



**They
came
in the
morning**

Brigadier Frank Kitson,
British Army's expert
on Brutality and
Torture.

**Internment—Monday,
August 9th, 1971.**

Torture and Brutality
in the North.

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INTRODUCTION

“If They Come in the Morning . . .” is the title of a moving book on repression in the United States featuring the case of Angela Davis and the Black Panther Movement. That book describes the heroism of human beings faced with terrible oppression and inhumane treatment.

Books will yet be written about the time the British troops came in the early dawn of August 9, 1971, to gather up the political hostages who are now held in Crumlin Road Jail and Long Kesh Concentration Camp.

This little booklet is intended to meet the immediate needs of the moment: to document factually and truthfully a selection of the stories that reveal what happened to the hundreds that Tory Unionism sent for in that terrible dawn.

Three main categories of brutality and torture have emerged. Two of these begin on August 9 and are connected with the initial internment swoop and the third commences in the police compound at Palace Barracks, Holywood, in early September and continues to the present day.

Almost 300 men were taken in the first swoop on August 9. The majority of these men were from the Belfast area and were taken to Girdwood Army Barracks adjoining Crumlin Road Jail. The vast majority of the men taken to Girdwood were the victims of a systematic and highly organised exercise in brutality. Led out in batches of six, the detainees were forced to run a gauntlet of baton wielding military Red Caps to a helicopter stationed in a field near the barracks building. They were then forced to run back through the gauntlet being kicked, knocked to the ground and batoned once again. The most senior British officers present at Girdwood stood and watched this process. The other main feature of this day's brutality was the terror journey to Crumlin Road Jail nearby when prisoners, in batches of six once again, were forced to run an obstacle course in stockings or bare feet over rough shingle and broken glass, being screamed at and beaten all the way.

The second category comprises those brought to the Maidstone from the rural parts of the North. A selected number of these men were tortured as distinct from being brutalised. Magilligan Army Camp in North Derry and Ballykinlar Army Camp in Co. Down are jumping off points for this torture category.

Patrick Shivers of Toome, P. J. McClean of Beragh, Michael Montgomery and Michael Donnelly of Derry spent a whole week in an unknown location with bags over their heads being tortured in a scientific manner. British Army medical personnel supervised this operation and ensured that these victims were driven to the limits of physical endurance.

The third category became known to the detainees in Crumlin Road Jail when two young Belfast men, Anthony Maxwell and Pat McCarthy

of the Markets area, Belfast, described what had happened to them in the police compound at Palace Army Barracks, Holywood, Co. Down.

Arrested on September 4, Maxwell describes how he had been stripped naked and tortured for two days and two nights. Those listening to his account in C Wing of Crumlin Road Jail could see the visible signs of the beatings given him by Special Branch Inspector Harry Taylor and others unknown to him.

To the internees themselves must go the credit for exposing what is happening. Despite being held incommunicado they managed to document the experiences of detainees and smuggle the accounts to the outside world.

The **Irish Times** and the **Irish Independent** were the first to publish the details. Inside Crumlin Road Jail Kevin McCorry, Desmond O'Hagan, Oliver Kelly and the present writer, all graduates of various Irish Universities, took down the majority of statements from the oral accounts of detainees. These descriptions, labourously hand written, took many hours to write.

Accuracy was the prime concern of everyone involved.

The British and Unionist reaction was to deny the stories had any truth whatever. Then commenced the searching of visitors both going into and coming from visits to internees in an attempt to stem the flood of information. When these measures failed the establishment of the Compton Inquiry was announced at the end of August.

The very terms of reference of the Compton Inquiry showed that the British Home Office wish to hide a scandal from the public view. The Inquiry was private, non-judicial and promised only to publish findings as distinct from evidence. Significantly, the terms of reference confined it to August 9. The terms of reference were in contravention of the criteria advised by the Royal Commission on Royal Commissions. Apparently what is good for the English is too good for the Irish.

Whatever the enlargement or replacement for Compton, the original terms of reference stand as a monument to Home Office intentions in the matter of an impartial inquiry into allegations of brutality and torture.

The detainees of Crumlin Road Jail resented this adding of insult to injury and were unanimous in their rejection of Compton. In a statement smuggled out of the jail and carried in the national press they called for a public, judicial inquiry with full powers to subpoena and to allow cross-examination of Army witnesses and which would publish its proceedings in full.

The detainees also demanded a recognised international figure from abroad to act as Chairman and guarantee the impartiality of the proceedings. These demands have not yet been met and it is clear that they can never be met in full by the Home Office if it is to be successful in suppressing the scandal.

The detainees in the statement pointed out that men like Pat Shivers and P. J. McClean had been taken away for "concentrated torture" on the strength of the special order signed by the Stormont Premier, Mr. Faulkner. The purpose of the exercise, said the detainees, was to shield "not just a rabble of sadistic British Army bully boys" but the Northern

Ireland Premier himself, who was “personally responsible for the worst treatment meted out”.

“We will boycott this inquiry until such time as it is open, impartial and comprehensive, and summons Faulkner to account for the torture of detainees”, said the statement.

Another important demand made by detainees was that the court to be established should be chaired by someone from the Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg and representatives from that Court and also from the United Nations should attend. “In this way, the effects of the United Kingdom derogation from the European Convention of Human Rights would be seen, and action against the London Government might be considered”.

When Compton arrived in Crumlin Road Jail, not a single detainee would speak to him. He received a letter from the Prison Committee setting out the demands outlined above. The attitude on the Maidstone is described in a statement by Des Smith of Bessbrook. “Your name was called out in alphabetical order. The first man to go up . . . was asked if he had any complaint to make against brutality by the British Army. The man said he had but stated that he did not intend to make it to a Private Inquiry. ‘Anything I have to say I wish it to be made public. . . .’ Before he got time to finish Sir Edmund said: ‘Listen, I am not interested in this. I asked you a question. Yes or No, do you want to make a complaint?’ The man replied again: ‘Yes, I want to make a complaint to a Public Inquiry’.”

He was again told that was not the answer required—the answer required was either yes or no. The man insisted on the same answer. Sir Edmund stroked him down as having said “No”. This happened with every man on the boat after that”.

In recent weeks the number and horror of the stories has increased to the point that a detainee taken in a swoop is considered lucky to arrive at the torture centre in Palace Barracks in one piece.

In the event the Compton Report justified entirely the stand taken by the detainees and their demands for a public judicial inquiry headed by a Chairman of International repute from one of the European countries. This inquiry, in the light of the dishonest and partisan Compton charade, is now more imperative than ever.

The European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights states: “Everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time, by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law.” The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations Organisation states: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.” The internees, survivors of the British Army terror in the North of Ireland, demand no more and no less.

Amnesty International, the only body of international repute to have dealt with the complaints of the internees, has found prima facie evidence of brutality and torture and urged such an inquiry.

The evidence here is intended to confirm the widely held opinion that such an impartial and judicial inquiry be established as soon as possible. The daily reports of brutality, torture and atrocity from the North add urgency to that demand.