

CONCERNED

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF FERMANAGH CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE COMMITTEE

"IRELAND UNFREE SHALL NEVER BE AT PEACE"

PAY
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NO
RATES

No. 171

Saturday, 1st February (De Sathairn, 1 Feabhra), 1975

SEEKING PEACE?

OVER the past few weeks many peace marches have taken place. Every effort was made by the organisers to draw as many people as possible onto the streets in support of their demands for peace. The news media North and South co-operated fully in announcing and appealing for support, the SDLP politicians, Alliance, Unionists and Dublin Government all made appeals for support and the result was that many thousands came out and supported the peace calls.

To any impartial observer it is obvious that the demands for peace were directed at the Provisional IRA, as it gained greater urgency after the ceasefire ended. One would expect these same peace protesters would have directed their attention towards Mr. Rees and the British Government during the truce, urging them to make a lasting peace possible, but at no point have they done this. In fact when a peace march took place in Dublin on the British embassy, agents of the Government there, one of them the wife of Cruise O'Brien) attacked the very idea of such a protest. No doubt many of the people who came onto the

streets of Dublin and Belfast demonstrating for peace were sincere, but they failed to realise they were being used by the pro-Establishment and pro-British forces who were the organisers.

A simple test of their sincerity is an examination of their past attitude to the terror of the British Army. Where were their voices when Hugh Coney was murdered in Long Kesh, when James Moyne was allowed to die for lack of medical attention in that vile place, or when the defenceless men were brutalised and gassed after they burned the place down in protest against their conditions. Not one of the present peace set are noted for marching or protesting against the existence of Long Kesh or the other British hell-holes in the North. Has any word been heard from them in support of the men who are now dying in Portlaoise and the Curragh.

There is a big difference between peace and peace based on justice and if the organisers of the recent peace demonstrations are sincere they will pressurise those who hold the key—the British Government. Only a just peace can end this war.

NOT INTERESTED IN PEACE

ON Friday, 24th January Mr. Michael McManus from the Knocka district of Lisnaskea was laid to rest. His son, Michael, is a political prisoner in Long Kesh and was allowed home for a few hours to attend his father's funeral.

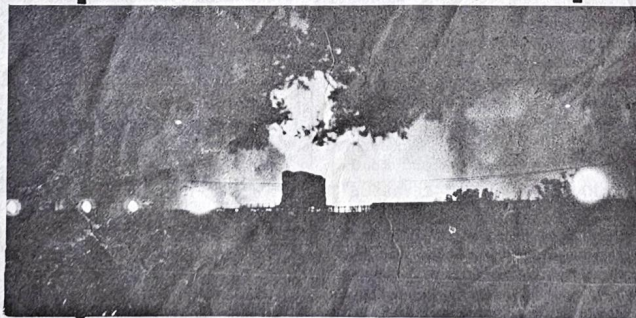
As the McManus family are well known and well respected, not only in the Lisnaskea area but throughout the country, a very large attendance was present at the funeral from the Erne Hospital and again at the burial and Mass next morning.

To the astonishment of all the R.U.C. and British Army were patrolling outside the church and they blocked all roads out of the town searching and checking cars. Even the wife and family of the deceased were stopped and ordered out of their car as they returned home from the churchyard, and their car was searched. Needless to state, Mrs. McManus refused to get out of her car for foreign soldiers.

On Sunday night last, 26th January, a concert was held in Maguiresbridge in aid of the Internees' and Political Prisoners' Dependents Fund. The village was sealed off by the UDR, British Army and RUC. Cars were stopped and searched on their way into and leaving the town. RUC men were observed noting the registration numbers of cars belonging to all who attended. The size of the attendance would seem to have irritated them very much. Their presence and actions at both these places does not indicate a desire for peace from these so-called security forces.

The Flames of Long Kesh

15-16 October, 1974



By Fr. Denis Faul, Dungannon
Fr. Raymond Murray, Armagh

The Murder of Hugh Gerard Coney, Internee

6 November, 1974

Price 50p

STRICT SECRECY ON NEW PRISON

THE new top security prison now being built within the precincts of the Curragh Military Camp, 20 miles from Dublin, is scheduled for completion in June. Although the Dublin Government's Department of Justice claims that no decision has been reached regarding the category of prisoners to be housed there, there is little doubt that it will be used to imprison Republicans.

Close secrecy has been the keynote of plans for the Curragh prison. The blueprints have been closely guarded by the Board of Works and the contractors and the workmen engaged on the job are under close surveillance.

All flights over the Curragh except those by military aircraft have been prohibited. Similar precautions have been taken in the case of Mountjoy, Portlaoise and Limerick prisons, since the Mountjoy helicopter escape.

Military guards on these institutions have instructions to use whatever means they can to prevent aircraft flying over, and each prison has a direct line to the nearest military aerodrome to be used to summon air assistance in emergencies.

HUGE FIRE IN BELFAST

ONE of the worst fires in recent months was at College Street, where four shops were completely destroyed and several others severely damaged by a bomb blast. The outbreak was caused by a blast at a chemist's shop—the bomb was left at the front door in a duffle bag and exploded before it was discovered. Four appliances fought the fire, which spread rapidly and which enveloped adjoining shops. The explosion was so severe that windows on both sides of the street were shattered.

Sinn Féin State Position To British

BRITISH civil servants were briefed on the Republican position at two meetings in Belfast within the past week. The meetings, between two senior Sinn Féin members and officials of Mr. Rees' office, took place on Sunday, 19th and Wednesday, 22nd instant.

It is apparent now that Mr. Rees is trying to patch up a new ceasefire, having been taken aback by the realisation that the IRA would not tolerate gross provocation during the ceasefire which ended on 16th January. The British line now is that an improved system of communication is necessary between the IRA and the British Government.

At the same time the British authorities appear to be striving for the initiative in any new proposed ceasefire. They want a new ceasefire to come about in such a way as to have the odds stacked in their own favour, with plenty of room allowed on their side to manoeuvre and to bring their political puppet back into the arena.

As against this, the consideration of a renewal campaign of resistance at full intensity weighs heavily with the British. Mr. Rees is thus currently engaged in a very delicate and very dangerous balancing act.

After last Wednesday's meeting he issued an ambiguously worded statement, couched in language open to loose reporting. On the following day Irish newspapers represented his statement as conciliatory, but their counterparts in Britain reported him as refusing any more discussions with Republicans.

He began his statement by referring to the lack of an adequate communication system: "There have been further discussions between my officials and Provisional Sinn Féin to clarify points made in my public statement and about arrangements that might be made to ensure that any ceasefire did not break down. My officials made it clear that if the ceasefire continues I would wish, and I am sure, that the people of Northern Ireland would wish, to see effective arrangements made to ensure it would not break down. I attach very great importance to this and practical arrangements would be necessary."

As against this, he showed his alarm at the renewal of hostilities, but tried to couch this in such a way as to win the confidence of the establishment politicians, who are demanding a hard line:

"My officials have also made it clear to members of the Provisional Sinn Féin that as long as violence continues, in the way that it has in the last few days, there can be no point in detailed discussion of such arrangements. When violence ceases, my officials will be ready to talk again to members of Sinn Féin, particularly about arrangements designed to ensure effectively that the ceasefire did not break down."

He then moved away from this last rather vague sentence to speedy reassurance of the politicians who stand to lose. He promised them that he himself would be available to them at all times. The thinking of the British Government does not seem to be very clear at the moment. If they sincerely want a solution, the opportunity for securing this must be clear to them. They have not yet availed of that opportunity.

PEACE BASED ON JUSTICE AND UNDERSTANDING

"Political activity, however professional or well intentioned, can only be fruitful if based on a correct analysis of the problem it confronts. Most people accept that the present flurry has as its objective the attainment of peace; but few have openly examined whether what is desired is the

sullen quiet achieved by repression and dissimulation or creative, lasting peace based on justice and understanding."

This is as one journalist sees the present "flurry of activity" whether in the form of peace talks or popular demonstrations. In their analyses of political events in Ireland during the past week many commentators have gone out of their way to cast doubt on the genuineness of the reasons given by the IRA Army Council for ending their ceasefire. But even these had to refer, if only mildly, to the inadequate British response to the Republican ceasefire gesture. There was much play too on the "faulty" means of communication as if this were due to everyone's inadequacy except Westminster's.

However, there can be no doubt regarding the clarity of the Republican case, which is sustained by the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people for freedom to determine their future without British interference. Nor can there be any doubt regarding the Provisionals' interpretation of "peace" which is demanded by all—to them it is not just a cessation of war but something creative and lasting and based on objective achievements. The Provisionals also made clear the reasons for their Christmas ceasefire which was extended to give Britain a chance to make even a substantial gesture towards satisfying some of the IRA demands. By making it impossible for the ceasefire to continue, one wonders what interpretation the British Government put on the truce in the first instance. Were they really under the impression that what the Republican leadership meant was a unilateral ending of the state of war between the Provisional IRA and Britain? Or did Britain seriously conclude that the ceasefire was called because of a weakening of the Provisionals' militarily or a decline in support for them among the people of the Six Counties? Britain's analysis of the war situation in Ireland is obviously inadequate if such was the case.

The level of Republican military action against the British forces and economic targets in all parts of the Six Counties and in Britain in the week before the ceasefire shows how far the British generals are from interpreting accurately the military strength of the IRA, apart altogether from securing for themselves a military victory. Also the fact that the level of popular protest after the burning of Long Kesh matched the upheaval that followed the introduction of internment shows that popular support for the Provisionals has never waned.

DECLARATION OF INTENT—KEY ISSUE

The British Government has not yet realised, it seems, that the demands passed to them by the Feakle churchmen were serious and intended to be taken seriously and urgently, to save lives all round and end Britain's war in Ireland at last.

The propagandists for the establishment politicians, north and south, tried to make internment the key issue. But the war was raging in Ireland before internment was introduced.

If Mr. Rees had released all internees and declared the concentration camps closed for good, such a move would have been welcomed as an initial, genuine response to the ceasefire. Alone, it could not have resulted in a permanent truce. The key issue is not internment. Likewise, if the British had maintained the minimum police and military on the streets, withdrawing the remainder to barracks, and if those forces had behaved themselves, this also would have been welcomed. But not until a publicly declared intention to withdraw forever from Ireland is forthcoming will the crea-

tion of conditions be made possible whereby the Irish can solve their own problems without outside interference.

ONLY JUST PEACE CAN END WAR

Present political activity in Ireland bears no relation to the problem it confronts. There is no doubt that the Irish people need peace, but peace based on justice. The collaborator and agents of the imperial power want and advocate peace at any price. Such is not new to Ireland. There is a striking similarity between the peace negotiations of 1921 and those of the past couple of weeks. In 1921, too, there was a surge of desire for a cessation of hostilities—a surge which took place among not quite the same people as had given mass support to the desire for revolutionary change. 1921 led to no permanent peace in Ireland, no satisfactory settlement. Again, today, we have peace being demanded by a surge of opinion, but a surge among people who did not demand an end to injustice at a time when war could have been not ended, but averted.

REPUBLICANS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE

If the British Government wants the war to continue, so be it; but it is their decision, not Ireland's. Only a very few of the weapons and tactics open to a guerrilla movement, pitted against an international imperialist conspiracy, have been used so far. There are many others. There are many more fronts. There are willing allies abroad. There is a growing appreciation abroad that British imperialism can be smashed forever in its first colony and there is a growing determination to do everything to ensure that it does.

The Irish Republican leadership is always willing to negotiate—not just to talk aimlessly but to negotiate directly, seriously and honestly. The leadership knows that no patched-up "peace" will solve the Irish problem. It must be solved in Ireland by Irish people or passed on to another generation. It will NOT be passed on to another generation.

The Irish people are entitled to permanent peace and the only way to any prospects for such peace, with justice for all, is for Britain to renounce all claims to Ireland and declare its intention to leave.

UNDUE FORCE USED AGAINST WOMEN

ALLEGATIONS that Southern police used undue force and jackboot tactics against women visitors who picketed Portlaoise Prison on several occasions have been given scant coverage in the heavily censored Southern press. Mrs. Caroline Flynn, North Circular Road, Dublin, said that when she went to the prison she was informed that there was no visiting. She requested information about the condition of her son, Albert Flynn, serving a 12-month sentence for membership of the IRA, and was told by a Southern police Superintendent that he was not in a position to give information about prisoners. She was informed that if she did not leave she would be forcibly removed.

Mrs. Flynn also claims that she was dragged along the floor and into the yard, in the direction of the main gate, and that her right arm, right hip and leg were bruised.

Five other women, whose husbands or sons are serving sentences in the prison, also allege that they were dragged out by the police and prison warders onto the main road.

LONG KESH LETTER

Dear Sir,

Today in Long Kesh we paraded for the third time in as many weeks to pay honour and homage to two more fallen soldiers of the Irish Republic. Under the ever-watchful eye of our captors, we stood in silence to remember Lieutenant John Kelly, O/C "D" Coy., Belfast Brigade and 2nd Lieutenant John Stone, "D" Coy., Belfast Brigade, who died on active service in Belfast on Tuesday night. On Thursday of that same week, the murder of Vol. Kevin Cohen, South Fermanagh Active Service Unit, by the Crown Forces was recalled. And yet again the week before that the death in Long Kesh itself of an internee, Vol. Jim Moyne of Derry, who died because of the total lack of even mediocre medical facilities, the lack of concern and total disregard for the rights of an individual on the part of the camp administration was marked in this, by now, all too familiar sight.

Why then, you may ask, did these four men die? To what end were they and the countless others willing to sacrifice their lives? Are these men then, the "terrorists" one hears so much talk about—the "evil men" who have no regard for the Irish people?—whose only wish is to destroy, destroy, destroy?

The answer is simply "No." Ask yourself this: Why, why need these brave soldiers of Ogligh na hEireann have chosen to take up arms against all the odds? Why did they leave the comfort of their homes to face the might of the British war machine? In what way do they differ from you or the men with whom you work? All of you were born on the same island. You attended the same type of schools, played the same type of games, drank in the same type of pubs. You all appreciate the joy and comfort that can be shared within an Irish family.

But did you, as John Kelly did, as John Stone did, as Kevin Cohen did, as Jim Moyne did, see the evil in our midst? Have you, for instance, accepted treatment as a "second class citizen"? Are you willing to be trampled on while a foreign power extracts the wealth of this country, or exploits its cheap work-force? Do you agree with English soldiers, fully equipped with the tools of war, roaming through the streets of our towns, disturbing the peace and tranquility of our communities? By your silence or inaction, do you condone or permit thousands of your fellow-Irishmen languish and rot in internment camps or prisons?

Our age-old struggle is now, at a very delicate stage. The Republican Movement asks nothing more of our oppressors than freedom. The freedom to work, the freedom from prison camps, the freedom to practise our beliefs and preserve our heritage, the freedom to be ourselves.

If you still think that Kevin Cohen and his other fallen comrades were wrong, then I am sorry. Not alone do you insult their memory, but you insult the Irish nation. You agree with the British Government's oppression of our people, you put another bolt on the gates of Long Kesh and you scorn our right to freedom.

But I know that such will not be the case. All through our bloody history the Irish people have shown their willingness to resist no matter what the cost, to endure the inevitable suffering — to stand up and be counted. Don't now falter at this, the last hurdle, in our long struggle for self-determination. The temptations now are many. The pleas for "peace" echo all around—but what is peace without justice? And what is the point of that?

The leadership of the Republican Movement has brought us this far. Put your trust in that leadership and the next step, the final step, will be realised, before very long.

Refuse now, and all is lost. What will you tell

your children?

Long Kesh.

24th January, 1975.

PORTLAOISE PROTESTS

ABOUT fifty members of Sinn Fein (Kevin Street) picketed the Garda-Army roadblock at the roundabout at Ballyshannon on Saturday, 11th January, against conditions in Portlaoise Prison.

Michael McMahon, spokesman for the picketers, stated the reason for this protest was to highlight the worsening conditions in Portlaoise Prison where ten men have been on hunger strike since 1st January. He stated that the Gardai and Army were responsible for the destruction of £15,000 worth of equipment and personal belongings of the prisoners, including tape-recorders, record-players, radios, crafts, etc.

The hunger strikers include Donegal man Pat Ward, who is on his third hunger strike for political status within two years. He called on Mr. Cooney, Minister for Justice, to restore political status to all Republican prisoners in Portlaoise which was granted to them in Mountjoy last year; also that visits be restored immediately, segregation from all other prisoners and the immediate return of food parcels. He called on everyone to demonstrate and protest until these demands were met.

He stated that the arrest of Kevin Mallon was a bid by the Free State Government to wreck the ceasefire, of which he was one of those responsible.

A similar picket was placed on the Garda station in Bundoran on Sunday evening. Anthony O'Malley Daly, Ballyshannon Town Commissioner, addressing those present, stated that Joe O'Neill, Bundoran UDC, and himself had been to Portlaoise Prison the previous day to visit Pat Ward. They were refused admission and clothes that they had for the prisoners were not accepted. He stated that men were five and six to a cell and didn't have a change of clothing since Christmas. They were also refused a report on the condition of the hunger strikers.

Protests also took place in Clones, Monaghan and Sligo and in many other parts of Ireland.

In London the Irish embassy is being flooded with phone calls demanding the granting of the simple request to the Republican prisoners in the South and a picket was placed on the building on Wednesday last.

LONG KESH UNFIT FOR PIGS

THE revelation that the huts in Long Kesh Concentration Camp fall far short of the minimum requirements laid down by the EEC Farm Modernisation Regulations for pig houses was made by a Dublin Sunday newspaper on 19th January. The article points out that the British Army in course of many searches at the concentration camp have ripped out all the insulation material between the two layers of metal from which the huts are constructed and that this insulation has never been replaced. According to an ex-internee the only insulation between the metal sheeting is the accumulated bodies of dead rats.

The sides of the concentration camp should include a wall approximately two and a half feet high, constructed of concrete. The Long Kesh huts have no such sidewalls, with the result that flooding is a permanent feature of the huts. In Long Kesh the average hut is sixty five by twenty feet. This accommodates forty men and two toilets, giving an approximate living space of thirty square feet per prisoner. In the present conditions, with eighty men to a hut, the living space is reduced to fifteen square feet per man. The British Army is at present engaged in rebuilding this infamous hell-hole and the first of the repaired huts are expected to be ready next month.

International Red Cross—please note!

LONG KESH

How many men have seen that warder's hardened face?

How many men have seen that solid jangling key?
How many men have felt the pain of solitude,
Or know the icy feeling of being an internee?

Is it your will, Lord, that took me to this cursed place?

Should I bear my load or should I heave and sigh?
I ask you, alone, for if here I question or inquire,
"Shut up, you Fenian lout" returns the gruff reply.

How can a man who's heart is full of hope
Be content to stay in a dungeon of this size,
To watch vile insects crawl upon my bed
And vermin decompose before my eyes?

How many sleepless, restless nights have I believed

That I saw my little daughter running into me?
How many sun-kissed morns have I awoke
And thought I'd broke those chains, to see me free?

Long Kesh! that cancerous foreign cell
Still tries to crumble many a mother's son.
Great Britain, where is your greatness now,
You can ne'er unfold the damage you have done.

Long Kesh, may you rot and burn in hell,
May your walls fall and may I live to tell,
May all the world regret you ever stood,
And may all the world request you did no good.

A NATION MOURNS

O'er Ireland's hills and plains the cold winds blow,
The grey-white waves beat shores with discontent,

The wild geese mourn and wail their song of woe,
The world around bursts forth in sad lament.

And you who know the truth well understand
How elements and man suit this condition,
How torture, pain and death have swept our land,
How we have suffered foreign imposition.

They shot our thirteen men on Derry's ground
And put our men behind barbed wire to rot;
They scoured our homes and scattered us
around,
They spilt our blood and left us with our lot.

And though they've left our heroes dying and dead
They think that we will never rise again;
We once more will fight with flame and lead,
And neither will our efforts be in vain.

We'll cut the ground from under England's feet,
The steeples will ring out a victory bell;
We'll win this battle, they will show defeat,
And have our country that we've earned so well.

MISLEADING STATEMENT

THE Prisoners' Welfare Action Group, which campaigns for improved conditions at Portlaoise Prison, this week pointed to obvious discrepancies in statements being issued by the Dublin Government's Department of Justice. One such statement from the Dublin Government said that the conditions prevailing in the prison made it impossible to determine how many prisoners were on hunger strike.

The Group, who represent the relatives and friends of the prisoners in Portlaoise Prison, demanded to know why strict secrecy regarding the conditions at the prison had been maintained by the Dublin Government until this week. Copies of statements signed by members of the Welfare Committee, including wives and mothers, who had attempted to visit relatives in the jail after the riot of 28th December have been supplied to the Dublin Branch of the Association for Legal Justice.

IN MEMORY OF VOLUNTEER KEVIN COHEN

IRELAND has borne many fine sons in her long and strife-torn history, but none more noble, none more heroic, none more unselfish than the man we stand to remember in silent tribute to day—Vol. Kevin Cohen, South Fermanagh Battalion, Oglai na h-Eireann, callously slain by the forces of the Crown as he sought to give cover to his besieged comrades on the Fermanagh-Cavan border on Monday evening of last week. At a critical time in the history of this nation, when the pressure on the Republican Movement to end its military campaign is immense, when the bishops, clergy, politicians, businessmen plead we forego our traditions, our heritage, our beliefs; when they gather at their clubs, or in the comfort of their homes, far removed from the reality of the murderous activity of the invader's army, it is indeed comforting to know that Irishmen of the calibre of Kevin Cohen, men who have his vision, his foresight, his fortitude, but above all else his unrelenting love for his native isle and its oppressed people, are still prepared to ensure the continuation of the struggle for liberation, despite the pitiful cries of the English lackeys.

Who, we can ask with pride, embody the qualities that shone through Kevin Cohen on the side of the plundering enemy? At what stage in their bloody history can they stop and truthfully point to a patriot of his standing? Never, in the many wars they have waged against defenceless nations, have they had such men. We are not mercenaries as they are; we have no paid assassins, nor hirelings, and that, comrades, is why we will never yield. Will the so-called "Irish politicians" still continue with their monotonous, selfish cries of "peace"? Will they still ask us to bow the knee to the imperialist master? How many more Irishmen must be sacrificed upon the gory altar of British imperialism? Will they never understand?

We, the caged prisoners of the British war-machine, must play our part too. The role each of us as Irishmen is asked to fulfil does not end once we enter the confines of Long Kesh. Each time we act, each time we speak, do we bear in mind the sacrifices that our comrades on the outside have made and are daily making, so that some day the Irish people can reclaim their birthright—an Ireland free? Free from the evil clutches of the British Empire. Do we ever even pause to think?

Today, as the mortal remains of Kevin Cohen enter the soil of his beloved native Sligo, that same historic county which has produced such faithful children as Countess Marceveicz, will we remember him in the long days ahead? If we are to see the ideals for which he gave his young life achieved, then the answer must be a resounding YES. To divert from the path he and those other gallant Gaels who have given their ALL have trod would be an insult to their memory.

In a lonely churchyard at Drumcliffe, not too far from where Kevin Cohen now lies, there sleeps one of Ireland's finest poets — William Butler Yeats. And of the Easter rising of 1916 he wrote: "A Terrible Beauty Is Lorn". Truly, comrades, many men have died to see that dream fulfilled. Yes, the price is high, but our cause is just.

Farewell, brave comrade, Kevin, sleep that long sleep. The day of liberation is close at hand; that day you dreamed and worked so hard for that same day you will never now see. But WE WILL avenge you.

Go ligfeadh fod na Poblichta go h-eadrom ar do chroí calma.

May the soil of the Republic rest lightly on your brave heart.

BRITISH JUSTICE, BUT ONLY FOR BRITISH

OBSERVERS of the British system of justice were amazed last week when Michael Skelding, an ex-Oxford University student, got off with a mere two years' sentence after being found guilty on charges of causing criminal damage and recklessly endangering life by planting bombs.

Andrew Grainger, a student at Reading University, was sentenced to only six months' imprisonment, while Roger Moore, the third man charged in the same case, escaped with a nominal fine of £300. At a time when Irishmen are being jailed for anything up to thirty years, often on less serious charges, the ridiculous disparity in these sentences must be seriously questioned and widely publicised.

Membership of the British Army's elite recruiting agency, the Oxford University Officer Training Corps, no doubt was the prime motivation for mitigating the sentences. There is also the possibility that their fascist judge approved of their choice of bomb targets, namely Ruskin College, the Trade Union Education Institute, Blackfriars, a Catholic friary and, of course, the local Irish club.

The disquiet felt by Britain's Irish population at this development was greatly increased when Ronald Travers, recently jailed for seven years at the Old Bailey in London, had his sentence reduced to four years, on appeal, when he testified that he was not Irish and that he did not take sides in the Irish liberation struggle. It is now obvious in the British Court of Appeal that sentences are decided not for what the accused is found guilty of, but because of his nationality and political beliefs. British Government threats about heavy sentences for bomb offences have now been proved to apply only to Irishmen or those involved in the Irish freedom struggle.

HUNGER STRIKERS ENTER FOURTH WEEK

THE hunger strike by ten Provisional prisoners in Portlaoise Prison entered its fourth week on 22nd January. The protest began after the jail riot of 28th December when Southern police ran amok inside the prison, wrecking the interior and destroying all personal belongings and clothing of the prisoners. Since the riot prisoners have been forced to sleep on the floors, without heating of any kind, and a total cover-up of the appalling conditions within the prison has been effected by the Southern Government by a total ban on all visits for the past month.

But a powerful public opinion lobby has been growing for the past four weeks, and the Dublin Government could no longer ignore the many demands by prominent people for access to the prison so that the conditions could be inspected by them. When the world-famous stage and screen actress, Siobhan McKenna, demanded the right to visit the prisoners, at a Dublin press conference last week, the Dublin politicians became alarmed and took immediate steps to extricate themselves from their very embarrassing position. On the 23rd January they announced that visits would be resumed the following day and that 54 year old Joe Cahill, the veteran Republican leader from Belfast, had been released. Mr. Cahill, whose release came six months before the expiration of his sentence, had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment to date from March, 1973, for his part in the "Claudia" gun running. He suffers from a serious heart ailment, which necessitated hospitalisation on several occasions since his imprisonment.

In the course of a press conference given on 24th January, Mr. Cahill confirmed that seventeen prisoners were now on hunger strike in the jail and that at least three of these were in a very weak condition and unable to walk. One of these is Patrick Ward from Co. Donegal. Twenty-seven years old Ward took part in two previous hunger strikes while in Mountjoy Prison, before being transferred to Portlaoise, and was seriously ill for several weeks after his last hunger strike in the

Autumn of 1973. Relatives are also concerned about the condition of Gerry McCarthy from Cork and Joseph Buckley from Dublin. Both of these men are in their middle fifties, and Mr. McCarthy has been interned for long periods during the '40s campaign and again in the '56 campaign.

FREE STATE ARMY SHOOTING

A SHOOTING incident at the Curragh Camp on Christmas Eve last seems to indicate that sentries on duty have also been given unlimited powers. Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Phillips from Maddens-town, Co. Kildare, were challenged by an army sentry while delivering a Christmas present to friends on the camp.

Having given their names and addresses they were fired on by a sentry who attempted to detain them even though he was aware of their identities. Late night viewers on Radio Telefís Éireann, the state-owned television station, heard that shots had been fired by a sentry at a car which failed to stop near the military camp, and that the car had later been found abandoned. After a cursory investigation, red faced military chiefs succeeded in having this news item "scrubbed" from subsequent news broadcasts and the daily newspapers of 27th and 28th December also suppressed the story. A neat example of all pervasive censorship as practised in the "Free" State.

Mr. and Mrs. Phillips were interviewed by the Southern police, who were sympathetic to their story but told them they saw no chance of an impartial enquiry or disciplinary action against the sentry involved. Indeed this opinion was confirmed two days later when Mr. and Mrs. Phillips discovered that the same soldier, Private Lally, was still engaged on sentry duty at the camp.

TRILICK BULLY GOES FREE

A case of assault against a well-known member of the U.D.R. from Trillick was dismissed at Enniskillen Court by the R. H. McCrea Elliott.

The charge of assault was brought by a local, John J. McBride against Joseph Mills a member of the U.D.R. McBride alleged he had been beaten and kicked by Mills at a road check. He had the evidence of a Doctor and an R.U.C. constable both of whom inspected the bruise marks on his body, on the night of the assault. Despite this his story was disbelieved and the charge against Mills dismissed by his "Worship" because his "Worship" felt McBride should have fallen from the blows or that he "did not make some attempt to get away." While it is realised that Mr. McCrea Elliott does not have to suffer the down right vulgarity and abuse dished out by certain thugs in the Uniform of the U.D.R. one would expect that at least he would know that a civilian finding himself confronted by armed Uniform bullies does not try and get away, even though he is being kicked and punched.

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