

# The CAPTIVE VOICE



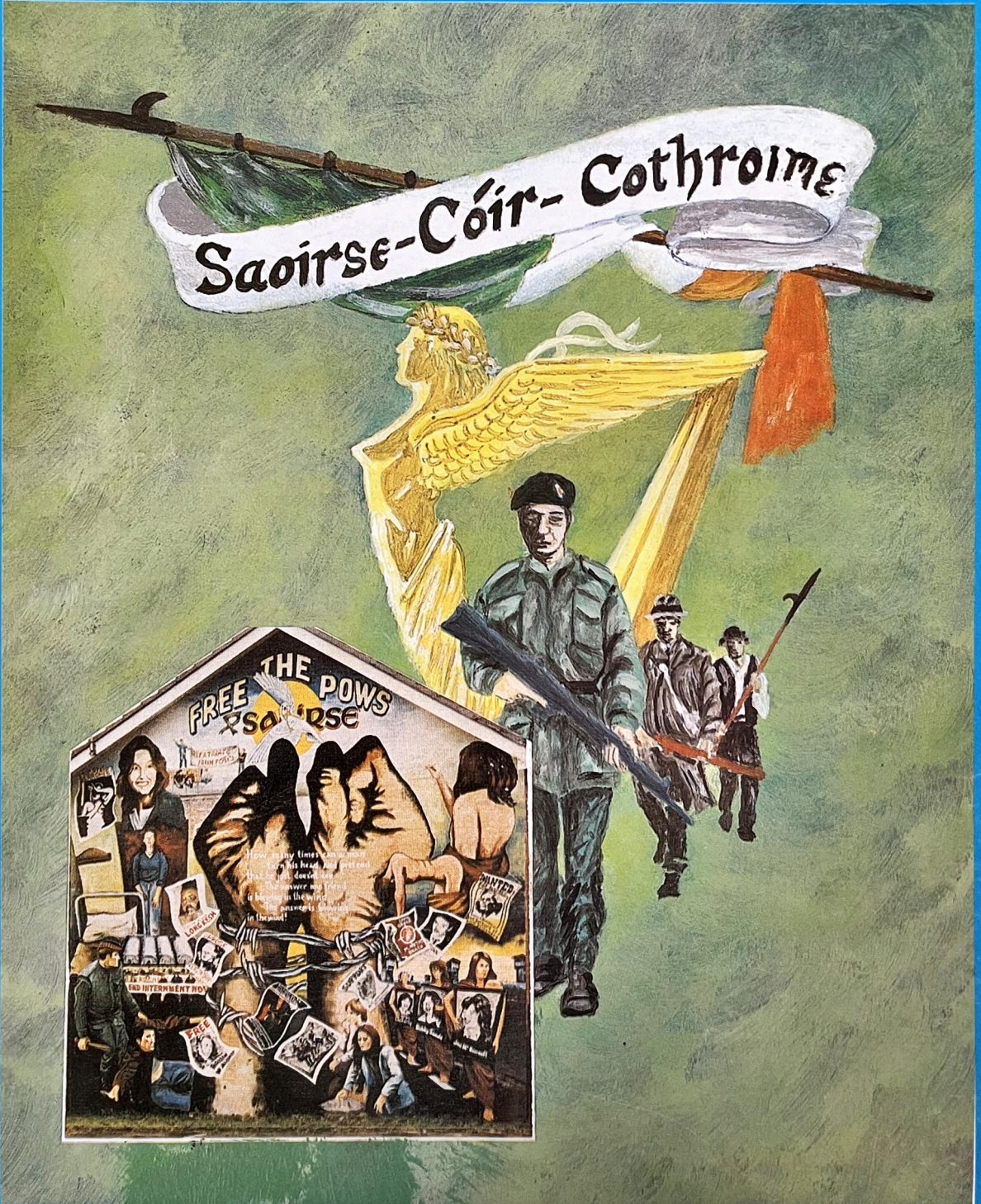
An Glór Gafa

Vol. 9 No. 2

Summer 1998

£1/\$5

The Voice of Irish Republican Prisoners of War



# 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. ■

Make sure that you 'hear' *The Captive Voice* each quarter by taking out a subscription.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR FOUR ISSUES ARE:  
 Six Counties, Wales, Scotland and England:.....£5.30  
 26 Counties:.....£6.10  
 Europe (airmail):.....£6.70  
 Australia:.....£9.50  
 Elsewhere:.....£8.00

BULK ORDER RATES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Name: .....

Address: .....

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES/MONEY ORDERS  
 PAYABLE TO AN GLOR Gafa

Send details to:  
 The POW Department  
 51-55 Falls Road,  
 Belfast.  
 Tel: 249975. Fax: 231723

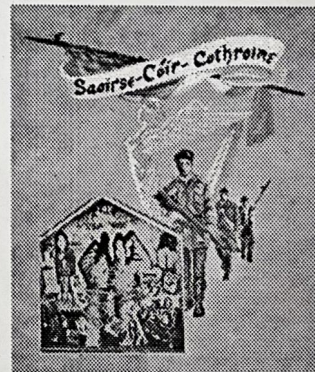
or 44 Parnell Square  
 Dublin.  
 Tel: 8727096

**USA & CANADA**  
 Readers in the USA & Canada can now obtain *The Captive Voice/An Glór Gafa* direct from the Irish Northern Aid Committee in New York. Price \$5 each; four-issue subscription \$20. Send details to: *An Glór Gafa*, c/o INAC National Office, 4951 Broadway, New York 10034. Tel: (212) 567-0707.

# CONTENTS

Armagh revisited	2
Civil Rights against Sectarianism	4
Nora	7
Na hAontachtóirí Agus An Ghaeilge	8
Crossword	10
1798 — What relevance today?	11
Yoga — Doing a stretch In the Blocks	14
The Battle for water	16
Quotes	19
One day in a life	20
Like it or not	21
Cooking up conspiracies	22
Historic visit	24
Remembering	26
Red Spider	28

## Cover illustrations



By Nollaig Mac Aodha  
 (Long Kesh)

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

WRITE TO: Paddy O'Dowd, H-Blocks, Long Kesh, County Antrim.

The

# CAPTIVE VOICE



## An Glór Gafa

THIS YEAR marks the two hundredth anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion; since then Irish republicans have travelled a long and historic road. For those who have followed in the footsteps of the men and women of 1798 there has been suffering, tragedy, pride, and above all, a determination to fulfil the goals of the United Irish Movement. The desire to unite Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter and to sever the link with Britain is as relevant today as it was two hundred years ago. The consequences of a foreign power's interference has been a legacy of division. The creation and promotion of a privileged group by the colonisers to serve their own interests throughout the centuries has left this island divided territorially, culturally, socially and politically. At the close of the 18th century, attempts to shape a future whereby the people would be united to govern for themselves was put down by the English forces with the assistance of its local militias. These militias were quite often drawn from the local Orange Orders whose descendants have laid siege to the Garvaghy Road, have obstructed and intimidated, bullied and burned, threatened and terrorised for their perceived right to trample over the rights of others. History has shown, and this week's events have illustrated, that the defeat of the United Irishmen allowed the old sectarian and privileged minority to shape the catastrophe which has bedevilled Ireland over this past two hundred years.

While we can't change the wrongs of the past, we can shape a proper future. Republicans recognise that all the traditions which shaped our history have a role to play in creating that future, a future that must benefit all sections of the people on this island. It may seem daunting that we should seek to persuade the multitudes who converge on Drumcree when their thinking predates the 1798 Rebellion by over 100 years, but such is our task. No one is asked to abandon their culture or beliefs but for the sake of everyone it must be demanded that they leave behind the mindset which blinds them to the rights of everyone else. There is no room in society for such insular and sectarian thinking. Irish republicans inherit a proud tradition, one which seeks to be progressive and inclusive; we recognise the responsibilities such a position carries, we understand the challenges and we will continue to live up to them just as we have done up to now.

In order to resolve centuries of conflict, republicans entered, and concluded, the talks at Castle Buildings in good faith. Unfortunately, others have not yet faced up to their responsibilities and have sought to continue with the old agenda of exclusion, this simply will not work. Sinn Féin is a vibrant political party attracting support at a rate which other parties can only envy. Sinn Féin are giving a voice to people who seek clear and unequivocal leadership; the republican message has never been stronger within a nationalist community which has never been more confident.

Unionism, on the other hand, is in turmoil - the scenes surrounding Drumcree are but a manifestation of the fact. Unionism is harking back to the days when psychologically they were on their own - Drumcree Hill encamped above nationalism, beating drums and marching feet just daring nationalists to attempt to rise out of their inferior position. But the old days are over and for many that reality is slowly dawning - the croppies are off their knees and they're staying on their feet. That the status quo is no longer an option has left unionism floundering; despite all the scaremongering down the years about sell-outs, they never really believed this day would come and are ill-prepared to deal with it. So it's time to reach an accommodation and deal with their fellow citizens as equals, but is the leadership there to seize the moment?

As he contemplates the effects of Drumcree, David Trimble must this week be contemplating the price of his jig on the Garvaghy Road in 1995. He knows that, had he shown leadership and seized the opportunity, which the generous gesture by the Garvaghy Road residents had given, then the whole sorry mess of 1996, 1997, and now more tragically 1998, may never have happened. Orangeism in 1995 saw compromise as weakness and sought to humiliate the nationalists. Unionists, throughout the Peace Process, have treated initiatives by republicans in a similar manner, and continue to do so. But those unionists and their brethren at Drumcree had better learn quickly that not only may compromise equal strength but for them there is no other option.

In the wake of the tragic events in Ballymoney, David Trimble has called on the Orange Order to lift the siege of Garvaghy Road - he himself ignored similar appeals in '96 following the murder of Michael Mc Goldrick, but, now devoid of his orange sash he can look beyond the triumphalism - he knows his brethren must come off the hill at Drumcree. If this is the first sign of Trimble showing responsible leadership it is to be welcomed. In the year since the IRA renewed its cease-fire, all veneer of excuse for David Trimble and his party not to engage with Sinn Féin has been removed. Drumcree, sectarianism, the murders in Ballymoney are all symptoms of a society which has seen one section holding the other in inferior contempt. The Good Friday Agreement has the potential to resolve all of these things but it will take courage and leadership, it will mean being inclusive, it will mean engaging with those you view as your enemy, and, it will mean Mr Trimble coming down off his own Drumcree Hill.

Sunday 14th June 1998 and I'm on a journey to Armagh which in some ways is like my journey from Armagh on 7th October 1974. That day I was on, as I am now, a return journey. On 7th October 1974, I was returning home from Armagh Prison where I had been interned for 13 months and 2 weeks; now I'm returning for the day and I feel a sense of excitement and anticipation.

Starting off it was good to see all the faces, some hadn't changed at all. Looking around them illustrated to me just how much we republicans are entwined in struggle and sacrifice. The beautiful Rose Sheeran from Derry told me she had married her childhood sweetheart Raymond Mc Cartney - who himself had spent many years imprisoned. Bernadette O' Hagan - who time seems to have left untouched - and Eileen Hickey whose good nature has no end were among all those who had returned. Even though she is not in the best of health at the moment the beloved Madge Mc Conville also made the journey. Madge was first interned in the 40s - she was arrested along with Tom Williams who was hanged in Crumlin Road jail on 2nd September 1942 - she was interned in Armagh again in the 70s. One face missing from the group is that of Mary Mc Guigan. Those of us who were with her in the early 70s always remember her with great pride - she was a truly wonderful person. Mary was a sentenced prisoner in Armagh at the same time as her daughter Celine and daughter-in-law Rosemary while her husband John and three sons were interned in Long Kesh. A fourth son, Francie, had also been interned but escaped dressed as a priest.

This group of women are no ordinary sight-seers on a visit to this old jail, they understand only too well the reality of prisons as, between themselves, their partners and their children they have spent many periods and countless years imprisoned in their fight against injustice.

The journey on this bright sunny day is most enjoyable, it feels good to be able to relax and admire the scenery. No one could tell that we are all felons travelling back to the place where we had been incarcerated. I try to capture my feelings in comparison to my original journey in the back of a prison van on a cold stormy night in August 1973. On that night I don't think I dared hope, I didn't know what lay ahead for me in the short term nor for our people in the long term. I only know what faced us then - oppression, repression, Castlereagh, Palace Barracks, torture and injustice for the nationalist people. I don't know what degree of hope I felt back then. Yet here I am now full of hope and confidence for the future,

# ARMAGH



Armagh Prison

a future which I know the nationalist people are strong and confident enough to shape for themselves. I take comfort in the knowledge that those who are in the leadership of the Republican Movement are people whose journey through the past is similar to that of us on this journey today. Those who have suffered as we have suffered, and have resisted that injustice, understand the undeniable need for change in this society. We have all come a long way from those days. For all the attempts by the Brits to defeat the struggle by imprisoning us they failed miserably. The electoral strength of Sinn Féin began as a result of prison struggle and from that it has been developed into the force it is today - it is a good feeling on this journey to a now closed Armagh prison to know that we have good cause for hope.

Suddenly with all my reminiscing we have arrived. There is no great rush from the bus, we disembark slowly. Signing the visitors book in the entrance hall I vaguely remember the dullness of the hall, I also thought I could remember the colour brown which the walls were painted. Then into the circle where the black and white-tiled floor looks so small that I barely recognise it. The wing I had been kept in is apparently too unsafe to allow visitors to view so it's disappointing for most of us not to be able to go into the actual cell we lived in for a certain period of our lives. The wing we are allowed to view is identical to the

other so it's easy enough to remember how things had been. The strange thing is just how small everything seems.

Everyone is looking forward to getting out to the exercise yard as the high point of the visit. But initially we are disappointed as the door is locked and we are refused admission. But, by some miraculous intervention, when no one is looking the lock falls off and within seconds the yard is packed with ex-POWs snapping away with their cameras trying to recapture some far off memory. Most, I would imagine, would have thoughts of Marie Carson, and even as I write I can still hear her voice left, left, left, right, left. Left sticks in my mind mostly because I'm left-handed and so sometimes my left hand and foot would move forward together which would then confuse Colette Mc Cann from Ardoyne who would be behind me in the line. Marking time isn't one of my better memories. Nor was doing the laundry on a Monday morning. Bernie Mallon and myself were given this job permanently. On hindsight this may have been no coincidence, the fact that we were both easy-going was probably an important requirement for the job as it involved going into each cell at 7am every Monday morning and removing the bottom sheet from each bed. Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well, it was slightly more complicated than that. The complication depended on who was asleep on top of the sheet at the time. As Bernie and I very quickly

# REVISITED

realised, republicans are not very friendly people at 7am on a Monday morning. There were in fact some cells we were afraid to enter but the job had to be done and so we took all the verbal abuse with a pinch of salt.

In the yard some are taking photos of the wall and I wonder why until I see Liz McKee and it all comes back. Liz was the first woman to be interned in the '70s [there were 23 of us all together] and now Liz is pointing out to some visitors where the attempted escape took place. Liz and Teresa Holland led the escape but unfortunately they were caught on the high wall of the yard.

Then I think of all the republicans who have been in Armagh and are known the world over. I remember Marie Drumm, killed by loyalist death squads, and her daughter Marie who was also here, Rita O'Hare who was wounded by British soldiers during a gunbattle in Andersonstown, the Price sisters who were transferred from prison in England after spending 179 days on hunger strike

during which they endured forced feeding, Mairead Farrell who was shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar and who was on hunger strike in Armagh with her comrades Mary Doyle and Mairead Nugent in the fight for political status.

All the women political prisoners were well known in their own areas and Armagh jail became known the world over because of these women and their struggle. I found it disappointing, therefore, that the leaflet issued by the Armagh City and District Council on the prison made no mention of the political prisoners nor that important era in its history. Maybe the powers that be just can't find it within themselves to deal with the whole sorry truth of the matter. They might have to explain that political status was first won by the women in 1972 only to be withdrawn when the British government introduced its criminalization policy in 1976 - a policy which was resisted daily. Could they bring themselves to tell how the women were brutally attacked by male warders

on 7th February 1980? Would they wish to admit to the reasoning behind the introduction of strip searching? Far from being a security policy it was a political policy designed to humiliate in an attempt to break the unbreakable spirit of the women POWs. No, their leaflet could never tell the story of Armagh so for that reason we printed our own leaflet about this prison and its history in the republican struggle.\*

Of course, one can't stand here and reflect on the experiences of women in this prison without remembering the women POWs who continue to be held in Maghaberry, they were transferred there in March 1986 when Armagh closed down. The same regime holds them but that same determined spirit sustains them. We know that what they experience now will someday be a memory from their past to be visited in happier circumstances.

For us here today, the visit to Armagh Prison, to our past with all its memories, doesn't take that long - and like any place revisited it is only the imagination that it captures and thankfully not the body!

■ BY ROSELEEN WALSH

EX-INTERNEE

● If anyone would like a copy of this booklet produced by ex-POWs contact POW Dept. Falls Rd. Belfast.

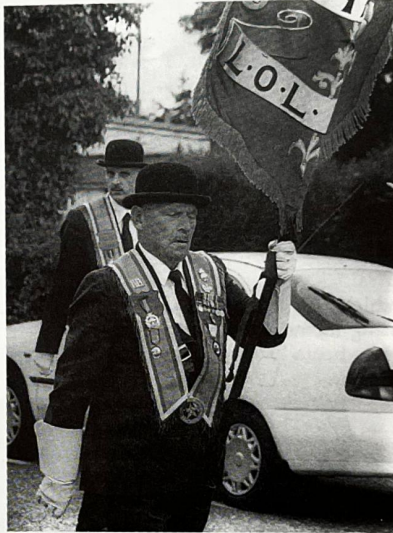


# Civil Rights AGAINST Sectarianism

In relation to politics in the 6 counties the issue of marches and parades is one which is never off the agenda and at times, as we are all too well aware, it dominates our news and thinking. Given that we all have to live with what is now generally called 'the marching season', then how should nationalists view the Parades Commission, the issue of marches and parades in general and the attempts in particular of the Orange Order to present their argument as an attack on their civil rights, culture and identity?

Given the desire and resistance in many nationalist areas not to have Orange or Loyalist parades and marches foisted upon their communities, the Orange and Loyal Orders have sought to make the issue a civil rights one, 'the right to march'. Such an approach can be seen as an attempt to mirror the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. At that time many people - not just nationalists - sought to highlight the injustices perpetrated by the state in its denial of civil rights to many of its citizens. In attempting at this time to make the issue a civil rights one, the Orange and Loyal Orders are seeking to portray themselves as the victims rather than the instigators of the controversy surrounding their marches and parades. In today's Orange and Loyal Orders' 'civil rights' parlance, any nationalist community which rejects and protests against such parades and marches is held to be denying Protestants their culture and identity. The British government, in the shape of the NIO and the Parades Commission that it established, is held to be part of the conspiracy to deny 'civil rights' to Protestants.

Certainly for nationalists the issue of civil rights is a very important one, especially considering our experience of having been denied them for so long. In light of such experience we have to ask how well does the claim of denial of Protestant culture stand up to scrutiny? Could it be that the new approach adopted by the Orange and Loyal Orders simply conceals a



change of tactics on their behalf, whilst they seek to maintain all their old ways? We also need to make our position in relation to parades and marches very clear so as to avoid any confusion and to ensure that our arguments are not used to block any group from marching in order to attain their civil rights.

The new approach of attempting to make Orange marches a civil rights issue would appear to have come at a time when they have been under the media spotlight. It has to be asked just how much the negative international publicity that has surrounded Orange or loyalist marches in recent years, and in particular Drumcree, has led to this change in approach from the Orange and Loyal Orders. For once it would appear that they are concerned about their image around the world. This can be seen in their calls for protests in support of their position yet at the same time being very quick in trying to distance themselves from the violence of their supporters. Unfortunately for nationalist communities this desire for less negative publicity on the part of the Orange and Loyal Order does not signal any change in their approach of not caring what the residents of an area feel. Even the

horrific murder of three young children failed to move them. At the end of the day they still maintain their old approach that they must get their own way.

For those loyalists advocating 'the right to march', there does not appear to be any duty, as far as they are concerned, to respect the wishes of anyone else. Their 'right to march' merely entails that they should be allowed to march unimpeded wherever and whenever they want, despite any objections from the residents of the areas. Where residents do object, the Orange and Loyal Orders expect the government to provide the necessary muscle, under the threat of violence, to make sure that their parades are allowed to proceed.

Can it really be said that Orange parades are a 'civil rights' issue? Nationalists are not out to deny the Protestant people their culture or identity - thousands of Orange and Loyal Order parades take place every year in areas where the residents want them and these do not create a problem for the nationalist community. What many nationalist communities do take exception to is when the exercise of that culture turns out to be nothing more than exercises in domination and triumphalism. If Orange marches were simply an expression of culture and tradition without the triumphalism they would not be a problem. The Orange and Loyal Orders use their parades to seek to reinforce to the nationalist community their inferior status within the 6 county statelet. This message has been made clear by Orangemen. Stephen McAllister, organiser of the 'Tour of the North' Orange march in North Belfast openly posed the question, on a TV programme, 'what is the point of marching if it is only in our own areas?'

When such marches are opposed, the same Orders scream that it is all part of a republican-inspired plot to deny them the right to exercise their culture. At the same time, in unionist eyes, not opposing these marches has always been seen as an acceptance of our inferior status. For nationalists to oppose such marches is not a denial of civil rights but rather an exercise in opposing injustice. Perhaps this



argument was best set out by no better an authority than Conor Cruise O'Brien, member of the United Kingdom Unionist Party, when he said that;

"When the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys commemorate the victories of 1690, as they do each year in elaborate ceremonies, the message they are conveying is that of their domination to hold for Protestants in Northern Ireland as much as possible of the privileged status which their ancestors won under William of Orange. These are not, as outsiders suppose, comically archaic occasions. The symbols are historical, the iconography old-fashioned, but the message is for the here and now. The ritual is one of annual renewal of a stylised act of dominance: 'We are your superiors: we know you hate this demonstration of that fact: we dare you to say something about it: if you don't you ratify your own inferior status.' That is what the drums say."

No one, whether unionist or nationalist, will be in any doubt that the British government had its own agenda when it established the Parades Commission. The British government was under considerable pressure to grant a modicum of civil rights to the nationalist community, especially when scenes like Drumcree 1996 & 1997 were seen around the world. Here was a nationalist community being beaten off the streets so as to allow a coat-trailing exercise in bigotry and sectarianism to take place. Such pictures made uncomfortable viewing for the British government because, rightly, they were viewed as being part of it. Their agenda behind setting up the Parades Commission was so as they could be seen as removed from making the decisions about what parades and marches went ahead and, thus, not be the ones seen to be responsible for the RUC being used to attack nationalist communities. Whilst everyone in the 6 Counties knows that the whole issue of parades and marches is tied in with the political situation here, the British government wanted to be able to pretend

differently. Whilst the Commission was due to give its decision in relation to Drumcree prior to the Referendum this was delayed after a plea by the British Prime Minister. No one was in any doubt that his intervention was designed to help ensure that the Referendum was passed. This very clearly displayed just how much the whole marching process is tied into the politics of the statelet.

To the Orange and Loyal Orders the Parades Commission represented a threat to them always getting their own way when it came to parades and marches. They have always wanted it to be clear to the nationalist community that not only were they second class citizens but that the Orange and Loyal Orders had the backing of the British government in their desire to trample on the wishes of the nationalist people. Given the Commission's claims to be impartial then the Orange and Loyal Orders knew that to give it that impartial image, some of their marches and parades would have to be restricted. This was a step too far and hence they have not only ignored it but continue to work to have it disbanded. To be seen to be acting against a ruling by the Commission would in fact be seen around the world as acting outside of the law. Whilst it is very clear that the Orange and Loyal Orders are prepared to do that, it has always suited them better to be able to show that they had the backing of the state.

In light of this approach it is easy to understand why the Orange and Loyal Orders are so hostile to the idea of the Parades Commission. Given this hostility by the Orange and Loyal orders one has to ask does the Commission offer anything that is positive to the nationalist community? I think that the answer to that ultimately has to be 'No'.

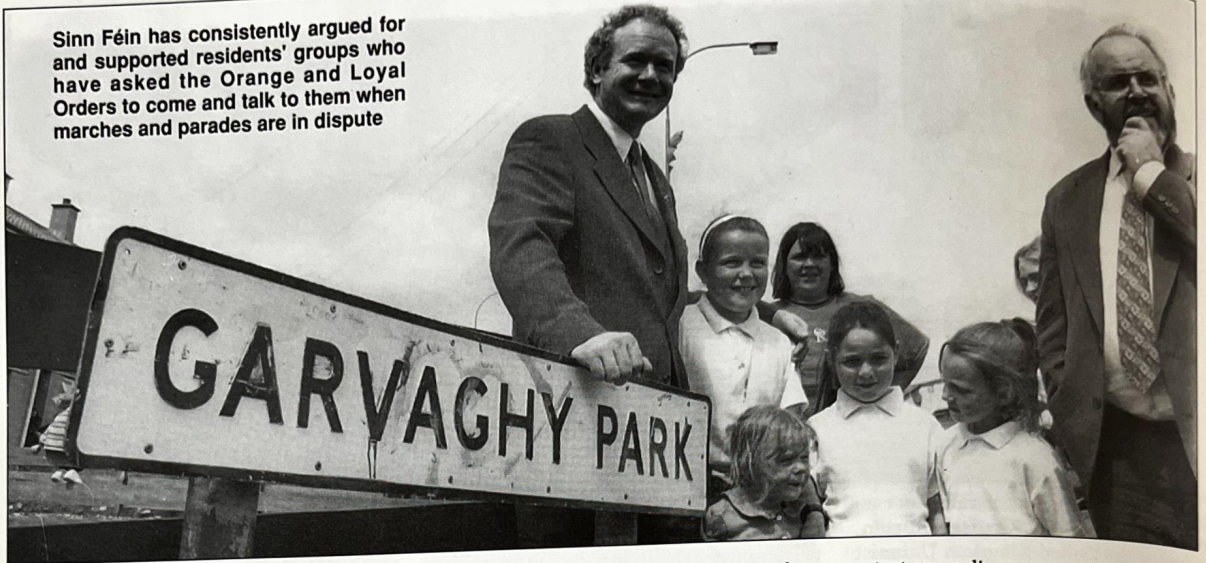
The Commission initially offered some hope, in that, in being forced to at least act out the role of being impartial they would have to offer some respite to some nationalist areas. By being prepared to talk

to the Commission, the residents groups were able to show that the Orange and Loyal Orders had no interest in reaching an accommodation but rather they wished to continue their coat-trailing exercises unimpeded. Whilst this at least felt like a positive step at the end of the day some of the decisions made by the Parades Commission have made it clear that the Orange and Loyal Orders do not need to talk to the residents whose areas they wish to go through.

The chairman of the Parades Commission, Alistair Graham, made his views very clear in relation to Drumcree '97. At that time his approach was not about the rights of everyone but rather how to get the Orangemen down the Garvaghy Road with the least amount of trouble. It was clear that the concerns of the nationalists residents to the right to live in peace and free of fear were not to be an undue concern to him. The approach in 1998, after so much criticism of what had gone before was that there could not be a repeat of this triumphalism. However, the Commission has made a ruling that the Orangemen should be allowed down the Ormeau Road. This was despite their failure to talk with the residents and flew in the face of the criteria which the Commission was supposed to apply. The chairman of the Commission made it very clear that the decision was based on the view that the Orangemen would feel 'deep hurt' if they could not get down the Ormeau Road. This decision takes no cognisance of the hurt felt in that community and can hardly inspire the nationalist community that the Parades Commission is an impartial body. In a court case the Commission made no secret of the fact that they had looked beyond the locality of the Ormeau Road when making their decision. It would seem that all sides accept that the Ormeau Road decision is a trade-off for the decision made in relation to Drumcree.

The original delay in announcing the initial decision in relation to Drumcree and

Sinn Féin has consistently argued for and supported residents' groups who have asked the Orange and Loyal Orders to come and talk to them when marches and parades are in dispute



the trade-off in allowing the parade down the Ormeau Road makes it very clear that the Commission has a political agenda, which everyone believes is being set by the British government. By using this method the government has the chance to make it appear that it is not involved and thus allows them to cop out from finally confronting the Orange and Loyal Orders and breaking the spiral of triumphalist marches once and for all.

All societies have particular problems when dealing with the issue of parades and demonstrations and there are no simple answers to be found. We all know what nationalist areas have to endure when Orange parades are forced through them. Only a proper understanding of Sinn Féin's position on marches and parades will ensure that our arguments are not used in anyway to deny civil rights to others. Sinn Féin supports the right to march but any such right brings with it responsibilities. The right to march cannot include subjecting others to living in fear, no matter how much it may be dressed up as a reflection of culture. Orange parades through nationalist areas where they are not wanted are really a reflection of bigotry and sectarian domination over that community rather than any reflection of culture.

Sinn Féin has consistently argued for and supported residents' groups who have asked the Orange and Loyal Orders to come and talk to them when marches and parades are in dispute. In line with such an approach, and where the Orange and Loyal Orders have refused to talk, they have supported the residents calls for no parades without consent. In adopting such an approach Sinn Féin's position on marches and parades should not simply be seen as one endorsing the notion that all parades and marches can only take place with the consent of the majority of the people who live in the area that the marchers wish to

pass through. Not all marches and parades are of the same sectarian nature as those of the Orange and Loyal Orders and not all issues revolve around sectarian politics. In opposing Orange marches through nationalist areas we have not abandoned our belief that the people have a right to march and demonstrate.

There is no doubt that some people will find particular marches offensive or distasteful. It is reasonable to conclude that not everyone will agree with or wish to give their consent to all the marches and parades that may take place in their area. Where such a situation arises it is important that people do not misunderstand Sinn Féin's position of 'no parades without consent', in relation to Orange sectarian marches and translate that to all marches and parades.

To make such a mistake would be tantamount to interpreting our position as creating an 'offensive clause', where anyone who took offence at the issue could withhold their consent for the parade or demonstration to go ahead. Many people might find protests for or against the issue of abortion, or gay and lesbian rights as offensive. We do not want to give people a veto over such protests by giving the majority in any area a veto that might be used as an excuse to block or restrict demonstrations that highlight injustices. The simple reality is that there will be issues that some people wish to raise and highlight which will not meet with the approval of the state or a majority of the people. When such cases arise marches should not be suppressed or restricted simply because a majority does not subscribe to them. The protests of the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s could not have gained the consent of the people in many of the areas that they marched through. It is a matter of record that many of the civil rights protests were brutally attacked and we do not want people to

contort our policy on opposition to marches into a spurious legitimacy to attack people seeking to highlight injustice. Just how much a position on consent in relation to marches can be distorted is reflected by the fact that loyalists tried to stop football supporters attending a football match because they had not given their consent for them to pass through their area.

Can it really be said that the Orange and Loyal Orders are being denied their civil rights, culture of identity? If you believe that people have the absolute right to march whenever and wherever they want, no matter who they offend or the reason behind their marching in the first place then you may conclude that the answer is 'Yes'. On the other hand, if you believe that the right to march also carries responsibilities, that people do not have an absolute right to indulge in bigotry and sectarian coartrailing exercises, then you will conclude that the answer is 'No'. The simple reality is that re-routing does not threaten their culture or identity unless their culture and identity insists on marching where they cause offence. The attempt by the Orange and Loyal Orders to portray opposition to their bigotry as a denial of their civil rights would be laughable if it was not so serious for the nationalist communities which have to bear the brunt of their triumphalism. It is clear that what really lies behind the complaints of the Orange and Loyal Orders is not so much their civil rights but their need to abuse the civil rights of others so as they know their place in the 6 county statelet. Their willingness to ignore the Parades Commission and to flout the law is a very clear demonstration that what they are really interested in is making sure that no matter what, they can flaunt their sectarianism in the face of the nationalist community.

BY PAUL KAVANAGH  
H-BLOCKS

# NORA

The word was out. It was on the wind, in the trees; the birds had it; the French were coming, they were on the seas. I met John Moore on the road, he was wild with excitement. He told me that the county had risen and that they were, that very night, marching on Enniscorthy. He had organised two mounts: his own grey mare and Bob Keogh had lent a cob. With a smile he drew from the thatch two fine swords, two muskets, shot and ball. He looked splendid in his enthusiasm.

With his fine steel strapped to his waist, he swung his leg into the stirrup and shouted, 'Come on, let's go!' 'Wait,' I cried, 'A letter to Nora'. I got some parchment and, in great haste, began to scribble some lines. Oh to say so much in so little time. I penned:

"I perforce did leave  
Love at the moonlit trysting-place  
to grieve  
Till fame and other little things  
were won."  
And to reassure her:  
"Oh, when we meet there shall be  
sun and blue  
Strong as the spring is strong."

A little girl from a near-by cottage volunteered to run with the letter. With the snorting and prancing of the horse, who was eager to follow his companion, I mounted the saddle and shouting, 'Hold up, we'll fight the English together!' I followed in pursuit.

As we neared Enniscorthy we saw the lines of pike men and boys. We strained on the stirrups to glimpse the leaders - Myles Byrne and Father Murphy - through the pikes and banners. On receiving our orders and command we sided up for the first charge, up the hill to the town, through mud cabins and low walls with hooves and mud flying, we hacked our way. I cursed God and begged His forgiveness for this awfulness. I glanced to my right and saw John Moore slash left and right over the shoulders of his mount. The day was ours. That night we supped well on the slopes of Vinegar Hill.

Some days later the Yeomen mounted a counter attack. The ferocious black vomit of cannon against our lads proved relentless. Wave after wave of pikes were cut down like corn before the scythe. The dry earth became sponge-like as streams of blood like crimson snakes flowed through the heather. I saw John Moore's body ran through with a lance. I bent down and took from his finger a ring and from his breast a watch which, if fate permits, I shall return to his mother. I kissed his head and left him there.

We gathered again and made our way to Carlow where a similar fate awaited us,



■ Illustration by Tommy Marron (Long Kesh)

for hundreds died in the streets with no progress to us. We crossed over the Bloom mountains where the beauty of the summer sun won from us no heed. We won and lost at Comer and turned to face the rising sun again. Under Myles Byrne we fought our way through the Wicklows, town to town, village on village. I fought alongside boys too young to shave and men bent with age, but every one a man. It was Armageddon.

As the harvest moon rose, I walked through the dead, men with their bodies hacked through, their eyes opened to the sky, their mouths in scream but no sound. I saw Troy in flames and the death of Agamemnon. In my despair I prayed like Him in Gethsemane, 'Father, if it is Thy will, take this cup from me.' And on Calvary, 'Lord, Lord, why hast Thou forsaken me?'

In the morning we were gathered by our leaders, some of whom were yet to pay the supreme price, and told that the day was lost, that darkness had come over our cause and that it would be left to those yet unborn to realise our dreams.

I headed south and on my way passed monuments of destruction. An elderly

couple in their mud cabin tended my wounds and fed me from their scarcity. As I left I heard her say, 'He is some mother's son and some young girl has kissed his lips and ruffled his curls in the twilight evening'. I kept to the woods and avoided the highways, I crawled between heaven and earth, I heard whisperings of terror, of hangings and floggings. My mount, though a few weeks earlier a proud beast, now his withers and flanks covered in fissures of gore, still kind but a limping frame. As I came in view of my homestead I fell from the saddle to my knees: had it been another mile I would not have made it. Nora, on seeing me, picked up her skirts high in her hands and ran to me like a young maiden running to her lover. The little ones now catching up, their squeals of laughter and giggles, hugs and kisses rejuvenated my spirit and brought me home.

"Oh, when we meet there shall be  
sun and blue  
Strong as the spring is strong."

BY DENIS LAHIFF  
PORTLAOISE.

*Poetic lines from Francis Ledwidge.*

# Na hAontachtóirí Agus An Ghaeilge

**I**s cinnte gur aithnigh gach gaeilgeoir sna Sé Chontae an mhaslacht is an drochmhúineadh a tugadh do Ghearáid Mac Adhaimh ag na haontachtóirí nuair a thosaigh sé ag labhairt as Gaeilge ag oscailt Tionól an Tuaiscirt i mí Meithimh 1998. Ba é sin an mhaslacht céanna agus an drochmhúineadh céanna a motháladh sa Stát seo le blianta fada anuas ó bunaíodh é, maslacht agus drochmhúineadh lenar thacaigh an stát, le reachtálocht agus idirdhealú ginearálta in éadan na Gaeilge.

Ba é seo fosta an eachtra is déanaí in éadan na Gaeilge i liosta fada a thaispeánann an míthaitneamh agus fiú an fuath atá ag an chuid is mó de na haontachtóirí sa stát seo don Ghaeilge. Cuimhnítear ar na focail chluíteacha a dúirt Sammy Wilson (DUP) fán 'leprachaun language', ag cruinniú de Chomhairle Bhéal Feirste i 1988 ar an chosc ar labhairt na Gaeilge sna cruinnithe de Chomhairle Bhéal Feirste, ar na dlíthe in éadan na Gaeilge a cuireadh i bhfeidhm le linn tréimhse Stormont, ar an easpa Gaeilge at-le feiceáil ar B.B.C. nó go háirithe ar UTV agus ar an idirdhealú a dhéantar in éadan na Gaeilge sa Tuaisceart maidir le maoiniú stáit i gcomparáid leis an Bhreatain nua Bhreatain Bheag agus le Gaeilge na hAlbain in Albain.

Cuimhnítear fosta ar an dóigh a cuireadh cosc ar an teanga, i bhfoirm comharthaí agus fógraí ar na ballaí, i bhfoirgneamh Aontais na Mic Léinn ag Ollscoil na Ríona sa samhradh 1997. I dtír liobrálach ar bith ar domhan d'amharcaf ar seo mar chinneadh ciníoch ach rinneadh an cinneadh seo le lán tacaíocht ó húdaráis na hollscoile, ón 'Fair Employment Commission' agus ón tromlach polaitiúil i dTuaisceart na hÉireann - an chuid is mó den phobal aontaitheach. D'ainneoin mhianta thromlach na mic léinn baineadh na comharthaí Gaeilge de na ballaí, de thairbhe gur shíl na húdaráis gur chuir an teanga Ghaeilge isteach go mór ar na mic léinn aontaitheacha (agus mar sin de orthu féin fosta, is dócha).

Ach cad chuige a bhfuil an chuid is mó de na haontachtóirí chomh dubh sin in éadan na Gaeilge an lá atá inniú ann, an raibh an cás mar seo i gcónaí agus an bhfuil dóchas ar bith ann go n-athrófar an scéal sa todhchaí?

Le dearcadh na n-aontachtóirí a thuigbheáil inniu caithfidh tuigbheáil de chineál éigin a bheith ann faoi stair na h-Éireann agus stair an chóilíneachais in Éirinn agus an bhaint idir na haontachtóirí agus seo.

Cé gur cuireadh smacht is rialú Shasana i gcrích sna tíortha ceilteacha eile, an Bhreatain Bheag is Alban, le mórchuid comhréitigh is comhghéillte leis an uaisle dhúchais is na tiarnaí dúchais, níorbh é mar seo a tarlaíodh in Éirinn é. In Éirinn, de réir a chéile, i ndiaidh éirí amach, smachtú, marú, deoraíocht agus plandáil, scriosadh an Uaisle dhúchais agus cuireadh uaisle agus pobal eachtrannacha ina áit, a raibh eagla leanúnach orthu i gcónaí go n-athghabhádh na dúchasaigh a dtír go polaitiúil, go soisialta is go cultúrtha.

Áfach, ní hé sin an scéal iomlán. Ní raibh an scéal chomh simplí nó chomh soiléir leis seo, nó chomh dubh is bán. Mar chumhachtaí coilíneacha eile; (An Fhrainc san Afraic, in Indo-Sín, i gCeanada; An Spáinn i Meiriceá Theas, srl.) rinne na Sasanaigh iarrachtaí a gcultúr féin a bhrú ar an oilean seo ach bhí sé thar a bheith deacair dóibh ón tús. Cuireadh dlíthe i bhfeidhm in éadan na Gaeilge cosúil leis na Reachtanna Chill Chainnigh [1367]. Ach dréachtaíodh na dlíthe seo, den chuid is mó, le cur ina lú ar na coilínigh iad féin gan cloí le nósanna is cultúr na ndúchasaigh. Cé gur thug siad dílseacht do rialú na Sasanaigh in Éirinn d'fhás suim agus grá i gcuid mhór acu don Ghaeilge go dtí go raibh roinnt acu 'níos Gaelaí ná na Gaeil iad féin'. Mar sin de, d'ainneoin dearcadh an Rialtais bhí a lán de na coilínigh agus a muintir i bhfách leis an Ghaeilge ag an am seo, rud a chuir imní ar an Rialtas.

Briseadh cumhacht na nGael in Éirinn go hiomlán i ndiaidh Chath Chinn Sáile [1601] agus 'Imeacht na nIarlaí' [1607] ach níor cailleadh an Ghaeilge ón tír. Fiú amháin i ndiaidh Phlandáil Uladh labhraíodh an Ghaeilge ag a lán de na coilínigh úra de réir Ó Snodaigh [1995] mar shampla.

Roimh Phlandáil Uladh bhí a lán teacht is imeacht idir Uladh agus Alban agus ó bunaíodh Ríocht Dal Riada i 500, roinn Ulaidh an teanga Ghaeilge is an cultúr Gaelach le hAlban Gaelach. Idir 500 - 637 bhí Aontraim, An Dúin agus Iarthar Alban le chéile i Ríocht Dal Riada agus, fiú amháin nuair a scaradh as a chéile iad lean borradh sna Gaeil Albanacha go dtí gur labhair tromlach na ndaoine in Alban as Gaeilge sa 11ú haois. Gidh go bhfuil difríochtaí idir an Ghaeilge in Éirinn agus Gaeilge na hAlban an lá atá inniú ann ní raibh mórán difir eadharthu sa 17ú haois. Mar shampla, ba é an chéad leabhar ariamh as Gaeilge a bhí curtha i gcló ná aistriúchán de leabhar Preispitéireach Knox 'Book of Common Order' a scríobhadh in 1567 'for the men of Scotland and

Ireland'. Fosta, go dtí 1830 baineadh úsáid as Bíobla Bedell [Bíobla Protastúnach a aistríodh go Gaeilge in Éirinn sa 17ú haois] i nGaeltachtaí in Albain. Sa 17ú haois labhair tromlach na ndaoine in Iarthar Alban as Gaeilge go fóill - agus ba as an cheantair sin ar tháinig a lán de na Plandóirí. Mar shampla, bunaíodh pobal Gaelach Preispitéireach i mBaile Mhic Scarláin (in aice le Dún Dealgáin) ag an am seo agus mhair sé go dtí an 19ú haois. Fiú amháin nuair a tháinig Béarlóirí phos a lán acu gaeilgeoirí (mar ba ghaeilgeoirí tromlach na ndaoine go fóill) nó bhrúigh an Ghaeilge isteach ar a gcuid teanga. Fosta, d'athraigh a lán Gael a reiligiún ach choinnigh siad a dteanga. I gcuid mhór áiteanna nforbh fhéidir gnó a dhéanamh gan Gaeilge éigin a bheith agat ag an am. Ach ó thaobh an dhli, chursaí tráchtála agus riaracháin de, ba é an Béarla teanga na tíre agus tháinig meath ar an Ghaeilge dá réir.

Ag deireadh an 18ú haois, tháinig mean aicme Preispitéireach chun cinn in áiteanna cosúil le Beal Feirste, agus bhí suim láidir ag cuid mhór acu sa Ghaeilge. Bhí cuid acu bainte leis na hÉireannaigh Aontaithe agus d'amharc siad ar an Ghaeilge mar nasc eadarthu féin agus na Caitlicigh agus mar shiombal den ionannas céanna a roinn siad eadarthu. Cuireadh an chéad iris Gaeilge ariamh, 'Bolg an tSolair' i gcló i mBéal Feirste ag na daoine seo i 1795.

Ach d'amharc na haontachtóirí ag an am seo orthu féin mar Éireannaigh fosta. D'amharc siad ar Éire mar a dtír dhúchais agus mar chuid den chúla cultúrtha ina mhair siad bhí an Ghaeilge agus cultúr na Gaeilge. Mar sin de bhí cuid mhór acu siúd an-bhródúil as an teanga agus cuid, ar a laghad, sásta í a fhoghlaim nó fiú í a chur chun cinn. Le linn an 19ú haois go h-áirithe bhí Protastúnaigh áirithe chun tosaigh in athbeochan na Gaeilge in Uladh, Protastúnaigh a bhí dlíis don rialtas is don Stát Breatach in Éirinn.

I measc na ndaoine seo bhí An tOir William Neilson (1774 - 1821), Samuel Bryson (1776 - 1853), Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810 - 1886), Dr. James Mc Donnell (1763 - 1845), agus an duine acu is clúití, Robert 'Shipboy' Mc Adam nó An Ciúin Mac ádhaimh mar a bheirtair air (1808 - 1895). Bhíodh an tOir William Neilson ag seanmóireacht as Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste agus freastal mór air. Toghadh mar 'Moderator of the General Synod' i 1806 agus i 1808 chuir sé i gcló 'An Introduction to the Irish Language', tfolactha don Lord Lieutenant. Bhailigh Samuel Bryson, aontachtóir eile, cnuasach mór bhair Gaelaigh a bheadh cailte murach eisean. B' fhile clúiteach Samuel Ferguson. B' aontachtóir é fosta le commitmint don Ghaeilge. Bhunaigh Dr. James Mc Donnell agus Robert Mac Adhaimh an Cuideacht Ghaeilge Uladh (Ulster Gaelic Society) i 1830, cumann a raibh sprioc shoiléir roimhe - athbeochan na Gaeilge. Cuireadh ranganna Gaeilge ar bun ar fud Uladh agus cuireadh bhair Ghaeilge ar fáil. Scríobh Mac Adhaimh 'Grammar' do ranganna Gaeilge in 'Instit' i mBéal Feirste agus cuireadh roinnt mhór leabhar teagasc i gcló. Ba é Dr.

Norman Mc Leod ó Alban i 1833 a mhol úsáid na Gaeilge mar chuid den ghluaiseacht sóiscéalach in Éirinn. Bunaíodh 'Home Mission' le Preispitéireachas a theagasc do Chaitlicigh fríd a dteanga dhúchais. Os rud é go ndéarna an dream seo [Home Mission] iarracht daoine a mhealladh ón Chaitliceachas fríd an Ghaeilge tháinig amhras ar a lán sagart faoin Ghaeilge agus bhí an-amhras ar an té a bhí ag teagas na Gaeilge. Mar sin de ag an am nuair a bhí Protastúnaigh chun tosaigh in athbeochan na Gaeilge bhí a lán Caitlicigh ag éirí rud beag amhrasach faoi [ go h-irithe in áiteanna cosúil le gleannta na hAontroime].

Nuair a tháinig an Bhanríon Victoria ar cuairt go hÉirinn i 1849 cuireadh fáilte roimpi le 'céad míle fáilte' agus rinneadh boinn i nGaeilge di leis an ócáid a chomóradh. I mí Meithimh 1892 nuair a osclaíodh an Ulster Unionist Convention, i Botanic Gardens, Béal Feirste bhí brat mór ar crochadh ann leis na focail 'Erin Go Bragh' air. D'fhreastail 11,879 toscairí air.

Mar sin de tá sé thar a bheith soiléir nach raibh an naimhdeas atá ag aontachtóirí in éadan na Gaeilge, an lá at inniú ann, i gcónaí ann.

Ach ag deireadh an 19ú céad is tús an 20ú céad le fás an náisiúnachais sa tír, de réir a chéile d'ardaigh buairt is imní na n-aontachtóirí sa Tuaisceart go háirithe, faoi féin-rialú in Éirinn. Rinne siad iarracht a nionannas Breatach a neartú agus a n-ionannas Éireannach a dhiúl'tú. De thairbhe go raibh na poblachtóirí ag baint úsáide as an Ghaeilge ag an am céanna le ionannas úr neamhspleach a chumadh is a chothú, scartha ó Shasana, do na h-Éireannaigh, chuidigh sé seo le dearcadh diúltach na n-aontachtóirí in éadan na Gaeilge. Nuair a vótáil Conradh na Gaeilge a thacú le hathraithe poblachtánacha dá mBunreacht chinntigh sé seo do níos mó aontachtóirí gur rud poblachtánach an teanga Ghaeilge.

Mar sin de, nuair a bunaíodh an Stát úr i dTuaisceart na hÉireann i 1921, rinne an rialtas Aontachtach iarracht ionannas úr Aontachtach a chumadh don stát úr. D'amharc sé ar an Ghaeilge mar theanga eachtranach agus dífhás an dearcadh seo nuair a chonacthas na hiarrachtaí a bhí an Saor Stát sa Deisceart ag déanamh leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn ansin.

De réir a chéile d'fhás naimhdeas na n-aontachtóirí in aghaidh na Gaeilge sna Sé Chontae agus bhí sé sin le feiceál i reachtaíocht, i ngníomhaíocht agus i ráitis an rialtais. Mar shampla, cuireadh cosc ar chomhairlí áitiúla ag tógáil logainmneacha sráideanna as Gaeilge i 1949. Fiú amháin nuair a bhí ré O' Neill i ríocht sna seascaidí - ré a bhí in ainm agus a bheith níos liobralaí - bagraíodh na tuismitheoirí gaelacha ar Bhóthar Seoigh le príosún nuair a scríobh siad chuig an Roinn Oideachais ag iarraidh scoil gaelach a bhunú.

Maireann naimhdeas ag a lán aontachtóirí leis an Ghaeilge, cé go bhfuil rudaí ag athrú. De thairbhe agóidí is brú idimnáisiúnta is polaitiúil, tá níos mó



# 1998 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis

On May 10, 1998, a re-convened Ard Fheis was held at the RDS, Dublin. Republican prisoners from Portlaoise, Maghaberry and Long Kesh supported proposed change to the Sinn Féin constitution, which would enable republicans to pursue their present strategy in the context of the Good Friday Agreement. Below is the address given by Padraic Wilson, O/C H-Blocks, at this special Ard Fheis.

"There is not an Irish republican who would deny that the particular period of struggle in the H-Blocks and Armagh spanning the blanket protests and hunger strikes was not a watershed in this, as yet unfinished, struggle. No republican would deny that we are political prisoners. But what may not be as clear to everyone is the way in which we have had to constantly assess and analyse how we could best achieve our goals and objectives within the prison context.

In many ways, the actual struggle within the prisons and the situations which arise are a microcosm of the overall struggle and indeed society in general. It is with this in mind that we would like to outline some developments, perhaps not as widely known which have helped us to put today's debate and the decisions to be taken into a wider context.

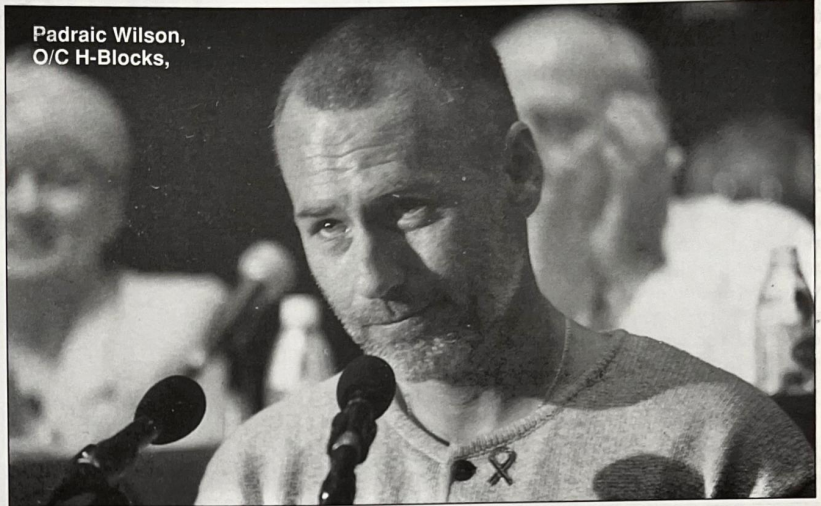
Many of us and many of you still carry the emotional and physical scars and traumas of the years of the H-Block/Armagh campaign. No-one needs to be reminded of the price we all paid and paid willingly, without hesitation.

However, it is the case that in reality, in prison terms, our struggle was just beginning when that campaign came to a close. We had been left a tragic legacy. What we could not afford was to sit about and wonder 'what if' or 'if only'. We needed to remain clearly focused on our objectives and goals and then decide upon a course of action, a strategy and a set of tactics which would bring us closer to those objectives, or indeed, see them achieved outright.

What we demanded was not to be found within the system under which we were held. Our first major battle would have to be the setting in motion of a series of events which would help create the environment and conditions which we had identified as being necessary to achieve our objectives.

Five solid years of unparalleled prison struggle, including ten deaths, had brought us to a point where our strategy had to be reassessed. We were faced with harsh decisions. We were still to be treated as criminals. We were subjected to arbitrary punishment. We were censored politically and culturally. We were denied the right to organise. We were expected to exist in a system that could only survive if we were to deny and reject all that we believed in.

During the years of protest we had



Padraic Wilson,  
O/C H-Blocks,

shown our determination and courage from behind the locked doors of tiny concrete cells. These cells were our learning centres and the time had come for us to apply what we had learnt. We met the system head-on; its administrators, its apologists and all of those who had sponged up, unchallenged, every petty concession the system was willing to dole out while it simultaneously battered, humiliated, deprived and tortured us.

The crucial and pivotal element in this was the cohesion of republican POWs. Without that cohesion we would go nowhere. The diversity of views and strength of feelings on all sides did not make this an easy move. But republican prisoners followed the leadership given and applied themselves wholeheartedly to the tasks ahead. This ensured that our enemy was met with a unified, determined and strengthened body of resistance.

There have been high points over the course of the ensuing years such as the escape of 1983, the tunnel of 1997 and the escape of Liam Averill in 1997 which are testament to our unity of purpose and spirit of resistance. But even events such as this could not, on their own, achieve what we sought. Years of struggle were necessary inside and outside of the prison walls.

At each juncture we faced new situations. Our strategy and tactics were not to be found in the system. We had to bring to the system demands and scenarios which strategically and tactically were of our design and to our advantage in the pursuance of our objectives.

In 1988, following widespread discussion among all republican POWs in the H-Blocks, a document was drawn up and presented to

the prison administration and their political bosses. We laid out in clear terms a range of demands from the most trivial right through to those which were at the very core of our identity as political prisoners.

We understood that the system, as then structured, could not even contemplate conceding our core demands in a short period of time. To do so, for the system, was suicide. We knew that the trivia would be moved on first. But we also knew, and were confident, that once we brought the dynamic of the need for change into play that we could and would achieve our demands.

Throughout all of this, what was never in doubt or up for discussion were our duty and objectives as republican prisoners. We were then and we have remained thereafter Irish republicans, committed to the ending of British rule in Ireland, to the ending of the partition of our country and to the establishment of a 32 County Democratic Socialist Republic.

We have not travelled this road alone. We have not come this distance without fears and deep concerns. Nor have we arrived here without the support and active assistance of our families and of our comrades.

Today, we, as Irish republicans, must take decisions and decide upon a course of action which can only be considered if it has the potential to move our struggle forward. We are confident in ourselves. We have created the dynamic for change. This must be developed. Our struggle is not over. There is a lengthy road ahead yet.

Believing that we can and will move forward and move forward together we urge you to support motions 9, 10, 11 and 13.

# 1798 - WHAT

■ Illustration by  
Nollaig  
Mac Aodha  
(Long Kesh)



Almost two hundred years ago one of the most violent and tragic events in Ireland's history occurred - the rebellion of 1798. According to Thomas Pakenham: "In the space of a few short weeks, 30,000 people - peasants armed with pikes and pitch forks, defenceless women and children - were cut down or shot or blown like chaff as they charged up the mouth of the cannon."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the rebellion the bulk of its leaders were either dead or in prison. The fragile unity of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter, so carefully fostered by the men and women of the United Irish movement, was shattered. Many of those who had so eagerly received the revolutionary ideas of republicanism now deserted the cause, and, in just a few short years, the Act of Union would secure the connection with Britain that Tone so desired to break.

It would be fair to say that by almost any standard the rebellion was a failure. Why then should so distant an event be worthy of our interest? What relevance could it possibly have to the problems and concerns of the Irish people today?

When we examine the men and women of 1798 and their stories, we sometimes are moved by their acts of great courage and sacrifice or are appalled by their acts of cruelty. But these evocative events alone do little to explain their enduring legacy. The rebellion and the politics of its adversaries remains relevant today because the fundamental problems that ignited the struggle also remain with us. Our country remains deeply divided, geographically and across class and sectarian lines. Part of the country is occupied by a foreign power and our sovereignty is denied to us. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the political programme of the United Irish movement should have such resonance, particularly for northern nationalists. 'To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break the connection with England, the never failing resource of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country, these were my objects.' So declared Wolfe Tone, and how was he to fulfil these objectives? 'To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissension, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter - these were my means.'

In Ireland the agrarian unrest of the eighteenth century has been replaced by industrial unrest and working class alienation. In the North, religious discrimination is still a widespread practice, sectarian murder commonplace.

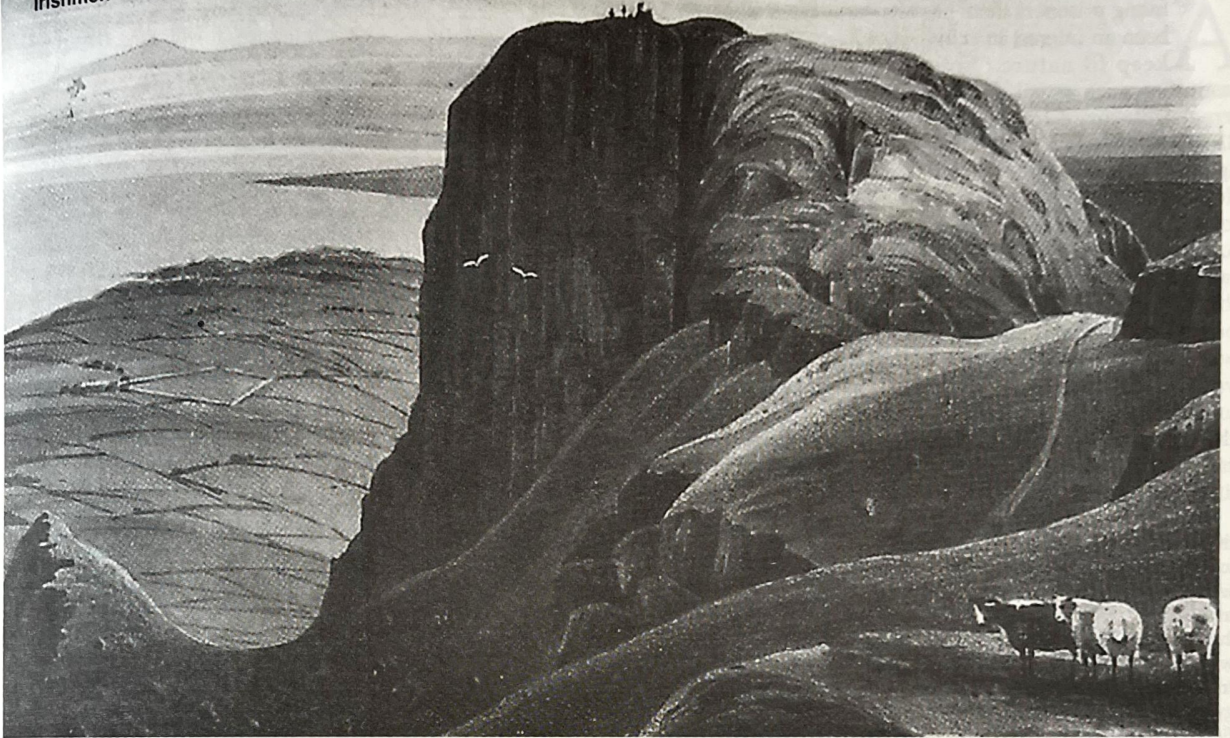
Throughout the country many forms of discrimination and suffering is widespread. In a recent court case covered in the Irish Times<sup>2</sup> the Southern state's failure to provide accommodation for vulnerable children was remarked upon by a High Court judge - individuals not known for their radicalism - when he said that the 'much vaunted Celtic Tiger' was not looking after its young. In the same issue another piece entitled, 'Racist slogans painted on walls in Ennis', highlighted the growing problem of racism in Irish society. The problem of drug abuse is endemic in parts of our cities and is spreading. Poverty remains entrenched as the gap between the rich and poor widens, north and south. Women, travellers, gays and the disabled continue to be excluded within society.

In 1791 Wolfe Tone penned, 'An argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland'. It would be difficult to find a more eloquent or more stinging attack upon sectarianism or the politics of exclusion. Both he and his comrades had no time for the hypocrisy of those men and women who turned a blind eye to the injustices of the day and yet spoke of freedom and justice. 'We prate and babble, and write books and publish them, filled with sentiments of freedom, and abhorrence of tyranny, and lofty praises of the Rights of Man! Yet we are content to hold three million of our fellow creatures and fellow subjects in degradation and infamy and contempt, or, to sum up in one word, in slavery!'

Too many of our politicians, Church, business and trade union leaders, 'the

# RELEVANCE TODAY?

McArt's Fort, Cave Hill,  
birthplace of the United  
Irishmen



comfortable classes', are only too willing to ignore the injustices of today or to pay lip service to them. The vested interests in Tone's time refused to support the United Irish rebellion because, in his words, 'they trembled for their titles and estates.' How little some things have changed.

Of course the world and Ireland have changed. Industrialisation and global capitalism has enriched a relatively small group of nations and we are fortunate to be among them. But the rest of the world - the greater portion of its population - continues to experience abject poverty, hunger, famine and war. While the gap between the rich and poor within Ireland widens, so too has the gap between rich and poor nations.

The political creed of the United Irish movement was not a narrow xenophobic one, not at all. They drew their inspiration from revolutionary France and America and indeed were bound by ties of blood and kinship to those revolutions. They could see beyond Ireland's problems to the world around them. Billy Kennedy, in his book 'The Scots - Irish in the Carolinas' tells the story of how many thousand Irishmen and women - a large proportion of them Presbyterians - left

Ireland to escape 'the oppression of haughty landlords' and in America came to the fore in the revolutionary war of independence. This spirit of solidarity and internationalism, a spirit relevant in Ireland and throughout the world today, developed in the eighteenth century, Tone tells us, because 'as we well knew experimentally what it was to be enslaved, we sympathised most sincerely with the French people; and watched their progress to freedom with the utmost anxiety.' Today, along the Falls Road in Belfast or the streets and walls of Derry, images of Nelson Mandela, Che Guevara, ETA or the PLO are as common as the names of Wolfe Tone or Bobby Sands. Having endured oppression we continue to watch the progress of freedom throughout the world.

'If men could learn from history, what lessons might it teach us.' (Samuel Coleridge Taylor)

Over the two hundred years since the rebellion of 1798 Ireland has repeatedly revisited the same battles. In 1922 part of the island achieved a measure of self government following a war of independence and a brutal civil conflict. A few decades later, years of simmering anger and resentment exploded in the

North and the current conflict began. Partition has failed and every attempt to reform the state has satisfied no one, neither unionist nor nationalist. Even in the Ireland of today the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity adopted by the United Irish movement seem to be more pertinent than ever. Of course the world has moved on and so the remedies to all our problems are not to be found in the past but for Irish Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter, and indeed those of no creed at all, the two hundredth anniversary of the 1798 Rebellion presents us with an opportunity to rediscover a rich political philosophy and a moment in our history when we were, at least for a period, united in our common interest.

'Let them but consider what union has done in small states, what discord in great ones. Let them look to their government, let them look to their fellow slaves, who, by coalition with them, may rise to be their fellow citizens, and form a new order in their society, a new era in their history.' Theobald Wolfe Tone.

BY JIM Mc VEIGH  
H - BLOCKS

[1] The Year of Liberty; The History of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798. E. Phoenix.

[2] The Irish Times, March 3 1998.

# YOGA — doing a s

**A**mong prisoners there has always been an interest in activities of a keep fit nature. Entering an institution such as jail gives people an irresistible urge to prepare for the distant future when they hope to be free again. Embarking upon such projects draws you a lot of encouragement - not least from visiting friends who tell you to use your time wisely, keep in shape, take care of the mind and body. That this advice is usually issued from a beer-bellied couch potato who coughs his way through 40 a day makes it no less valuable - in fact, many are spurred on to maintain some semblance of youth so that they too may be fit enough to sample the most unhealthy aspects of life when released.

For anyone entering the H-Blocks since the late 80's this advice has been easy to follow. We have now a multi gym on each wing, usually complete with the wing maniac just waiting on a new addition for 'his squad.' My advice is beware of those who entice you in with promises of a transformed physique with bulging biceps guaranteed to make others green with envy. From what I've observed the only thing bulging and green is your face on that first morning as your body goes into shock at its first taste of exercise since you played tig in the school playground.

Most men do persevere, however, and very soon keeping fit is part of their everyday lives in jail. Throughout the years this routine has been lifting weights or running and quite often a combination of both. Yet for all this interest in a healthier approach to life very few people involved themselves in yoga. There have always been those who claimed that they practised in their cells and would touch their toes with great flair as proof of their yogi abilities. Inevitably the following morning a few men would be seen on the wing with creaked necks and pulled back muscles as a result of similar attempts at flair.

That there was an interest in yoga was clear but there was also a clear misunderstanding as to what it was about. Those who had yoga books usually only looked at the first few pages, enough to get tips on leg stretches before going on a five mile run. At least the runners had an approach which sought benefits to their own sport. The weight lifters, on the other hand, wouldn't countenance an exercise which might unbind their muscle-bound shoulders or limbs - those knots of sinews were proof

of their dogged hard work and determination in the art of pumping iron.

However, while very few actually practised yoga, its attractiveness was widespread. It's easy to see the attraction. Yoga, with its promise of eternal youth, with its aura of tranquillity, its mystery of deep meditation to transport you where you want to go, has a certain appeal to anyone who lives day after day surrounded by drab grey walls. So when a proper yoga teacher from outside was made available to us there was a long list of names looking to enrol in the class. In fact the demand far outstripped the space so we drew names from a hat on the understanding that those who could attend the course would pass on their new skills to others on the wing.

So what were these skills to be? Well, for the most part, people weren't sure; there was the naive view that it was an easy way to gain flexibility and perhaps there were visions of doing the more spectacular poses - not yogic flying, though, the Natural Law Party weren't about to pick up floating votes from these loyal Shinnners. Yoga was considered as something which might compliment other training regimes, nobody linked it with gaining strength and stamina nor as a regime in its own right. Clearly we had a lot to learn.

Marie, the yoga teacher, began her weekly class in Autumn '95 and immediately knew that her students here would want a strong type of yoga. So, on her first visit she made two points. Firstly, that we should commit ourselves to attending for six weeks, by that time we would see the benefits and feel encouraged to continue with the practice. Secondly, she promised a form of yoga, called Iyengar Yoga, that would be of interest to those who liked a physical approach. This immediately appealed to the weight trainers and the more fit among the group, but the fact that Marie would readily admit that she was, let's say, old enough to have baby-sat some of these students, some felt that this yoga might be just too easy.

So began the first real teaching of yoga in the H-Blocks and a very quick first lesson - Iyengar yoga strips the ego. Without much ado all the students were quickly realising their limits. While Marie demonstrated what seemed so simple, an attempt by all present to do likewise reminded you why you never went beyond those first few pages of that tattered old yoga book.

'Lets break it down and go through the basics,' Marie began, 'you turn the ankle out like so.'

'Marie, my ankle won't turn'

'It will with practice. You pull up this leg muscle like so'

'Marie, I don't seem to have that muscle and my leg is shaking.'

'You'll develop it with time. Now, when you're in this position you stretch and breathe smoothly.'

'Ugh, Marie, I can't breathe and nothing will stretch.'

'You'll learn to control your breathing with time.'

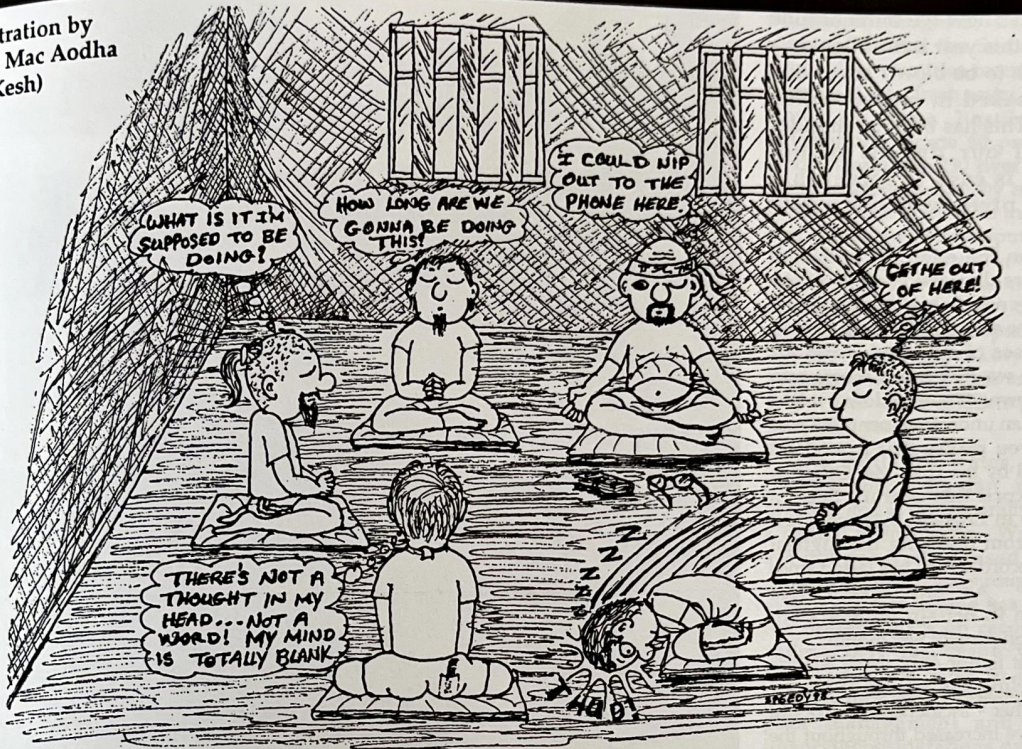
By the end of the first lesson it was clear that yoga needed discipline and an attitude which makes you strive for improvement. Time and practice seemed to be key factors, if you wanted to learn, you needed to utilise both.

For yoga to succeed, this positive approach was all important in order to complement the activity linking the body and mind. When you find you need to focus inward in order to understand why you can't make your own strength control your activities, you soon discover that combination of body, mind and breath. You learn how each needs to be brought into harmony for the good of each other and the whole. Of course this takes discipline, it takes patience and it takes practice. Initially some of the original group who were used to a regime of weights abandoned the practice, they had difficulty in coming to terms with the variance in focus. They were used to a routine whereby they could externalise their discipline through that one final push, by lifting that extra weight and thus achieving an immediate and identifiable goal. Marie, on the other hand, was teaching us to focus internally in order to progress in a more measured, controlled and precise way. Most of the class placed their faith in Marie and continued with the weekly session.

For those who persevered, yoga soon became part of the daily routine. The group was made up of all types; those who trained regularly, those who were naturally flexible and those who did very little exercise outside of the yoga class. Within a short period of time, though, none of that mattered - neither flexibility, strength or age distinguished people's capabilities as they progressed through the asanas [poses]; the group functioned as a body. Whereas, weeks before, people were falling out of an asana after ten seconds everyone could now go through a series of asanas while holding some for up to sixty seconds. Anyone who has experienced Iyengar yoga will agree that doing poses such as Warrior 1 or Warrior 3 for even half a minute can be quite a workout. Those of you who are not familiar with this type of yoga may be somewhat surprised to hear of poses with such fierce sounding names. They're certainly not terms to conjure up images of sitting cross-legged

# Stretch in the Blocks

■ Illustration by  
Nollaig Mac Aodha  
(Long Kesh)



meditating by a lily pond. No, but everything in its own time. When you understand how to work your body and mind for its own benefit you can sit and contemplate the deeper meaning of it all but in the meantime you just have to, in the words of Elizabeth Connolly, 'cut the bullshit and get on with it'. Marie had now worked with us for a year and a half and knew we had reached the stage where we needed some of Elizabeth's philosophy to help us go beyond our limits and onto the next important stage. She knew we were serious in our practice of yoga but wanted to make it possible for us to prove to ourselves just how far we were capable of going. Although she was far too nice to say so, she was going to take us beyond the proverbial bullshit. She invited Elizabeth of the Iyengar Institute over to assess us for the possibility of doing a teacher training course in Iyengar Yoga.

They arrived together one Monday morning in April '97 and, for a full week, morning and afternoon, we went through a routine which had us sweating, cursing, and pleading, and that was only the warm-ups. We went through everything that Marie had taught us and everything seemed to have a reverse version, an upside down version and an inversion, so whilst we had grunted and groaned in our initial practice, we were now huffing and puffing to keep control. If it had

not been for the fact that these two women seemed to be going through it all so effortlessly I doubt a full class would have been there on the last day - luckily yoga hadn't completely stripped our egos and we all hung in there. We made it to Friday and felt great for having made that achievement. Elizabeth, for all her push and bullying, was actually impressed and agreed with Marie that we had the potential to complete a teacher training course. It would mean more of the same on a regular basis but everyone was keen. These two women had a way of encouraging you so that you felt motivated in your wish to succeed. So began a full year of yoga practice with this goal in mind.

Our daily classes among ourselves were now focused on a very clear programme. The fact that a group of us were going through this course encouraged new faces to take up yoga and some of those who initially were involved, but had left, returned to its practice. There is now a greater understanding about yoga and its benefits and it is being hailed even by those who were most cynical at the start. Among those who practice it regularly there has been a marked reduction in sporting injuries such as pulled muscles, torn ligaments and tendons as well as back problems. Many who had carried handicaps for years from injuries, or wear and tear, have been able to reverse the

effects of muscle wastage and have achieved increased movement in arthritic joints, such as knees and hips. Where ordinary physiotherapy had failed, the benefit of yoga practice showed remarkable results.

Since '95, with the introduction of serious teaching and the determined skills of Marie, the attitude to yoga has transformed from one of ridicule [only to be done by the old or the feeble] to the point where it's now an actual part of keep fit routines in the Blocks - as common as running or weight training and often assisting the practitioners of both.

One still gets advice from visitors about keeping fit and now when I tell them that I practise yoga I get the look which says 'going through that fad are you?' Well, let me give some advice for a change, if you have never practised yoga, or have done so only to be put off by its 'oh so gentle' approach, get involved in Iyengar yoga - young or old, fit or unfit it will help you beyond belief - and you never know, there just might be a yoga teacher near you.

BY PADDY O' DOWD  
H-BLOCKS.

● If you are interested in attending an Iyengar yoga class, or would like to establish one in your area, you can contact Marie Quail by telephone (018206) 30686 Mobile: 0403-458855.

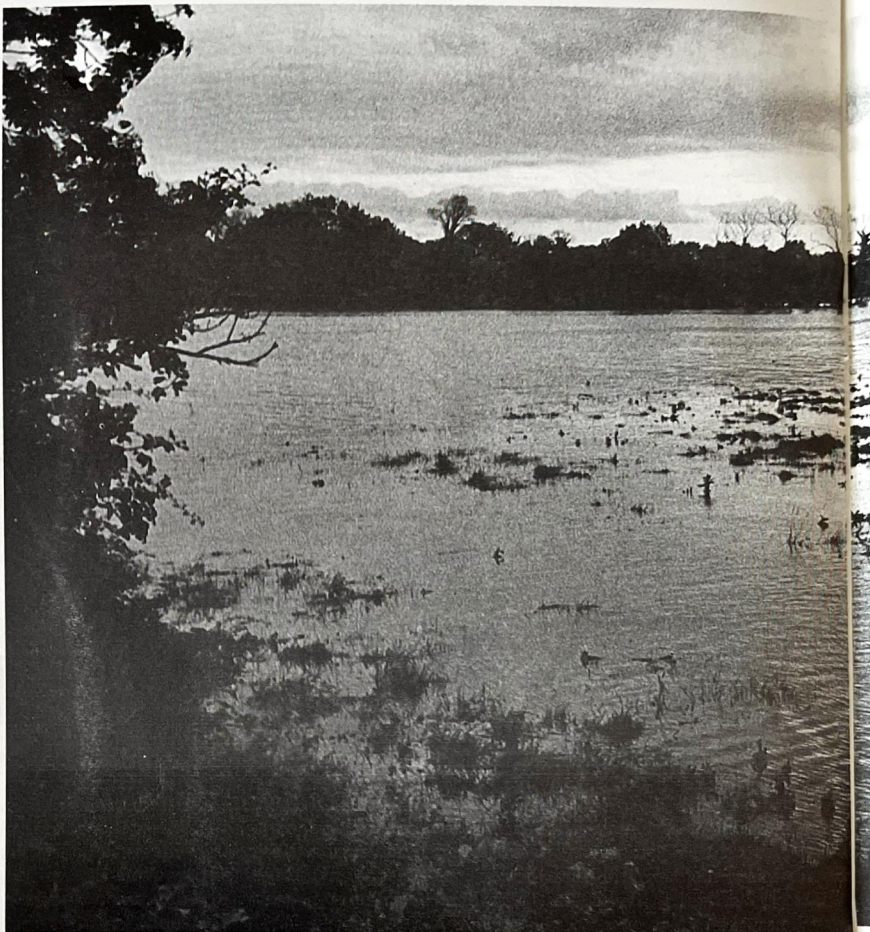
Here we are in July, a month supposedly typical for its sunshine and beautiful weather, a time of year many of us look forward to with thoughts of long lazy days soaking up the sun. However that's how we think of June as well, only this year it has come as a bit of a shock to be blown about and regularly soaked in monsoon-like conditions. This has been a reminder that for all our dreams of hot summers it is easy to forget that Ireland is a pretty wet and windy place.

Situated on the edge of the North Atlantic, where depressions roll off the ocean in gigantic whirlpools of air, Ireland is in the middle of a battleground between masses of cold and warm air fighting along weather fronts where rain often pours down. 'Pouring down' might be considered an understatement this past while when you realise that April 1998 was confirmed by the Irish Met Office as the wettest April this century here in Ireland. Over in England they were just millimetres from breaking the highest ever rainfall record which has lasted since April 1782. As one Met Office spokesperson in Britain understated, "that was an abnormally wet month."

Of course it is not only these islands which are feeling the effects of record breaking weather - incidences of drought and floods have increased throughout the world. Hardly a week passes without us seeing images of tragedy and death connected with a weather phenomenon. To us the weather seems to be just damned weird, unpredictable and seemingly record-breaking every other month.

Do you know what seems really weird, though? The fact that despite the onslaught of such down-pouring some of the water authorities in England and Wales are cautioning people to be prudent with water usage again this summer. Is this astonishing to anyone else? Such contradictions highlight the abuse of self-imposed dichotomy of corporations going monstrosly private, accumulating vast profits for share owners and fat cat managing directors and then appealing to the public conscience to combat water shortages. And the ironies mount - take these examples. Mrs Smith sitting raging in Wheatly because the local Water Authority won't pay to clean her pipes. Meanwhile she has to run an estimated 300 gallons every morning in order to make her water turn clear. A water main bursts in Sheffield, spurting thousands of gallons every minute, and Yorkshire Water takes a mere 28 hours to respond to the first call. Then its Managing Director gives a public display of his personal

# THE BATTLE



restraint as he splashes about in a wash-hand basin. The whole thing is a wash with irony.

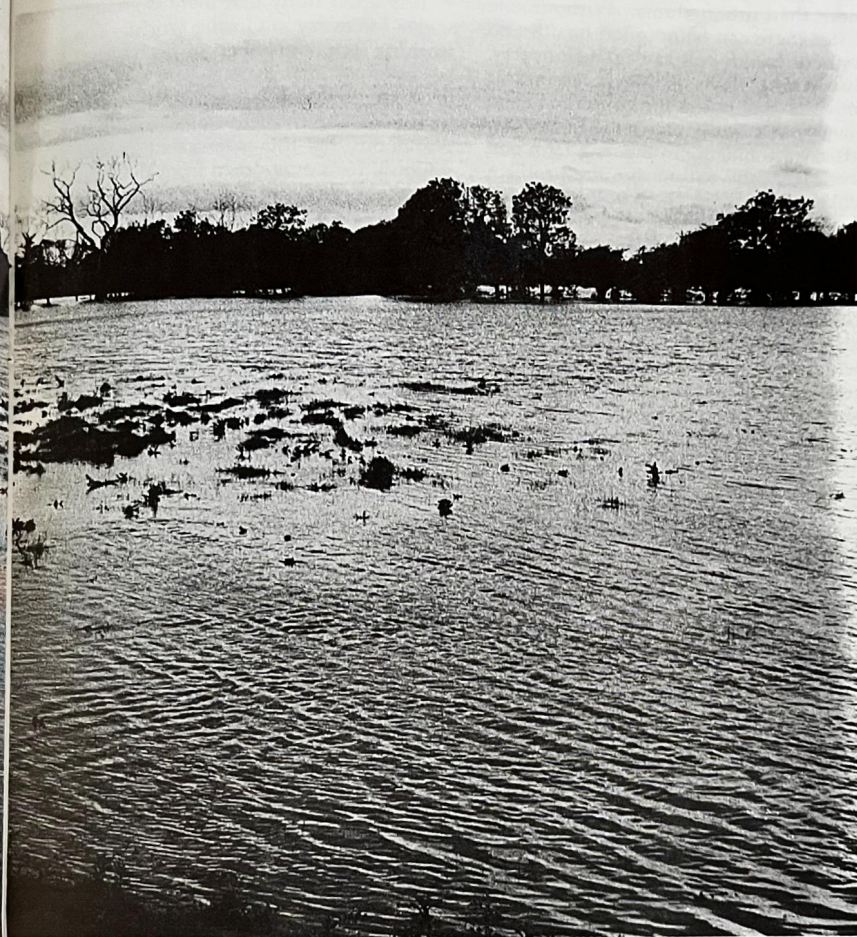
You'd hardly know from such attitudes that the availability of Earth's most precious resource, even in rain sodden Ireland, is and always has been a persistent source of conflict in human affairs because ultimately it is a vital source of survival for us all. The average adult is comprised of more than 70 pints of water, and needs to consume at least four or five pints each day for health and survival. Fortunately modern day living in Ireland is no longer characterised by a daily struggle for access to clean fresh water as is the case elsewhere. Warnings of drought for several weeks of the year, hosepipe bans, water rotas, standpipes and countless arguments over who is to blame for the shortages are generally the sum of our experiences in these isles. As such they represent nothing more than minor skirmishes in an age old battle for

water across time and space.

In a global context, though, the situation regarding the provision of water is becoming increasingly dire. Indeed it has become so dire that there are those - such as John Vidal of *The Guardian* - who believe that the wars of the next century will not be over politics, or oil, but water. This view was echoed last year by Ismail Serageldin, Vice President of the World Bank, and as far back as 1988 by UN Secretary General, Boutros Ghali, who asserted that the next war in the Middle East would be over the Nile. Within hours of that statement Israeli and Palestine diplomats had reached more deadlock over the issue of water in their peace talks. These people have seen the future and it's very, very dry.

Today more than 85 countries across the world now have water shortages that threaten health and economies; 40 per cent of the world population [more than 2 billion people] have no access to clean

# FOR WATER



water or sanitation. As industrial, agricultural and individual demands escalate everywhere, the situation continues to deteriorate. World-wide demand for water is doubling every 21 years, more rapidly in some regions. Supply cannot remotely keep pace with growth of demand as populations soar and growth of cities explode. We are ill-equipped to universally provide the one thing we cannot live without. In fact, as you read these words Cape Verde and Barbados are running out at a disastrous rate. The water situation in North Africa is 'precarious'. Northern China, western and southern India, parts of Pakistan, South America and much of Mexico all face water scarcity. Moreover, much of sub-Saharan Africa is in almost permanent crisis. Fifty Chinese cities face acute shortages as the water table drops one to two metres a year. Many countries are accelerating the process of desertification and, in the developing world, water

quality is falling rapidly as pollution and salinity, caused by industrial farming and over-extraction, rises.

'With water there is survival, without it there is no food nor sustenance of any sort,' says Dr Norman Myers in his book 'Ultimate Security'. Here he identifies an ecological 'risk spiral'. As the population grows (it is expected to double world wide in 40 years from 5 to 10 billion people) drier areas are being farmed. This justifies the loss of forests and other water conserving vegetation but the result is less rainfall in the regions and a 'dessicatory effect' whereupon multiple factors are compounding each others impacts. As a result, communities are less able to feed themselves, thus resulting in raised political tension and an escalation toward conflict. As Dr Myers notes, "It is then no longer an economic struggle, but a fight for survival."

Seen in this light it is clear that water is becoming increasingly important in inter-

state politics due to the 'probability' of violent conflict over the Earth's fundamental resource. Water is fast evolving into an issue of high geopolitical strategy and as it is no respecter of national boundaries, the potential for political and economic insecurity is great. Botswana, Bulgaria, Cambodia, the Congo, Gambia, the Sudan, Syria and many other countries receive 75 per cent or more of their fresh water from the river flows of, often hostile, upstream neighbours. Some 40 per cent of the world lives in the 250 river basins whose water is competed for by more than one nation. Great rivers like the Nile, Niger, Tigris, Mekong, Brahmaputra and Indus flow through many countries, all of whom want to extract as much water as possible. All have been the subject of recent international disputes. Tensions appear 'especially likely' in parts of southern and central Asia and the Middle East where water conflicts go back more than 5,000 years.

The battle for water, then, arises because of a human management problem and is not generally the result of a natural phenomenon. Water shortages are not generally caused by 'climatic drought'. Rainfall stays roughly the same, even if the last decade has seen eight of the hottest years on record. Rainfall varies widely from year to year but good and bad years tend to be grouped. Today's problem is self-induced due to poor management and short term financial considerations over long term human welfare issues both on a local and global scale. In this country water shortages, for the most part, are best explained as local mismanagement of water supply and demand. Globally, we find that fresh water shortages are mostly cases of 'agricultural drought' where water supply is insufficient to cover crop or livestock needs. It comes in two forms. Growing populations need more food which demands more water to grow it. But less remarked upon is the fact that new, high-yielding crop varieties - subsidised and pushed vigorously by governments, industry and world bodies as the most efficient way to feed people - demand much more water *per se*. Moreover agricultural drought is being worsened as tensions grow everywhere between the three sectors of society that traditionally compete for water - farming, industry and individuals. The World Health Organisation and the World Bank agree that as wealth increases, agriculture is being denied water by emerging industrial and urban areas.

This begs the question, where is the food going to come from? Indeed how can we possibly meet the needs of 10 billion people when we can barely meet the needs of 5 billion and continue to take water away from agriculture? Food

production capacity is being lowered and water scarcity, due to mis-management, not shortage of land, will be the main constraint on agriculture in developing countries in the future.

The solutions are hotly debated. The World Bank wants £600 billion to be invested in sanitation and water schemes in the next decade, and says it will up its lending in this area to about 25 per cent of its loans. It makes economic sense; the price of not investing in health and sanitation is huge. Recently, ten weeks of cholera in Peru, caused by contaminated water, cost about £1 billion - three times the amount invested in the country's water supply in the whole of the 1980's. Several years ago, because Shanghai could not afford to clean up the pollution of its water supplies, it spent £300 million recently moving its intake 25 miles upstream. In Britain water companies say it will cost £60 billion to meet EU water quality standards - the high price of not investing in pollution prevention earlier.

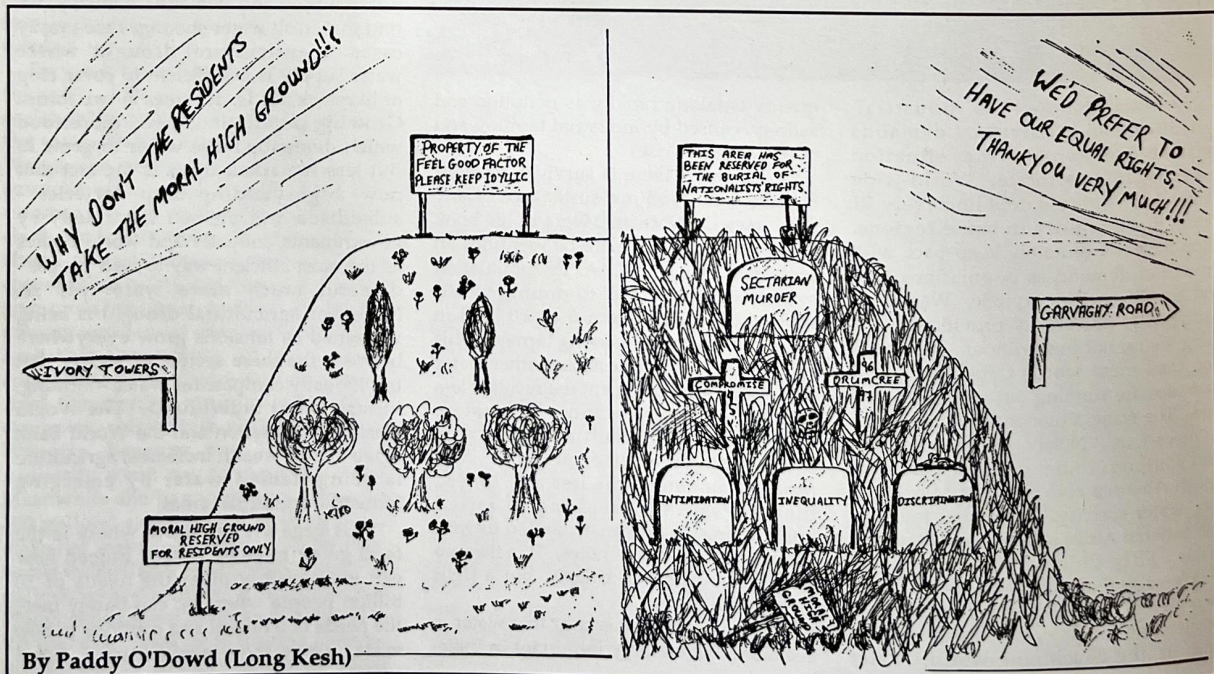
Of course it is the human cost which makes the most harrowing reading. The British charity, Water Aid, claims that 80 per cent of all deaths in the developing world are now water related and warns that cities in the developing world are becoming mega-slums increasingly prone to disease. This affects literally millions of people every year. The consequences for the World Bank and the world community are great. Scares like the recent plague outbreak in Sudan will be repeated month after month unless we get to grips with the problems of water provision. There are major implications for us all but it is not enough to throw money at the problem - it is a global problem which

requires a global solution - the approach is vital. Time and again the poorest are bypassed by inappropriate water and sanitation investments. The developing world is littered with failed water projects. Soon the majority will be living in little more than urban slums. Without safe water there can be no good health and without health you can't fight poverty. Everything starts with efficient water provision and unless the World Bank and governments really attack the root of the crisis, start thinking in the long term and work from the bottom up, the problem will not be solved. The core thinking and dominant discourse promoted by the World Bank and others is to push Western 'efficiency', technology and modernisation - most of which have ignored social costs. Yet the poor have ended up poorer in cities, where they need more water than before and where the pollution of water is greatest. Without clean water and good sanitation, urban poverty, slums and diseases have flourished and countries have slipped even further into the poverty trap. But countries are still told by the World Bank and Western-trained economists to develop at the expense of their traditional water-sparse agriculture. Foreign exchange-earning crops like flowers or lettuces or indeed bananas - which need even more water - are encouraged. It is all underpinned by global free trade and the GATT - pushed by the World Bank. Nowadays the economic catchphrase is 'tourist development', but it is not commonly known that per capita this is the most water intensive of all industries. The figures are startling; according to the World Health Organisation, the average

15,000 cubic metres of water needed to supply 100 luxury hotel guests for just 55 days is enough for 100 nomads and 450 cattle for three years, or 100 rural families for three years, or 100 urban families for two years.

It is a sad irony that there is enough water for everyone in the world. The world is simply not short of fresh water! For example, in an average year 1,070mm of water falls on Britain's 280,000 square km area. The Institute of Hydrology points out that this means that 280,000 billion litres pours down from the skies every year. Since there are approximately sixty million Britons this works out at 4.6 million litres, or more than 1 million gallons per person. Simply put, there is enough rain to fill three Olympic sized swimming pools for every man, woman and child, every year in Britain. In the absence of fundamental change in the dominant discourses about modernisation, capitalism and the nature of the global economy, universal provision of clean, fresh water, both locally and globally will remain a pipe dream. Meanwhile as the battle for water continues around us, sometimes politically, often economically, but more increasingly and tragically, militarily, those of us fortunate to live in a rain drenched country such as Ireland should take stock. We may complain about our summers, agonise over rain and drought and hosepipe bans, but for all the irony we would be well advised not to ignore the signs, we should not remain indifferent - nor, despite our location, can we afford to act so dry and mighty.

BY JIMMY Mc ALLISTER  
H-BLOCKS.



By Paddy O'Dowd (Long Kesh)

# QUOTES

"What part of NO don't you understand?" - Graffiti on the Ormeau Road, encapsulating the residents' opposition to sectarian marches.

"The Orange Order... has to appreciate that the days of the politics of exclusion are over." - Bertie Ahern, *Irish News*, July 11, 1998

"They had been treating these people with kid gloves [in the past] but they have got the feather dusters out now." - A Garvaghy resident's view of how the RUC were unwilling to move protesters from the vicinity of Drumcree church, despite the Parade Commission's ruling that Orangemen should disperse, *Irish News*, July 11, 1998

"All this bravado and the hypocrisy of the Orange high priests and their mouth warriors blinds them to the fact that they have not a friend left in the world and that no matter what the outcome [Drumcree] could be their Valhalla ...The truth is out at last." - James Kelly, *Irish News*, July 11, 1998

"There can be no suggestion that loyalist culture is under threat, as the total number of Orange parades across Northern Ireland is on the increase." - *Irish News* editorial countering loyalist claims that their culture is being eroded because they can't march wherever they like, *Irish News*, July 11, 1998

"There was always going to be a moment of intense agony when the last remnants of Irish unionism had to come to terms with 20th century democracy ...For all the talk of political change ...they cannot accept the basic concept of equality." - Tom Mc Gurk's analysis of the split within Unionism, *Sunday Business Post*, June 28, 1998

"The French may well complain about England's football hooligans, but would they like these gallant heroes heavily armed, uniformed and permanently based in their country?" - Letter to the *Irish News*, putting English hooliganism in France into perspective.

"Isn't it politically significant that the [Irish Times] devotes huge space every day to coverage of life in Northern Ireland while the broad sheets based in the country which asserts its sovereignty over Northern Ireland tell us so little...British newspapers ignore most of the horrors perpetrated by the men who roam the streets waving Union flags and unleash savagery on their fellow citizens in the name of the Queen." - Roy Greenslade, reporting the unreported loyalist terror in the British press, *Guardian*, July 15, 1998

"The Orange Order in Portadown should talk to the residents without preconditions, and the residents should talk to the Orange Order." - *Irish News/Newsletter* joint editorial at last coming to terms with residents' position, July 4, 1998

"The Orange Order stands for civil and religious liberty for all, not just for Protestants." - Orange Order letter carried in the daily papers, July 2, 1998

"But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. And again they said Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever." - Leaflet handed out at Drumcree in the aftermath of the burning of ten Catholic chapels, underlining the Orange Order's view of civil and religious liberty for all

"Croppies lie down." - Prominent banner displayed at Drumcree. Yet more evidence of the Orange Order's version of civil and religious liberties.

"So the reason for the growth in Nationalist voters is almost exclusively down to Sinn Féin's performance ...in absolute terms the Sinn Féin vote has risen from 119,000 votes in 1996 to 143,000 last week." - Ed Moloney, finally coming to terms with the extent of Sinn Féin's mandate, *Sunday Tribune*, June 8, 1998

"Part of the reason opinion polls underestimate Sinn Féin support is because the electoral fraud the IRA engages in." - Sue Denham of the *Sunday Times* failing to come to terms with Sinn Féin's mandate, July 5, 1998

"In a jibe at the availability of Mr Blair for interview, Mr Paxman said: "First he fearlessly shared a quip or two with Des O Connor, and only yesterday he was delighted to give his views on the burning subject of the week. Not about Kosovo. Not about Drumcree or the economy. He wanted to talk about England's defeat in the World Cup." - Jeremy Paxman blows the whistle on Tony Blair's goal to tackle important issues

"No matter what the cost - we will march." - David Jones, social worker and spokesman for Portadown Orange, *Ireland On Sunday*, June 28, 1998

"So there has been collusion between members of the Special Forces and members of paramilitary groups. It was an excellent vehicle to discredit the Orange Order to say that it was directly linked to Drumcree." - David Jones, trying, but not quite managing, to distance the Orange Order from the sectarian murder of three children in Ballymoney

"Has David Jones ...taken leave of his senses... Perhaps he needs a holiday in the sun well away from the Garvaghy Road and the glare of the television cameras ...If this is what he is telling the media, what on earth is he telling the brethren assembled at Drumcree?" - Newsletter editorial on Jones' theory. If only all the assembled brethren would take a holiday well away from the Garvaghy Road, July 15, 1998

"It was my awareness of the deep rooted but largely unacknowledged nature of this resistance to change within sections of the Unionist family that led me to make the first public references to Seán Mc Philmy's detailed account, in his book, *The Committee*, of the links between some members of the Unionist establishment (including the security establishment) and the gun." - Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland on Sunday*, July 5, 1998

# One day in a lifetime

I have vivid memories of a day in July '86 when I travelled to Slane to see a concert by the rock group Queen. The lasting memories are not because of that special atmosphere created when thousands of young, and not so young, converge at an open air concert but for something entirely different. I spent the most memorable, enjoyable and poignant time in a small cottage with an old man in a quiet County Louth town.

The morning was overcast but my three passengers and myself were looking forward to a sunny day at Slane. When we reached Ardee we decided it was time to stop for something to eat before driving any further. We soon found a café and while the others relaxed after our late breakfast I decided to go for a walk to freshen up before continuing our journey.

As I walked along aimlessly I was conscious of a gnawing thought that there was something about Ardee that linked it to my area in County Antrim. These thoughts brought back memories of the stories I had heard about the old epublicans who came from the Randalstown and Tannaghmore areas of County Antrim. These stories often involved my grand-uncle Cathal Shannon and another local man James Drain. Then I realised that it was these names that were at the back of my thoughts. I recalled being told one time that James Drain who had done time 'on the boat' had moved to Ardee after his release. No sooner had the realisation struck that I was standing in the town in which this man might still be living than I decided that I just had to find out could I locate him.

I crossed the street to where a group of elderly men was standing and asked if anyone knew of James Drain or where he lived. Without hesitation I was brought straight to James' door, which happened to be only a few yards away. Before I had time to think of what I was going to say about this sudden visit, a woman who was working as a home-help invited me in to meet James. It was an old cottage with the distinctive smell of a turf fire and the rhythmic chime of an antique clock. I was shown through to the back kitchen where I was introduced to 86 year old James Drain. Despite his age he rose promptly from his armchair to greet me, smiling broadly when he heard my accent. Having received such a warm welcome I began at once to explain my background. The home-help lady left us together as she went to make us tea and I tried to think of what to say about my reason for this unexpected call. James, though, seemed to sense the source of my interest and my reason for being there and once we were settled with our cups of tea began telling me the story of his life.

James, the eldest son in a family of six, was born in the townland of Lenagh, Co. Antrim in 1900. His father, Henry, came from nearby Tannaghmore, where the Drain family had lived for several generations and his mother, Margaret Lubby, originated from Co. Cavan. James left school at fourteen and got employment in Rea's timber yard in Antrim, a tough place with a reputation of almost slave labour.

Meanwhile the effects of World War One and the 1916 Rising had conflicting impacts on the area. The British Army, throughout the conflict in Europe, had made use of the Whitehill and Tannaghmore bogland for training its recruits before sending them off to die in France. At the same time many young locals felt the awakenings of republicanism after the events in Dublin of Easter 1916. By the time the new Dáil Eireann of 1919 had been established and the war for independence was being waged James had joined a local column of the IRA. This column consisted of Frank Bogue who originated from Co. Cork. Frank and his brother, Maurice, were instrumental in the establishment of hurling at the Tir na nÓg club in Randalstown. Communications were of utmost importance; Dick Kerr acted as local courier and successfully travelled around the country on bicycle undetected. Johnny Byrne and Frank

McNaughton also made up the column along with Cathal Shannon who looked after an arms dump.

Following the partition of Ireland with the Government of Ireland Act in 1920, and the establishment of the Belfast Parliament and unionist Government in June 1921, no time was lost in the repression of nationalists in the North. Between 1920 and 1922 over 450 people, mostly nationalists, were killed in Belfast. Around 50,000 A and B Specials were recruited and given unlimited powers of seizures and arrests under the Special Powers Act. Night time curfews were also imposed. Meanwhile the IRA was increasing its activity against the Unionist Government and its forces. By the spring of 1922 the IRA launched its most intense and co-ordinated campaign throughout the North. On the Friday night and Saturday morning of the 19th and 20th of May, numerous attacks took place in Belfast and in counties Antrim, Down, Derry, Monaghan and Tyrone.

In Co. Antrim, Ballymena train station and Crebilly Castle, a large mansion in 250 acres was destroyed by fire. Around the same time at Martinstown, some eight miles outside Ballymena, the RIC barracks was attacked in a gun battle that lasted from 11.00 p.m. until 2.00 am. In the attack Special Constable Tomás McNeill was shot dead and his brother seriously wounded. While this attack was in operation the IRA had placed a roadblock at Rathkenny and ambushed Specials who were rushing to assist their colleagues in the Martinstown barracks. Other similar attacks took place in Ballycastle, Cushendall, Cloughmills, Carnlough and Glenarn.

However, from the Northern establishment's point of view, the most devastating attack of the night was inflicted upon Shanes Castle at Randalstown. Shanes Castle was the home of Lord and Lady O'Neill and their son Hugh who was the Speaker of the Belfast Parliament - Hugh's nephew, Terence O'Neill, was later to become the Prime Minister of the Stormont Government during the 1960s. The O'Neills were awakened by the shouts of servants and revolver fire. John Bell, the estate carpenter, was shot in the hip and everyone was ordered into the kitchen of the servants' quarters. Daniel Close, a young pantry boy, was then ordered by the IRA to show where the petrol was stored in an outhouse, over a dozen gallons was obtained and sprinkled throughout the castle. The subsequent fire destroyed the entire mansion and tower, inflicting a financial cost of £100,000, which in today's money would be equivalent to over £20 million.

Three days later, the unionist Government responded with the introduction of internment and hundreds of nationalists were arrested throughout the Six Counties. James Drain was arrested at Rea's timber yard and taken directly to Crumlin Road gaol. Although there was no evidence to connect James to the attack on Shanes Castle both his parents who worked on O'Neill's farm were immediately sacked. Frank Bogue and Johnny Byrne were also interned.

The Specials who carried out the raids also arrested Cathal Shannon in Byrne's pub. However, as Cathal was being led down the steps at a rear entrance he used his considerable physical strength to throw off his two captors and made a dash for freedom. The Specials immediately opened fire shooting indiscriminately before rushing to my grandmother's house nearby where they continued firing within the grounds. Eventually the Specials reached a house where Cathal was hiding but he managed to outflank them by squeezing out through a small window. Despite frantic searching by his enemies, Cathal managed to stay in the area of the Moss and Thompson's Wood for three days where he was fed by the locals before he made his way south to Dublin.

A month later, James, along with many other internees was moved to a prison ship, The Argenta, which was situated in Belfast Lough. The conditions on this ship were cramp and squalid with disease spreading quickly. One of James' comrades, Harry Carey

from the Moneyglass area of Toome, became critically ill on the ship and died shortly after release. Some internees were also taken to Lame Workhouse where James was taken for a period. Despite the hardships, republicans on the Argenta as in all other prisons took the opportunity to develop their education, culture and talents. One of the most renowned internees on the Argenta was Mickey McIlhatten from Glenravel in Co. Antrim. He learned to read music and speak Irish fluently on the ship. Mickey was to become famous for his 'pottin making and fiddle playing and was known as the 'King of the Glens'. McIlhatten was later immortalised by Bobby Sands in a song he wrote while on the Blanket Protest.

After the cease-fire by the IRA on 24 May 1923 the internees on the Argenta were given the option of remaining in prison or signing a document of release that stipulated that they must leave the Six Counties. James refused to budge and was one of the last remaining on the Argenta when internment was gradually phased out with 'normal' releases during the Spring and the Summer of 1924. However, when the Unionist Government decided to finally end internment, they quickly made use of their unlimited 'Special Powers Act' to serve Exclusion Orders on many republican prisoners.

James was one of those served with an Exclusion Order before being taken to the newly imposed border. At the time Rea's Timber Merchants had a contract in the Colleen area of Co. Louth and James resumed work with his old firm. Eventually he decided to settle in Co. Louth where he married and reared a family in the village of Ardee.

Sixty two years later here I was sitting opposite him by pure chance and good fortune. From my own perspective in the 1980s the 1916-23 period in our history was only something I had read about in the school history books with the images of old black and white photos. Here I was listening to a man who was not only around then to tell it as it was but was an actual participant in the creation of that history. After James went over the story of his young life we began to discuss the lives of people living in the Randalstown and Tannaghmore area. He had many memories of old friends both living and dead from my area and his eyes would light up at the mention of some old person who shared their youth with him. When I spoke of one old lady who was still living in the area he smiled and said, 'She'd be no spring chick now.'

He also spoke about his own grown up family who were all living away from home and doing well. He placed great emphasis on the need for young people to gain third level education. Eventually I remembered that I had three friends waiting on me and, with reluctance, I had to leave. As James walked me out to the street he told me that he had plans to travel to England shortly to visit his son. We shook hands and I had this strange feeling of a bond about the way I was linking up with this republican from a previous generation, who came from my area, and who, I later discovered, was christened in the same chapel as myself.

A few weeks later I mentioned to the South Derry/South-West Antrim Comhairle Ceantair of Sinn Féin about my visit with James. They were collecting information about republican history for their annual calendar and a possible history book. The late John Davey agreed with me that James Drain's story contained much valuable history. We made arrangements to go down to Ardee and make a taped recording of James' story so that nothing would be lost. I had already forgotten some of the details of what James had told me.

The following day I happened to be visiting a relative of James in Tannaghmore when in the middle of conversation I was asked, 'Did you hear about James Drain? He's dead.' The relative couldn't have known what a shock that news was to me. I wouldn't be making that trip to Ardee after all, I wouldn't be recording James' story, I wouldn't be meeting James again.

James died on 1st of August 1986 while on a trip to England to see his son, just three weeks after my visit. His remains were brought home to Ardee and buried in Colleen cemetery County Louth.

BY GERRY MAGEE.  
H-BLOCKS

# Like it or Not

I've been thinking of the days  
Times emerging from the haze

There's nothing can erase

The memories

You were always by my side

I'd try to hide

But now the tide

Is turning.

And you'd keep telling me

That's the way things just gotta be

And all I need to do

Is close my eyes and I'll get through

Chorus

'Cos like it or not, life can be tough

And sometimes love it just ain't enough

And whenever I feel the pain inside

I remember you're the one who tried to guide me,

To find me.

I could dream my life away

In the glow of yesterday

With things I'd love to say

To you now.

But life remains the same

It flickers like a flame

I'm gonna claim

Tomorrow.

Still you'd keep telling me

That's the way things just gotta be

And all I need to do

Is close my eyes and I'll get through.

Chorus.

Winning song in the

1998 Prison Art Foundation competition,

By Rosie Mc Corley, Maghaberry

# COOKING UP CONSPIRACIES

Just thought I'd let all you prospective wives and partners and all presently so engaged in matrimonial drudgery [only joking] know that your future is secure. No, I'm not talking about fidelity and matrimonial bliss, nay, I'm telling you all that you will never grow hungry. Of course you will all grow old, nothing can change that, but you will grow old with big fat bellies, insatiable appetites - and probably a few ulcers besides. And what will cause this gush of gastric juices, this flurry of heartburning moments? None other than the emergence of the Long Kesh school for budding Ainsley Harriot, or for those of you from Gabe Magee's generation, the Long Kesh School of withering Fanny Craddocks.

This sudden emergence of the Long Kesh Cordon Bleu-rters is due to the NIO's provision of cooks. Yes, my friends, after many years of trying to poison us with their own fare they have finally decided that we could do a better job on ourselves - and their fiendish plan is working. Praise and dare I say it promotion is due to the "seurocrat" [sewer o crat] who cooked up this latest attempt to keep the lid on the republican problem. But things just might boil over for already we've seen Ulsterisation and Normalisation but the icing on the cake must be the introduction of Ulcerisation. They may think they have us on a spit, well, they better have an appetite for a fight as these cookies aren't about to jump from the frying pan into the fire. The whole thing could be a recipe for disaster, but then, as one young Turk [ey] put it, if you can't stand the heat stay out of the kitchen.

As an example of the dangers these tactics pose to us I'll tell how one budding chef [or should that be, bulging chef] - none other than Gerard Loughlin - was responsible for a meal that took out half the wing, myself included. Now I've experienced lots of pain in my lifetime, from being battered with batons, guns, and yes, even the odd whip or two - ouch! But nothing, my friends, compares to the pain that Gerard's cooking inflicted upon myself and my comrades. Gerard's speciality on this occasion was a Long Kesh stew, which, God pity us our naivety, we believed to be related to the Irish stew!

I observed Gerard cutting up ingredients required for this most famous of Irish meals, his enthusiasm was infectious so I offered my assistance to which he replied, 'I'm sorry Dáithí but you would only be in my way and you wouldn't know what to do.' Then I started to get his CV. 'Well, Dáithí, after completing my City and Guilds I used to do stew in the Kilwee Club and I've worked in several top class restaurants...' the list was endless, longer than a Noel Mc Hugh story, and I can tell you I was impressed, very impressed and I couldn't wait to taste what, in my mind, was to be a great stew, the stew of all stews!

However, one thing Gerard neglected to tell me was that he wasn't really a chef at all but a kitchen porter, a scrubber and washer of dishes [nothing wrong with that, says you, and you're right, and, unlike our Gerard, most kitchen porters wash their hands]. I should have tipped anyway when he mentioned the Kilwee - I mean the Kilwee after all, sure Sam

Baker says that they used to eat stray dogs up there for Sunday dinner - and judging by the jowlers on Sam he was eating Great Danes as appetisers. But that's another story for another day. Anyway, I left Rosco Loughlin to it and by God whatever "it" was he gave it to us good!

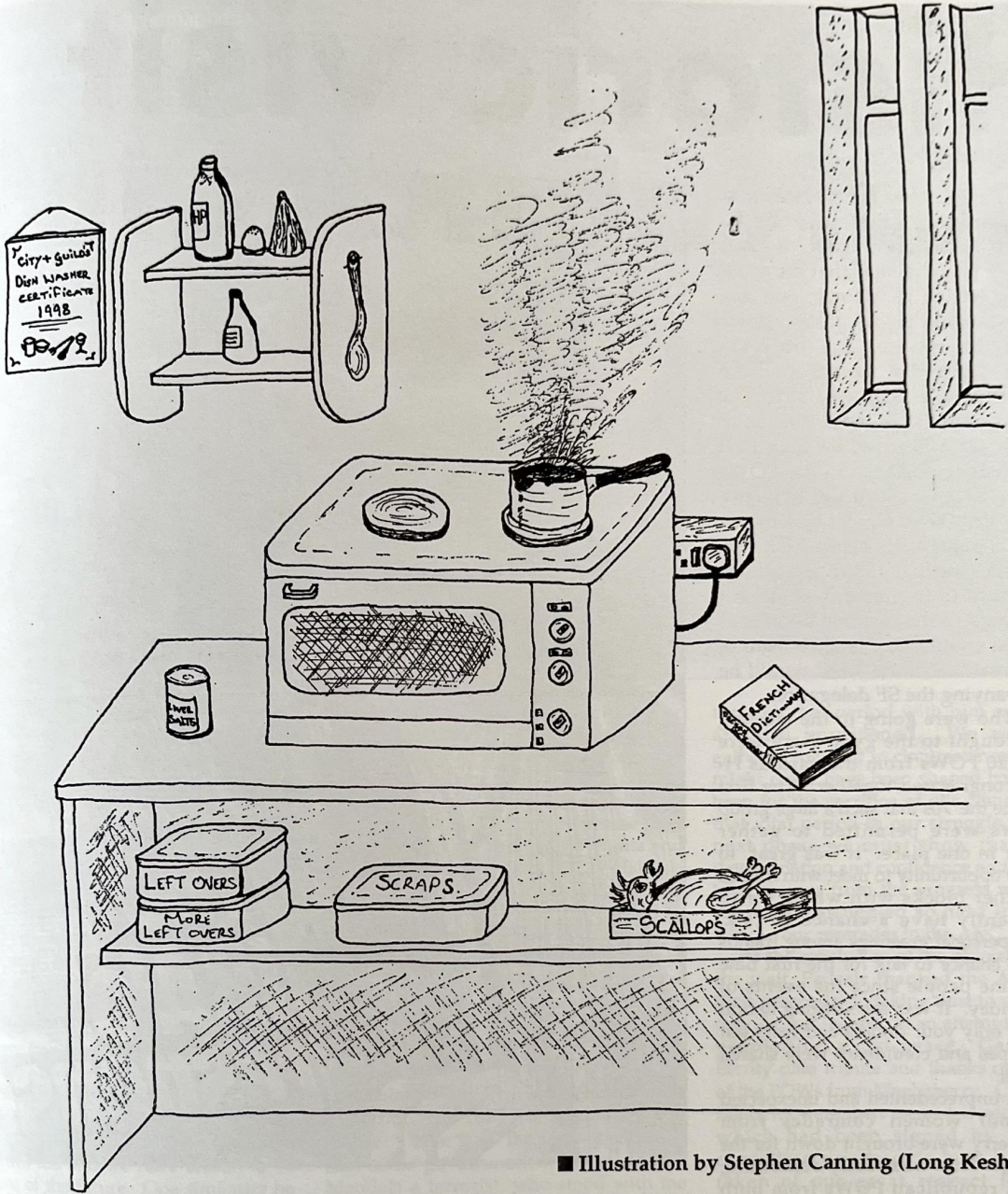
Did our mouths burn, did our stomachs grumble, did the screws run out of toilet paper? Yes to all these and more. The doctor has never been busier, not since Seany A got released, yet no medical cure can be found for that which was inflicted upon us. I even resorted to prayer, asking the saints to intercede to free me from my misery, but they were all booked up by Francie Mc Goldrick to work for the success of the Prisoners Bill. So I suffer yet from this devil's concoction.

We have been told by Gerard that we don't know what good food is, we in turn have told him that under no circumstances should he ever so much as boil an egg for us. "Boil an egg!?" says he, "Not a chance, I never reached that stage in my City and Guilds."

As in showbusiness we too have our duets, Collie Coyle and Scallop Hill are the Bob Hope And Bing Crosby in H[ell] Kitchen. To be honest neither of them can sing, crack jokes or, as far as I know play golf so they're really not similar to Bob and Bing at all, except that, just like that famous duo, only one of them manages to show signs of life. So as Bob and Bing sang and danced on the road to Morocco our happy duet grumble and plod their way from the fridge to the cooker. There have been reports that their cooking is even worse than Gerard's but these allegations have never been substantiated as no one has managed to get past Scallop to sample their fare. Anything that resembles food [or not] goes into Scallop's Casserole. He has a superbowl or "superbowl", if you prefer, into which everything is mixed. He has adopted the role of chief taster which fits in nicely with his role as chief scavenger on the wing. On occasion Collie has had to admonish him for over-tasting as his constant nibbling followed by "I don't think it's ready yet" means that when it is ready that there is nothing left for his diners.

The legacy that Scallop has left behind is a host of disgruntled "starvos" whose numbers have decreased while Collie's and Scallop's girths have been considerably increased. They are almost as big as Paddy Murray whose considerable weight gain has the boys discussing two possibilities, either he's expecting triplets or he's the mystery man who makes the fries at three o'clock in the morning.

Another lad who spends a lot of time loitering over the cooker and 'talking' a good meal - besides talking a good war - is Blute Mc Donnell and what a big "blute" he is when it comes to preparing one of his 'home-mix' specialities. Blute has all the appropriate language, French terms no less, for this and for that. It was very impressive to all who were brought up on stew and champ. However, he was exposed as a fraudster - not for the first time - when one of the lads who is fluent in French - our own Doctor Féilim Ó hAdhmaill - informed us that Blute's exclamation of, "Ah! Oú est la gare!" as he added more ketchup to the pot followed by, "Ooh J'aime beaucoup les fesses" as he licked his lips, meant that he was asking directions to the railway station and expressing his love for



■ Illustration by Stephen Canning (Long Kesh)

buttocks. And we thought Blute only made up his Gaelige as he went along.

Of even greater concern has been the icification of Paul Kavanagh's face. Under the strict supervision of Ciaran Morrison, the milk quota has been put on 15 minute watch to protect supplies from over zealous cooks, it has fallen to poor Paul to stick his head in the fridge 4 times an hour to carry out this task. On one rare occasion the sight of Paul's ice-caked features almost melted Ciaran's into a smile. But here's the mystery, how can Dougie, on his food hunts, stick his head in every fridge in the block and yet manage to escape those arctic effects. The most plausible theory is that he remains thawed because he spends the rest of the time hanging over the toaster.

What is most disconcerting, though, is the sight, when the cooker is not available, of these characters in front of the television watching reruns of Ready Steady Cook, each with his own green pepper and red tomato placard.

So be warned ladies - or gentlemen - someday you may have returned to you a new man - not only new, but twice the size. Sometimes whilst asleep he may rant and rave about icing sugar and mix, about switches and timers and setting the jelly - but don't go thinking that he has gone back to his old ways. These are classic symptoms from the effects of the counteringourmetsy policy as devised by that master  sewer o craft, General Frank Kitchen.

BY DAITHI ADAMS  
H-BLOCKS.

N.B. Daith  submitted this article under a pen name wishing to remain anonymous. I considered this pointless as he has revealed his identity in the piece - it is well known that he is the only republican POW who has "been battered with batons, guns, and yes, even the odd whip or two -ouch!" OUCH! OUCH!

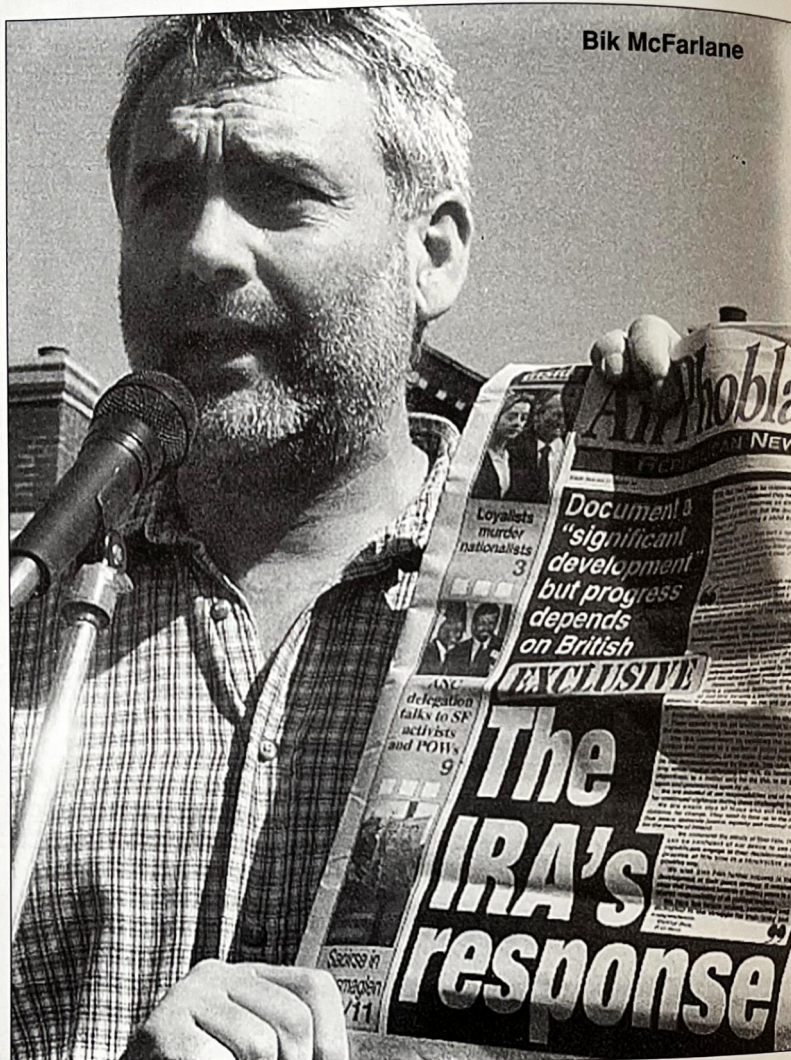
# Historic visit

Wednesday April 29th saw history created in the H-Blocks once again. Such is the peace process now that an event which is hailed as historic one day becomes, within weeks, just so much par for the course. It's only six months since the first Sinn Féin delegation was allowed into the camp, as outlined in the last issue of An Glór Gafa, and while they still retain their importance to the POWs as part of the ongoing briefing process, they have almost become an accepted part of the norm. On this particular morning, though, there was a buzz of excitement as we got ready to go to the meeting because it had been confirmed that two leading representatives of the ANC would be accompanying the SF delegation.

All who were going to the meeting were brought to the gym, there were about 120 POWs from the various H-Blocks congregated together. The first time since the '70s that such a large group of POWs were permitted to gather together in one place. It was great to have the opportunity to meet with friends from other blocks with whom we so infrequently have a chance to talk. Besides personal greetings among friends it was a chance to talk for the first time with some people since the events of Good Friday. It was encouraging to find that not only your doubts and fears but your hopes and confidence were shared by others.

In an unprecedented and unexpected move our women comrades from Maghaberry were brought down for the meeting. This was really something special, republican POWs from both prisons being under one roof. When the women came in they were greeted by friends and comrades who they hadn't seen in years, for some of them not since the day they stood in the dock of a Diplock Court together. I'm sure they didn't know what hit them for, unlike us, they live in a small group, only eight of them together on the wing. Suddenly they were walking in among a crowd this size, being greeted by people, meeting people, being introduced to people - it must have seemed chaotic - but it wasn't hard to tell that they were very happy to be there.

The Sinn Féin delegation arrived and again there was a great warmth with



people meeting each other. It was nice that Bik McFarlane and Mary McArdle were among the delegation as they were recently released comrades and the bonds between them and the prisoners were evidently still strong.

The two members of the ANC who were present were Cyril Ramaphosa - Secretary General of the ANC since 1991 and formerly the ANC's chief negotiator during the talks process in South Africa - and Mathews Phosa, Regional Premier of Eastern Transvaal. Of course we had heard their names often enough and had read lots on their contribution to the ANC struggle so it felt quite remarkable to have them sitting here with us in Long Kesh.

Padraic, having welcomed all those

present and after introducing the delegation, asked Gerry Kelly to open up proceedings. Gerry gave us a detailed version of events leading up to the Good Friday Agreement. There were questions asked and options outlined and Gerry detailed how Sinn Féin saw the way ahead within various scenarios. He reiterated strongly that no matter what scenario we opt for, that Sinn Féin was unwavering from its determination to find a democratic and just settlement.

Mathews Phosa was introduced and he talked about his experiences so far on his visit to Ireland. Just as in South Africa among their own people during negotiations, he met a lot of people here with concerns and reservations about the

ANC negotiator Cyril Ramaphosa speaking in the Ulster Hall, Belfast on 29 April



way ahead. Such doubts are all right, he told us, it is only natural that people feel apprehensive at certain stages of struggle, and making peace is of course like struggle itself, fraught with dangers. But he emphasised that our leadership, like themselves in the early '90s, have never taken their eye off the goal and we should remain confident that we would achieve it.

Cyril echoed the remarks made by his friend and related to us his own experiences in dealing with the white government in South Africa, throughout the struggle, during his period in exile, and, more importantly, during his time as chief negotiator. There are a lot of differences between the South African situation and the Irish struggle, he reminded us, but there are many similarities too and we have reason to be confident of the future. One similarity he made particular reference to was the important role POWs have in shaping the future. Republican prisoners upon release need to work with their communities to ensure that people understand the present strategy so that they become involved in making it succeed while it offers the best opportunity for achieving our ultimate goal.

Again both men's contribution was followed by questions from the floor and a discussion. The reality of not letting your opponents box you in was underlined when reference was made to the role played by Alex Maskey in the past when he first entered Belfast City Hall as a Sinn Féin councillor. Alex, who

was part of the delegation, described how naked sectarianism from unionists saw him verbally abused, spat upon, and threatened but he didn't walk away as they wanted him to do. Today, Belfast City Council is transformed because Sinn Féin stood up for nationalists' rights and now it is the biggest party in City Hall.

Looking at that joint delegation of SF and ANC sitting together it occurred to me that the occasion was, in many ways, so momentous that it would be easy to understate how far we had all come over the past decade. Bik was here, as H-Blocks O/C during the hunger strike he faced the intransigence of Thatcher's government; those people who had tried to criminalise the Irish struggle, the same Thatcher who told the world that the hunger strike was 'the IRA's last card'; that same government who considered Mandela a terrorist, who stood with the racist white South African Government, that same Thatcher who told the world that anyone who believed that the ANC would ever be in government in South Africa was living in 'cloud cuckoo land.' Well, here we were all together, republican POWs paying host in the H-Blocks to our guests from the ANC, Thatcher, like her policies, like her predictions, totally discredited.

Coincidentally, Bik had been on Teilifís na Gaeilge the previous night, along with comrades who had taken part in the hunger strike, describing the experiences of that time. It was moving to hear their stories and it was moving now to see Bik embracing many of those who had come

through that period with him and who are still imprisoned. We were all gathered together in circumstances which might never have been shaped had it not been for the sacrifice of our comrades at that vital period in our struggle. In the next phase we must show that same determination and confidence and we can take succour from the progress made by those who struggled so hard in South Africa - our comrades in the ANC.

At the conclusion of the official part of the visit, Padraic thanked the ANC for their generosity in taking time to visit, not only us, but Ireland, in an attempt to help people find a just peace. Geraldine Ferrity paid tribute and thanks on behalf of the POWs from Maghaberry. Cyril and Mathews were then presented with books which had been signed by all the republican prisoners in both jails as a token of our great respect for and gratitude to the ANC. Everyone stood and gave both men an ovation which lasted several minutes, an applause which was an outpouring of emotion as each of us knew that this was an historic moment and we were all proud to be part of it.

Afterwards, as the delegation mingled among us, Cyril and Mathews shook hands with everyone - with each handshake heartfelt greetings were exchanged. This was an historic day and very special to us all. It was useful to get a perspective from people with such an array of experience. Such comradeship is invaluable.

BY LIAM GALLEN  
H-BLOCKS

# REMEMBERING

It's a sad reality that as each year passes, marking another twelve months of conflict, the list of tragedy has grown. However, while each tragic event will be remembered and shared by those who suffered it is the decision of a few that certain incidents be projected into the public domain for special attention. Those with a certain political agenda will 'use' the understandable emotion of a tragedy for political ends as just another weapon used in an attempt to defeat their political opponents. Some may view this as quite legitimate, seeing propaganda as an important tool within conflict. In reality, though, it is the same establishment forces which mistreated a vast section of this society for decades continuing with that policy against those it views as 'non-people'. Each community feels the hurt perpetrated against it but when the grief of one is portrayed as something extraordinary while the hurt and grief of the other is by and large ignored then this adds insult and pain to grief.

1997 marked 25 years since Bloody Sunday. That the events of that day had been brought into the public eye had nothing to do with the media feeling that society should remember these victims above all others. The spotlight was placed on the events in Derry that day a quarter of a century ago as a result of many years hard campaigning by the relatives of the dead. Their campaign was based on the issue of justice, that the dead should not be blamed for their own deaths but rather that the responsibility for the murders should be laid at the feet of the British gunmen and their political masters who sanctioned the atrocity.

Last year was also the 10th anniversary of Enniskillen and the 25th anniversary of Bloody Friday. We know about the grief suffered and the scars that are still carried from those days, we know because no one could fail to notice the almost institutionalised commemorations for the victims of republican violence. We know because establishment figures tell us, we know because British royalty is flown in on a wave of publicity, we know because British government ministers can talk in such moral tones about the 'evil of violence'.

Republicans, however, should not and do not distance themselves from the pain and suffering of those effected by IRA



**REPUBLICAN NEWS**  
 "VOICE OF REPUBLICAN ULSTER"  
 WEEK COMMENCING FRIDAY 9th FEBRUARY, 1973  
 VOL. 2 Number 73 PRICE 4p (5p in Britain)



VOL. JIM McCANN



VOL. TONY CAMPBELL



VOL. JIM SLOAN

## 40,000 Honour Murdered Victims

### of British Massacre



AMBROSE HARDY



JOHN J. LOUGHRAN

One of the largest Republican funerals in living memory wended its way to Milltown Cemetery from St. Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, Belfast, on Wednesday.

The innocent civilian victims had been buried earlier that morning. The second funeral was for three members of Oglagh na h Eireann, Volunteers, Tony Campbell, Jim McCann and Jim Sloan.

The Republican Publicity Bureau in Belfast, made it clear that none of the Volunteers were armed or engaged in an offensive action when they were murdered by British troops on February 4th.

As the funeral neared Conway Street, gunfire was directed without warning into the unsuspecting

mourners. The gunmen showed no mercy or consideration for the women and children in the vicinity.

Near Lesson Street, a volley was fired over the coffins after the mourners had quickly reformed ranks after the cowardly attack at Conway Street.

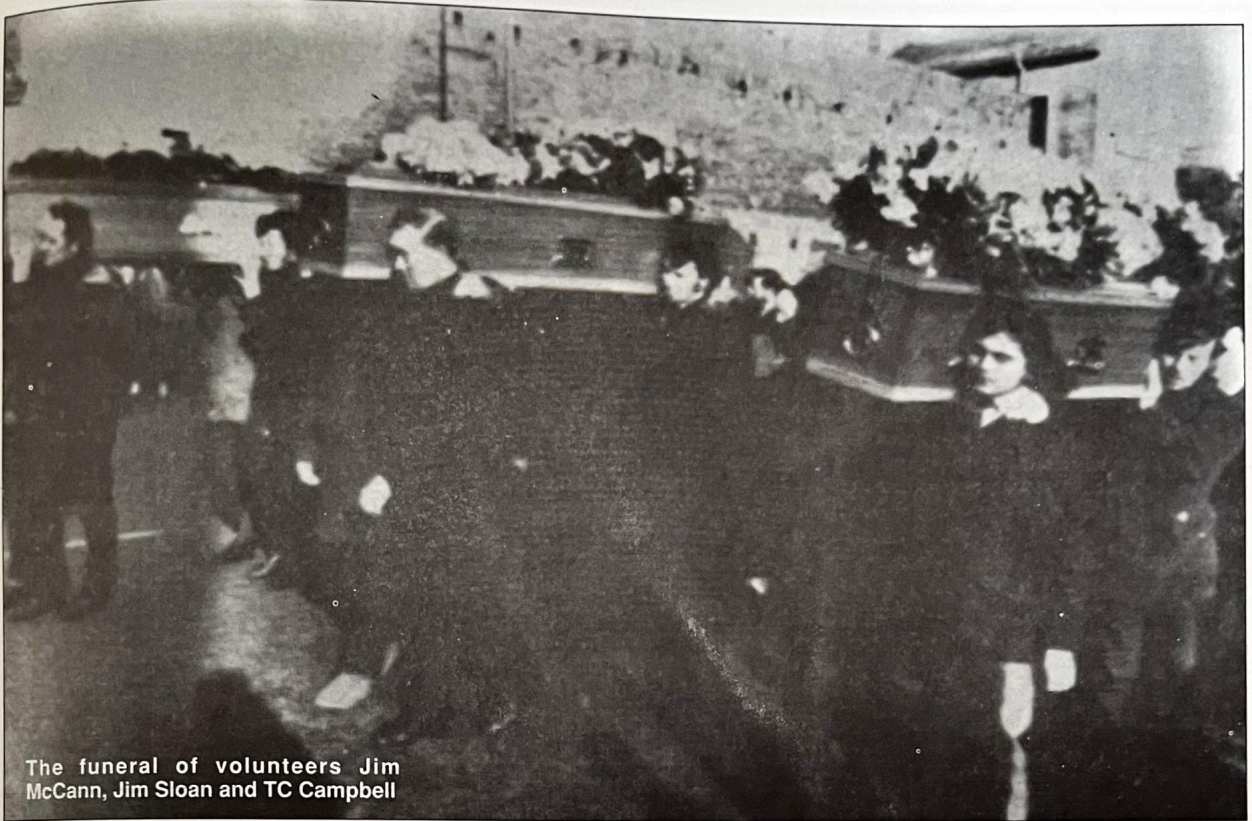
The general attitude of most people along the Falls Road was:

LET CRAIG AND HERRON DO THEIR WORSE. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A UNITED FREE IRELAND, COME WHAT MAY.

actions. Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams spoke for us all in reflecting back to the sorrowful tragedy of Enniskillen. But we should not let it be forgotten that all communities have suffered, we can relate to the pain of others because we have felt that hurt ourselves.

The beginning of this year, February '98, was also an anniversary, it was 25 years since the murder of the New Lodge Six. Many, even within the broader nationalist

community, have probably never heard of them - this is not surprising. I watched the media carefully for programmes on the event, I scoured the papers for words of remembrance or even an acknowledgement of the hurt caused to this community by British forces and their shadowy allies. Of course there was nothing. It was left up to that small community alone to remember the victims - and perhaps it is fitting that they be spared the indignity of hypocritical



The funeral of volunteers Jim McCann, Jim Sloan and TC Campbell

soundbites from those who have demonised them and theirs for generations.

On a cold, wet February night in 1973 six nationalists were shot dead on the New Lodge Road. Four of those killed were shot by 42 Marine Commando while a Military Reconnaissance Force (MRF) squad operating out of Girwood barracks killed the other two.

In the early seventies nationalists were under constant attack from loyalist death squads who operated with assistance from the British MRF. Shootings, bombings and abductions were a nightly occurrence in nationalist areas, bars in these areas were prime targets. On this particular night two unarmed IRA volunteers, Jim McCann and Jim Sloan, were assigned stand-by duty outside Lynch's bar at the top of the New Lodge Road. These two local lads were to warn the patrons inside if they noticed an attack being launched. The night passed off without incident until just before closing time when a car pulled up outside. The customers inside heard gunfire. Two short bursts accurately fired from a British army issued Sterling submachine gun hit the two men. They both died immediately. The car sped off down the Antrim Road with the occupants firing into a Chinese restaurant as they drove by. The car then turned into Canerd Street and entered Girwood British army barracks.

Crowds came rushing onto the New Lodge Road. As they mingled together and consoled one another shots rang out from

Almein House, one of the high rise flats on the New Lodge Road. The crowds began running in panic. One young man, TC Campbell, was hit by a high velocity bullet and fell to the ground. John Loughran, from the place he had sought shelter, could hear TC's screams for help and ran out to assist. Once he broke cover John too was hit and died instantly. Ambros Hardy, looking out at the two bodies from the Ex-Service club, was shot through the face. Later as the bodies were being put into the ambulance, Ned Maguire, who was assisting, was also shot dead. All gunfire came from the high-rise flats. Many more were shot and injured that night.

Afterwards the British army released a statement, just as they had done in the wake of Bloody Sunday, claiming that they were responding to the sighting of gunmen and the sound of shots in the area. However, the subsequent investigation found that no shots were fired from the New Lodge Road, all gunfire was directed into it, and none of those killed or wounded had been armed at the time. Yet despite the evidence of premeditated mass murder that night no one has been officially held responsible let alone charged with those killings. Neither has there been an apology from the British government nor an acknowledgement from society at large of the hurt and suffering inflicted upon that community.

As with many of the atrocities committed against nationalists by the Crown Forces and loyalist death squads the

victims will be remembered only by their friends and relatives and by their own community. This 'hierarchy of death' as one writer put it, exposes the sheer hypocrisy of the media and establishment whereby, depending on who the victim is and who the perpetrators are, will determine where the dead are placed on the hierarchical ladder. For bottom rung read nationalist/republican victims of the British and their locally armed allies.

How can the wrongs such as that committed against the population of the New Lodge Road be addressed? Well, that has to come from those responsible in the first instance and secondly from those who moralise and use victims in their own narrow political agendas. Much has been made lately of the need to recognise the hurt of victims, and this is only right, but those who are so vociferous in such campaigns must realise that while they elevate the hurt of one group of victims whilst virtually ignoring the pain suffered by another group they only serve to increase that feeling of hurt and abandonment. Perhaps they don't really care, perhaps the deaths of people who were never equal in society doesn't mean much to them. However, they should know from the rest of us that those nationalists who have died as second class citizens are survived by those who mean to be equal - and the voices of all victims must be, and will be, heard.

BY JOE DOHERTY  
H-BLOCK.

# It's a jungle out there

## AND IT'S FAIRLY CLOSE TO IT IN HERE

Pat Martin and Paddy O Dowd took a break from their normal political discussions one day when they realised that they both knew a certain person. Now, this chap doesn't so much know Lady Luck - he seems to be married to her as he has stared the Grim Reaper in the face on quite a number of occasions and came out the winner. Pat was filled with wonder as Paddy informed him of how many times the blessed fellow in question had brushed with death. At the end of the discussion Pat, completely over-awed it seems, says, 'Hey, Paddy, the next time you see him tell him I said he has nine cats.' We're sure he has, Pat, but what has that got to do with our friend's fortune?

Micky Breslin is the studious sort and even seems to fit the classic scholarly stereotype - a serious, thoughtful expression, glasses and an air of authority whenever watching *Catchphrase*. Perhaps this was the reason why Seamy Doc, when stuck on a crossword, turned to Micky in an effort to tap into his seemingly immeasurable intellectual ability and deliberate, careful reasoning. Seamy, knowing that anyone who watched *Catchphrase* was not someone to be trifled with, shouted out, 'Micky - six letters - chum or pal.' Micky, without blinking or shooting a glance towards Seamy's direction replied, 'Does dogfood fit?' No, Micky, it doesn't and it seems that you have been spending more time watching the advertisements than *Catchphrase*.

Micky's reputation as an analytic, deductive type of person is fast going out the window. Recently he had a skin complaint and went out to the doctor to confirm his own diagnosis as a 'well' skin complaint. The Doctor gave Micky a cream which he assured would cure Micky's affliction, though not the wrinkles. After a couple of hours Micky was slightly miffed about the progress. "This stuff is no use," Micky informed a helpless passer-by, "what would yon Doctor know about skin anyway; sure he's not a gynaecologist."

John Brady was passing the turnstile which leads to the yard one day when something caught his eye. He glanced

down and thought 'Who would be so stupid to leave a pair of football socks lying there?' Tutting he bent down and lifted them but turned white, screamed and wanted to be violently sick when 'they' jumped out of his hand and zoomed out into the yard. The socks' were, in fact, a rat. Looks like John needs to make an appointment with the optician. Let's hope this one isn't a gynaecologist, John.

On the subject of turnstiles, John Clarke likes to take a stroll in the yard once every six months. One day after watching his daily fix of Vanessa he decided to mosey his way around the yard to pass a minute or two. On reaching the turnstile which leads to the yard he pushed only to find that it wouldn't budge. He pushed again - but to no avail. He went into the canteen and asked those who were watching the cartoons (Media Studies, they claim) why the yards were locked. No-one knew and this promptly started a discussion on how far those fiendish, devious screws would go in trying to re-route POWs away from the yard in anticipation of the marching season. Out John went once more to try again, but the turnstile refused to be stirred. It wasn't that John depended on this walk but it was getting personal now. He could see comrades in the yard, lying enjoying the sun, getting burnt and generally having good fun. John's anger (and jealousy) started to build when another comrade came along, pushed his way past and out into the beautiful sunshine. It was only then that he realised that he was pushing the turnstile the wrong way. I wonder if he'll have the same trouble with the turnstile at the carpark when he is released?

Republican prisoners are well versed in political science, though, for some, maths appears to be a problem. Pádraic Wilson and Bobby 'Bert' Fitzsimmons were dumbfounded when they heard the following exchange on the landing between Ciarán Morrison and Fuinneog McShane.

Ciarán: 'How many 16ths are in an inch, Fuinneog? 14?'

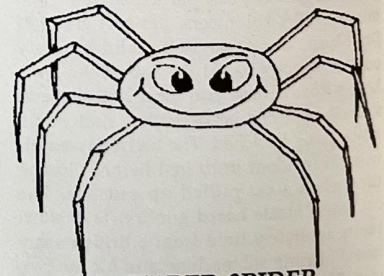
Fuinneog: 'Nah, there's 12, I think.'

And these two are wondering why

the handicrafts they make look like cubist sculptures.

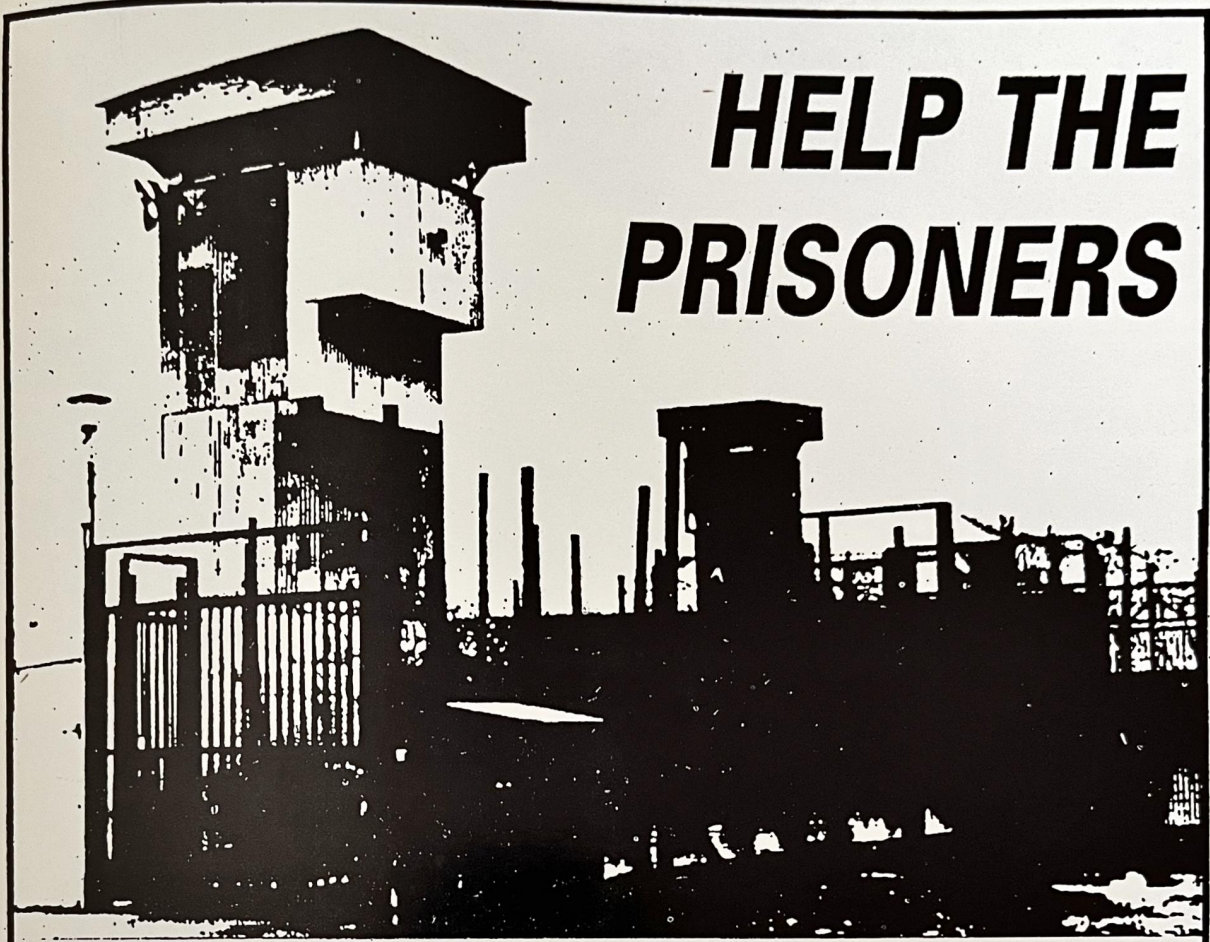
However, Bobby Bert is prone to the odd clanger himself. Take this one, for example. He runs into Raymy Wilkinson's cell one day and announces (with the authority of someone who is just breaking important news) that a British soldier was killed by a tiger in South Armagh.

'A tiger!' exclaims Raymy, a bit on the sceptical side. Bert is insistent, and to prove his point underlines how ferocious the beast was, with its menacing features, inch-long fangs and razor sharp claws by swishing his hands into the air and snarling and drooling all over Raymy's cell. Raymy's scepticism turns to fear at having someone in this state of mind in his cell and assures Bert that he believes him as he pushes him out onto the landing and closes the door. As Raymy listens to Bert's snarling as he stalks the wing, looking for another victim to tell of the breaking news story, Raymy thinks back to the big cat which was spotted around Fermanagh last year and wonders to himself if it decided to go down to South Armagh to do its bit for Irish freedom. Raymy, with a sense of wonder (and a little naiveté), looks up the teletext only to see the headline 'Soldier killed by tanker.' Yip, Bert, it's a jungle out there. Looks like we have another on the list for the hospital - to the ear specialist. This time please let it be a gynaecologist.



BY RED SPIDER

CROSSWORD PAGE 10 ANSWERS:  
ACROSS: 1. Hesitate; 5. Tavern; 9. Megalith; 10. Fathom; 12. Every; 13. Yes; 14. Dams; 15. Dearth; 18. Ark; 21. Rotor; 22. Grand; 25. Allah; 26. Reinforce; 29. Indoor; 30. Ladybird; 31. Searched  
DOWN: 1. Hamper; 2. Signet; 3. Tally; 4. Tatty; 6. Abandoned; 7. Ethereal; 8. Namesake; 11. Ashura; 16. Earthworm; 17. Regard; 19. Breaking; 20. Stolid; 23. Wraith; 24. Seeded; 27. Inane; 28. Foyer

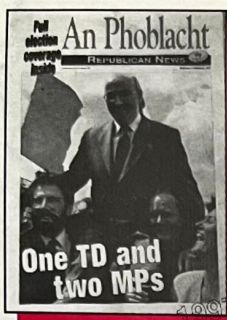
A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a prison tower and surrounding walls. The tower is a square structure with a flat roof, and the walls are made of vertical bars. The image is grainy and has a stark, graphic quality.

# **HELP THE PRISONERS**

# **SUPPORT An Cumann Cabhrach & Green Cross**

An Cumann Cabhrach and Green Cross are two organisations, staffed by voluntary unpaid workers, which exist to alleviate some of the suffering of republican prisoners and their families. Dependent solely on public subscriptions and collections, these bodies provide weekly grants to dependants of over 700 republican prisoners in jails in Ireland, Britain, Europe and the US; pay expenses and arrange accommodation for relatives visiting POWs and provide finance to purchase clothing and other necessities for these prisoners.

All donations, enquiries and offers of help should be addressed to:  
**An Cumann Cabhrach,**  
44 Parnell Square,  
Dublin 1.  
or  
**Green Cross**  
51/55 Falls Road,  
Belfast 12.



1998 sees the twentieth year of publication of the merged *An Phoblacht* and *Republican News*.

Over the years *An Phoblacht/Republican News* has been unmissable if you want to be up to date with republican politics. Every Thursday the paper brings you all the stories, analysis and political debate within the vibrant republican community.

As the paper develops and expands, make sure of your copy every week by taking out a subscription today. Why not order a subscription for someone as the perfect political present?

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

- Ireland.....£35
- England, Scotland, Wales.....Stg£40
- Europe Surface.....Stg£45
- Europe Airmail.....Stg£65
- USA.....US\$100
- Canada.....Can\$120
- Australia.....Aus\$120
- Elsewhere.....Stg£65/US\$110

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Telephone: .....

I enclose cheque, postal order, etc for £ .....

Please debit my credit card for: .....

1 year  6 mths  (length of sub)

Card No: .....

Exp. Date: ..... Month..... Year .....