

REPRESSION OF THE CATHOLICS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Allegations of Brutality, Signing of False Statements and Threats of Assassination made by Regional Crime Squad Members in the Strand Road R.U.C. Station, Derry City 22-25 November, 1976

Issued by Rev. Denis Faul, Dungannon and Rev. Raymond Murray, Armagh.

THE following are extracts from statements taken from men interrogated in Strand Road R.U.C. Station recently. They should prove to be of interest to the relatives and legal representatives of men who were interrogated in that R.U.C. Station over the last four months by the regional crime squad and made statements which might be described at some future date as voluntary written statements.

The effort to inspire confidence and secure co-operation from the Catholic people to solve the many horrendous murders of innocent men in the Co. Derry, will not be helped by the alleged claims of the R.C.S. to have close contacts with the U.F.F. and to be able to send them to "get" men. The tactic of forcing a man's hand to sign a statement written by R.U.C. R.C.S. men does not increase respect for due process of law. Likewise violations of law by assault and grievous bodily harm by punching, kicking, prodding, forced exercises, stripping, hand exercises, press-ups, karate chops and the like do not elicit feelings of approval or support for people who allege their duty is to uphold the law impartially and who accept taxpayers' money on that allegation. Some names of R.U.C. men and descriptions of them all have been sent to the Police Authority to help their investigation of these allegations. Of course if anything like an assassination or attempted assassination of the men whose statements are recorded below, occurs, we would expect some members of the R.C.S. to be charged as accomplices and I have notified the Chief Constable to that effect.

The promotion of peace in the community depends on these complaints being looked into in an impartial and just fashion.

SEAMUS DOHERTY (31), Drumderg Road, Draperstown, alleges: "On Monday 22/11/76 I was arrested under Section 10 at 6.05 a.m. and brought to Strand Road R.U.C. Station, Derry City.

I sat on a chair; I asked for my solicitor. They said there would be no f..... solicitor here. I said I would answer no questions until I had my solicitor here, and I wanted the questions in writing. They started shouting and using obscenities. I still refused to answer question without a solicitor. They started to beat me about the ears with the flat of their hands, jabbed me in the stomach with straight fingers; punched me from behind in the kidneys. I was pulled up from the chair; more punching in the kidneys, slapping on ears. One man held me up by his arm under my Adam's apple and when I was ready to gasp he other man hit me in the stomach.

Second interrogation: Same two men. Started beating me, prodding me with fingers in the guts and the kidneys. Holding me up with his arm under my chin and hitting me in the stomach. A third and fourth man came in. Three of them set about beating me — punching me in the stomach with fingers and fist. A tall man caught me by the hair and swung me around the room on my toes — the others hit me in the guts. One split my fingers and twisted my hand away back, while putting pressure on the other arm — pulling me apart; it lasted a long time.

They told me I was in the **Romper Room**, 30' x 30', carpeted, one wee table and two chairs.

Third Interrogation: Same two men; spread-eagled against the wall in search position after some ill-treatment, punched me and kicked me in the stomach and between the legs — kept doing this. Hoped I would faint in the Romper Room. At intervals a quiet man would talk so that all the squealing and noise and beating could be heard from the room next door. "That's your f.....ing brother getting it. You're going in there next."

Fourth Interrogation: 8—8.30 p.m. Taken to the room next door, which is a long one, full of desks and chairs with a blackboard in the corner and a table up front. Punching in the stomach and kidneys with fist and fingers; fingers and hand twisted back. Went on for an hour. Back to the cell. They interfered with my sleep.

Tuesday: First Interrogation: About noon, a quiet interrogation, shouting, but no physical abuse. Different men.

Visit from wife.

Second Interrogation: Immediately after the visit a rough session. Punched in the stomach, chest and kidneys; twisted my fingers and hands. They produced a false statement from my brother. Said he would make a false statement for me. He copied from the alleged statement of my brother, which was false. He threw it down and said: "Sign that". I refused. He said: "We'll soon see about that; you'll f.....ing sign it. A stout man held me over the table and the other asked me was I left handed or right handed. I said I was right. He reached the pen into my right hand and when I refused to hold the pen, he pushed it into the palm of my hand, closed my hand inside his hands and scribbled a makeshift signature. "That's you right for twenty years no," he said. The a different man to the one who held me said: "There's your statement and there's a lighter. If you make a statement of your own, you can take that other one and burn it with the lighter."

In this lecture room there was a package framed

on the wall. He took it down and made me handle it; then he made me read the paper on it; it said: "Commercial explosives". He said: "You just handle it".

Little sleep on Tuesday night.

Wednesday: First Interrogation: No beating. One detective said: "You'll be a f.....ing lucky man if your get 20 years, because if you do get out of here, I'll give you till Christmas — you know. We can drop the names in the right places." Another man said to me: "There is only one thing for you boys — the bullet in the head." They insulted my wife repeatedly; they used very bad language all the time—a continuous stream of filthy talk. Released without charge on Wednesday evening.

Signed: Seamus Gerald Doherty.

Witness: Fr. Denis Faul.

26/11/76.

Statement by **PETER DOHERTY** (20), Ballyknock, Maghera, brother of Seamus:

I was arrested on Monday 22/11/76 and brought to Strand Road R.U.C. Station, Derry City.

First Interrogation: No brutality.

Second Interrogation: Brought me to a little room with desks and board; kicked away the chair, stood me in front of the table, slapped my face, punched my stomach with fists, punched my ears, made me stand with hands straight in front of me. One pulled my head back and chopped my Adam's apple with his arm; split my fingers, forced my hands back, then in against the wrist, getting leverage from my elbow. They beat me in the stomach, knocked me to the ground, lifted me by the hair and slapped me in the face.

Third Interrogation: Threatened with **Romper Room**. At 9 taken to **Romper Room**. One said: "This is the Romper Room and I am Miss Adrian". They jabbed me with straight fingers in the stomach and beat me around the face. Stood me against the wall. Beat my head against the wall. They put me standing on a chair; punched me in the stomach and threw me from one to the other on to the chair. Pulled the chair away, walked me around the floor with his arm around my shoulder and kept hitting me in the guts and in the mouth. Then others thumped me with fists and kept kicking me in the stomach. They threw me in a heap against the wall. Again one started walking me around the room — he was "Miss Adrian" — and thumping me in the stomach and the kidneys. Another known figure put me on his knee and said: "I am going to drop you — and he did and hit me the back of his fist across the mouth.

One went out and said he was going to get "full" and then he would sort me out. They continued beating me in the stomach twisting my arms and they threatened to throw me out the window. They put me in the sitting position with no chair, and when spreadeagled in that position I was beaten. I was made to do press-ups and beaten on my body while doing so.

Tuesday: First Interrogation. Taken to the lecture room. Standing; beaten about the face and caught by the hair and beaten down.

They wrote out a long statement. They took my hand, put the pen in it and wrote my signature at the bottom of the paper. One jumped off the table and said: "That makes my day. I'm going to get f.....ing full now." The others said they were willing to burn the statement if I would sign one on membership.

Second Interrogation. Taken into a bedroom. They got rough. Caught me by the hair and banged my head against the wall. Put his hands behind my head; while talking would you forward to himself

and then threw back, hit you a rabbit punch and smash your ears.

Third Interrogation. An Englishman among them this time. Hitting on stomach, embracing you and throwing you back; hitting the head against the wall. He said they wanted me out; I would not see Christmas. They would drop a work with their acquaintances to sort me out. You work on roofs in Coleraine. It would not be hard to knock you off down there. It's the right country for it." They they said: "You'll not be getting out. You have a mother and people belonging to you at home. The U.F.F. will count that near enough. They used filthy and rotten language all the time.

Wednesday: First. Slapping, punching, threats: "The boys around Desertmartin will be waiting to see who comes out of this lift".

Second. Young man, slapped me and kicked me, said I would be got. I was released without charge on Wednesday evening.

Signed: Peter Doherty.

Witness: Fr. Denis Faul.

26/11/76.

BRIAN GRUGAN (26), Ballynure, near Drapers-town.

I was arrested at 6 a.m. on Monday 22/11/76 and taken to Strand Road, Derry. Monday was alright.

Tuesday. Second Interrogation: Beaten with fists in the stomach. Beaten against the wall. One said: "Take off your coat and fight me."

Wednesday. First: Made to do press-ups; pulled by the hair, twenty times. Hit my head off the wall many times.

Second: Punched me in the belly and kicked me in the privates. Stripped me naked and laughed and joked about my body. Threatened to open up my stomach with an old tin box. Put ashes on my hair and eyes. Swung me around the room.

I was released on Wednesday afternoon.

Signed: Brian Grugan.

Witness: Fr. Denis Faul.

26/11/76.

Another man aged 22 from Draperstown said: "I was slapped in the face. They wrote: 'I am a member of the Provo I.R.A. and a volunteer'. I said that was wrong. They caught my hand and made me sign it. They said: 'You'll get ten years for signing it'".

He was released on Wednesday.

APPENDIX

Fr. Faul, Dungannon, said that he had identified the following list of methods of ill-treatment in **Castlereagh R.U.C. Interrogation Centre** in the records of prisoners arrested in Co. Derry and Co. Tyrone during October 1976. Official complaints had been made to the Police Authority.

1. Striking in the solar plexus.
2. Forcing fingers back against the lever of the arm or pressing hand forward.
3. Standing in the middle of the floor, hands up in a sitting position but without a chair for long periods.
4. Slapping in the face, back and forward violently.
5. Hitting on the legs.
6. Pulling hair.
7. Slapping on the stomach, thumping on the stomach; they said: "under the Queensberry Rules we can thump you without leaving a mark".
8. Hitting in the privates with the boot.
9. Hooding with coat or pullover.
10. Threatening with revolver.
11. Threatening to have the family assassinated by the U.V.F./U.D.A.