come.

Your end was not glorious

not as heroes die in Hollywood

creations

and in chapter ten someone comments

that really

you had very little to live for.

I dispute that

though understand that it was spoken from another's world

for I believe that in the H-Blocks you found something to love and live for

a place to give what was yours to offer

and not be judged by societal norms

exalting the few and damning the

multitudes

and you loved and lived that so much

that you loved and lived it

to death.

Laurence McKeown

(Long Kesh)

Crossword Answers:

Across

1. Babble; 4. Stucco; 9. Irish Neutrality; 10. Hurdle; 11. Cinnamon; 12. Machismo; 14. Exhort; 15. Tempts; 18. Robinson; 21. Speckles; 22. Yachts;

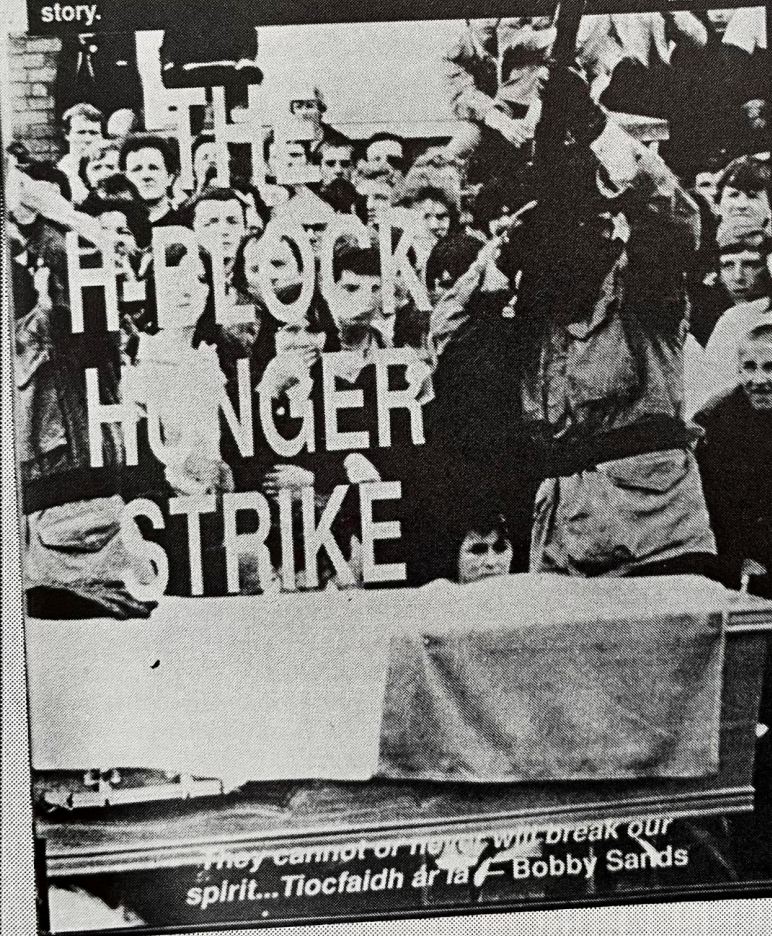
24. Media Censorship; 25. Slyest; 26. Stress Down

1. Bermuda; 2. Based; 3. Linnets; 5. Terence; 6. Callaghan; 7. Outdoor; 8. Nuncio; 13. Hypocrisy; 16. Express; 17. Selects; 18. Rising; 19. Boycott; 20. Obtains; 23. Caste;

THE H-BLOCK HUNGER STRIKE

AT 1.17am on Tuesday, 5th May 1981, 27-year-old **BOBBY SANDS** died in a British prison hospital after enduring 66 days of hunger-strike. In the following four months nine other young prisoners died Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Thomas McElwee and Mickey Devine.

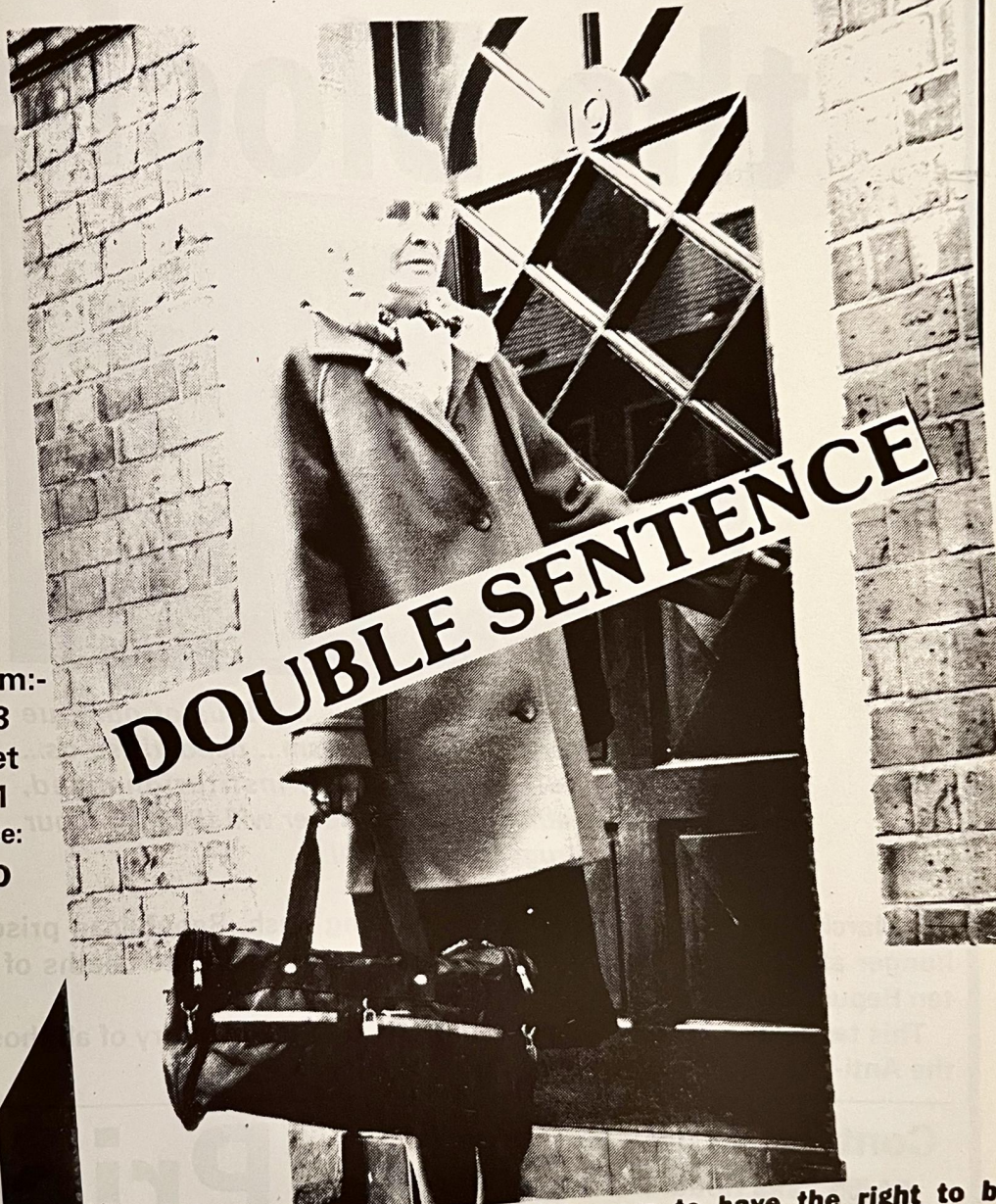
In this video those in the frontline of battle in the prisons, the republican prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh Prison, tell their own story.



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***They cannot or never will break our
spirit... Tiocfaidh ár lá — Bobby Sands***

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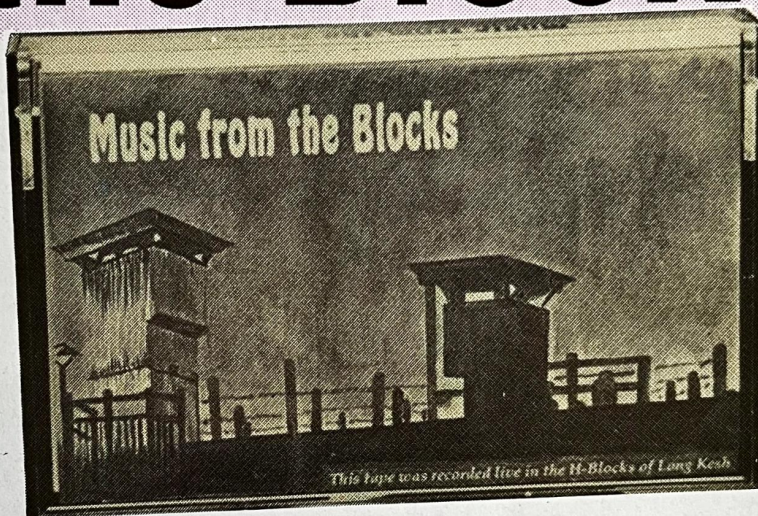
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