

VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND 1968-1978

*This pamphlet is based on speeches delivered
by Fr Raymond Murray to Congressmen
in Washington D.C., 3 October 1978, and
to the Ad Hoc Committee for Human Rights
in Northern Ireland, Philadelphia,
7 October, 1978*



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I am proud and happy to be here speaking about human rights in a country where president, congress, senate, and judges are committed to the cause of human rights in theory and practice. They have proved that they can solve problems of the gravest legal and social kind by legal and political means. They have shown to the world the meaning of open and democratic government. They have reconciled the people of America around the ideal of honesty, fair-play, and civil rights for all without factional and sectional violence on any large scale.

In contrast I wish to draw your attention to the sufferings that have been endured over the last seven years by a group of up to 5,000 men and women who have been imprisoned in the north of Ireland. All of them come from the poor areas of Northern Ireland. The vast majority of them are Catholic. They are the Irish poor and they have suffered gross violations of human rights. Many of them are the third and fourth generation of unemployment contrived by sectarian British Governments and bigoted Unionist administrations. In their areas unemployment is 25% to 30%. Many of those imprisoned in the last seven years saw their fathers and brothers dragged off to internment in August 1971, processed through the torture chambers of Palace Barracks, Holywood, and into the shanty-town prison huts of Long Kesh. They saw the British Army entering their homes night after night, insulting the womenfolk by foul and filthy language, tearing down the holy pictures from the walls with insulting words about Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and our holy father the Pope. They were endlessly searched and frisked and made to stand in search positions or lie on the pavements of their own streets. If some of these deprived youngsters threw a stone or made a rude gesture or used a foul expression to their tormentors, or if they got involved in paramilitary activity and took more serious action against their oppressors, they had to suffer the full vigour of emergency laws, illtreatment, dragged before courts, given the maximum sentence. Many other young men and women who have never committed any

crime, except that they were born in Catholic areas and bore the ancient names of Ireland, O'Neill, O'Donnell, McDonnell, Bradley, Heaney, McKenna, McCloskey, were also dragged off, illtreated and thrown into jail by the anti-nationalist and anti-Catholic legal process. The ancestors of these young boys - O'Neills, O'Briens, McCarthys, O'Sullivans, were chiefs and kings in Ireland for a thousand years before the British ever came to the country. Against this whole-sale arrest and imprisonment of young Irishmen we must set the astonishing fact that in the ten-year period, 1968-78, no British soldier or policeman in Northern Ireland has served a single day in jail for shooting dead 60 innocent people, torturing 800 people, using inhuman and degrading treatment on arrested persons. This fact has been publicly proclaimed on many occasions and the British have never been able to deny it. It indicates a very serious imbalance in law and order and the administration of justice. One can only presume that it is so arranged for the political purposes of the British administration. I ask you a question - why should an ignorant 17 year old boy of deprived background meet with the full rigour of the law and the expertly trained British officer and police detective, who knows the law and is paid to administer it, be allowed to break the law with impunity?

Fr.Denis Faul, Fr.Brian Brady, and myself, over seven years, in the course of 16 books and 30 pamphlets, and numerous submissions and letters to the governments of Ireland and England, have merely asked that the police in Northern Ireland and the British Army keep the law - that they keep within the very wide confines of the sweeping emergency powers that the British Government has allowed them to use in Ireland. They have signally failed to keep within these boundaries. Daily they have broken the law and in many cases broken it with the full approval and with orders of their superiors up to the rank of Cabinet Minister - we know this was true in the case of the men who were hooded and suffered sensory deprivation in August 1971. What I propose to do for you now is to

trace the history of the violation of law by the British Government, the Unionist Government, the British Army and the RUC (the police in Northern Ireland) over the last seven years. I will tell it in a personal way as it affected me.

KILLINGS BY BRITISH SECURITY FORCES

The second man to die in the N.Ireland troubles was John Gallagher, a young married man from my own parish, the night of 14th August 1969. I live in rooms three storeys up and I had been watching a Loyalist crowd massing in the street outside the city hall where a civil rights' meeting was taking place. The leaders of the meeting, sensing the build-up outside and the heavy concentration of police told the crowd to leave and disperse to their homes quietly. The crowd were directed to the left by the police when they went out - side. A short distance away the street had a left turning. Some of the crowd who turned down this street were met by a party of B Special police who fired killing John Gallagher and wounding some others. The Scarman Tribunal into Violence and Civil Disturbances in N.Ireland in 1969 was satisfied that the police did fire and that one of them did kill Mr. Gallagher while others wounded Mr. McParland and Mr. Moore. After making allowances for the strange, difficult and frightening situation in which the police found themselves the report said that there was no justification for firing into the crowd. The tribunal placed a measure of responsibility on a police inspector who put an untrained party of police from a country area into an alarming town riot without briefing or leadership. No RUC man has yet been charged with the murder of John Gallagher. On 22nd August 1974 I wrote to Mr. Merlyn Rees, the Secretary of State: "On 14th August, 1969, John Gallagher, one of our parishioners, was shot dead in Armagh. Are police investigations still continuing into this fatal shooting?" The reply was that investigations had closed but would be reopened if fresh evidence was obtainable. The Report also found unjustified the killing of Patrick Rooney, a boy of 9 years, by the police in Belfast. The Report states - "We are unable to justify the shooting from the Browning machine gun which was responsible for the death of Patrick Rooney." On 19 April 1969 police entered the home of Samuel Devenney on a day of rioting in Derry and beat him up in front of his children. He died in hospital in Belfast on 17 July 1969. He was 42 years old. Following an inquiry conducted by Scotland Yard detectives on the instigation of Sir Arthur Young, Chief Constable, Sir Arthur made a statement. He attributed lack of evidence to a "conspiracy of silence". I mention

these deaths at the beginning of the present crisis because it is there the rot set in. You could be shot dead on your own street by the British Army or the police and nobody would be made amenable for the killing. Since that time some 60 innocent people have been killed in an unjustifiable manner by British government forces - 14 in Derry on 30 January 1972, 6 on the New Lodge Road, Belfast, 3 February 1973, and so on. On Saturday 15 June 1974 a 22 year old man, John Pat Cunningham from my parish, really a retarded boy who had the mentality of a 10 year old child, was shot dead by the British Army. He was afraid of the soldiers, having been beaten up by them on a previous occasion. The Army said they called on him to halt before they fired. There was no independent inquiry into his death. He was shot at 120 yards. The officer said he had his hand in his pocket. If he had been a gunman, what use would a pistol be at that distance? Fr. Faul and I documented the cases of Leo Norney aged 17 years gunned down by the Black Watch Regiment 13 September 1975, Majella O'Hare aged 12 years gunned down by the Third Parachute Regiment 14 August 1976 on her way to church, Brian Stewart killed by a rubber bullet October 1976. By their actions in killing 60 innocent civilians the British Army have violated human rights spelled out in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and *The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights*. They have been guilty of unjustified, reckless and deliberate killings of innocent persons.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person" (Article 3 of the Universal Declaration).

"Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life (Article 6 (I) of the Covenant).

Not only were these innocents - people like Patrick McElhone, Pomeroy, County Tyrone, taken out and gunned down in the field in front of his aged parents' house - Brian Smith gunned down by the Paratroopers while he stood chatting to friends in Ardoyne - deprived of their lives, but they were slandered by malicious lies promulgated by dishonourable officers that they were gunmen. Why can the agents of the British Government kill people manifestly innocent in very suspicious circumstances and never pay any penalty? Are they really operating under the law if they are never effectively made amenable to law? Are they above the

law? Is there a conspiracy to make them immune from effective prosecution?

On 7 January 1976 the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced the use of units of the SAS, the Special Air Service Regiment, in N.Ireland - plainclothes irregular units. What the real motives of the British authorities were can only be guessed at but the general idea seems to have been to terrorise the people by assassination, by nightly calls to scattered families threatening assassination, by highly unorthodox and criminal methods contrary to Hague Regulations and Geneva Conventions. Fr.Faul and I chronicled the shooting of Peter Cleary taken out from the house of his girlfriend and her relatives and killed in a nearby field. So far in the past year the SAS have gunned down 8 people in cold blood - Colm McNutt and Denis Heaney in Derry, Paul Duffy in Cookstown, John Boyle in Country Antrim, Jim Mulvenna, Dennis Brown, William John Mailey, and a Protestant William Hanna, in Belfast. This is known as the "kill, don't question" security policy and is a massive breach of the rule of law.

BRUTALITIES 1971-1972

I am a prison chaplain to the women's prison in N.Ireland. Eleven years ago there were only a few Catholic women held prisoner in Armagh Jail. In the past 9 years I have seen 120 women political prisoners in that prison at one time - 32 of them interned. There are still 70 women in jail facing long sentences. In 1969 there were only 712 prisoners in prison in N.Ireland. Now there are 3,000. From December 1971 until August 1972 Armagh Prison was used for male prisoners on remand for political charges. That was a turning point in my life because I saw with my own eyes the bruising, burning, and after-effects of drugs and electricity used in their torturing. Let me outline the squalid, cowardly, bestial business.

On 9-11 August 1971, 342 men were arrested under special powers, cruelly illtreated and brought to Army Camps. That was the introduction of internment. 12 of these men and later another 2 were specially selected for torture by hooding, spreadeagling against a wall for days, being subjected to a high pitched noise, deprived of food, drink and sleep, and being badly beaten - all these tortures happening simultaneously and for 6 days.

These became known as THE HOODED MEN. This was sensory deprivation. Two of the men were from my parish - Brian Turley, and a young married man Patrick McNally. The men suffered hallucinations. In High Court Settlements some years later they were all awarded huge sums of money. They figured in the Compton Report, a committee of inquiry into allegations of brutality by security forces arising out of internment.

From December 1971 until March 1972 interrogation with brutality and a great number of torture methods were carried out against detainees to force them to sign statements admitting crimes that the police wanted to connect them with.

I met hundreds of these men in Armagh Prison. They suffered grievous psychological and physical brutalities. The men stripped for me and I saw their bruises. I think of Joseph Rafferty who had been held over an electric fire. He had severe bruising measuring 8 inches by 4 on his abdomen; Francis Maguire - here is an extract from the report of the independent doctor who saw him in prison:-

"Examined 6.40 p.m. 7 January 1971. Examination of the trunk area of dark purple bruising in the middle just above the umbilicus 7½" wide and 4" high. Dark purple in colour. Right arm - purple bruising 6" by 3" in the medial aspect of the right elbow. Large dark purplish bruise situate in the medial aspect of the left upper leg. 4" wide purplish black bruise extending completely round the ankle. There was a bruise 1" in diameter over the anterior aspect of the right ankle which was congenitally deformed." Patrick Fitzsimmons was a well-known amateur boxer for Ireland. Here is an extract from his statement - he received electric shock treatment - printed in our book *British Army and Special Branch RUC Brutalities:-*

"There were three men there with stockings on their faces. The head man says - if you want to have it easy tell us everything you done. When I said I had nothing to tell I was made stand against the wall, fingers distributed and legs outstretched. I was beaten and kicked in the stomach and privates for about half an hour. I was made lie on the floor. My pants and underpants were removed. One put his foot on my throat and the other held my legs. The other one lit

matches. He blew them out and then held them to my privates. Then they made a few rude remarks about my wife and made me get up again. There was a rest for about 15 minutes. Then they took me out into another room. They told me to look around but I saw a man with a green apron and green overalls with a mask like a doctor. He was a big heavy-set man. They made me sit on a chair facing the wall. They blinded my eyes with a cloth. They rubbed my arm with some stuff and I felt a jab in my arm. I felt my head dizzy. Then I thought they were taking my blood pressure for a band was wrapped round my arm. Then I felt an electric shock going through my arm. It got higher and higher and I felt it going through my legs and the rest of my body."

The World in Action team in their research for their programme on N.Ireland for Independent Television, *A Question of Torture*, issued 25 September, 1972, came to the conclusion that the machine used to produce electric shocks to the men was a nerve or muscular stimulator available at medical equipment shops. This machine can be strapped on the arm and has electrodes capable of giving a powerful electric shock.

THESE ARE THE PRINCIPAL METHODS USED IN HOLYWOOD AND GIRDWOOD BARRACKS

- 1 Placing a man in "search position," single finger of each hand to the wall, legs well apart and well back, on the toes, knees bent, for prolonged period.
- 2 Heavy punching to the pit of the stomach to man in "search position."
- 3 Kicking the legs from under a man in the "search position" so that he falls to the ground, banging his head on the wall, or radiator, or ground.
- 4 Beating with batons on the kidneys and on the privates in "search position".
- 5 Kicking between the legs while in the "search position". This is a very popular among the RUC officers and they often do it for periods of half an hour or an hour.
- 6 Putting a man in "search position" over a very powerful electric fire or radiator.

- 7 Stretching a man over benches with two electric fires underneath and kicking him on the stomach.
- 8 Rabbit punching to the back of the neck while in "search position."
- 9 Banging the head against the wall.
- 10 Beating the head with a baton in crescendo fashion.
- 11 Slapping the ears and face with open hand.
- 12 Twisting the arms behind the back and twisting fingers.
- 13 Prodding the stomach with straight fingers.
- 14 Chopping blows to the ribs from behind with simultaneous blows to the stomach.
- 15 Hand squeezing of the testicles.
- 16 Insertion of instruments in the anal passage.
- 17 Kicking on the knees and shins.
- 18 Tossing the prisoner from one officer to another and punching him while in the air.
- 19 Injections
- 20 Electric cattle prod was used.
- 21 Electric shocks given by use of a machine.
- 22 Burning with matches and candles.
- 23 Deprivation of sleep.
- 24 Urinating on prisoners.
- 25 Psychological tortures:
 - (a) Russian roulette.
 - (b) Firing blanks.
 - (c) Beating men in darkness.
 - (d) Blindfolding.
 - (e) Assailants using stocking masks.
 - (f) Wearing surgical dress.

- (g) Staring at white perforated wall in small cubicle.
- (h) Use of amphetamine drugs.
- (i) Prisoners are threatened; threats to their families, bribes offered, false confessions are used.

ILL-TREATMENT IN BALLYKELLY 1973-1974

From 1973-74 the main torture centre was Ballykelly Royal Air Force/Army Barracks. There young men and boys were brought for interrogation by the police, especially those men from Armagh, Tyrone, and Derry. In Belfast some RUC Stations and British Army posts were used for interrogation and beatings. The following are samples of illtreatment in Ballykelly:-

- Long hours of interrogation.
- Deprivation of sleep.
- Bullying and ignorant conduct.
- Foul and filthy language.
- Threats of UDA, internment, to life itself.
- Use of excessive heat in a black hole.
- Prisoners being struck and manhandled.
- Forced to do physical exercises for long periods.
- Forced to assume positions of discomfort.
- Use of hood.
- Hair pulled out.
- Simulated executions by clicking guns.
- Being shown photographs of the mutilated bodies of brothers and relatives.
- Offered bribes to turn informer.

THE BLACK AND BLUE BOOK

In April 1972 three men arrived in Armagh Prison on remand. They were so severely beaten they could hardly walk. They had to have their trousers slit and they walked with their legs apart. One of them had a

fractured arm. They were the famous Edward Duffy, Gerard Donnelly and Gerard Bradley from Belfast who were severely tortured by RUC Special Branch men in Broadway Army Post. Their injuries were so bad they were sent from the prison to Musgrave Park Hospital. Their cases were brought to Strasbourg. The tortures and brutalities by the RUC were recorded by Fr.Faul and I in our book *The RUC: The Black and Blue Book*.

THE CASTLEREAGH FILE

Father Faul and I continued the catalogue of torture and brutality in our book **THE CASTLEREAGH FILE**, allegations of RUC brutality 1976-77. It is a large book of nearly 200 pages. There is world wide interest in the allegations about Castlereagh following the *Amnesty Report* after its mission to N.Ireland 28 November - 6 December 1977. Amnesty has already issued a Report on N.Ireland March 1972 and concluded that persons arrested under the Special Powers Act had been subject to brutal treatment during arrest and transport and that there were cases where suffering had been inflicted on those arrested to obtain confessions or information from them. The European Commission on Human Rights in Strasbourg found Britain guilty of torture in the Irish Government case against Britain alleging breaches of the European Commission on Human Rights, 1976, and in January 1978 the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg ruled that the United Kingdom Government had been guilty of inhuman and degrading treatment, contrary to Article 3 of the European Human Rights Convention, in the use of interrogation techniques. In 1977 the brutality of plainclothes police in Castlereagh came under the criticism of the BBC "Tonight" team under Keith Kyle after its presentation of the case of Bernard O'Connor, the Independent Television Network Team under Peter Taylor on 27 October when records of persons illtreated and records of doctors were shown on television, and in December the heads of the four main churches expressed their concern about serious allegations of illtreatment. The brutality in Castlereagh followed new techniques mainly designed not to leave marks.

20 METHODS OF BRUTALITY IN CASTLEREAGH AND OTHER RUC INTERROGATION CENTRES

1. Hair pulling.
2. Punching to back of head. Heavy slaps across the face and head.
3. Simultaneous slapping of ears with both hands sometimes perforating eardrums.
4. Strangling neck. Chops to the throat. Gripping and pulling of Adam's apple. Pushing fingers into pressure points of neck.
5. Punches and kicks to stomach, buttocks, kidneys, spine. Stiff finger prodding to ribs.
6. Manual squeezing of testicles, punching and kicking testicles; lifting naked prisoner by placing stick between his legs.
7. Arm twisting. Bending wrist backwards both above and below arm. Finger twisting.
8. Positions of stress-search position against wall, sitting on non-existent chair, squatting hunkers.
9. Press-ups to point of exhaustion; super press-ups, legs on chair, hands on ground. Running on the spot to point of exhaustion.
10. Wrestling holds until prisoner vomits.
11. Strangling neck and forcing head down to the point of asphyxiation.
12. Trailing along floor; prone on floor while personnel stand and jump on back riding prisoner like a horse.
13. Made to lie centre back across a table or chair face upwards. Interrogators then jump on legs causing intense pain to back.
14. Placing plastic bag, hood, jacket, or underpants, over head to restrict flow of air.
15. Throwing prisoner from one interrogator to another.
16. Simulated execution by clicking gun behind the head; simulated electrocution by putting plug into mouth and putting on switch.
17. Singing skin with matches and cigarettes.

18. Degradations - making prisoner lick water or vomit off floor; behave like a dog; spitting in face; stripping prisoner naked and making obscene remarks about his body, his wife, his children.

19. Pouring liquid into ears.

20. Threats to shoot prisoner in lonely place, hand over to UVF, threats to parents and children.

BERNARD O'CONNOR

Here is an extract from Bernard O'Connor's statement:-

"I was kicked around the room by both men on the legs and buttocks. I was fired around the room from one to the other. I was punched severely in the stomach several times, mainly by the older man. I was made get down on the floor and do ten press-ups and if I let my body touch the floor again I was kicked by the younger man on the buttocks. I was again put back on my toes and made stand again with my hands out and this went on and on. Finally they decided that it might be even better if I took off my clothes so I was told to take my trousers off. They then told me to take my underpants off. They then told me to take the rest of my clothes off, leaving me naked. I was pumped up and down with my head between my knees several times after I was fully clothed again. I was pushed into a corner and the track suit top which I was wearing was taken off me and put down over my head by the younger man with the arms tied around my neck. I cannot say who tied them round my neck. My nose was closed off with their fingers and my mouth was sealed off with another hand. I couldn't breathe. During this I heard the older man say "choke the bastard". I found even my very stomach trying to come up my throat until finally I could remember no more for a short stage. I felt I must have fainted for maybe just a minute or maybe 5 or 10 minutes. I have no idea but I came round the same two people kicking me in the sides. I was made run up and down at the time, jogging and running on the spot, and each time I ran past them they kicked me on the legs and buttocks. They couldn't get me to run fast enough."

We documented many similar cases in THE CASTLEREAGH FILE. An interesting thing is that the book contains allegations of illtreatment by Loyalists and the inclusion of women in illtreatment. The statements given in our book suggest that the continuing illtreatment of prisoners is being done by a

squad of plainclothes men, not by the uniformed men of the RUC. This squad of plainclothes men is centred in Castlereagh, but they appear to move about the Six Counties in the manner of a "Heavy Gang" and have been known to operate in many centres. It is impossible to understand how the chiefs and heads of the RUC in Belfast and various districts could be unconscious of the fact that this brutality is going on; it is impossible for the police doctors not to know it; impossible for the magistrates, impossible for the prison officers who receive innocent men into jail after being charged on brutality statements.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

I praise Amnesty International for their mission to Northern Ireland 28 November - 6 December 1977. The four member team was made up of Dr. John Humphries a Canadian well known for his work in human rights and head of research at the International Secretariat of Amnesty in London, Dutch Lawyer, Mr. Douwe Kerff of the University Institute of European Studies in Florence, Dr. Kelstrupp and Dr. Ingelund, psychiatrists. They were available to everybody who wanted to see them. They worked hard until 2 a.m. in the morning. I witnessed the extreme attention they gave one of the cases I brought them - case No. 27, seeing him for two hours on one day and six hours on another day. Any organisation which is prepared to send two highly qualified doctors from the continent of Europe to N. Ireland to examine an Irish country lad for a total of eight hours and issue a public report to protect his physical and mental health and secure his human rights, without charging a penny, has my unqualified admiration, thanks, and approval. I hope this organisation's work in N. Ireland will find many imitators here in the United States.

OUR DEMANDS

Our demands are as follows:-

1. An end to 7 Day Detention.
2. An end to torture and cruel and degrading treatment of arrested persons.
3. An end to imprisonment without trial.

4. An end to long remands without trial of 12 to 24 months.
5. An end to the special Diplock Courts where alleged verbal statements of an accused man are given out by the police and accepted on their word, where beating, thumping, and kicking prisoners and interrogating them for long periods, and putting them in positions of stress, are not accepted as cruel and degrading treatment and statements taken after these forms of illtreatment are accepted in court. There is great disparity in sentences and some of the sentences are inhuman - 20, 25, 30 years recommended.

6. An end to the deplorable conditions in the prisons. In H-Block Long Kesh (The Maze Prison) young boys of 17, 18, 19 are facing sentences of 20 to 30 years. They refuse to wear the prison clothes and do the work because they have been subjected to all these emergency laws and violations of emergency laws. They are locked up 24 hours a day in their cells, denied association with fellow-prisoners and contact with the outside world through radio, television, papers, writing material, reading materials. They are denied physical exercise in the open air and some of these young men have endured this for two years. No prisoners in human history have endured so much deprivation for so long a time.

Likewise girls in Armagh Prison, both the 27 on protest for political status, and the remand prisoners, have been suffering a regime of excessive lock-ups and defeminisation.

7. We demand a re-examination of all cases based on statements taken in Castlereagh and the rescinding of many sentences.
8. We demand the release of 18 Irish prisoners in Britain who are innocent - 9 of these have a life sentence. They were imprisoned by police action and judicial procedures which in my opinion are contrary to human rights. Sister Sarah Clarke, London, of the "Relatives and Friends of Prisoners Committee" has pointed out frequently the harassment of five prisoners in England who have been subjected to solitary confinement, segregation units, loss of privileges, strip searches both of the prisoners and their visitors, body searches, closed visits, curtailment of visits, curtailment of mail,

curtailment of parcels. They are from a poor area of Belfast. Three of them are married and have nine children between them, another has a widowed mother over 80 years, and one is an orphan. Bishop Thomas Drury of Corpus Christi, Texas, has shown himself to be a friend and co-laborer in the work for prisoners in England. We demand the end to Category A "Irish" treatment of prisoners in England and the repatriation of Irish prisoners.

H BLOCK

I would like to say something more about H Block. Prison conditions have always been bad in this mile-square camp of concrete, iron, barbed wire, soldiers, dogs, hundreds of prison officers, men in cages. In 1976 the British Government said nobody would receive political status for political crimes committed after March 1976. The first prisoner - Ciaran Nugent was sentenced in September 1976. He has now been two years "on the blanket". If he can endure another year, he will emerge as a great hero. When he is released he will have served every day of his sentence on the blanket.

The British Government tried to smash this protest as quickly as possible and they deliberately imposed excessive punishments - no physical exercise, no reading material, no writing material. The men endured this state of almost total deprivation, 24 hours in cell etc, for 17 months. Then when they found the British authorities were interfering with their visits and their correspondence, and were continuing to beat up prisoners, especially young prisoners, they completed the cycle of deprivation by refusing to wash and slop out. This was an extreme measure. There are very few measures available to prisoners except there is a strike element of some kind in it. One would think the removal of remission adequate punishment. The loss of freedom after all is 90% of punishment in prisons. For instance what was remarkable about the prisoners demands? Every prisoner in the Republic of Ireland wears his own clothes and work is voluntary. The punishments that the British have inflicted - 24 hour lock-up, deprivation of physical exercise and fresh air, no radio, TV, reading materials, writing materials, hobbies, games, all lack of contact with outside world, association with fellow prisoners - all these taken together and inflicted on prisoners for over 2 years - all this constitutes torture, degrading treatment, and is contrary to human rights.

Mr. Roy Mason, Secretary of State, is trying to break the prisoners by punishments which are inhuman by any standards because he cannot face the political consequences of confining the punishments to loss of remission. There are hundreds of young men and women aged 18, 19, 20 years on protest after sentence in the Diplock courts and these would sit in jail on protest for 20, 25, 30 years as a reminder to the public and to the world of the British use of torture, brutality, and dubious legal and judicial procedures. It would be impossible to establish a democratic system of government while the ghettos seethed with indignation.

Therefore the British Government must use their crude dungeon type brutalities to break the protest of the H Block men. They are seen by priests in their cells every week when they go round for confessions. The experience is a terrible one. The H Block has an underground atmosphere, bare concrete bricks painted white, slashed with iron gates; the doors of the cells like great massive safes. On opening a terrible stench emerges. Two Rip Van Winkle types with emaciated white bodies and bedraggled hair and beards rise up from sponge mattresses that are half soaked with urine, clutching at their blanket or blue towel to cover their nakedness. The windows, little narrow slits in the concrete, let in the cold breezes which help to disperse the fumes. The once white walls of the tiny cell are now darkened with dried excrement. There is no furniture at all in the cells. You move from cell to cell and after a few hours you are glad to get away. You have taken the precaution of eating nothing. But these men are there all night, all day, all week, some of them for years. The inhuman conditions in H Block have been deliberately created to suit the political purposes of the British administration, like many previous periods of Irish history. The British are prepared to use violations of basic human rights to create conditions suitable for the imposition of a British solution on the Irish people. Are the 30 million Irish people in America the 4½ million at home, the million in Britain prepared to allow them to do this?

HARASSMENT IN H BLOCK

Here are two examples of harrassment in H Block:-

Relatives visiting H Block

For personal reasons Gerard Deery who is on the blanket in H5 decided to take a visit with members of his family. Two sisters and a sister-in-law, three married

women with seven children between them, went to see him on Saturday 23 September 1978. They left Derry at 7.30 in the morning and made the 80 mile journey. They arrived at the Prison Camp at 10.50 a.m. They were kept waiting until 2.45 p.m. Then they were told that they would get no visit. WHY? Presumably because the prisoner refused to submit to have his backside searched by the prison officers before coming out to see members of his family. They arrived home to Derry at 6.30 p.m.

This is abominable treatment for poor people. The women were 11 hours away on a fruitless journey. One of the women had to arrange for her father to look after her four month old baby while she was away.

Assault by prison officers on a H Block prisoner

On Friday 15 September 1978 a 22 year-old man from Dungiven, County Derry, Liam McCloskey, was taken out to the circle of H Block 3. He alleges he was assaulted by 8 prison officers. Special medical examination since then has shown that he is totally deaf in one ear and partially deaf in another.

On Tuesday 19 September he was brought out from one wing of H3 for transference to another. He was compelled to undergo another search. Totally naked he was thrown up on a table by four prison officers, one holding each arm, one holding each leg, face downwards. This was in order to carry out an exploration of his back passage. A fifth prison officer banged McCloskey's head down violently on the table smashing his nose. He saw other prisoners getting the same treatment.

Liam McCloskey is a quiet inoffensive little person, always smiling. He is not the type to resist or be cheeky or start trouble of any kind. His treatment must rank as one of the worst kind of bullying by security forces in the last seven years.

ONE UNITED IRISH VOICE

In proportion to the number of the population in N.Ireland - which is 1½ million - or in proportion to the adult male Catholic population the number of grave violations of human rights have been greater in N.Ireland each year since 1971 than in any other country in the world.

The United States Government has shown itself gravely concerned about human rights in Russia, Haiti, Sierra Leone, South Africa. We in Ireland find it difficult to understand why a President and his Congress refuse to make a clear and explicit statement condemning the well-documented and well-proved violations of human rights in N.Ireland over the last 7 years. Have the Americans got some inferiority complex in regard to the British? Is the British influence in America so strong that it can pressure the freedom-loving Americans to ignore the catalogue of tortures? It is my opinion that the Irish people are not sufficiently united in speaking out with one voice for human rights for Irish people and for other people. We are a small race in the world compared to Arabs, Indians, Japanese, Chinese. We are sufficiently small to regard ourselves as a family. It is a poor and unworthy family that fails to defend its weaker members, those who are sick, in trouble, or in prison. A family weakens itself by showing division if it fails to speak up for its members who are in need or who are experiencing violations of their basic human rights. What we want is to have the Irish in Ireland, the Irish in Britain, and the Irish in the United States of America - all 30 million of them - speaking with one united voice for human rights in Ireland and in the world.

We Irish are a people dedicated to the highest spiritual and cultural values. When we speak with united voice we will leave on one side leaders of violence who want exclusive control of prisoners and their relations for political reasons and on the other side certain Marxist elements who want to eliminate the decent middle of the road Irish family men and women and leave only a rump of wild talkers. We want the broad spectrum of Irish people in Ireland, in Britain, and in the United States to come together as a united family demanding decent standards for all people and especially for prisoners and the poor.

AN APPEAL TO CONGRESS MEN

Speaking to more than a hundred Congressmen in Washington DC, 3 October 1978, Father Raymond Murray made the following demands:-

THE TRUTH MUST BE TOLD

- 1 Machinery should be set up so that the truth from Ireland can be circulated in Washington and read by Congressmen, Senators, and key pressmen.
- 2 More Congressmen should visit Ireland. Come officially as Mr Joshua Eilberg, Mr Hamilton Fish, and Mr David Sorensen did. Come through your consul Mr Stout in Belfast. Tour the ghettos and get the bird's eye view - Turf Lodge, Ballymurphy, the Markets, the Short Strand, the New Lodge Road. This is not the primrose tour of Mr Roy Mason, Secretary of State. You will not hear about H Block prison conditions or the killings of Leo Norney, Majella O'Hare, and Brian Stewart from the British or the Irish Embassies.

JUSTICE MUST BE DONE

- 1 Justice must be done. You must back up the Amnesty International Report on N. Ireland published June 1978 with all the power of the Congress. Call for a public inquiry into the tortures in N. Ireland, the prosecution of the torturers and the rescinding of all statements taken under oppressive circumstances and by oppressive methods in Castlereagh Police Interrogation Centre and other police centres.
- 2 I am addressing many lawyers and pillars of the law steeped in the traditions of the common law. I would like you to gather a committee under a personage like Mr Samuel Dash to investigate the Emergency Provisions Act (NI, 1973), the Diplock Courts, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and thereby restore the rule of law to N. Ireland.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN DIGNITY MUST BE RESPECTED

- 1 The constant and particular interest of American Congressmen and Senators is necessary to scrutinise all legislation in N. Ireland in the field of human rights. This not only to establish independent procedures to end torture and ill-treatment of persons but to examine the whole area of jobs, houses, the routing of Orange processions, sectarianism in provincial and local government.
- 2 The particular interest and assistance of American Congressmen is required to secure the full development of all our people in accordance with their human dignity so that they be allowed to enjoy true religious liberty, full development of Irish culture, and all the resources of Ireland by the Irish people.

WE DEMAND

1. An end to 7 Day Detention.
2. An end to torture and illtreatment of arrested persons.
3. An end to imprisonment without trial.
4. An end to long remands without trial.
5. An end to the special Diplock Courts.
6. An end to deplorable conditions in the prisons.
7. A re-examination of all cases based on statements taken in Castlereagh and the rescinding of many sentences.
8. The release of 18 Irish prisoners in Britain who are innocent.
9. An end to Category A "Irish" treatment of prisoners in England.