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AN EOCHAIR

A BULLETIN OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT, LONG KESH

THE KEY TO TRUE FREEDOM -
SOCIALISM



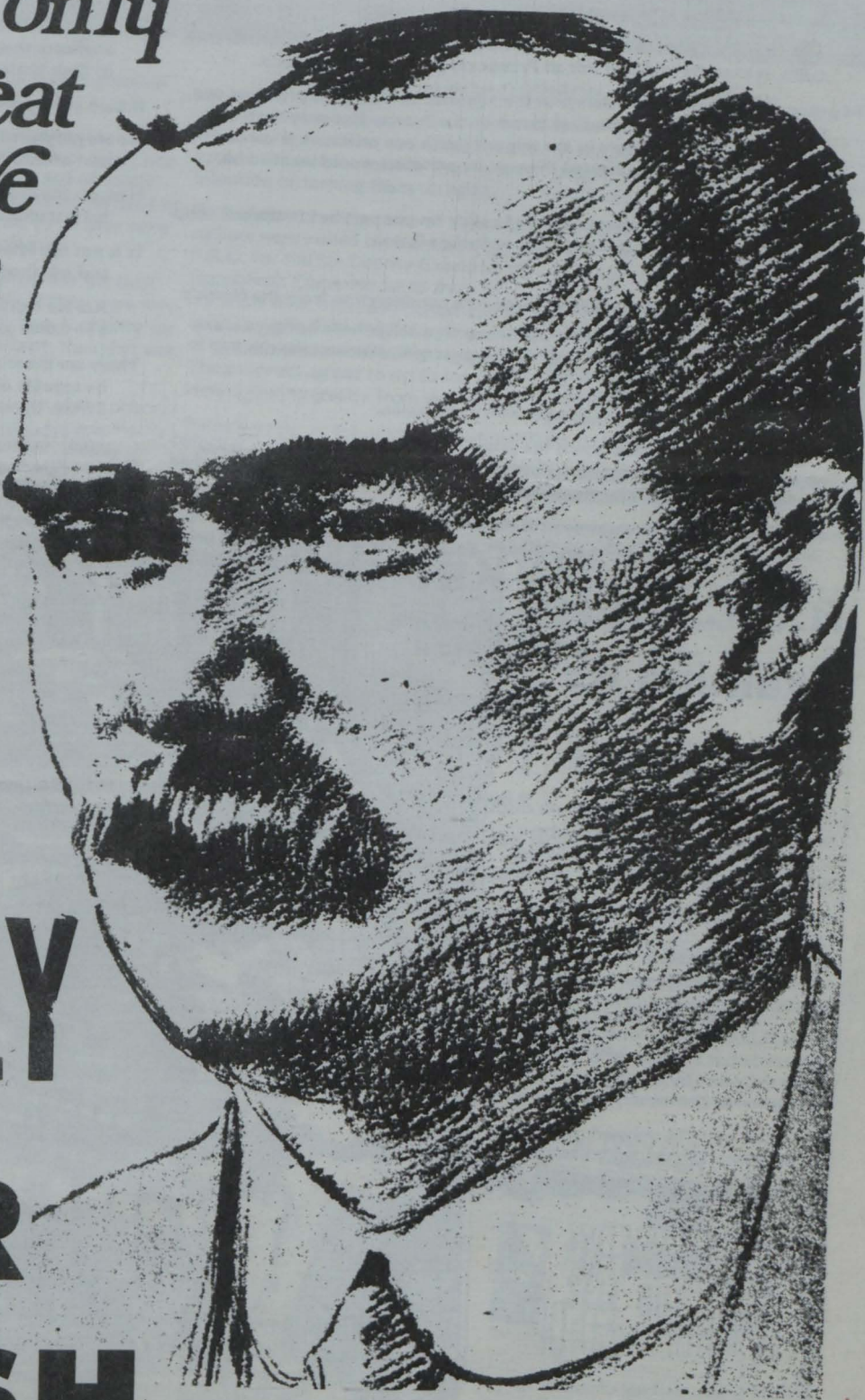
Number Seven

Special

MAY DAY

ISSUE

*“The great only
appear great
because we
are on
our knees
let us
arise...”*



**JAMES
CONNOLLY
FATHER
OF IRISH
SOCIALISM**

MAY 1868

MAY 1916

NONE SO BLIND AS THOSE WHO CANNOT SEE

.....
.....
Editorial

We, Official Republican prisoners, find it hard to understand the Provo prisoner belligerency directed against us in the Prisons of the North of Ireland.

Of course, we recognise that NOT all Provos are engaged in this belligerency, but that it is an element of them who are engaged in keeping it active.

However, those engaged in it reflect a dominant Provo attitude of overbearance. Again, it must be said that not all Provos are guilty of this attitude.

In prison our prisoners were always in the minority to the Provo prisoners and, therefore never posed a physical threat to the Provos. Not only that, but when Provo prisoners were in the minority with our prisoners in certain cages in Long Kesh, we treated them as we ourselves would want to be treated.

This treatment was a consistent aspect of policy on our part but it was not reciprocated by the Provos in Long Kesh or Belfast Prison.

The Provos have been asking for compassionate consideration from the North's Prison authorities, and rightly so but they themselves have not shown any compassion on occasions to their fellow prisoners, a inconsistent line of thought indeed.

To expect compassion, people should show compassion.

One of the despicable things about the prison attacks is that the Provo prisoners avail themselves of a situation presented to them by the enemy they profess to fight to attack Official Republicans.

It was as if they allied themselves with the prison authorities to inflict and increase pain and suffering on Officials already suffering from the bad prison

conditions. We are not saying that they are agents of the prison authorities but by their stupidity they have been helping the common enemy.

However, if it were not stupidity that caused their actions, if they have wished to receive compassion but give none, and if they have not wished to reciprocate our fair treatment of their members, we can only conclude that there is something more serious and sinister attached to certain Provo attitudes and actions.

If this something is a hidden policy then what we have is a Fascist undertone in existence. It was through gangs of thugs beating up political opponents that Hitler came to power. There are many examples of thuggery bringing Fascism to power.

If the Provos do have elements not amenable to discipline then they should eradicate these elements, for they can only bring their leadership and any of their better qualities into disrepute.

If they are fighting for justice then they should not act as oppressors.

We are perplexed to know if the Provo belligerency in prisons against us is some part of Eire Nua policy.

How do the Provos by their recent actions expect anyone to believe that they have credible alternative policies to the present set up in our country??

It is not too late for the Provos to sit down and rethink their present position and ask themselves the following questions:

Are we fighting for justice? Are we acting with justice? Or do we only want a so called justice-power for the Provos and the oppression of everybody else?

There are those among the Provos who should be able to rationalise. They must be capable of seeing that disunity and disharmony among the forces opposing British Imperialism can only accommodate this Imperialism's policy of divide and conquer.

Neither Provos, Officials, U.D.A. nor U.V.F. are at this moment in prison because they have been friends of British Imperialist policies.

We do hope it is not the proverbial case that there are none so blind as those who will not see.

R.U.C. Must Examine its Conscience

The Tyrone Republican Movement must be congratulated in taking the proper line with the R.U.C. during the Easter-time ceremonies.

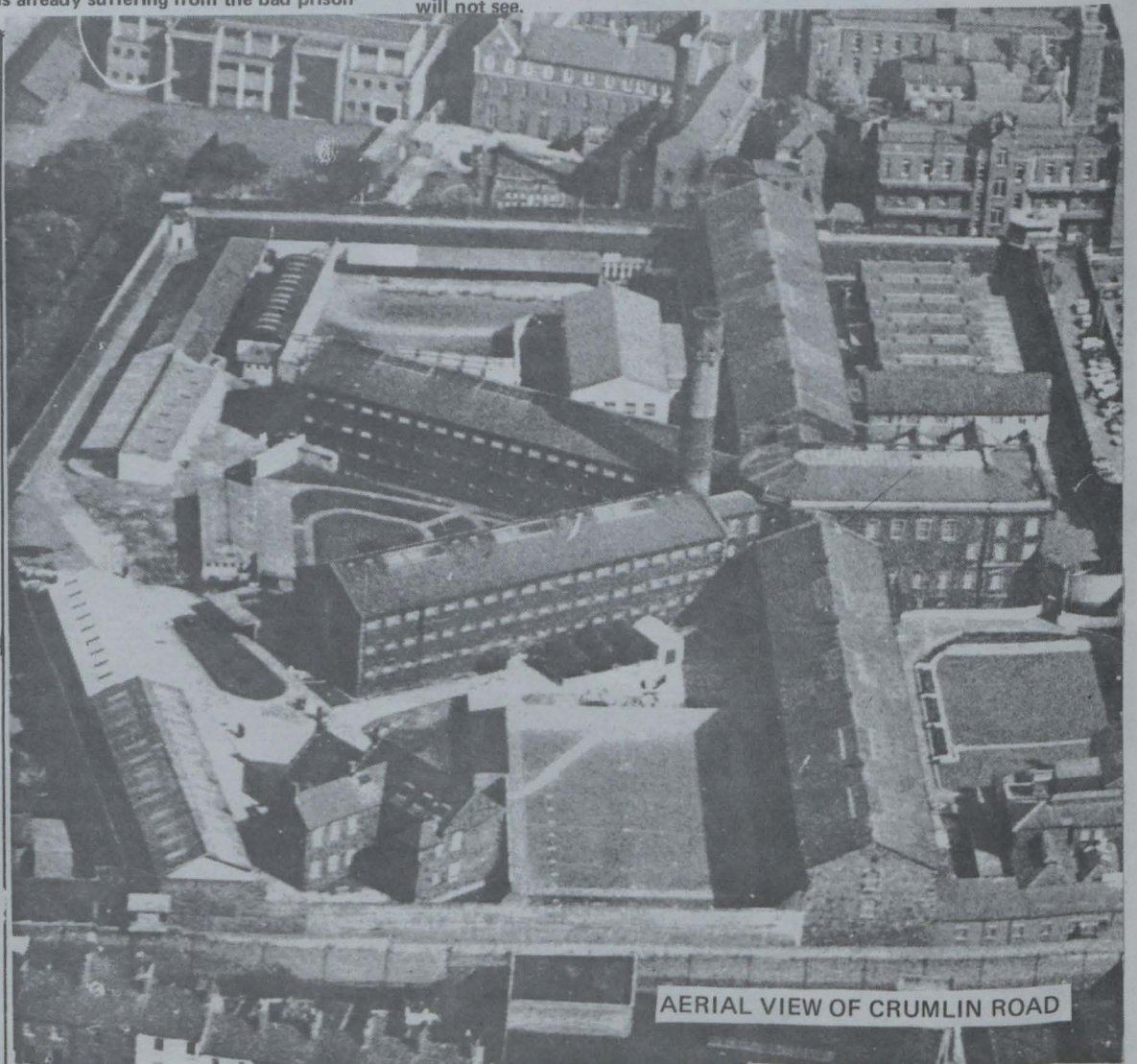
When this notorious body sought co-operation from the Tyrone Republicans concerning the parade to John Paddy Mullan's grave at the Rock, it was rightly told there would be none.

If the R.U.C. want co-operation then it must earn it by exercising just laws impartially and by being seen as an institution of democracy.

Only then will this debased police force receive respect from the ordinary people.

THE PRISONERS' HANDICRAFT CO-OP

Anyone making enquiries regarding prices, etc., should write to our manager, Paul Hemsworth, Cage 9, Long Kesh, Lisburn. We can ensure you that we will give every inquiry our fullest attention.



AERIAL VIEW OF CRUMLIN ROAD

SUFFERING AND BRUTALITY IN BELFAST PRISON



CRUMLIN ROAD PRISON, BELFAST

At 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 3rd April, twenty one remand prisoners were removed to Long Kesh from Belfast Prison, leaving behind five of their comrades, Terence McDermott, Kieran McLaughlin, Connolly Brady, Tommy Russell and Charlie Watterson.

Two of them were told by the prison staff that they would be staying in Belfast Prison another night as they would be appearing in court the next day. After the court appearance they would also be taken to Long Kesh.

On the next day, these two prisoners went to court taking their personal belongings with them. But after their court appearance, they were returned to Belfast Prison. Realising their detention was to continue there, the prisoners requested to see the Prison Governor.

Their request was granted and so after explaining to the Governor that they wished to join their comrades in Long Kesh and that they had been told they would go there after their court appearance, the Governor said there was no room there for them.

He then sent these prisoners to join the three other Officials in B Wing, who had also been told there was no room at the Kesh for them but they might go there later.

Conditions in B Wing were really atrocious and inhuman. There was a 23 hours per day lock up, no washing and toilet facilities no T.V. or radio. There was extreme lack of fresh air, exercise and recreation.

The conditions were so unendurable, and the prison authorities so unheeding of complaints and suggestions of betterment, that the five prisoners were induced to take the desperate course of a thirst and hunger strike hoping that it would draw attention to their plight.

The prison Authorities were informed of the action being taken and it was arranged

that the prison doctor would examine them each day.

On Sunday 7th, the Governor sent for the five prisoners. They were taken one at a time into his office and officially charged with trying to force the hand of the Prison Authorities. Then they were all asked how they pleaded.

Four of them said guilty and the fifth said no plea. Certainly, if they were forcing the hand of the Prison Authority for a little humane treatment, then that was their guilt.

On leaving the office, one of the prisoners, Terence McDermott, was physically assaulted by a class officer, Wesley McIlveen, nicknamed Tommy Steele.

This officer caught the prisoner by the hair, while two other prison officers accompanied him. He pushed the prisoner telling him to walk faster.

Although weak from hunger and thirst, the prisoner did his best. He was then struck on the head by Officer McIlveen who continued to hold onto the prisoner's hair, till they reached the stairs in B. Wing.

This prison warder has quite a record of brutality against prisoners and there are parts of Belfast Prison out of bounds to him, so great is prisoner's resentment of him.

By Monday, the prisoners were so weak that they were not able to leave their cells for their one hour's exercise. The warders kept the cell lights on 24 hours per day making it almost impossible for the prisoners to sleep.

As a further harassment, a cell search took place and personal items such as sketch pads, jotters, felt tipped pens, hankies and tracing paper were confiscated.

When a prison officer was asked for a return of the articles, he said there was no intention of turning them up again.

On Tuesday evening, some of the hunger strikers were visited by Malachy Toal, P.R.O. for the Six County Executive of Republican Clubs. He asked them to come off their thirst and hunger strike as he thought there might be other means of getting redress for their grievances. The prisoners agreed to do so for they were suffering greatly from their ordeal.

Subsequently, at the weekend, they were told by the prison staff to pack their belongings as they were getting removed

to Magilligan. As they were leaving the prison, they asked for the items that were confiscated.

Warder McIlveen said they already had them returned and that they were liars to impute otherwise.

These prisoners did not go to Magilligan, but happily joined their comrades in Long Kesh. Their barbaric treatment in Belfast Prison is a further chapter in the saga of a brutal and vicious prison system exercised by vicious and brutal men who are its slaves.

Let justice loving people take note of the facts contained in this story.

HOW ABOUT IT OLD SOLZ?

Since Solzhenitsyn has done such a good job in exposing the concentration camps of Siberia, inmates in Long Kesh wonder would he do a comparable job on Long Kesh. Of course, we will not be able to pay him the two million dollars for the job, same as he earned for his exposure of the Russian system.

IS AN EOCHAIR ILLEGAL?

It is noted that "An Eochair" came under the attention of the British Army some time ago, when they seized a number of copies. Then the Special Branch tried to justify this action by alleging that the paper is illegal.

At the same time as this was happening, a search took place in Long Kesh and copies of the paper, which hitherto had been ignored, were seized.

Prison Staff, British Army and Special Branch, since you had such good co-ordination on such a small matter, we wonder at your inability to solve your greater problems.

AN EOCHAIR
A PUBLICATION OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT, LONG KESH

Christmas and New Year Special Issue

ALL ROUND SELL OUT
By MICK MALLON

WILL SANTA NEED A WORTHY CARD AT LONG KESH?

RACKETS INSIDE LONG

The following is a report of a governmental reply to Mr. Stratton Mills, M.P., concerning the developing and the extending of concentration camps in the Six Counties. The reply was made by the junior Minister for Northern Ireland, during the latter part of 1973.

Mr Mills said that, to September 14th, more than £2 million had been spent on the Maze Prison, Long Kesh. But, when all contract claims were completed the figure could be about £3,000,000.

There were no plans for further extension of the camp. Up to the same date, £719,000 was spent on Magilligan, but the final total could be £1,400,000. Educational facilities at Long Kesh were to be extended, he said.

It would amaze and indeed disgust the general public, which includes all taxpayers, to know how this money has been spent, leaving aside the disagreement that any public funds should be used to build concentration camps.

KESH

In the first place no public advertising ever appeared for these contracts. They were presented underhand as a privilege to sacrosanct firms. The nature of the work carried out by these firms meant they must have had high and unearned profits, for the work done reaches no known specified standard.

The surface of tarmaced compounds are full of holes and hollows which hold water to a depth of at least six inches in places. Everybody knows there should not be hollows on the surface of tarmac, for these hollows will hold water which will rot the tarmac. Also, the water lying in these hollows causes dampness to seep into the floors of the huts and gives the prisoners wet feet.

The construction of the huts is of inferior and sub-standard work. Iron sheets covering the huts have only one ridge overlap. This means that rain, snow and frost penetrate to the inner sheeting and causes water to drip down on prisoners, their beds and their personal belongings.

The end gables of the huts are built with unplastered, porous brick which naturally allows damp and water to seep through to cause a health hazard to prisoners and spoilage of their belongings.

Another serious aspect of the contracts is the unfinished work left behind. Storm porches built at the huts' doorways have no weather flashing attached to the huts' gables which means there is a space left between these porches and the gables through which rain runs and drips down inside the doorway. During stormy weather, the rain literally pours through in this manner flooding the huts.

Such unfinished and inferior type buildings would not be passed as being of an acceptable standard to house cattle, fowl and farming machinery. Yet, in these buildings, human beings are imprisoned for up to twenty five years by British democratic institutions.

Concerning the nature of this prisoner accommodation, and concerning the great money spent on it, it is disturbing to know that the work done to no specified standard for a prison or otherwise.

If there was specified standard when it must have been ignored and the clerk of works appointed to such work for the purpose of inspecting it to see that it reaches a standard must either have been incompetent, or he turned a blind eye to the bad and unfinished work.

The prison authorities are aware of everything of the nature mentioned for quite a while, but no action or not intention of action is being shown to taking the culprits involved to task, which casts a reflection on the prison authorities.

So ~~why exactly~~ are the culprits? The con- who exactly blatantly guilty, the evidence is all there for everyone to see. The next guilty party is the clerk of works. The same evidence indicts him too. Or were matters that irregular that he was not present at all?

From the obvious and other evidence, the Prison Authorities are also grossly guilty because the contractors and the clerk of works could not pull off such malpractices and get rich quick schemes without the Prison Authorities connivances, who must have turned a blind to the clerk

of works' activities, and the quality of the contractor's work.

Some time ago, when a prisoner made a complaint to Prison Chief Wright about the bad conditions of the huts, he replied that the Prison Authorities were not prepared to improve the defects.

The contractor was responsible but since he was gone he would not be allowed back to finish or to rectify any work.

It must be said that this answer helps to substantiate the guilt of the prison authorities.

This serious misuse of public funds in the contracts at Long Kesh prison camp calls for a public enquiry. The Prison Authorities especially should come under this procedure for its corrupt practices, including the manner in which it gave out the contracts and for its aiding and abetting of bad and unfinished work.

It is about time the taxpayer ceased being gulled and deceived by corruption behind the protection of the guns and wire of the North's concentration camps.

Boal's Quip

At the entrance into Long Kesh prison camp, a group of visitors was getting checked out by the British Army. Among the visitors was Desmond Boal, well-known Loyalist politician and barrister.

After Mr. Boal was officiously interviewed by a senior British Army officer, he was asked by a priest who was standing by did he have any idea who the fussy officer was.

"I do," said Boal, "that was God speaking to me. I know he was God because I didn't know a word he was saying."

Commemoration in Long Kesh

In keeping with the Movement's Easter Commemoration of Ireland's dead elsewhere, Republicans in Long Kesh Concentration Camp, held their commemoration on Easter Sunday.

Taking place at 3 p.m., the commemoration started with a parade, which culminated with halted ranks being drawn up for the rest of the ceremony.

Then the 1916 Proclamation was read and a two minutes silence observed with dipping of flags as a tribute in memory of those who gave their lives for Irish Freedom.

After the two minutes, the Easter Statement from the Republican leadership was read out by the O/C. The ceremony ended with dismissal of the ranks.

During the parade itself, a black bereted advance Guard preceded the Colour party at the head of the parade.

The Colour Party also black bereted, carried three flags, the Starry Plough, the Tricolour and the Sunburst.

A military observer was present at the compound gate and he kept constantly reporting, by radio to his headquarters as the ceremonies proceeded.



THE HORROR OF BEING IN COURT

BY A SENTENCED PRISONER

How many times have you read in the papers or heard on the radio about a man or woman being sentenced to long periods of imprisonment for politically motivated crimes? Probably you thanked God you were not in the same position as these unfortunates.

Jail is the last place a person would want to be, until suddenly you find it is you who is facing the judge and a long prison sentence.

The whole experience is like a bad nightmare. But without doubt the remand period and the actual trial must be the worst part, since this process of legal internment is completely foreign and alien to an ordinary person.

The vast majority of people have never seen a barrister in his wig and gown in real life. The court-room was always something you had seen on the T.V. or the films.

From experience, I was struck by the impersonal nature of things in a court-room. One gets the impression that you are an object — not a human being. The entire proceedings are a matter of fact. You are an object that has got to be sent away.

The indifference of the prosecution to the plight of the object is indeed remarkable and only matched by the apathy of the defence. This apathy is more marked if the object is receiving legal aid.

The length of time required to send a person away varies with each case. After the arguments debates and counter arguments, compromises and compacts, the judge sums up.

Giving his pious 'holier than thou' piece about how bad a person you had been and about how you were going to be punished. Not a mention of rehabilitation, restoration or restitution.

That's only reserved for human beings you are looked on as an object.

You generally find that you are overcome with a desire to call out and tell the judge just what you think of him and his

system — to tell him to shut up and listen for a change, not to his own ranting, but to the cries of the slum dwellers to the unemployed, to the smutty-faced children of the back streets, and to the hungry and under-developed.

So much for his justice.

Suddenly you find all eyes in the court-room turn towards you. You've just been sentenced to a total of eleven years imprisonment in one of Her Majesty's concentration camps. But the terror and unpleasantness experienced when others were sentenced is felt by yourself.

Disbelief and expectancy give a strange empty feeling that numbs the limbs.

Uncurious to the fate to which he has sent you, the judge propes for a grip to haul himself to his feet. The court rises: you find yourself being urged out of court.

SCALES OF JUSTICE?

FINDING FREEDOM AND UNITY

We believe the Republic of a United Ireland will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on its way.

We cannot conceive of a free Ireland with a subject working class. We cannot conceive of a subject Ireland with a free working class.

So there is only one recipe for lasting peace in this country and it is towards this end that every person should set his or her sights.

For the first time in fifty odd years, the working class can identify their true enemy — the unscrupulous politicians

who guard the interests of foreign imperialists and native exploiters and at the same time keep the working class divided through the policy of sectarianism in the northern part of our country.

Peace to these men means luxury homes, a salary of perhaps £10,000 per year, and the making of an anti-Catholic or anti-Protestant speech once a year to make sure that the common bond belonging to an exploited people is never forged.

The main problem which faces us at the moment is to be able to recognise that

the only people who are benefitting from the continual sectarian strife are those who fear a united working class, who fear a united and politically aware people finally throwing off their chains.

Finally let it not be forgotten that in the early Thirties, when Catholic and Protestant workers united in the face of mutual misery and unemployment, a deliberately engineered incident was operated to turn the workers to each others throats — the only safe place to have them was the opinion of the government then.

That opinion is just as strong today and only by common and united action can it be broken.

WE SAY THANKS TO THE U.V.F.

A word of thanks from the Official Republican Remand prisoners to the Loyalist U.V.F. prisoners in Long Kesh prison camp for their recent kind consideration given when the Officials suffered from the activities of thugs in Cage 10.

Since the Officials were greatly outnumbered they were forced into a state of confinement in one of the cage's huts and were not able to avail themselves of the prison facilities.

During the days of confinement, the U.V.F. prisoners in other cages heated up their meals for them and made them offers of their washing facilities.

This kindness in a time of stress is remembered by the Official Republicans.



PRISONERS PROTEST FOR NORMAL VISITS

On Easter Monday, Long Kesh was unusually quiet. The whole camp was in a state of unruffled peacefulness. The familiar clanging of the gates, the rattling of the keys; the revving up of the motor engines, were all noticeably missing. Nobody was dressed for visits.

There were none. New and stringent visiting arrangements had been subtly introduced by the authorities and arrogantly thrust upon the prisoners. The prisoners, both Republican and Loyalist, totally rejected this enforcement and decided on a full scale boycott.

From this day on every prisoner was refusing visits.

The sun beamed down generously, adding a touch of brilliance and warmth to the customary bleak and exposed compounds. A guard-dog barked in the distance, while a helicopter buzzed overhead, its windows glistening in the sun and obscuring a pair of eyes that peered intently through binoculars at the lethargic events below.

Shirt-clad prisoners trudged the concrete compounds exchanging snippets of conversation and discussing this cruel encroachment on their personal liberties. It all began a week earlier.

Early in the week visitors to Long Kesh Concentration Camp, were shocked to discover a bizarre and different form of visiting procedure was currently in operation. Considerable alterations had been carried out on the small visiting cubicles clearly with the intention of causing further strife and imposing further hardship on the prisoners. This was not totally unexpected.

Malevolent acts, like this, on behalf of the Prison Authorities have become part of everyday life in the Kesh, but this time the perpetrators sunk to an all time low.

Not only was this evil deed conceived to humiliate prisoners but it was contrived with the knowledge that it would involve their families as well.

Wives, mothers and children; all innocent parties and all outside the heavy hand of penal authority, have to suffer the same degradation. Why should they be subjected to this kind of treatment? Does not the strains and pressures of trying to run a family without their husbands and sons constitute a heavy enough tax on their endurance powers.

Their mental and physical capacities must be stretched to the utmost limits and this unethical re-arrangement of the visits can only be interpreted as an extra psychological burden for them to shoulder.

But what were their visits like before this? Prior to the change, the visiting facilities, though by no means fully satisfactory, offered a certain amount of privacy. Little family frolics could be arranged. Husbands could embrace their wives at the beginning and end of their visits. Children could be cuddled. Mothers reassured. In fact, a sort of family reunion for one half hour.

However, conversation about private and personal problems was somewhat restricted, this being under the auspices of an "attentive" prison officer who manned the doorway and kept a close watch over the whole proceedings.

This was not a gracious gesture bestowed upon the prisoners by the authorities

but is standard procedure for all the long term prisoners.

Now the right to this type of visit has been taken away from them.

In place of the solitary door there are now two doorways which make any sort of privacy non-existent. The small 'face to face' table where prisoners and their relatives could indulge in whispered conversation is now substituted by a much wider one, and to be audible, one has to raise ones voice considerably.

This monstrosity of a table stretches from wall to wall, cutting the 8 x 8 feet visiting area in two and has a glass window on each side of it, the only separation from the other cubicles.

Frankly, no efforts towards intimacy has been made by the 'planners' for these windows have been strategically placed to further embarrass the prisoners and their families.

They are like fish in a glass aquarium.

This abuse of human dignity is an insult to all decent thinking people and serves to illustrate the low level the prison authorities will sink to in an effort to debase the character of the prisoners.

In this case, however, both Republican and Loyalist prisoners have rightly

identified the prison administration as the one common enemy, and so consolidated with the one purpose will prove a resilient force.

They are now pledged and determined to see the visit situation rectified as soon as possible and measures, both inside and outside of prison, are being implemented to ensure that this is accomplished.

Meanwhile, as the dogs bark and the helicopter fly overhead, the visiting cubicles in Long Kesh lie empty.

The Prisoners in Long Kesh demand the return of the normal visiting facilities in Long Kesh, which they have had removed from them.

The prisoners are on protest till these visits are returned to normal. Part of the protest is stopping taking any visits from friends and relatives. Other forms of protest are being carried out inside the prison camp.

The prisoners ask all their friends and interested organisations to work on their behalf to have this simple human right restored.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

After most elections, but especially after the most recent Westminster elections, a sense of anti-climax reinforces the apathy of the electorate. Although the British and the Irish anti-Sunningdale candidates appear to stir a little interest, the outcome in the immediate future, will only marginally affect the Six County situation. Sunningdale was not the issue; time will only test the effectiveness of that particular agreement, for the British are united in their inactivity, while the Irish, as usual, are divided in a welter of activity.

The British also have the S.D.L.P. for help whose tactics were predictable and whose simple propaganda, effective, they offered hopes of false peace. In most areas as in Mid Ulster, they forwarded candidates, not to win, but to split the vote, ensuring that a minority anti-Sunningdale candidate did not win. It was obvious that there would be a massive Loyalist protest vote, it was therefore essential that minority dissent should be concealed from the British public; some section of the community would have to show consent for such a widely acclaimed and publicised agreement as Sunningdale, and the tactics of the S.D.L.P. provided the silent voice of minority confirmation.

Of the twelve members returned, only the one supporting Sunningdale will swim with ease through the Parliamentary session; the other eleven will be obstructed at every turn. The Faulkner Unionists were to perform a similar spoiling function as that of the S.D.L.P., although less emphasis or concern was placed upon their success. Success in any event was

not their objective; the objective was to show with clarity the fragmentation of Protestant politics to the Protestant people.

If concession takes any form it must be largely a face saving exercise, the British being anxious to save the face of the Provo leadership to make it easier for them to implement a ceasefire. At the same time concessions will have to be made to the extreme Loyalist groupings. The most obvious common ground would be the question of political hostages, the release affects all sides of the political spectrum. The British might also make it known that if discussion is to be advanced on the federal (Eire Nua) doctrine advocated by the Provos, and the particular brand of UDI advocated by Desmond Boal now being considered by the U.V.F. this discussion would not be obstructed. This would not jeopardise Sunningdale, for the length of time discussions will take will effectively nullify any proposed action. By the time the Provisional ceasefire becomes acceptable the political arena will already have shifted.

Before the Provisional ceasefire becomes acceptable the mass of the Loyalist population will have to feel a sense of security; in short, their liberties must be secure within existing institutions which are part of the new executive. This will take time, but with the assistance of Mr. Fitt and Mr. Cosgrave, it can be accomplished. Brian Faulkner is a shrewd politician; he has realised that in the long run the most determining factor of Loyalist support for any party is the maintenance of the Union, which effectively means the backing of Westminster; Faulkner has that monopoly.

THE MALLARD

*Feathers leave rings, the whistle of wings
From the pool in the bog.*

The thresher of cob has gone for the year.

The mallard duck feeds on stubble and weeds.

Eleven months twilight, the frosted moons grey light.

Chemicals, oil: gun with hail flee.

The milling of man, struggling to free land.

Zombie the plastic culture, man is made.

Profits and gold from a neighbours brow we're told

For fifteen years or more; the ways of the material world.

Religion's a must. Still it can't from a crust

On the gruel of hate, that's stirred by the sword

In the Capitalist hand.

The traitors the worst, for power is their lust.

The robots that build with wire and with tin,

Are they free of sin? Nor those of might

Who come in the night, to lock neighbours in,

At the whim of the Master band.

Little would they think, if on the brink,

Of extinction, the wild mallard come,

Nature's beauty of life, soon past delights.

The fighting of man, with a flag changing hands.

LONG KESH 16/4/74.