

THE ORANGE CROSS

A Historical Narrative



**The First Organised Welfare Group
To Provide Comforts For Loyalist Prisoners**

'Their Cause Is Our Cause'

"WHY ARE YOU HERE SON?"

Upon their arrival, every UVF and RHC volunteer who found himself incarcerated in Long Kesh during the years when Gusty Spence was Officer Commanding was initially asked the above question during any debriefing meeting. Gusty was interested, not in the offence they had been convicted of, but rather the personal motivations of the mostly young men who found their way into the barbed wire compounds, guard dogs and military watchtowers.

"Gusty wanted to understand why I was in the prison and what beliefs had taken me there. I found it an arrogant question and yet it was a question that began to unlock a door to a different idea. He was confronting my attitudes and was forcing me to question .. why."

David Ervine



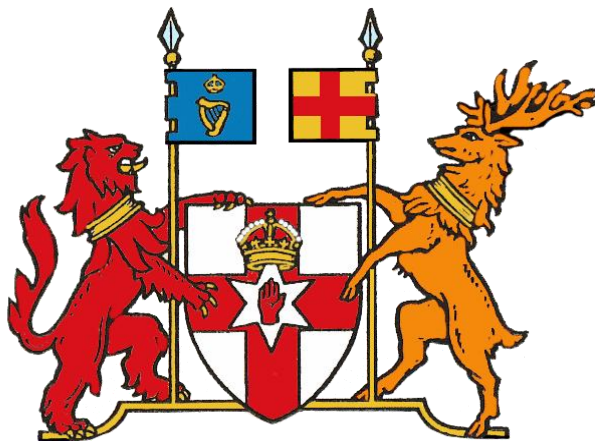
"With courage and vision you will dare to take risks, have the strength to be compassionate, and the wisdom to be humble. Courage is the foundation of integrity." Mark Twain."



In memory of Mum and Dad, Minnie and Willie Spence; and unfortunately with both having since passed, it is impossible to thank each personally for everything they've done for their children, from unconditionally loving my sister Margaret, younger brother Norman and myself; whilst at the same time, raising us in a stable household, where there was instilled traditional values through which we were taught to celebrate and embrace life. None of the three of us could have asked for better parents or role-models to prepare each sibling for the future.

"There's joy in every kindly thought; of friendship tried and true;
These simple chords of life, the hearts of us anew."

Ed Spence



1921 ~ NORTHERN IRELAND CENTENARY ~ 2021

THE BEGINNINGS ~ 1966 - 1969

In his 1859 historical novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens famously wrote .. *'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair'*. No doubt a quote that may have described the most explosive period in Ulster's history, starting in 1969, where the scale of events, some inevitable, and in hindsight many readily avoidable with more wisdom, blew us into the turbulent maelstrom of history and the futility of violence. One of the standard questions will remain however .. *do we ever learn from history?* The repetition of fatuous error by oneself and others gives reason to doubt, but starvation is inevitable if there is nothing available to consume. One can answer that very simply .. *what was it all for; what was it all about and what has been the end-game, with almost four thousand dead, hundreds of thousands injured and maimed, jobs lost, billions wasted .. but for what?*

Close though I was, or perhaps at times merely on the periphery of various events, during the height of the Troubles albeit in a pastoral, caring and welfare manner, to me some of those happenings were highly informative, even humorous and occasionally, very surprising.

One has to appreciate the fragility of the little grey cells, as the years quietly pass by, which makes the present-day formularised record so important. An honest man or woman, even when confronted by coeval notes has to admit to some loss of perspective of the time and hence perhaps what inspired me to put the true record straight before any frailty, in later life eventually takes its normal aging course.

Whatever the position in the spiritual sphere, claims of infallibility in the profane sphere are to be regarded with the greatest scepticism. The only living person, not forgetting his previous occupants or future successors, (*ever notice the silence of questionability from equality/gender groupings*) who maintains the chucklesome claim to be referred to as .. *'infallible'* .. has a large domed mansion in Rome and certainly none ever took on the name .. *Edward!*

From 1966 to 1983 along with members of my own family, involved ourselves as much as we could in seeking justice

for Gusty Spence, my dad's youngest brother who had been sentenced to life imprisonment in what the world and his, and everybody else's, dog saw was the most politicised trial in Northern Ireland's legal history; one that Lord Russell of Liverpool later described as *'a travesty of justice.'*

As the civil strife spiralled uncontrollably from 1969 onwards, the sentencing of many Loyalists and Republicans had the penal institutions bulging to over-capacity, and with the authorities unwilling to segregate both factions, one can only imagine the powder keg atmosphere of sectarian division waiting to explode within such confined spaces.

On many an occasion, particularly the build-up of years into the mid-seventies, it did erupt into regular violent confrontations, until cool heads, sensible persuasion and government lobbying by concerned groups, such as the Orange Cross that the authorities finally realised an obvious political situation equally required, a political solution.

Hence the implementation of Special Category Status within Crumlin Road Jail in June that year and thereafter in Long Kesh; in essence the legal entitlement to be fully recognised as Political Prisoners of the widespread war that was worsening day and daily throughout our Province.

Half a century ago the concept that became known as *The Orange Cross* was conceived and at the outset, except for the interest shown by 'Troubles' Historian and Independent Researcher, Dr Gareth Mulvenna Ph.D, how surprised I was that in all the recollective events, including reflective stories and compiled DVD screenings over the years, very little reference has been made to the important part played by the Orange Cross Committee or its activities in organising comforts for the Loyalist Prisoners, initially as a family lobbyist group from the late sixties; including and during the height of the civil unrest in Northern Ireland, until the mid eighties.

Now that over five decades have passed, and in recognising Northern Ireland's Centennial Anniversary Year since its creation as a Nation, an integral part of the United Kingdom, in 1921, the mood is now there to record the real story behind the welfare attributes characterised by the Orange Cross Committee.

I am very much appreciative of the personal interest that Gareth, (*with whom I have graciously become a very close friend*) has taken over the past number of years and the various presentations he has undertaken, across the political spectrum to highlight and generate awareness, particularly among those generations that fortunately were either too young or not yet part of the (in)human race during the war-mongering decades of the twentieth century.

The Orange Cross was the forerunner of all the later established Loyalist Prisoner welfare groups, and for over a decade provided comforts and help, both financially and in kind, to many of the Loyalist Prisoners.

From the mid-sixties all of them were initially incarcerated in Crumlin Road Goal but thereafter, by late 1972, when they were

airlifted from the bleak cells of Belfast Prison to be *'re-housed'* in what was just another desolate captivity regime, within the various Long Kesh barbed wire cages that sprawled the wind-swept, disused World War II airfield just outside Lisburn in the southern outskirts of County Antrim.

So this short compilation of that ten/twelve year period in providing comforts for the Loyalist Prisoners, will be an opportunity to tell the inside story of The Orange Cross from its very beginning.

I became Honorary Secretary of the Orange Cross after its official formation in 1971; my late Father Billy Spence, is Gusty's eldest brother and with all of us being members of the Prince Albert Temperance Loyal Orange Lodge No 1892 attached to the Belfast Orange Hall, in Clifton Street; and it was undoubtedly

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

from this original link that the eventual concept of the Orange Cross was created.

Back in 1962 the Lodge had organised an event to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the signing of Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant in 1912, being held the evening before the massive procession to Balmoral Showgrounds, Belfast the next day; whereby those in attendance at a function in the Shankill Road, Craven Street Unionist Hall, (a local venue that would later become another important part of the Orange Cross) which allowed Brethren, along with their Families and Friends, well over one hundred folk in all, to re-pledge

themselves, by signing an updated commemorative Ulster Covenant with each signatory then receiving a small personal souvenir copy.

I suppose, in a sense then, it was this one seminal event that later gave rise to the initial idea of fund-raising, with the proceeds being used to provide those much needed comforts for the incarcerated Loyalist Prisoners, who were during that period, being held in 'A' Wing of Crumlin Road prison and that, as a grouping, we would eventually evolve as .. **THE ORANGE CROSS COMMITTEE**

ULSTER COVENANT JUBILEE COMMEMORATION FRIDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 1962

HELD IN CRAVEN STREET UNIONIST HALL SHANKILL ROAD



Sadly through the passage of time, the majority of those folk who attended that re-enactment and re-signing function on September 28th, in 1962 have since passed from this mortal earth but their signatures remain for historical posterity. Signatories include many late members, and relatives of my own Family, including Dad William, Jim, Gusty and Bobby Spence as well as their Mother, Wee Bella and Sisters Cassie and Lily. I was also fortunate to witness at first hand and participate in this historic occasion and been proud to have appended my own name alongside those good and sincere friends. These documents are truly momentous in the annals of history and will be placed in a local Orange Hall Library, under construction and renovation, associated with the Lodge itself, where they can be viewed and openly inspected in the near future.

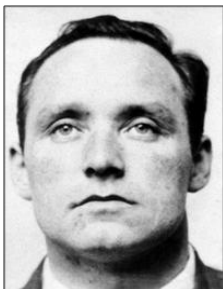
MALVERN STREET INCIDENT JUNE 1966

During the period between mid-1966 up to the latter months of 1969 at the height of what was called the ... 'Troubles' ... there had been perhaps under a half-dozen Loyalists imprisoned in Crumlin Road Goal for what each was perceivably a political associated incident in defence against, and defiance of, the recognised build up of republican activity that began two years earlier, with the Divis Street riots in 1964. This was then coupled with the open bravado events surrounding the 50th Anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising, first of all in the explosive destruction of Nelson's statue in Dublin City Centre during March 1966 and the large, illegal republican parade along the Falls Road on Easter Sunday that same year; not unlike the infamous republican funerals that in many cases, openly breached restrictions during the height of the more recent Covid-19 pandemic.

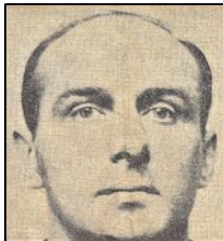
In October 1966 Augustus Andrew (Gusty) Spence (*below top*), Robert James (Bob) Williamson (*middle*) and Hugh Arnold (Dandy) McClean (*bottom*) were sentenced to life imprisonment with a 20-year minimum tariff for the Malvern Street shootings in what was a highly charged ten-day, overtly politicised trial

This tension followed on from Spence's direct release at the earlier depositions court, when the Resident Magistrate Mr Gerard Lynn (*who also happened to be a leading Roman Catholic himself*) ruled that there was no proven evidence to link Spence to the direct killing of 18 year-old Catholic barman, Peter Ward (*right*).

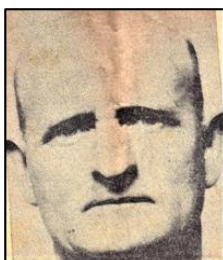
However as he stepped from the dock, a free man, Gusty Spence was re-arrested and brought before an already convened Grand Jury court, which had not been used since 1915; whereby he was re-indicted on the murder charges in what was seen at the time as political interference, even to the extent of including, would you believe, '*sedition conspiracy*', being added to the charge sheet, at the behest of the O'Neill regime to make an example of the three men. The trio were later sentenced to life imprisonment with a stipulated minimum tariff of twenty years imposed on each by an equally politically motivated Judge McDermott, before they would even be considered for release back into society.



This was the first time in Northern Ireland's legal history that such a minimum sentence had been imposed alongside the term of life imprisonment, before release, and was seen as another form of political expediency given that the statute that had only become law months *after* the earlier 1966 incident and also enabled the trial Judge to use his authoritative powers of retrospect, to determine on a convicted person, the heaviest and longest ever term of imprisonment in local legal history.



It is also worthy of note that when Special Branch detectives knocked on Spence's door at 6:30am, twenty-four hours after the other co-accused



In January 2001 following the release of confidential government documents retained under the thirty-year restriction rule, an interesting minute of a secret meeting held on June 20th 1972, between officials from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and representatives of the IRA emerged; and which had been sanctioned by then Secretary of State, William Whitelaw MP. Within it was revealed that one of the terror group's series of conditions for a cessation of hostilities would also have to include the release from Crumlin Road jail, of '*one prominent Catholic .. Billy McKee*', the Provos imprisoned leader who had led the earlier hunger strike for political status. The republican leadership also sought similar freedom for '*one or possibly two Protestant*' prisoners, by claiming that all three were '*framed*'.

had already been arrested within a short time after the shooting, the police openly stated that

they were invoking regulation 15 of the Special Powers Act (1922) to both arrest and/or search his home and detain him without the need for any legally issued judicial warrant.

There again politicising (*and not for the first time*) police actions against Loyalists, as the draconian Civil Authorities Act (*as it was officially designated*), had only been brought into being shortly after Northern Ireland was founded in 1921, to thwart the continuing republican aggression against the State.

Later of course, during many hours of constant interrogation by rotating teams of up to twenty detectives, when challenged, each of them denied any knowledge of any officer mentioning '*special powers*' in the early morning arrest of Gusty Spence. In essence therefore he was arrested expeditiously and illegally without a requisite legal warrant signed by a magistrate or JP.

However, and following the verdict, Lord Chief Justice John McDermott even used the jury's finding of guilt for the lesser of the two charges against the trio, to turn the verbal knife, when in passing sentence he then put in his own tuppence worth by adding such evil words .. '*it may well be that circumstances will alter, but I fix it now, although it may be that before this period is up, you will be worn physically, mentally and morally; the general experience being that after a period of imprisonment, something like ten years, a man goes down in all those directions*'.

It should be noted that publicly retained records will also show that since 1921 members of the republican movement, convicted of murder (*excluding the killing of a police officer which automatically carried the death penalty*) and sentenced to life imprisonment, each served on average a term of between seven and nine years behind bars, before being released on licence.

Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922

Under the Act the authorities are empowered to:

- (1) Arrest without warrant;
- (2) Imprison without charge or trial and deny recourse to habeas corpus or a court of law;
- (3) Enter and search homes without warrant, and with force, at any hours of day or night;
- (4) Declare a curfew and prohibit meetings, assemblies (including fairs and markets) and processions;
- (5) Permit punishment by flogging;
- (6) Deny claim to a trial by jury;
- (7) Arrest persons it is desired to examine as witnesses, forcibly detain them and compel them to answer questions, under penalties, even if answers may incriminate them. Such a person is guilty of an offence if he refuses to be sworn or answer a question;
- (8) Do any act involving interference with the rights of private property;
- (9) Prevent access of relatives or legal advisers to a person imprisoned without trial;
- (10) Prohibit the holding of an inquest after a prisoner's death;
- (11) Arrest a person who "by word of mouth" spreads false reports or makes false statements;
- (12) Prohibit the circulation of any newspaper;
- (13) Prohibit the possession of any film or gramophone record;
- (14) Arrest a person who does anything "calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of peace or maintenance of order in Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations".

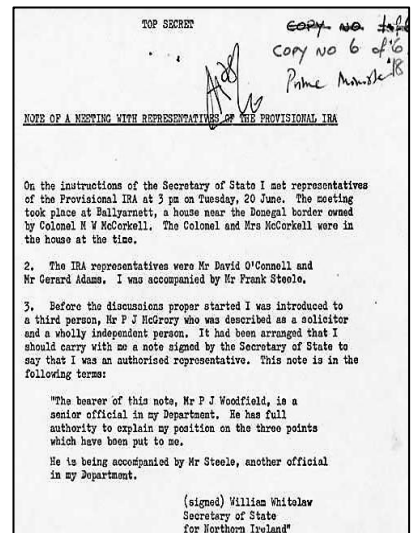


THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'



It was several years later during the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement negotiations that one of the Sinn Féin/IRA representatives, John Kelly (left, who was also one of the republicans charged but cleared, along with two Irish Government Ministers and a southern army intelligence officer of the Dublin arms

importation in 1970), revealed that in fact the names of the 'Protestants' referred to, in the recorded minute of the secret meeting, as being James Burns and Gusty Spence.



A supportive fact that Mr. Whitelaw's officials promise to convey the IRA representatives' request back to the Secretary of State for a review into any miscarriage of justice on all those mentioned during the meeting, certainly gave credence to Kelly's later claim back then that the one/two Protestants were indeed Gusty Spence and James (Rocky) Burns, appeared to hold good, when less than a week after that secretive and clandestine convocation had occurred, Gusty was granted forty-eight hours home parole to attend his daughter Elizabeth's wedding over the last weekend, of June, into July 1972.

12. The next matter raised was a request for the early release from prison of one prominent Catholic (McKee who led the Belfast Prison hunger strike) and one or possibly two Protestants. They said that **all three of these persons had been framed**. We said that the request for any review of sentence on the grounds of miscarriage of justice would be conveyed to the Secretary of State but that these could not be matters for bargaining nor ones in which any early decision could be expected.



So what brought about the Malvern Street shootings that occurred during the early hours of Sunday 26th June 1966 following the yearly Orange procession along the traditional route between the Orange Halls on the Shankill and Springfield Roads the previous day as part of the annual celebrations to commemorate the official opening date of the Whiterock Orange Hall (below left) in June 1958.

The three mile plus long route included processing the various streets off the south western side of the main Shankill Road that eventually took the parade the length of Cupar Street onto the Springfield Road, then turning right to the public's arterial thoroughfare leading to the site of the Orange Hall; which was just off the main road, and built on a raised embankment situated

between the Highfield and New Barnsley estates.

At that time New Barnsley was a mixed community housing scheme having a slightly percentage Protestant majority. On the opposite side of the main Springfield Road, the combined



Whiterock and Ballymurphy estates were also made up of a mixed community base, having a larger percentage Roman Catholic majority.

However, during that era, and even for years leading up to the start of the civil unrest, both communities lived in relative harmony, side by side and without any outward sign of acrimony.

However after the so-called ending of the latest IRA border campaign that lasted from 1956 to 1962, the world and his dog, along with the every other dog in every other street, knew that the cessation would only be a breathing space to recruit and reorganise in readiness for another onslaught.

There was no way in this world that the republican movement was going to let up in its ideological plan to unite mother Ireland once again, after partition in 1921.

With the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant in 1962 already in place, there was a train of thought that there must be methodical reasoning in the IRA's announcement of a ceasefire. What was behind such a decision to pull back its act of aggression in the same year that back then Ulster folk were celebrating the very document later recognised as the pre-birth certificate of Northern Ireland, with a Nation set to enter the world of politics, in less than a decade?

The yearly answers soon tumbled out when Terence O'Neill became the country's Prime Minister in March 1963 and began to set out a whole series of reforms intended to placate both Harold Wilson and the Southern Government.

However that was only the start of it. In 1964 the Divis Street riots occurred when police forcefully removed an Irish tricolour from its window display in Liam McMillan's Republican Party headquarters (below) and entering the new-year in January 1965, Terence O'Neill secretly welcomed ex-IRA gunman Sean Lemass to Stormont without any advanced press announcement being issued.

Thereafter throughout 1966, the Republican Movement's on-going commemorations associated with the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising which started with a bang and the explosive destruction of



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Nelson's column,; which had stood in Dublin's O'Connell Street since 1809; during the early hours of March 8th, that year.

Three weeks later on March 31st following a snap Westminster General Election, Gerry Fitt was successful in the West Belfast constituency, defeating Jim Kilfedder in what was deemed the *stolen votes campaign*, during which thousands of Official Government poll cards were furtively purloined by nationalist postmen from the main mail sorting office in Charlemont Street, at the rear of the GPO (*bottom left*) In Royal Avenue, and then quietly redirected to Fitt's electoral base, on the first floor of the Ancient Order of the

Hibernian's Meeting Hall on the Falls Road, as well as to another less prominent room, sited in the Black Bull pub's upstairs lounge at the corner of Cromac Square, and not far from Belfast City Centre.

Being informed of what Fitt was up to, Gusto Spence disguised his appearance and with a supportive postal friend from the Falls Road area acting as a decoy (*and the mail delivery person who had initially alerted him to what had been going in the postal offices*) drove to the premises on a covert reconnaissance visit posing as supporters, engaged in Fitt's election campaign.

Given the analysis of the turnout at the City Hall count following the closure of the poll, and with a turnaround victory from a defeat by almost two thousand votes back in 1964 to an eight thousand majority, during another, this time in a straight, one on one candidate election just two years later, raised suspicions of foul play and convinced unionists that the stolen voting cards had been widely used in a vast personation scheme on polling day by the Fitt camp and his supporters.

The following day after the count, again pretending to being one of Fitt's election workers, Gusto Spence and several others, visited the AOH hall and now knowing where to get the spare door key; which was conveniently left in the fruit shop next door to the entrance hall at the corner of Clonard Street and the Falls.

It can also be argued perhaps that anyone might also gain access to the premises in this way and use it illegally without the actual knowledge, or prior permission of any person either associated with/or the organisation itself.

Before leaving the first-floor room the group took instant Polaroid photos of the different clothes that included a variance of glasses, wigs, coats, dresses, trousers, hats, shoes etc used to change appearance and style as well as removing addressed samples from the remaining stacked piles of the stolen poll cards.

Statements by Spence and others, alongside this photographic evidence and cards, were immediately deposited with the Unionist Party's General Secretary, Jim Baillie at the Glengall Street Headquarters.

The police were summoned and the items taken away for investigation by RUC detectives, into any possibility of proffering electoral malpractice and/or theft/fraud charges against Gerry Fitt.

At the same time, after the post office's security branch had been informed of these findings, and given the vast numbers of stolen poll cards not delivered to their

proper addresses, it is understood the PO also began its own internal investigation. The photographs of the remaining untouched cards still on the premises allegedly caused

widespread consternation amongst Government Officials and within a few days in a cover-up, the rest of the circumvented polling cards were secretly removed by the authorities, guarded by members of the then police service, the RUC.

As the Prime Minister and leader of the Ulster Unionist Party at the time, Captain Terence O'Neill was also informed of this serious polling development by the Party H/Q.

Back then the PM had been under intense personal pressure from recently elected British Premier Harold Wilson, who was forcing O'Neill to implement a series of reforms within the

"As I stand on this platform and witness such a vast concourse, I am more than ever convinced that the ordinary people of West Belfast are prepared to take a stand in defence of all the ideals which have been their way of life for so long. 1966 has indeed proved to be a year of great significance to the Falls, Central, Dock and many other areas. We have beaten our opponents in politics, sports and in every other field they dare to confront us and I have no doubt that this will be the continuing trend in the years to come .."

Gerry Fitt, May 29th 1968



Province; at the same time he was also facing a backlash and a possible revolt from his own Party with Kilfedder one of the prime movers in seeking his resignation.

Gerry Fitt had, at that period, been a personal friend of Harold Wilson, who himself, even as a Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, made no secret of being a supporter of a united Ireland. Later in 1968 Fitt was widely accused of inciting sectarian hatred by his (above) statement to a crowd on the Falls Road.

However had he been found guilty of electoral malpractice, no doubt Fitt would have been immediately unseated as MP for West Belfast and, with the very possibility of imprisonment, Jim Kilfedder would then have been installed as the new constituency Member of Parliament.

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INDEED IF ANY INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST EVER TOOK TIME OUT FROM LAMBASTING LOYALISM, TO DELVE INTO THIS INCIDENT NO DOUBT HE/SHE MIGHT FIND SOME INTERESTING FILES HIDDEN AWAY IN THE OUBLIETTES OF THE RUC/PSNI KNOCK ROAD HEADQUARTERS OR THE STORES OF THE SEAPARK COMPLEX AT CARRICKFERGUS.



Meanwhile as police continued to vacillate in considering what was 'more than a mere scintilla of firm evidence' Fitt was openly filmed waving victoriously to the crowds, whilst taking part in a large un-notified republican parade, along the Falls Road, boldly walking behind an IRA banner, as part of the 50th Anniversary of the failed Easter Rising.

Republican areas across the Province were also brazenly decorated with bunting and Irish tricolours in defiance of the law.

That Easter Sunday RTE, the Irish Broadcasting Corporation made its own provocative contribution by screening the first part of a drama-documentary series entitled..

'the Insurrection.'

The commemorations also had both a visible impact on the fabric of Dublin City in particular along with the twenty-six counties in general, with new republican statues and monuments being erected throughout. Transport chiefs even renamed major railway stations after several of the 1916 leaders and buses bore the commemorative emblem above .. the 'Sword of Light' which the Government had also adopted as its emblem of the year.

On May 22nd that same year, a group of Prince Albert Temperance Lodge No. 1892 Brethren, including Gusty and myself along with a dozen or so others saw and felt, at first hand, the brunt of such impending resurgence in republican euphoria, having travelled over the border by private transport to attend the annual Royal Arch Purple Chapter Service in Saint Andrew's Church near Dublin city centre.

Following a break for lunch, and on our return, we found that all four of the minibus's wheel had been slashed, even though the Garda had been advised beforehand that there would be an Orange Service in the church, where collarettes had to be adorned inconspicuously beneath the covered cloisters with no parade; however the chillingly sectarian hatred and animosity was patently obvious.

Only for the local AA branch coming to our rescue and getting us on the road again did we gladly get back safely over the border, as quickly as we could.

Now with the aforementioned Whiterock Parade due to take place during its traditional Saturday at the end of June 1966, the high expectation of trouble was in the air and rightly so, for the procession was inevitably attacked as it made its way along Cupar Street, exiting across from Mackie's Foundry on the opposite side of the Springfield Road, although all the marchers did complete the route that day.

One could say that this was perhaps the litmus test for future years, so-much-so that year on year thereafter, the attacks increasingly and progressively continued on the marchers, as the parade journeyed through and particularly along Cupar Street.

So as the traditional 'last Saturday' Whiterock parade later in June 1970 progressed along that same street, it was violently bombarded in the extreme, this time by gunfire, no doubt instrumentally led by top Provos Francie Card and Billy McKee, who were spotted, overtly observing the scene; whilst at the same time gangs of youths tossed .. prepared

well in advance .. rotten potatoes embedded with sharp double sided, razor-blades on, into and amongst the ranks of the closely grouped procession.



It was a blood-bath with numerous casualties having open head wounds in evidence, the noise of gunfire along with the panic and mayhem soon added to a situation that was by now, well out of control.

Our own Lodge Banner was one of the many ripped to shreds, irreparably destroyed by these hideously-used sharp weapons and Gusty's own maternal uncle, Henry (Gunner) Hayes as a pensioner, sustained very serious face and head wounds, whilst his Lodge collarette became blood-saturated, after being struck by one of these lethal spuds.

Unfortunately the young soldiers belonging to the Royal Scots Regiment who were on security duty that day got into such a panic that they turned their CS gas propellants into the ranks of Orangemen and the accompanying Bands, which created a bigger fear and pandemonium than one already there, amongst the marchers trying to avoid the unwarranted republican attack.

Our Lodge did eventually get its tattered Banner home, by being able to regroup in Mayo Street with several others and then proceed to make our way back to the Shankill Orange Hall although some Lodges and Brethren at the rear of the procession, who had only reached the start of Cupar street, had to turn around, and go back up Lawnbrook Avenue.

Perhaps this was an ideal instigating forethought for

DURING EACH POLLING DAY THERE WAS AN APPROXIMATE 74% ELECTORAL TURN OUT.

In 1964 the total nationalist vote was 17,934 = 34.59%

In 1966 it was 26,292 = 51.99% - an increase of 17.4%

In 1964 Kilfedder's vote was 21,337 = 41.16%

in 1966 it was up 2,944 = 48.01% and increase of 6.85%

FITT NEEDED 13,721 VOTES FROM 1964'S POLL TO OVERTURN DIFFERENCE

Labour candidate, Billy Boyd a Shankill Road man from the Hammer area, polled

12,571 votes in 1964, but did not stand again in 1966 to give Kilfedder a single run

against Gerry Fitt and there was no way his total vote would ever go to Fitt but even if it did, the total would still have been 250 votes short of the 1964 figure. So it doesn't need a mathematical genius to work out just where these 8,358 (an increase of 17.4%) extra votes came from, if not by mass personation by Fitt's supporters using stolen Government poll cards!!



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future IRA bomb makers to encase bolts, nails and other deadly metal objects in and around their semtex bombs to inflict the utmost damage, particularly on civilians,

In early July 1966, a Royal State visit Edinburgh, to open the new Queen was also marred by an attack on their block was thrown from scaffolding in nationalist thug called John Morgan, limousine, and narrowly missing the

By now, and throughout 1966, reports of increased sectarian tensions and community division began to escalate, gradually rising day by day at an alarming rate.

Thereafter the exit route onto the main Springfield Road for the yearly Whiterock Parade was gradually, systematically and continuously moved, street by street up the main thoroughfare to a distance of over a mile from the original annual, traditional route when the procession first began back in 1958.

Unfortunately, later that night, with passions running high and the blood now at boiling point, with hindsight being a wonderful thing, the calamitous mortal outcome for a young Roman Catholic barman outside the Malvern Arms public house (top next page) in the early hours of Sunday June 26th 1966, might have been avoided and in turn spared the nightmarish years to come for the several families who, for years, were to suffer in its deadly wake.

As it was, two members of the Prince Albert Lodge, Gusty Spence and Bob Williamson were later convicted for the killing, along with another person, Hugh Arnold McClean.

Being the most important witness against Gerry Fitt's illegal electoral practices and with Spence now out of the equation, thanks to O'Neill's duplicitous intervention in ensuring Gusty would not be available to testify, then any possible case against the West Belfast MP (who, courtesy of Harold Wilson, was later made a Lord of the Realm) totally collapsed.

At that time, there was an surreptitious move by disgruntled members of the Official Unionist Party, including Jim Kilfedder, who were unsupportive of O'Neill's appeasement policies, plotting to depose him as Premier, regularly meeting at Brian Faulkner's Seaford home. Whilst facilitating the meetings, but being heir presumptive, Faulkner never sat in on any of the discussions; to avoid being aligned to the detractors.

Indeed during police interrogation at Brown Square RUC station, in relation to the Malvern Street incident, Special Branch Detectives, on several occasions boasted to Gusty that with him being complicit in a conspiracy to unseat the Prime Minister, as well as a primary witness at the Hibernian's Hall and the former Black Bull pub's stolen poll card storage facilities, if Fitt got away with it, and at the same time O'Neill's downfall was prevented, their own career prospects could be enhanced, particularly if Spence was charged and convicted of the gun attack. O'Neill must have been more than overjoyed with this new situation.

And, here's the evidential proof ... within a year of Gusty Spence being sent to prison, one of the more extremely aggressive Special Branch Officers, who originally hailed from the Falls Road, had interrogated each of the accused for hours on end, at times roaring like his lion namesake, sometimes menacingly producing a weapon. Afterwards the



despite any rat-eyed assertion of minimising non-security force injury, when the devices exploded.

by the Queen and the Duke of Elizabeth Bridge across the Lagan, official car when a large concrete Great Victoria Street by a young striking the bonnet of the Royal Regal couple sitting in the rear seats.

same cop featured prominently during the trial by knowingly perjuring himself, as well as denying his brutality on each of the three accused men within a year was appointed Premier Terence O'Neill's close protection officer and several years thereafter speedily promoted to Detective Chief Inspector.

Make your own judgement for the photographic proof is there (on the internet), with both pictured together outside the BBC building in 1967 (just one year after the trial) he with the constant fag stuck in his mouth, carrying a rolled-up umbrella, escorting the Northern Premier along Ormeau Avenue; though not to be mistaken however for his twin male sibling who once had his picture in a local Sunday rag due to his Andytown Bowling Club exposures.

Remember too that PACE (the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) was not in force back then.

Pointedly the Crown Prosecution's Legal Team consisted entirely of the pro-O'Neill members of the Official Unionist Party so much so that would you also believe each one of them was thereafter appointed to the High Court's Judicial Benches within a year or so after the trial.

To repeat; the evidence file on Gerry Fitt's illegal, underhand electoral success back then still remains sealed, in the bowels of some police storage facility, or in the Ulster Unionist Party archives, gathering dust and hiding a secret that could have blown the whole world of personation sky high over fifty years ago, and if followed through immediately might, just might, have also prevented the sorry saga that occurred in the early hours of that fateful Sunday in June 1966.

Later during the height of the 'Troubles' several younger Lodge Brethren, like so many others of their ilk and age, during that torrid period, soon involved themselves with the Tartan Gangs and then the Red Hand Commando group and subsequently each found himself with a criminal conviction for an undertaking they truly believed-in at the time.

Many, undoubtedly incited up to the top edge of the parapet by the ignitable rhetoric of loud-mouthed, bellicose clerics, one of whom was once described as ... 'a half-demented exhibitionist'.

Nor should anyone excuse the broken promises made over the years, by the many fat-cat politicians, including some of the now coronet-wearing unionists who were party to the earlier Seaford stratagem, relaxing comfortably on the green and red plush bench finery, financially well-off in the corridors of power at Westminster.

Or the hand-picked old boys (and girls) network elevated to the House of Lords talking shop, with their three hundred quid a day just for signing-in, plus expenses; along with its subsidised refreshments, both solid and liquid, but thereafter some still go as far as to deny all knowledge of the very existence of the hundreds of young men who by then, were languishing in jail or buried in a watery grave.

Evidence of further political interference could also be concluded following my application on Gusty Spence's behalf, to the Criminal Case Review Commission (CCRC) back in 2010, a year before he died, for further investigation into what a former advocate at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials and the Tokyo Tribunal, Lord Russell of Liverpool once described as ... 'a travesty of justice'. Indeed such was the lack of evidence against Spence, and so convinced of Gusty's acquittal that before the jury retired to consider its verdict, the Family was advised by defence QC Barry Shaw [later Sir Barry, before being appointed the first Director of Public Prosecutions] to have transport waiting outside the Courthouse.

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

The CCRC submission paper was the result of what the Family regarded as fresh evidence (*right*) that had emerged following a personal telephone call to the Northern Ireland Office in early 1972, from the Foreman of the Jury, (*the name and address have been redacted as the juror has since passed in 2013*) during the ten day Malvern Street trial on October 1966.

During a conversation with this Private Secretary, the jurist expressed his personal concerns at the trial outcome particularly the inordinate tariff of twenty years, which the panel were not made aware off at the time, and took each of them completely by surprise on hearing Lord Chief Justice McDermott adding this fixed stipulation to the life sentence, even before any future consideration would be undertaken to set a release date, had worried and played on his mind since the disputed guilty verdict.

The written reply on behalf of Secretary of State Willie Whitelaw's Private Secretary, Mr Ian Morgan Burns, who of late, was still very active within Civil Service circles in London, merely fobbed-off the juror, by hoping that the information within the letter .. 'would ease his conscience in the matter'.

Unfortunately the response letter from Mr Burns had made no direct mention of the Malvern Street trial and no doubt, was legally worded, couched or phrased in such a manner of political speak, or rhetoric so as not to make any direct link between the juror and any particular or definitive court case.

Due to this prolixity the CCRC concluded that it would not use the letter as a source of new evidence, which in turn prompted me to lodge an appeal with the Commission, that in the interests of natural justice, the CCRC should subpoena Ian Morgan Burns and conduct a in-depth interview with him in order to ascertain the true nature and distinct content of his reply to the Foreman of the Jury.

Not surprisingly, the Criminal Case Review Commission refused this request and also to deny the jurist any personal immunity from criminal charges stating that:-

1. **It was not in the public interest to interview Mr Burns .. due to the inevitable unreliability of statements after thirty years** .. (note 30 years: see below)**
2. **The CCRC cannot allow Mr Charles Txxx (the jurist and a former local councillor) immunity from prosecution in the event of any contempt of court, through disclosure of such deliberations in the jury room, after the judges summing up, as these were deemed .. 'confidential'.**

Contrast that comment of **unreliability of statements**** (para 1 above) to the on-going prosecutions of aging ex-

However, is there no one, no one on the unionist side of the legal coin, who may be so disturbed at the political interference in imprisoning Gusty Spence, to even



willingly have an in-depth investigative look at the transcript of the 1966 Malvern Street trial papers, for the sake of justice?


A court transcript in the form of a compilation bundle of over 1,600 pages, yet only one single, but very important document is actually missing from the overall file.

No, not the details of the team of police officers guarding the jurors throughout the trial, particularly in the ten overnight stays the twelve peers were kept away from their homes and families, ensconced together in the former Belgravia Hotel on the Lisburn Road. No! But only the sole part, one sheet of paper which contained names and details of the jury, that mysteriously disappeared soon after the written review application was submitted to the CCRC.

Therein lies one more piece of presumptive theory into overt political tampering with the trial paperwork that would have positively identified and linked the personage of the Foreman of the Jury and his personal telephone call of concern to Mr Burns at the NIO in May that year.

Food for thought? .. Is it not more than just mere coincidence given the year, 1972 when a combination of events occurred:-

1. **The Foreman of the Jury contacted the NIO in early May to express his personal concern at the sentence;**
2. **The IRA (represented by Gerry Adams and David O'Connell accompanied by their legal advisor, solicitor Paddy McGrory, father of the former DPP) met with NIO Officials twice that same year and as a pro quid quo for an IRA ceasefire, sought the release of several prisoners, including one/two Protestants, alleging that all three were framed;**
3. **Spence was released on parole to attend his daughter's wedding on July 1st;**
4. **On July 2nd, Spence was kidnapped by the UVF on his way back to the Crum; Gusty's nephew was badly hurt in the melee;**
5. **During the Granada World in Action television**



Criminal • Cases • Review • Commission

Juror X later communicated his involvement in such conduct to Mr Burns, a senior Civil Servant at the Northern Ireland Office, who took no action other than to provide a written reassurance to him that the imposition of the sentence was the responsibility of the Judge and the authority for detention the Order of the Court.

67. Any evidence X is able to provide in respect of this issue relates to events which occurred in October 1966, over 40 years ago. The Commission has reviewed and continues to review convictions which occurred many years ago and on some occasions has obtained 'new' witness evidence. The Court of Appeal, however, is cautious in its approach to such evidence and has expressed reservations about the value of new witness evidence of events which occurred many years ago in the following terms: "...These arguments afford an excellent example of the inevitable unreliability of statements made over thirty years after the event by even the most honest and assiduous of witnesses..."

68. In the Commission's view, at its highest, the applicant's representatives' revised submissions suggest that there was .. some deliberation of the evidence which resulted in an agreement of all the jurors which did not follow the Judge's directions on the law and was not in accordance with established court procedures.

69. The Commission does not accept the unsupported proposition of the jury's conduct set out in the revised submissions. In any event the law as referred to at paragraph 46 of this Statement of Reasons indicates that: "... an appellant court will not receive evidence from jurors about discussions or other matters that took place in the jury box or jury room concerning the cases in which they were acting."

71. Juror X indicated through Ms C that he was not prepared to be interviewed by the Commission unless first given an undertaking that he would not be prosecuted for any offence relating to the disclosure of information by a juror. For those reasons included at paragraph 44 of this Statement of Reasons, the Commission concluded that there was no proper basis to either contact X or seek an undertaking from the Public Prosecution Service. The Commission remains of the view that there is no proper basis to interview X.

72. The Commission, by the use of its statutory powers, has recovered various documents from public bodies relating to the applicant's trial. None of those documents contain a list of the names and addresses of the jurors at his trial. The Commission acknowledges that a list of the names and addresses of the jurors may have survived the passage of time in material he disclosed to the Commission.

73. The Commission cannot make use of its powers to support of this application in the absence of such a list of names and addresses of the jurors.

74. The Commission has examined the material regarding the Grand Jury who police officers acting include a list of the names and addresses of the jurors.

75. The Commission does not have any note or other document which prompted Mr Burns to hold a senior 'Troubles'. In the expectation that he of his conversation

From: The Private Secretary

Northern Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST
Telephone Belfast 63011

19 May 1972

Dear [Redacted]

Further to our telephone conversation last week about the case some years ago in which you were Foreman of the Jury, I have as I promised looked into the aspect of the matter which has been troubling you.

The position is that the document signed by a foreman of a jury simply records the jury's findings on questions of fact. The sentence is the responsibility of the Judge, and it is the order of the Court, as recorded by the Court Clerk, which is the authority for the detention of the accused in prison.

I hope that this information, together with the fact that your present attitude has now been clearly recorded here as a result of our conversation will ease your conscience in the matter.

Yours sincerely

IM Burns

THE LOYALIST PRISONERS OF WAR

PERSECUTION, PROSCRIPTION, INSULT AND CONTUMELY; WERE HEAPED UPON IN VAIN



**FOR THEIR LOYALTY WAS UNSHAKEN; A LOYALTY THAT STILL REMAINS.
WITH THE SPIRIT AND THE VALOUR THAT CONQUERED AT THE SOMME
DID NERVE THEM FOR THE STRUGGLE, WHEN IN THE DAYS DID COME.**



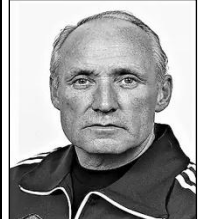
Even a decade after his passing, not just the name but any reference whatsoever to the late Gusty Spence makes good paper copy for the gutter press, particularly the Northern Ireland Sunday tabloids where the laws of libel, slander and defamation can be widely and openly exploited in the knowledge that neither the newspaper nor the reporter are subjective to legal action, which cannot be assigned or brought on someone's behalf.

Unsubstantiated comment on the departed, particularly in the more recent verbose, and verbal muck-raking, linking Gusty Spence to an incident that the police never, ever questioned him about at any time whilst in custody, nor even mentioned during the hours of limitless interrogation or any similar broach of him ever being involved, did not prevent one such scribbler sensationalising a story that again lacked any evidential clout.

However, in so doing, like many previous articles attributed to this diehard goidelic bhoyo and questionable proponent of the east end piggery's sectarian brigandage, when without a sense of realisation, the mask soon slips and openly exposes his own true colours with each and every misleading fabrication that awaits on the tip of his self-bigoted pencil.

But again, that's why the world over, such reporting is regarded as .. *"gutter journalism"*

I SAT WITH GUSTY SPENCE IN THE ULSTER HOSPITAL, JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE HE LATER PASSED AWAY ON SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2011; WHEN A PROMINENT CLERIC, BEFORE OFFERING A BEDSIDE PRAYER, ASKED HIM IF THERE WAS ANYTHING HE WANTED TO CONFESS TO, OR REPENT FOR .. GUSTY'S QUIETLY SPOKEN, BUT SIMPLE REPLY THAT AFTERNOON, TO ONE OF THE LORD'S PRESENT DAY EARTHLY DISCIPLES; AND ONE WHICH GUSTY SPENCE HAS MAINTAINED SINCE DAY ONE OF HIS TRIAL .. *"I HAVE NOTHING TO REPENT FOR, REVEREND .. I DID NOT SHOOT YOUNG PETER WARD"*



THE SO-CALLED TROUBLES ALSO SAW A MASS EXODUS OF MANY PROTESTANT FAMILIES; WITH FRIGHTENED YOUNG CHILDREN INITIALLY TAKING REFUGE IN THE HENRY TAGGART MEMORIAL HALL (RIGHT) FROM THEIR FORMER HOMES IN THE AFOREMENTIONED NEW BARNSELEY, WHITEROCK AND BALLYMURPHY ESTATES.



Similarly with the thousands of others from the upper Ardoyne and Londonderry's cityside who also suffered intense sectarian intimidation to flee their homes in fear of their lives.

Yet hardly a word in their defence or the highlighting of their sad story of persecution has ever been prominenced in print or at the despatch box.

So forever shame on all those parliamentary marionettes, who to this very day, continually remain silent and repudiate

our kinfolk a voice of overt support, thereby denying justice for the forgotten.

After all these years, there remains a variant of politicians, particularly those with a whiff of cordite still lingering behind their ears, and the complementary OTR letter in their top pocket; along with the many armchair general counterparts strutting about in Armani suits, having bulging bank balances, fast cars and holiday homes for their own greedy ends, by constantly focusing on that ONE incident, outside the Malvern Arms in 1966, will continue in the hope that it might derogate from the actual truth about who/what initially incited, the commencement of Ulster's Troubles.

AUGUST '69 ... THE COMMUNITY NIGHTMARE BEGINS

But in truth the orchestrated build-up of well-planned events, both military and political, in the interim years leading up to, and including the 50th anniversary commemorations of the 1916 Dublin Rising, were the real catalyst that unfortunately led to almost four thousand dead and hundreds of thousands injured, many seriously and life threatening, in the decades of civil strife throughout our Province as our pages move into .. *'THE COMMUNITY NIGHTMARE BEGINS'*. Following the conclusion of the Apprentice Boys of 'Derry parade around the Maiden City walls, the on-going unrest finally came to a blooded climax in August 1969 when well-prepared hordes from the nearby republican Creggan, Loanmoor and

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

Bogside estates, unilaterally began to riot and thereafter retreated into a barricaded no-go area frustrating police lines, from entering what the agitators termed as .. 'Free Derry'.

In Belfast, others were publically urged by the nationalist West Belfast MP, Gerry Fitt to defend their areas, inciting the mobs with .. *'it is now your duty to play your part in taking the heat out of the situation'*.

As such the daily hostilities worsened as the months passed, so much so that by that period, with about a dozen or so Loyalists languishing in the Crum, the Lodge Brethren organised the sale of a raffle/ballot draw around the local pubs, clubs and bars to raise some funds with which to purchase items such as cigarettes and tobacco for the lads, with the solitary prize of a Glasgow Rangers rug for the successful punter. A real treasure back then and as such a supporter's *'must have'*, as these hadn't been long on the market during that period.

Over the next twelve months or so we carried on with similar events, *though still in an ad-hoc and non-organised fashion*, in raising money to assist the lads inside; and where finance may have allowed us, to also help where possible, any of those families, who might have been struggling more than others.

However by mid September 1971 with the local situation deteriorating by the day across the Province, again several Brethren, particularly members of my own family initially organised a morale boosting occasion for the Loyalist Shankill residents, associated with the anniversary of the Covenant, similar to the one back in 1962, and one of those events was to set up a wallpaper-pasting style table at the corner of Agnes Street/Shankill Road where folk could again re-affirm the original Covenant by signing a petition styled document, which would eventually be passed to the elected Unionist Representatives at Stormont, well before it was prorogued the following year.

Alongside that collective document each person who signed it, received a small keepsake copy of the Covenant and in turn were then encouraged to make a voluntary donation towards providing everyday items needed by the Loyalist Prisoners incarcerated in Crumlin Road goal.

At this time, and after two years of unrest, the prison population had been gradually increasing as more and more Loyalist men were being arrested for taking defensive measures in what everyone in those areas believed was justifiable, defending their kith and kin, as well as their homes and property.

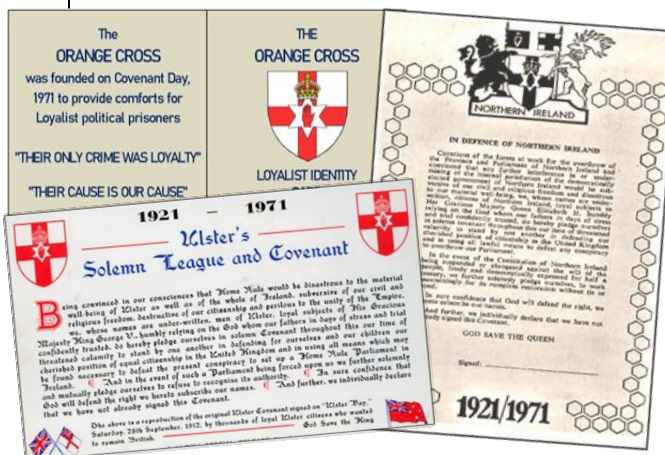
With folk totally, totally supportive of both the men's actions and of ourselves in trying to support them in whatever way we



could, be it limited financially or in providing simple necessities after being imprisoned, we had the full backing of the community.

Remember at that time and right up until the signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, 99.9% of those lads, many mere boys, who had been incarcerated over those troublesome years for what they believed in, undoubtedly ever in their lives, had even visited someone in jail, never mind having now been imprisoned in one themselves!!

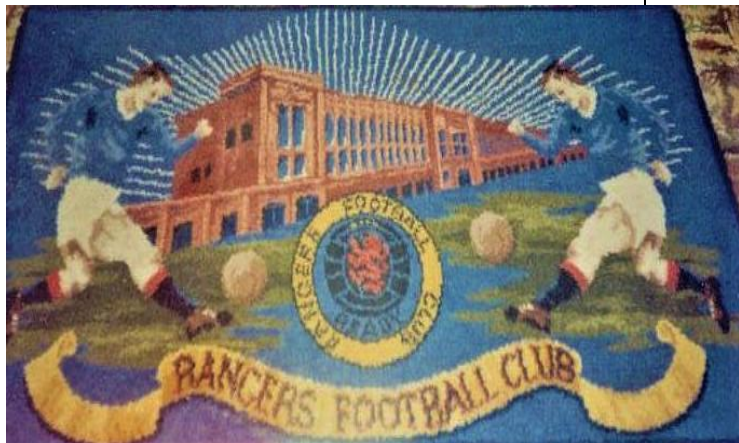
Indeed I well remember later, during the 1971/72 period it got



so bad, and there were so many inmates, particularly on remand, from both sides of the religious divide, detained in the Crum, the number of visits allowed on a Saturday alone was soon regulated and limited to a threshold number of one hundred and fifty visits on the most populated day of the week; equally allowing a maximum seventy-five to each side of the community, with the non-issuing of visitor passes back then.

As one would expect it eventually became a free-for-all .. first come, first served so to speak .. that I myself started to set the alarm during the early hours of Saturday morning and then found myself standing, forlorn, with other families, outside the iron gates of Crumlin Road goal upwards from 5:30am both summer and winter; and in all weathers to reserve a spot in the queue for Dad and I to see Gusty and our Bobby although access through the wee side gate entrance and onto the actual mixed family visitors' waiting room itself didn't open until 9:30/10am, several hours later.

Eventually the warders began to permit visitors through the main front gates, to regulate them into a long queue formulating along the front and length of the wee row of houses, in order to keep a count on the permitted numbers so they could afterwards close off



THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

the main entrance gates when the limited visitor threshold was reached .

After that no one, immaterial of how far some folk had travelled, or even how long they may have queued up for, never gained entry throughout the rest of that day.

There were many occasions when inside we could hear the shouting and foul language outside when someone got to the gate and was refused entry due to the visitor complement having been reached by that period.

One can also imagine the hours of hostility gradually fermenting throughout a fed-up, inter-mixed queue of both Loyalists and Republicans with everyone scrambling for a place, whereby there were more than several occasions



when the inevitable hand-to-and fisticuffs broke out.

"Crumlin Road jail was a dank Victorian, austere, depressing and oppressing place. The prisoners were as thin as greyhounds. It was one of the worst prisons in Western Europe where the food was minimal and even exercise was at a minimum. While on remand we were locked up twenty-three hours a day, although after sentencing we had relative freedom, to half past six at night. When we achieved political status we were wearing our own clothes. We occupied the dining hall overnight from 8:30pm until 7:30am .. and I informed the Governor that if the army attacked us we would retaliate very severely. We have taken too much from these people and we must show them that we are not dirt. We don't want violence and I trust God that none shall occur. Men marched, drilled and took orders. The old Ulster Volunteer Force relives. The spirit of our Fathers and Grandfathers of 1912 is rekindled. We have taken enough. We will take no more. There is no talk of Victory; no march of Triumph; just a sigh of relief that our protracted campaign to be recognised for what we are has been fulfilled and in the cold light of Whitehall we are seen as Loyalist Political Prisoners. Granted there is still a reticence to give us full recognition, but who cares; the principle is there and that's what life is all about .. principle."

Gusty Spence

It was so unbelievable that it took so long for someone in the prison administration to come up with the idea of sending out weekly, official passes in order to regulate beforehand the actual number of visitors attending, and on what day.

Having submitted such a written proposal to the prison authorities back then, on behalf of the Orange Cross, I am equally aware that this was one of several considerations as to why, within a matter of a few months, all now recognised as political prisoners, Loyalist and Republican alike were eventually transferred to Long Kesh, with many being transported by military helicopter.

"DECIDING ON A SUITABLE NAME"

Going back, one Saturday morning after Dad and I had visited and consulted with Gusty we decided that this regular increase in accumulative funding could be put to a more practical use in showing the men who had been incarcerated, they would not be forgotten and again, that folk on the outside were with them all the way. More or less, during one Saturday morning visit in October of 1971, the Orange Cross was duly formed in the visiting area of the Crum and in essence just a small prisoner support group, previously referred to by some as merely .. *'family orientated'* .. thereafter became a huge reality within the general Loyalist community.

How did we settle on the Orange Cross name? I believe that it was an equitable and natural expression of our own tradition, history and cultural background.

For past generations and in war torn global regions, both the International and British Red Cross have been well established, world renowned institutions for over a hundred or so years. Similarly the Blue Cross Charity grouping has been providing animal and pet welfare since 1897.

The republican movement already had in place the Green Cross welfare organisation since the early 1900s

Being members of a Loyal Orange Lodge in Belfast, the Orange Cross name, simply evolved then and there.

Dad and I then took this suggestion back to a few like-



mindful folk and although at that stage we were quite prepared to take the lead in this project, in reality we were not what one would call a community recognised welfare grouping; but thankfully we had supportive friends such as the late Brother Jackie Campbell who was also a member of the Lodge, coming on board, as our Chairman.

The feedback from the Saturday Covenant table signing event had given us the encouragement to carry on and from then, having been in touch with the late John McKeague, Mina Browne and wee Mrs Begley who had a long standing Loyalist sales pitch on Royal Avenue, initially each supplied us with copies of the Loyalist News, the WDA & UDA News etc.

We also had regular copies of the printed organs associated with the Orange Order both in Belfast (*the Orangeman*) and the Vigilant, in Scotland.

Later we approached the Ulster Protestant publications in Royal Avenue as well as several other similar Loyalist papers and news-sheets such as the Combat after its launch and in that way we established our own contacts for a direct supply.



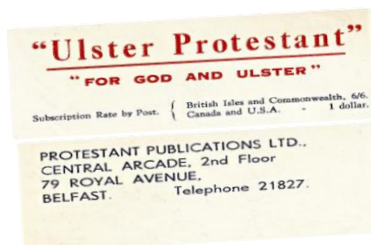
THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'



So every Saturday afternoon our display stall was well stocked with various publications and other Loyalist and Unionist literature; all being sold from that pokey wee wallpaper table, covered by a Union Flag, with curtain wire stretched across the top of the magazines and papers to prevent them taking off, in the wind, especially on a stormy wintery day.

Things really started to get better soon after, and a local joiner friend made us a proper looking sales stall of two sheets of 6'x4' plywood hinged together in a billboard shape, similar to those seen around the City Hall sellers at the time, where the newspapers and magazines could be easily viewed, by each being slotted upright and face out.

We set up shop where there were every Saturday from around noon until 5:30 or 6 o'clock, propped up against the Ulster Bank wall and in all weathers and again using a plastic covering when it



rained. It was a real heavy article and took four people to carry back and forward to storage, before and after each use.

Initially however, all we had available for sale in order to raise any funding were those papers,



magazines and leaflets, although gracefully there were of course the appreciative voluntary donations that came across as well.

At that stage of the 'Troubles'; within 'A' wing of Crumlin Road members of both Loyalist Paramilitary obligation were housed side by side, and the Orange Cross similarly, did not differentiate on either, it was totally .. Loyalist Prisoners of whatever affiliation, and of course where possible, also being both a supportive, as well as a source of encouragement to their respective families whereby we could keep them regularly advised of news, regarding their male relatives, through our own prison contacts.

In that respect whilst the lads at that earlier period of the Troubles, were incarcerated and languishing in the jail, as another boost in morale, we regularly arranged Saturday morning cartoon film shows for their children (*and spouses of course*) in the former Craven Street Unionist Hall, a building which later became an important part of the Orange Cross itself.

We also organised annual Christmas parties in the same venue each year whereby the kiddies ages/gender etc had to be coordinated in a military styled operation for months in advance to ensure every child received a substantial present from Santa

During the summer months the Orange Cross organised Saturday outings for the Loyalist Prisoners families to local seaside venues such as Brown's Bay, Portrush, Bangor, Millisle or Newcastle.



Following one such trip which we were informed later, became an inspiration to the lads inside. We had purchased a plastic football and then had all the kids who were on the outing to sign/autograph the ball along with a simple greeting for their dads. We brought it along to hand over during next visit to see Gusty.

You can guess the hassle we had trying to get it in. It was always the same super-Prod screws who were the usual blight on anything we tried to do to make life a bit more comfortable for those inside; perhaps trying to impress the republican visitors either queuing up, or seated behind us in the same waiting room.

However on that occasion we had to insist that the Deputy Governor be called to sort out the situation given the increasing hold-up at the visitors' sign-in desk, and after a heated discussion, the football was eventually allowed in and duly handed over to Gusty that Saturday morning.

As I said, we later found out that the kiddies' autographed ball was encased in a clear box tupperware type container

and placed in a prominent position in the wing, which gave everyone a real boost all round, indeed we were told that some of the lads even shed a wee tear of joy, on seeing the kids names and greetings for their dads.

Perhaps that's when we realised and came to the conviction (*no pun intended*) we had to do this properly and openly as we were now dealing with public money and everything had to be audited and accounted for; so that donors could see what we were about, and could be trusted; thus in turn avoid any revenue interference.

We were then advised by a fellow unionist, a good friend of my Dad's; Councillor Hugh Kidd to apply to the former Belfast Corporation for an official street trader's license.

With Hugh's help we succeeded in getting this wee badge and certificate, I think it was 62.5p (*12/6 old money*) renewable annually, which had to be openly displayed on the stall so when the police as they did regularly, turn up on a Saturday to enquire what was going on, we were well and legally prepared!!!

Shortly afterwards Hugh came on board as a locally recognised, well respected public representative and it was then that we could refer to ourselves as a Committee; I was to be the joint Secretary and Treasurer solely from being the Lodge pen-smith at the time, but I was also responsible for the direct liaison with Gusty during our visits to ascertain any necessary requirements or needs by the lads on the prison wing.



THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

By now things were getting really financially serious and encouragingly we then opened our own bank account and had a helpful accountant come on board to assist and guide us, in a fellow Orange Brother who offered his professional services for free, (unfortunately he was later to lose his only son in the Kegworth air disaster in 1989) which in turn allowed us to apply for charitable status on our funding. We even had our own headed writing paper and embossed rubber stamp; then put together and took on, a few of our own made-up slogans to publically highlight what we were about, such as; *'Providing Comforts for Loyalist Prisoners, Their only Crime was Loyalty, Ulster is Their Cause and Their Cause is our Cause.'*

We adopted our own Logo of a large diagonal Orange Cross in a white circle with our name around the border; and likewise several distinct wooden panels, were put together and painted by Ken Gibson who at that time worked alongside Dad in the Council, to highlight what we were about and also to decorate, as well as bring attention, to the front and sides of our new stall.

Our first news-sheet was produced by John McKeague on similar lines to the Loyalist News and this carried on for several editions, before we were able to progress further in producing our own coloured fortnightly magazine.

We decided this would be published in traditional colours which would include as much information as possible, primarily to focus on the plight of the Loyalist Prisoners, the draconian jail conditions, what we were doing, our aims etc, and how and where the money was being spent and also to highlight injustices, where they regularly occurred.

We also used a small bit of humour and included a jovial poke at our republican enemies, political and paramilitary in the magazine just to bring a smile to folk's faces during such tragic times and circumstances within the community.

Dad was a very competent and knowledgeable person, intellectually as well as politically and had many contacts throughout the latter. Several local politicians who understood and cared for what we were about, wrote short political pieces for the paper whilst others; such as the late Alderman Frankie Millar, Bill Bailie and North Belfast MP, Johnnie McQuade who was also a member of our Orange Lodge; made regular contributions to the overall content.

We also had our own lady poet, Mrs Doreen Gee who was the sister of wee Bobby Whitten and a real bonus to us, as for every copy of our paper, Doreen produced several suitable poems in each edition, like the one below which she penned under the pseudonym of DG.

Following his release from Crumlin Road jail, in the autumn of 1972 and having completed a nine year sentence for arms offences back in 1966, the Orange Cross then introduced the Rocky Burns column into our magazine, which in itself proved to be a really popular section every fortnight. Rocky was another Loyalist set up

by the authorities after sorcerous Special Branch detectives, as if by magic, seemingly produced a rusty gun allegedly hidden under a pile of discarded coal in a next door vacant property.

The Rock soon became a celebrity and was regularly stopped in the street by folk asking him what he was writing in the magazine that week; he used to answer by saying .. *'you'll have to buy the paper and see.'*

In fact my Dad was the actual ghost writer for the Rocky Burn's column; but then, that's how myths are made!!

Interestingly in early '72 when the Orange Cross was pushing the authorities on the outside to introduce Political Status, it was late one Friday night, that I personally brought the initial smuggled-out (presumably) written statement from the jail to Ric Clarke at the News Letter offices in Donegall Street, on which the inmates on 'A' wing had set out their intentions to undertake, and being behind bars with limited resources, whatever means at their disposal, to attain POW recognition due to the very nature of the charges levelled against each of them during the 'Troubles.'

The document (copy of the wording shown above) had been formulated in modern day Covenant speak, neatly typed in full capitals as was the normal style of most letters and

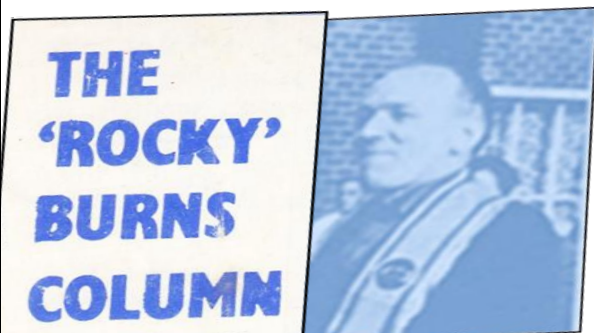
IMPRISONED

Shattered and torn the ways that I knew
Just Loyalty beating in this heart that is true;
For Ulster keeps calling, still calling me on
The land of my birth, though my freedom has gone.

In dreams I must wander when twilight awakes
The yearnings for homeland that memory takes;
But the prison's my world now and here I must stay
While youth with its pleasures, goes drifting away.

But the years I must spend, in this prison's confines
I pledge to my country, her cause is still mine;
Then to ask staunch resistance from those that remain
So my stand for proud Ulster, will not be in vain.

D.G.



THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

LOYALIST PRISONERS OF WAR: 'A' WING BELFAST PRISON - MAY 1972

BEING CONVINCED IN OUR CONSCIENCES THAT OUR CAUSE IS JUST, AND OUR ENDEAVOURS IN FURTHERANCE OF THAT CAUSE FULLY COMMENSURATE WITH THE FINER ATTRIBUTES OF THE BRITISH ULSTERMAN, WE THE LOYALIST POLITICAL PRISONERS ENTOMBED BEHIND THESE WALLS NOW, IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, ASSERT OUR FULL PREROGATIVES UNDER BRITISH LIBERTY, TO OPT FOR FULL STATUS AS POLITICAL PRISONERS, AND WE SHALL, AS FAR AS IN US LIES, USE EVERY AND ALL LEGITIMATE MEANS IN PURSUANCE OF THESE HONOURABLE ASPIRATIONS.

WE NOW, OPENLY AND WITH PROUD AFORETHOUGHT PRONOUNCE OUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE ULSTER VOLUNTEER FORCE WHICH IN LAW IS BANNED, BUT IN PRACTICE IS LIVING AND REAL AND TO US AN ATTESTATION TO THE UNQUENCHABLE AND UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT OF THE ULSTER LOYALIST.

WE DESIRE PEACE WITH JUSTICE, BUT NOT AT THE COST OF SLAVERY. A START HAS TO BE MADE NOW AND WE ARE PREPARED TO BE WILLING SACRIFICES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THAT PEACE BUT TO ENABLE US WE MUST SOLICIT AND RECEIVE YOUR SUPPORT. FEEL YOUR STRENGTH, JUSTIFY YOUR CAUSE AND STAND UP TO BE COUNTED.

MAY GOD GIVE US STRENGTH AND THE GUIDANCE THAT IS REQUIRED.
FOR GOD AND ULSTER,

evening, that all the local newspapers began to take an interest in prison matters, and I believe the news-editor at the time could have kicked himself afterwards when he realised the exclusive he had spurned back then.

Ric and I later became very good friends and he would regularly seek out the Orange Cross for further snippets about prison life. In fact getting to know me as he did, and indeed through our close association and his own reporting vigilance, Ric probably saved me a lot of personal embarrassment, later on, perhaps even physical grief, though not of my making; the story of which is outlined further on in this wee historical compilation.

As we steadily progressed in our quest to provide comforts for the Loyalist Prisoners, the Committee was equally successful in our application to

correspondence sent out by inmates back then, and signed by all the Loyalist Prisoners in 'A3' Wing of the Crum, but which the weekend editor refuted as mere publicity and refused to print it.

It was not until the prisoners, in some shape or form, actually sprung the heavy cell doors off their hinges as part of the protest just before lock-up the following Saturday

the Inland Revenue for Charitable status as we were by then, the only recognised Loyalist grouping totally dedicated to working for and assisting, both in kind and whatever ways that were humanly possible, for the welfare of our lads in Crumlin Road Jail.

We carried on with this wee wooden stall, which wasn't really big enough at that time, through news spreading of the welfare work by the Orange Cross. So with so many folk wanting to help out in support of the Prisoners, one Saturday this wee elderly gentleman with a big heart, called Bobby Whitten turned up with the proceeds of a ballot he had organised in the Crues' Club near where he hailed from on the York Road. Bobby offered to help as much as he could; so much so, and because of his real interest, he was asked to join us on the Committee. Similarly another fellow Orangeman from the Shankill area, called Bobby Close was also eager to assist and subsequently the 'two Bobbys' (below) aligned with us, so that by then we had grown to a recognised Group of six members.

Wee Bobby and big Bobby as they became known were also a real bonus as they never missed a Saturday, whatever the weather, from noon to tea time, through all seasons be it with sun, rain, sleet or snow they were truly dedicated.

By that time, the Loyalist Prisoner population was growing at an alarming rate, and because we had been providing various items into the Wing, through the official and proper channels, Gusty arranged us for a formal meeting with a very sympathetic and humane personage in the Governor, Major Albert Mullan.

We were invited to present our case to him, setting out our aims and procedures to demonstrate that the Orange Cross was totally genuine in what we were doing solely for the welfare of the Loyalist Prisoners within his jurisdiction, thereby opening a real and regular channel of

communication with the jail authorities.

By this time the Loyalist faction had been re-housed in the upper top tier of, 'A3' Wing of the jail to segregate them from the outnumbering republicans based in the other two lower landings which helped prevent disturbances between both factions.

In fact being on the ultimate, upper tier of the Wing also gave them better protection and were then less vulnerable from attack by having no one overhead or at a higher level.

Meanwhile Gusty continued to ignore orders to undertake any daily prison work as well as refusing to leave his cell and then took the bold step to enrage the screws by using smuggled in tippex correction fluid, to paint bold white POW letters onto the prison jacket as a protest and to show his determination to be classed as a political pawn, whenever or whatever it took.

Now, and even with the republican prisoners being on the lower landings, though still a segregated 'A' Wing, to emphasise the no-fighting policy or discourage the display of sectarian animosity in any of the mixed or visiting areas, each of the individual group commanders had already met to agree a truce, albeit still a very shaky one as you can imagine, in such a confined environment. The mixed canteen service as well as the physical movement to the recreation areas, were still ever-open opportunities for confrontation and all the while the ever increasing numbers in both Loyalist and republican camps was beginning to make the prison regime more and more, unworkable.



THE FINAL PUSH FOR POLITICAL STATUS

Since the first day he was committed to prison Gusty Spence had vigorously maintained his stance that he was not a criminal and the politicising, with such obvious political interference, both during the trial, along with the outcome, proved this overtly and beyond any reasonable doubt; indeed moreso that much of the manufactured evidence against him was concocted with the previously referred to prime example, being the outdated use of the 1850 Grand Jury system, held in camera, with Gusty and his legal counsel 'in absentia' .. debarred from giving any evidential input during this sham, to re-indict him on the same antecedent, failed charges.



The Grand Jury was the result of a nineteenth century draconian law where so-called evidence was presented before a handpicked 'jury'

with the actual defendant being denied a personal appearance or allowing his/her defence lawyers an opportunity to challenge or contradict the prosecution's unconstitutional actions.

The conclusion of such a hearing behind closed doors is simply the prosecution's ability to bring in a verdict of either a so-called .. 'no bill' or 'true bill'. Invariably, the latter!

Having earlier been released by the magistrate's deposition court with no case to answer, as well as twisting the fact that he:



- a) had **NOT** been picked out in four separate identification parades even in the confines of the jail;
- b) was not allowed a separate trial given that statements by co-accused should not in a normal court be used against another co-accused, but
- c) was then to be 'identified' from the dock, during the actual trial by

being pointed out, through a quiet whisper in the witness's ear by unscrupulous Special Branch detectives involved in the case.

It must also be said that Gusty Spence was not convicted 'beyond all reasonable doubt' as is the norm when one is found guilty, but through 'primary association and the reasoning to assume and probability' which is the actual wording on the final appeal rejection paper.

As it was Gusty continued in his adamant refusal to undertake any type of manual work or labour, as well as now using heavier white paint smuggled from the workshop, to adorn the bold **POW** letters on the only finery, **prison garb**, he had to wear at the time, as the authorities had confiscated all his own personal clothing on re-entry after sentencing.

Gusty also refused to acknowledge when called or referred to, by an allocated prison number inside this penal environment and encouraged others to follow suit, in order to further preserve their dignity and humanity.

Charges of damaging prison property soon followed on a number of occasions.

Because of his refusal to co-operate, Gusty also found himself on the receiving end of being placed on the boards with a number of solitary confinements during his first few years in custody, whereby he undertook three or four hunger strikes to highlight his case. Undoubtedly his health suffered



because of these refusals to take food whereby he was confined to the hospital wing on many occasions.

One time in particular I remember most worrying was one Sunday evening, when Governor Mullen urgently dispatched an officer, the very short distance from the jail precincts down to my Granny's (below) house in Joseph Street, to request that members of the family should go to the jail immediately, as Gusty's health had failed so badly, the authorities thought the worst. No doubt they were more apprehensive of repercussions on the outside had Gusty succumbed within the confines of the Crumlin Road jail.

Along with Doctor Norman Laird (*the late Lord Laird's father, left*) who had premises on the Grosvenor Road and was a personal friend of the Family, Dad and I were brought to a meeting that night in the Governor's Office. After the Major had told Dad that Gusty had once thumped his desk in response to some instruction or order, which was unheard-off for any 'prisoner' to defy the Governor, to which Dad replied that 'Gusty was an honourable person, but also a determined human-being, who would not take kindly in being treated like a caged animal.'

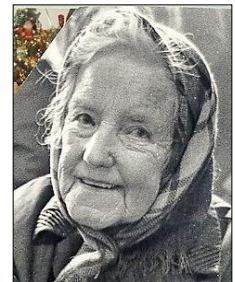
It was however finally agreed, there and then that if Gusty ended his hunger strike, the Governor would permit him to spend his day within the tailor's shop, but would NOT be required to undertake any actual physical work, such as log cutting in the prison wood-yard (*top*).

The Governor then kindly permitted the three of us to visit Gusty personally in the hospital wing that Sunday night to explain Major Mullan's arrangements. When we got there we were each taken aback by Gusty's physically emaciated appearance, with the smell of death in the room, as by this time he had been over thirty days into the hunger strike, his third in so many years as a protest to his conviction.

Only for my Father bringing a plea from their Mother and 'for her dear sake' to cease, as Gusty was so determined to see it through to the end promising that .. 'no jail would break the loyal heart that was rocked on a loyal knee.'

Thankfully because of his Mum's plea, coupled with the Governor's assurance of a no-work policy, along with a promise by both Dr Laird and Dad to work tirelessly for his release, (*which they continued to do until their deaths*) or seek others in authority to have another look at the injustices associated with his case, did Gusty agree to cease the hunger strike that evening.

However he remained under constant medical watch in the prison hospital for some considerable time afterwards, and underwent further treatment due to complications that had gradually built up after such prolonged periods of refusing wholesome and regular food or meals.



THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

Determined to be classed as a political prisoner, Gusty inside and ourselves outside, carried on with the campaign to achieve this important status. Though politically and diametrically opposed to each other's ideology, Gusty representing the Loyalist Prisoners, held face to face conversations with Billy McKee, leader of the Provos and Peter Monaghan for the Official IRA, and in order to maintain the discipline within each other's factions, the trio pushed collectively for political status.

I had previously worked alongside a fellow plumber called Liam who had been interned as a member of the (Official) IRA during the war years and he and I got on very well.

Liam also knew who I was of course and yet he was quite willing to impart several pointers as to how the republican internees derided the system and in essence were eventually treated in a different category from other convicted prisoners, the ODC's (*ordinary decent criminals as they were referred to*), all of which I related to Gusty during our Saturday visits.

Over time Gusty had made a personal acquaintance with a sympathetic Roman Catholic Officer in the jail, who regularly brought out, *and took in*, messages scribbled on toilet paper and rolled up in sweetie or caramel papers that both Gusty and he were able to drop into each other's coat pockets twice a week, as they hung on the wall of the tailor's shop.

The Minister, (*since deceased*) as he was codenamed to retain utmost confidentiality, liked a wee liquid refreshment after work, so a member of the family always met up with him on a Tuesday and Thursday evening once his duty had finished, conversing in one of the small enclosed booths of McCann's public house at Carlisle Circus.



For years, the Minister was a paradigm of inspiration and Gusty always smiled inwardly, when the 'Super-Prod screws', made the usual comment for him speaking to.. *'that Fenian B'* .. whilst at the same time slamming shut the cell door then turning the key in the lock!!

One wee snippet of info I once passed to Gusty created a near

panic among the Provo prisoners on 'A' Wing. Through my job within the Belfast Corporation during the Troubles meant that I worked mainly in West Belfast and particularly in and around the Falls and Springfield Road areas.

One day I had a call to inspect a faulty chimney flue at a house in Kane Street off the Kashmir Road which happened to be the home of Frances Card (*Proinsias MacAirt*) one of the Provisional IRA leaders openly named on TV by Major General Anthony Farrar-Hockley (*above*) of the Parachute Regiment.

In the living room there was a folded-up King William tea-towel lying on a corner table (*most likely one picked up during the Whiterock parade melee*); and long before the days of mobiles and tablets, the telephone was not in the



main living-room of the house, but kept in an upstairs bedroom.

Though during the short time in the property, I thought I'd copped it when a youth entered the house and recognised him as the gunman, (pictured in either the Fortnight or Nuisight magazines at the height of the Troubles), firing a gun from the corner of Cawnpore Street and Kashmir Road; and I believed he knew me, possibly from jail visiting.

Thankfully he just nodded in my direction, said something like .. 'do a

good job' .. and then disappeared upstairs to join Card.

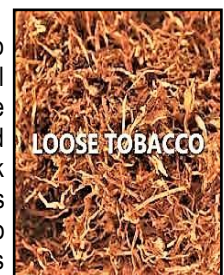
I'm able to write this compilation, so I must have had the rebel look of a republican sympathiser and 'not one of the other-side' nor a Loyalist, either brave, bold, stupid or crazy enough to be in that house.

That was not long before MacAirt was soon after arrested with fellow Provo leader Billy McKee stopped by a couple of English detectives on secondment, who had been tailing them and 'allegedly' found a gun in the vehicle.

After both had been remanded to the Crum and at one of their factions' meetings, Gusty asked Francie why he kept a King Billy tea-towel on his side-table and his phone in the bedroom upstairs. It apparently created a panic amongst the IRA leaders as to who the spy was in the ranks.

On the outside we continued to lobby politicians and anybody else we thought might help in trying to gain political status, including the Secretary of State, Willie Whitelaw and on one occasion in early May '72 we were granted a meeting at Stormont with his officials to put across the case for such recognition. This was before his officials' next meeting with Adams and O'Connell the following month. Things seemed to be moving along nicely for that political status recognition.

So whilst at Stormont Castle we also took the opportunity to ask for several other special dispensations such as the deposit of a financial allowance to be paid in by the Orange Cross for use in the tuck shop to purchase extra commodities as was an additional weekly tobacco allowance and a few other everyday items of necessity.



These requests were granted shortly afterwards, and at the same time, the government also permitted extra weekly allowances of loose roll and shag tobacco to each of the Loyalist Prisoners. This gave us another opportunity to take on an added advantage from this personal allocation; whilst handing in the agreed weighted amount of tobacco. So with each package being individually named we also included the same stipulation into the non-smokers on the landing who then dispersed this 'extra' allowance to the smokers who were then able to enjoy an additional wee puff!!

Not long after, as the news of the extra tobacco allowance had soon got around, one day a van turned up at Gusty's mother's home in Joseph Street, where two lads got out and landed a large black bin-bag of shag tobacco that was originally destined for the incinerator, on her doorstep. They simply shouted ... *'that's for Gusty, Mrs Spence and then drove off.'*

Soon after, a brand new clean metal dustbin was acquired and the whole lot was hauled up to Granny's back bedroom. We were afterwards informed by those in the know, to cut up a few apples and spread them into the bag to keep the baccy fresh.

When word spread further, a couple of sympathetic local hostleries were practically queuing up to supply us regularly with a few bottles of cheap brandy which was dispensed into the tobacco bin to give and keep that added freshness and one can imagine the aroma that hung around Joseph Street or The Banjo, as it was nicknamed in the area, for a long time afterwards.

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

But, like all serious situations there is always that wee smidgeon of humour, and I was standing with my Dad at the Orange Cross stall one Saturday when one of the Loyalist Prisoners' wives came over to offer her appreciation and thanks for what we were doing and passed on the gratitude of her husband for the extra tobacco. She then added .. *'I don't know how you do it, but whatever way, thank you'*.

Dad whispered, *'Jean, don't ever tell anyone, but we go up to the entry that runs between the back of Landscape Terrace and the prison's outer wall and there's a specially marked stone in the wall that we remove and put the extra bags of baccy into that opening, then replace the stone. When the boys are out in the exercise yard, Gusty removes another stone in the inner wall and takes out the packets of tobacco whilst the boys surround him so as not to arouse any suspicion, from the screws. The stone is then pushed back into place, ready for the next week'*.

Dad gave Jean a wee wink to say, don't you let on to anyone, it's a secret. Jean just looked at him and then said .. *'I just knew you had a wee secret move Billy, but my lips are sealed'*.

Even though the exercise yard was an enclosed space and there was an obvious security corridor between the outer wall and the enclosed yard; still Jean was never the less content with that wee explanation. **Another myth sealed!**

We also managed to send in a small portable black and white TV for personal viewing in one of the cells in the wing.

However when we bought it from a city centre store there were two cables in the

box for the TV, one for battery usage and the other for mains power supply only.

What happened however was, as they all gathered around the portable, some clever dick decided to plug the set into the prison's main electricity circuit, using the battery input and the TV literally blew a gasket as well as fusing the lights across the wing before the stand-by generator kicked in and panic set in amongst the screws.

The TV was completely and utterly, electronically wrecked, kaput; but the screws wouldn't let it out again to be repaired due to security reasons; so we had to get another portable television and go through the whole process again only, this time with just one, *along with the instructions of how to use the proper, power lead and the correct socket.*

Following another ad-hoc request from the Committee, permission was given by Governor, Major Mullen (who, as I said on many an occasion, was a very reasonable person

when engaging with us) for

the Orange Cross to supply a six-foot snooker table for the lads, but on one condition, that it had to be brought up, still packaged and handed over

quietly through the side door entrance near to the Mater Hospital, and ONLY WHEN the Principal Officer (who was himself later murdered by the IRA) had left for his lunch-break, as he would have gone over the Governor's head and refused to allow it into the jail or on the Wing.

But with a wee bit of cunning and the turning of a blind eye here and there by one or two more sympathetic warders, *perhaps a Super-Prod or two*, we succeeded and in it went.

Several transistor radios were also similarly transported into the wings which allowed the lads to listen in to the police messages relating to the on-going troubles outside.

However one of the most unusual requests was for a portable tape recorder along with a set of cassette tapes of .. *"how to teach yourself .. German."*

Gusty had convinced the Prison Governor that some of the lads wanted to learn another language to pass the time and believe it or not, it was granted on condition that nothing could be recorded on it; but as you can guess someone with electronic savvy was thinking otherwise.

That was well before internet shopping, so I had the unenviable job of trooping around all the music and record shops in downtown Belfast to find a store that stocked box-tapes of self-taught foreign languages.

Why German was the chosen lingo, and not French or Spanish, I didn't even want to ask!!

But I finally got the tapes, ordered through a record shop in Donegall Arcade and again I'm sure the retailer must have wondered why this Belfast lad wanted to learn German.

He too never asked and I wasn't forthcoming with an explanation. Little did the shop attendant know however, of an important part he was to play in Loyalist folklore?



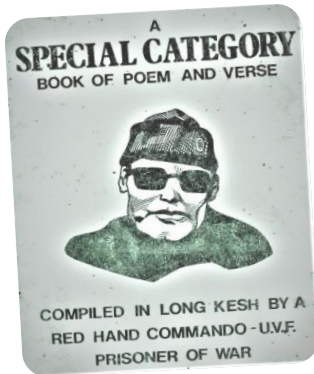
"IT'S NOT JUST ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL"



The whole shebang was then left into the prison admin office amongst a lot of head scratching by the staff no doubt wondering just what Spence is up to now!

What occurred afterwards was that the machine was adjusted to record, but with the first part of the tape still in German so as to hide the true intentions, Gusty

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'



was then able to over-record further in, complete with the background sounds of clanging keys, slamming doors, swearing, whistling, shouting and much more along with actual messages and tales from the inside.

Afterwards he would get the 'Minister' to bring in additional tapes and the other, recorded ones, back out.

Unfortunately however in one of their constant searches around the Shankill area, the Paras later raided one of the family houses and confiscated the lot; perhaps for souvenirs as we never did get back any single tape or the other items they took despite official applications to

the authorities for their return, which of course, were vehemently denied, they ever existed in the first place.

So another incredible and irreplaceable piece of history associated with the intriguing machinations of prison life during the Troubles had vanished into thin air; but who knows the tapes could now be in a trophy display cabinet of the Parachute Regimental Museum in Aldershot or who knows, maybe one day they'll eventually turn up on eBay?



Looking back, the on-going lobbying on our part finally appeared to pay off, when on June 22nd, 1972, the Secretary of State Willie Whitelaw prudently granted Special Category recognition which, both in essence and in reality, was *Political Status*, in all but name; to both the Loyalist and Republican prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail.

Once this happened, the Orange Cross received an immediate request for a list of personal wear and with the various jacket sizes being sent out on prior to Saturday morning, we initially purchased thirty-seven olive green pilot coats with fur collars, as chosen by the sentenced and remand



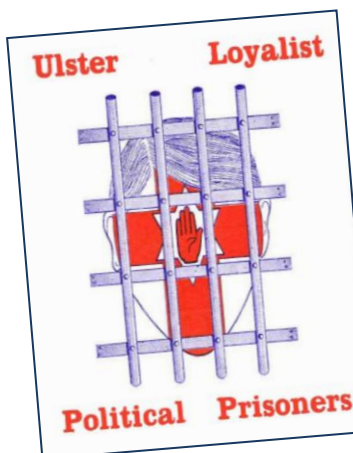
POWs themselves, being the in-thing at the time, with another supportive retail proprietor in Ernie Erwin's outfitter's on the Shankill Road giving us a good discount for the Loyalist POWs.

Later that same Saturday afternoon the jackets were dispatched into the jail and all

factions were now able to wear their own clothes and not the drab prison garb.

At the time Gusty had already informed us that the British Government were in a close 'clandestine' contact with the Provo leadership and plans were afoot by NIO officials for another follow up meeting in early July.

However despite the usual republican narrative and claim of who actually enabled this special recognition, it was through the sheer on-going guts and determination of the Ulster Loyalist Prisoners led by Gusty Spence, with the defiant POW letters, painted on their prison jackets this was achieved, with a little help of course, on the outside



through the pressure and perseverance of the Orange Cross as the 'Voice of the Loyalist Prisoners' and the unwavering support of the Loyalist Women's nightly protests outside the jail and a few, just an odd few, supportive unionist politicians.

At the final June weekend and into July

1972, Gusty had been granted parole for his daughter Elizabeth's wedding and on returning that Sunday evening to the Crum he was apprehended by the UVF in an effort to persuade the authorities to grant a retrial due to the manner in which he had been treated during the 1966 arrest and imprisonment.

A victim then of what the dog in the street knew as a political involvement to jail him.

Thereafter, the Orange Cross stall was practically turned over and searched each week by the police and army, as they upped the ante to re-arrest him

The rest is a piece of history and for several months Gusty remained 'in freedom' before being detained by the Paras, on the Glencairn Road and returned to jail, but this time flown directly by helicopter straight into Long Kesh and confined alongside the Loyalist Detainees and the transferred Sentenced Prisoners from Crumlin Road Goal.

The state later proffered charges against him for .. "being in unlawful custody" .. a blatantly obviously charge but which various juries saw through as each failed to accept or agree upon, on a few occasions when Gusty had to appear in court.

Quietly, and no doubt to save further embarrassment, the disparaging charges were eventually secreted and thereafter, not another word was heard about them.

SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS FROM 22nd JUNE 1972 GRANTED CONCESSIONS INCLUDE:

1. One visit per week
2. One food parcel per week
3. Unlimited incoming and outgoing mail
4. The right to wear personal clothing at all times
5. Free association with other prisoners
6. No statutory requirement to engage in prison work

ORANGE CROSS AUTONOMY SLANDERED

Around this time, with Gusty being in freedom, though held safely for several months by the UVF, of course the media were at pains to stir up discord between the Loyalist Groups, both inside prison, as well as on the outside. In particular the Irish Independent published a story that Gusty Spence was at the centre of a 'clash' between the UDA and the UVF over what the southern based paper cited as 'an underground news-sheet, *The Orange Cross*'. A further-on piece in this compilation will belie that claim by the way, and had we known of this defamatory quote at the time, the Irish Independent could also have found itself alongside the Daily Telegraph in a joint libel action in the courts.

From day one, the Orange Cross's claim was to .. **'provide comforts for Loyalist Prisoners'** .. the Committee never deviated from that commitment and being a legally constituted and respected body was **NOT** in any way, shape or form 'underground' as our weekly open trading in the public eye, or HMRC registration would prove, and the written constitution in our *successful submission* for charitable status would support.

If that particular biased Irish broadsheet had, at the time checked its facts, as with all publications back then, and in order to benefit from the regular mailing discount associated with a 'printed-matter' postal discount scheme provided by the Post Office, all **BRITISH** mail-sheets, news-sheets, publications, mail-drops and newspapers had to be registered with the UK's main postal service. The Orange Cross was no exception!

In fact when we started our fortnightly direct mailing service for many overseas readers, the Orange Cross paper became so popular, and such was the interest that the local Peter's Hill Postmistress was investigated by the PO because of the bi-weekly high increase in her profits.

The Committee even had to lend support and the reason for her higher fortnightly intake, through an official letter of explanation being sent to the PO Counters Management.

Additionally and contrary to the Irish Independent's suggestion, the autonomy of the Orange Cross or its

Spence in centre of row

GUSTY SPENCE, Protestant folk hero and convicted killer who disappeared while out on parole earlier this year, is alive, well, living in Belfast and at the centre of a dispute involving the UVF and the UDA.

Augustus Andrew Spence was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1966 for his part in the murder of a young Catholic barman outside the Malvern Arms public house in Shankill. On July 1 last he was allowed parole to attend the wedding of his 18-year-old daughter and to visit his 70-year-old mother.

Spence did both, but never returned to the Crumlin Road Prison. He was 'taken' from a car by four men on the Springfield Road and 'vanished' from the public eye.

Now it is known that Spence is at the heart of a struggle for power in which the two main Protestant extremist groups—the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force—are engaged.

The clash between the two groups has arisen over a Protestant underground newsheet 'The Orange Cross.' Funds from the sale of the paper go towards helping the dependents of 'loyalist' prisoners held in the city jail. The UVF have a large say in the running of the paper and are thought to administer the payments to dependents.

The UDA, anxious to increase their sphere of influence in the Protestant ghettos now wish to usurp the role of the UVF and become the controlling force behind the paper.

It is understood that Spence as a representative of the UVF was called to meet the 12 men who compose "the inner council" of the UDA. 'The Terrible 12' are said to have threatened Spence and pointed out that they had over 40,000 members.

Sources say Spence countered by replying: "You may have over 40,000 members, but there are only 12 of you, and we can eliminate everyone of you."

At that point the meeting broke up, and since the exchange there have been a number of shooting incidents in which only Protestants have been involved.

Recently, one of the strangest meetings in a city of strange meetings took place when "Gusty" agreed to meet a group of young Maoist-Communists.

A man who was present at the meeting said the talks were called on "matters of mutual interest." He said that Spence said that the UVF were engaged in a "class struggle" and were determined to oust "the landed gentry" in the North, regardless of their religion.

The eyewitness claimed that Spence said he was not interested in sectarianism—but not interested in a united Ireland either. What Spence appeared to desire, the source said, was a kind of workers' state which was still a part of Great Britain.

Committee would never have allowed ourselves to be the subject of any division and this will also be reflected further on in this publication.

The Independent, like many other newspapers of that era, were no friends of the Loyalist people, and at every twist and turn, each saw a golden opportunity and never allowed a passing chance to divide and conquer a people constantly under attack from a sectarian onslaught from within the safe haven of its own southern borders for generations, augmented with a scorched earth policy against innocent Protestants by the militant terrorist, republican movement and its political mouthpieces.

THE YEAR 1972 HAS THE HIGHEST RECORDED DEATH TOLL OF THE TROUBLES, INCLUDING THE IRA MASSACRES ON BLOODY FRIDAY .. WE NEED COMMENT NO FURTHER, THE FACTS ALONE TELL THE TRUE STORY!

ANOTHER PROVO BOMB - ANOTHER NEW STALL SITE

On August 17th 1972 the Provos parked a hijacked Post Office van containing large a bomb outside the Standard Bar, (right) just across from where he had our Saturday stall. The area was devastated and the remains of the pub had to be demolished which thereafter left a waste ground. After it was cleared and made safe we eventually transferred our stall position across Agnes Street and settled in a more prominent section of the bombed site.

It was not long after, that a very skilful carpenter who had worked alongside my Dad drew up a plan for us to look at, comprising an enclosed four-wheeled kiosk similar to a fast food booth which we readily approved, as it had a roof to keep us dry during the wet weather and in particular, we could leave our



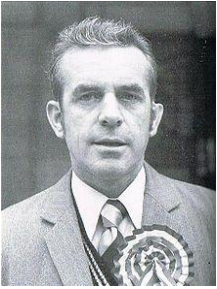
THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

merchandise inside as it could be closed up and securely locked when stored overnight or from week to week.

Suffice to say the joiner friend, wee Billy and that's all I will call him, as he worked tirelessly at his place of employment and without any cost to us, made all the necessary parts so when they were joined together, became our new wheelable, warmer Orange Cross stall.

Billy even arranged to have it transported to the place where we had planned to assemble it. We were also fortunate to get an out of the way, corner spot located in the nearby Loyalist Club delivery yard to allow us park it from one Saturday trading day to the next.

It arrived in six large panels, one including a fitted door which were all very easily screwed together, roof



and all; we then fitted it out, with brackets and shelves inside and out; we even a small calor gas lamp for the winter evenings, to light up and show off what we had for sale.

And of course it was finally painted in traditional colours of Orange and Blue, again with the help of Ken Gibson who adorned it throughout with our slogan/motto signage boards which were

then screwed onto the outside. **A sight to behold, sez you!!**

As one can imagine, it was a heavy rascal and it too, took four people to negotiate it up and down the main Shankill Road from the Club and across Agnes Street. The first time we were pushing down the kerb to park it back to the Club, the plastic wheels buckled under the weight.

Thankfully another helpful supporter working in Mackie's Foundry got us a set of large industrial wheels, and once we made a solid wooden ramp for the footpath, it could be very easily manoeuvred up and down from the bombed out pub's waste-ground to the storage yard in the Loyalist Club.



The larger stall also gave us more room to expand and being able to display a wider selection of Loyalist merchandise.

As we now had our trader's licence it also allowed the Orange Cross direct access to many of the local wholesaler stores throughout Belfast and every Monday morning, my Mum Minnie and her sister Greta along with my Wife Mary trundled off to these stores and warehouses and bought up different Loyalist flags, streamers, badges, necklaces etc as well as various other types of Ulster memorabilia.

You name it they bought it, and during the week the three of them along with my sister Margaret, sat patiently round the table in Mum's house making up different pieces and styles of chains, bracelets as well as sticking on Loyalist badges and other goodies for us to stock and sell from the Orange Cross stall each Saturday.

We also commissioned our own Orange Cross ties, novelty goods such King William stamps and match boxes along with others depicting, UVF Badges, and Glasgow Rangers logo.



THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

Some of the printed matter produced by the Orange Cross during its committed years in 'providing comforts for the Loyalist Prisoners' included our first foray into the printed media, with the mono, black and white edition of the first magazine produced the Late John McKeague. The coloured montage shows some copies of our own produced magazine; 102 copies in total. Other items included calendars, covenants, I/D cards and handkerchiefs with the names of the UVF Prisoners of War in Long Kesh, listed during 1972/73

The Orange Cross fortnightly magazine was produced by a former member of the Lodge who owned the printing premises sited across the upper first floors of a tyre and car repair shop in Trinity Street, on the northern edge of the Unity Flats complex.

Unfortunately during one of the regular nightly riotous situations in and around Clifton Street, republicans broke into the building and found a batch of waiting-to-be collected and newly printed Orange Cross papers.

The inevitable happened and the building was fire bombed and totally destroyed, with the firm having to relocate to another area and start afresh. Coincidentally, the Brother who owned this particular firm had learned the trade as an apprentice to the late Jimmy Laird, a master printer who operated his own small family business from a downstairs, kitchen house room at Pim Street, off the lower Antrim Road and using the older, manual leaded typeset method had produced all our documentation associated with the Lodge's 50th Anniversary Covenant Celebrations back in 1962.

PROVIDING COMFORTS FOR LOYALIST POWs CONTINUES

So, after Gusty had been apprehended in October 1972 and over the Christmas period into the following year, all the Loyalists POWs in 'A' Wing, Crumlin Road Goal had been transferred from Belfast Prison to the compounds or cages, as they became known, in Long Kesh. We continued however to carry on with what we had been doing previously as well as providing a varied selection of the Sunday papers, faithfully transported each week by another faithful supporter using his own car and fuel, down to the prison parcel office, just off the M1 motorway on the outskirts of Lisburn.

The Orange Cross also began taking orders for the carved leather handicrafts; painted mirrors, and hankies made in Long Kesh and the orders flowed.

The weekly arrangements to transfer payments directly to the names of each of the Loyalist Prisoners who made the articles

were deposited during family and/or welfare visits; the following week etc, was used to re-order more leather cuttings from a very helpful Brig o' Doon supplier in Scotland that posted the leather directly to a named Loyalist prisoner recipient in Long Kesh.

By now, however there were two distinct, established paramilitary groups, each housed in separate compounds though we still deposited the same cash amounts equally divided between both groups. So contrary to the Irish Independent's phantom story of alleged events of the previous year, it was however at a later meeting in the UDA headquarters opposite Dee Street on the Newtownards Road in 1973; *at least twelve months after Gusty Spence had been in freedom*, that the three welfare bodies sat down to discuss the ever-growing prison situation. By this time however with a sizeable number of men behind the wire, and the financial support needed on a regular basis, each of the organisations had now set up their own distinct welfare body, the UDA, with the Loyalist Prisoners Aid (LPA) and the UVF creating the Loyalist Prisoners & Detainees' Welfare Association (LPDWA) The latter at the time to include the plight of a number of Loyalists who had been interned without trial as a sop to nationalist leaders, bleating on about only republicans being interned.

At that forum attended by my Dad, Jackie Campbell and myself, the Orange Cross was given an opportunity, if freely desired, to amalgamate with one, or other, of the two larger welfare organisations.

However at our own previously convened meeting to air and discuss our views, the full Committee had already decided that we would continue to retain our separate autonomy. Having established good relationships overtime with the prison authorities, the welfare departments, and in particular individual welfare officers and government officials we were of the opinion that the Orange Cross should retain this individuality.

We did however offer any knowledge and experience gained by ourselves, over the years since the Orange Cross had been created and prudently having both acquitted ourselves in being

trustworthy and through investing in a good rapport and relationships with officialdom for years, the Orange Cross would be more amenable to remain as we were in providing comforts for all Loyalist Prisoners irrespective of membership..

Again and contrary to the Irish Independent's 1972 false news story, our decision was undisputed, being both entirely and amicably accepted in consort with the other two groups; with just one, totally agreed, change in our welfare approach .. that the Orange Cross would continue to assist only those prisoners belonging to the UVF/RHC and Orange Volunteers being held in the Long Kesh cages.

The two other welfare groupings would then continue to further develop a wider scope of assistance and transport arrangements which was also to include the ever increasing families' dependency of their respective POWs groupings.

ARRANGING WEEKLY HOLIDAY BREAKS IN SCOTLAND

During mid 1973 and by now having been friendly for many years, with Orange Brethren in and around the Airdrie District of Scotland who since 1969 had been accumulating finance, to help the folk here, we developed another mode of assistance within our welfare remit. What followed were discussions involving the prisoners' wives/children and even grandparents being afforded a week's free holiday in

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Scotland, from one Saturday to the following Saturday. The Scottish Brethren and Sisters would finance these seven day round trips through what they had already established as .. **'The Ulster Fund'**.

Once it was put to the men inside, they were more than grateful and happy to give their blessing to this venture. We then engaged in collating all necessary details, names and ages etc of all those families interested in going over during the summer.

Suitable arrangements had to be made to accommodate any special family requirements etc ensuring that each group was ideally bonded together, grandparents, mothers and children, keeping their familiarity and no separation, in order to avoid any undue stress or upset, particularly to the kids.

Having personally met and discussed our proposals with the Belfast Steamship Company Manager in High Street and after outlining what we were planning to do, he kindly allowed us the first week in credit, with the travel tickets from Belfast to Ardrossan trustworthily handed over to me.

The families were first collected by Lodge members for group assembly at the Orange Cross stall, organised by the late Tommy Wilson, another Lodge Brother who was a respected community worker in the Village area of Donegall Road, and later in 1996, awarded the MBE by the Queen for his community work. Several Shankill Black Taxis Association drivers then freely gave their time to transport the outgoing party each Saturday to the ferry terminal, whilst at the same they then collected the returning group and drove them straight home.

After sailing over to Ardrossan, on arrival the families were met by our Scottish Brethren and Sisters, co-ordinated by Brother Peter Downie, with complimentary transport also waiting at the Ayrshire portside.

For the next week and thereafter all the family groups were also provided with extra spending money courtesy of the Fund, for travelling to all the well known holiday spots around Scotland.

On returning home, the invoice payment for the previous week was brought back from Scotland and in turn I then called to the High Street office on the Monday, paid the account and ordered the next batch of tickets for the new party travelling over the following weekend.

This went on throughout that spring and summer months during the school holidays period, and again in 1974, when by that time well over two hundred wives, children and grandparents had enjoyed those weekly trips and away breaks. All paid for, courtesy of our Scottish counterparts and their families, including long standing friends such as Mrs Nan Guy (*who also regularly got us sports equipment*) and her late Husband Jimmy, along with sincere supporters such as Jim Connor (*Harthill*) who unfortunately passed in July this year and another sincere friend in the late George Campbell (*Slamannan*).

Even to this day, over half a century on, many of the associations and friendships established back then, remain as solid as ever and still bearing fruit.

"Truly I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." ... Matthew Chapter 25 Verse 40

SHANKILL BLACK TAXI DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION HELPED BY TRANSPORTING THE FAMILIES EACH AND EVERY SATURDAY, BOTH TO AND FROM THE FERRIES BERTHED AT BELFAST DOCKS



BRETHREN AND SISTERS BASED WITHIN AIRDRIE LOYAL ORANGE DISTRICT HALL ESTABLISHED AN 'ULSTER FUND' TO PAY FOR WEEKLY TRIPS DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAY PERIODS FOR THE LOYALIST PRISONERS' WIVES AND CHILDREN ALONG WITH OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS. THE GRAND ORANGE LODGE OF ENGLAND ALSO RAN A SIMILAR SCHEME FOR OTHER LOYALIST EVACUEE FAMILIES.



BROTHER PETER DOWNIE CO-ORDINATED THE SCOTTISH SIDE OF THE TRIPS, LINKING WITH THE ORANGE CROSS, IN OPERATING THE ARRANGEMENTS ON THIS SIDE OF THE IRISH SEA



MEMBERS OF THE SCOTTISH LADIES ORANGE LODGES WHO ALSO WORKED IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY SUPPLIED THE LOYALIST PRISONERS IN LONG KESH WITH SPORTS, FOOTBALL AND TRAINING KITS



ABOVE, THE LATE BROTHER TOMMY WILSON OF LOL No. 1892 RECEIVES HIS MBE AWARD FOR COMMUNITY WORK, FROM HM THE QUEEN AT THE PALACE IN 1996



UNIFORMS AND DRILLING IN THE LONG KESH CAGES

By now sort of settled, *if I may use that term*, into the compounds or cages, the UVF/RHF Loyalist Prisoners began to arrange for uniformity whilst on parade around the perimeter wire and in advance of a forthcoming July 1st muster, I was tasked to seek out thousands of sparables, metal studs for the drill boots on parade.

However little did I realise just what I was letting myself in for, when I called at the shop in Church Lane and ordered several boxes of these studs, the lad at the counter looked at me in somewhat amazement.

Unknown to me back then, they weighed a ton and I had innocently walked in with a small plastic carrier bag.

A taxi had to be called to get them back to base, and then transported off to Long Kesh in the daily visitor's bus; under the guise of handicraft materials.

Next came the dark cap comforters to augment the black pullovers, though soon after the screws caught on to what was happening and barred the headgear from being left in, being unacceptable and regarded as part of a uniform.

So Gusti asked me to leave in reams of black wool and long knitting needles and the lads then began to make their own caps.

Again the authorities caught on to this move and the Governor soon stopped the needles and black wool. So we then left in balls of white wool and black dye, along with a box of six inch long wire nails, the latter also listed as 'handicraft items.'



However, once they soon caught on to this move, white wool was also immediately barred from entering Long Kesh, as part of the allowed items on the parcels' list.

So not to be outdone, the bunk blankets and other similar cotton bed coverings were unravelling, stripped into makeshift balls of wool before being dyed black and by using the six inch nails as knitting needles soon produced other uniform type items.

BELOW; THE STAINLESS STEEL BUCKLES MADE IN MACKIE'S FOUNDRY ALONG WITH THE SPLIT PIN TO SLIP INTO THE REAR OF THE UVF BADGE. THE BELTS AND CAP BADGES (CIRCLED) ARE DISPLAYED ON THE PARADE GROUND.



Another way to keep the prison authorities on their toes was to regularly change physical appearance by growing beards and long hair, then shaving them off or shortening the length on a haircut, or adopting a differing beard style, meaning that a new photograph had to be taken at each and every change of appearance particularly during the visiting days.

After that the UVF badges and the chrome buckles were on the menu. The large badges were made by a firm in Liverpool and each prisoner was to eventually receive two

of them; one for the belt buckle; with the other for the cap comforter. The special buckles with two holes to take the badges and back pin, were specially made by a friend in

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Mackie's (who was a member of the UDA; at a small cost of 25p each, *just for the materials I would add*), as the labour came with gratis, and these could be left in as part of the handicrafts, but the badges would prove more difficult.

The agreed solution, because of the number involved, was to get the badges delivered to each of families homes, to singularly smuggle them in during their visits; so everyone was told to expect a small padded envelope with two badges inside.

Again there was a bit of humour connected to this, as one of the wives had placed her badges between two baps in the weekly food parcel and they were soon discovered. Another family, perhaps at that stage unaware to expect the badges in a brown padded envelope, erred on caution; thought they had received a small suspect parcel bomb; called the army and those two metallic badges were blown to bits.

All in all however, we still managed the impossibility and the parade photos from inside the cages confirmed that we had succeeded once again.

Similarly when the parcel list was first drawn up as to what groceries and food, families could leave into the Camp. Initially it included two wheaten bread soda and potato farls as part of the list, which didn't



stipulate the bread size of course. So as you would expect, a local bakery was asked to produce a couple of extra special giant soda farls each week, which were well over twice the normal shop size goodies.

After that episode was discovered, the inevitable order came down from the Governor and the bread list was amended to state (across), a normal shop size!!

Whatever the prison authorities put in the way, or any attempt to belittle, oppose or reduce morale, the Loyalist prisoners' determination was much stronger and I believe this was a mantra similar of the defiance used by Allied Prisoners of War incarcerated in Colditz during WWII being a prime example of how they fought back against every such challenge. *One could say that the impossible was no problem, although it was the miracle that took just that wee bit longer.*

At one stage later, with the accumulated reserve from the weekly donations we had been leaving in for the tuck shop, along with the sale of handicrafts, during a visit the men signed out over twelve hundred quid to me, through the parcel office, as payment for a full sized snooker table ordered from an external supplier as it had to be paid upfront before delivery.

I never did follow up to ascertain as to who either delivered it or even who was allowed in, to actually

Go Antrim June 1975 248

SPECIAL CATEGORY PRISONERS WEEKLY PARCEL

- 200 Cigarettes or 6 ozs Tobacco ✓
- 1 lb Sweets or 4 bars of chocolate up to 1 lb weight. No pill type sweets, chewing gum or liquor content sweets.
- 4 lbs Fruit - including Onions and Tomatoes ✓
- 1 lb of Butter
- 1 lb Cheese - Cheeses individually wrapped are not accepted.
- 1 No - 3 lb Cake (quartered) no small pastry or fancy cakes ✓
- 1 lb of loose biscuits
- 1 lb of cooked meats - thinly sliced. Shanks of meat or meat with bone content eg chops - NOT ALLOWED. Sausages must be sliced length ways to be acceptable to Censors.
- 1 No - Chicken cooked, quartered, but unstuffed, or (1 lb of meat in lieu).
- 1 No - Lettuce
- 1 No - Small bunch of Scallions
- 1 No - Small packet of Tinselen (sealed)
- 1 No - Bar of Toilet Soap
- 1 No - Tube of Toothpaste
- 1 No - Toothbrush
- 3 No - Sachets of Shampoo
- 1 No - Comb (plastic)
- 1 No - Stick of Shaving Soap or Tube Shaving Cream
- 1 No - Packet of 5 Razor Blades
- 1 No - Packet of Washing Powder in small plastic Bag
- 1 No - Tin of Lighter Fuel

BREADS

- 6 No - Farls of Soda or Wheaten or 6 Baps or Scones cut in half - all items must be shop size
- 2 No - Packets of Potato Bread - shop size
- 1 No - Veda or Fruit Loaf or Malt Loaf or Vienna Roll (Any loaf must be sliced and be shop bought)

- Every parcel must contain a list of its contents.
- Every parcel must be signed into the prison by the person delivering it.
- No writing paper, envelopes or stamps allowed with parcel.
- Any newspaper or periodical that contains an article prejudicial or detrimental to the Prison Service or to the Security of the Prison will not be allowed.
- Any or all articles may be stopped without explanation at the Governor's Order.

assemble the table as it surely must have needed a professional to do so. But I did see some pictures later, so it was delivered and somehow, finally put together in the games hut.

During the time we were involved in our welfare commitment we also requested through the pages of the regular Orange Cross paper for our readership to send in Christmas cards to the lads, many of whom we had highlighted in the magazine either in the fortnightly individual feature or as part of the nominal roll which we unfortunately had to update with the prison population gradually growing larger as the months progressed and the civil and communal strife escalated.

We also instigated the 'adopt a prisoner' scheme similar to the old pen-pal venture which was very popular after the war, and indeed on this occasion was equally very popular amongst the readership. This in turn was another significant boost to morale and in turn furthered the cause of the Loyalist Prisoners incarcerated in Long Kesh.

FAMILY MEETING WITH SECURITY MINISTER AT STORMONT RE GUSTY'S RELEASE

CONFIDENTIAL

PWJB 9364

- 5 DEC 1983

N.I.O. BELFAST

Northern Ireland Office

DIV/18 DONALD HOUSE

1767

- 5 DEC 1983

REF. TO 3958

PS/MR SCOTT (B)

GUSTY SPENCE - MEETING ON 6 DECEMBER WITH MR PETER ROBINSON MP AND MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

The Minister agreed to see Mr Robinson and that he should be accompanied by Mrs Spence (wife), Mrs Rea (daughter) and Mr E Spence (nephew). Lord Gowrie saw Mrs Spence and Mrs Rea early in November 1982, when they accompanied Lord Bleasde to Stormont Castle; Mr Edward Spence (born 1944) [redacted] some time he was one of the organisation's "welfare visitors" to the UVF special category prisoners, but he has not come to notice latterly.

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Some of our Magazine Pen Pictures used in the 'adopt a prisoner' scheme and below, a 'thank-you' letter with a resume of the Tuck Shop expenditure in 1973

Top left;
TREVOR KING;
GEORGE FRANCE &
NORMAN SAYERS

Middle:
DAVID ERVINE;
GEORDIE ORR &
GUSTY SPENCE

Bottom:
WILLIAM (PLUM) SMITH;
STEVIE McCREA
& JIM IRVINE



LETTER OF THANKS FROM CAGE 12 LONG KESH INTERNAL TUCK SHOP EXPENDITURE 1973

Dear Ed and all friends of the Orange Cross

Once again the Loyalist Political Prisoners would like you and your colleagues and to know how much we all appreciate the excellent work you are doing and of the grand effort and contributions you have given to us as you can see by this statement below and how we are being well subsidised by the Orange Cross. The manner in which we are being fed here we most certainly look forward to our ORANGE CROSS DAY for the tuck shop.

May we take this opportunity of thanking you for the magnificent sports equipment you send us. We itemise below further gifts for your readership to know just how the contributions are being used and spent on our behalf.

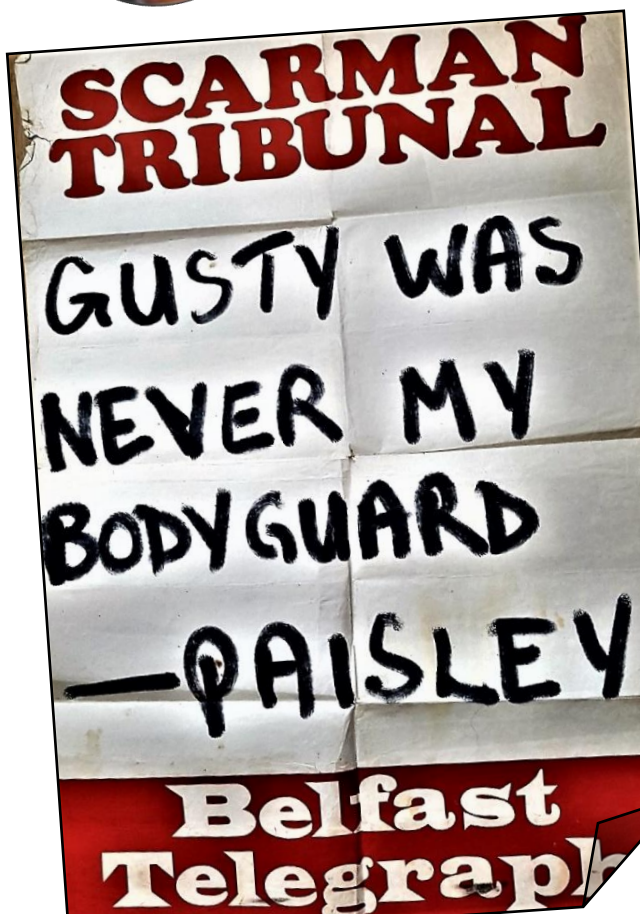
2 x Complete sets of Football Strips (jerseys, socks and pants). Basketball; Volley Ball; 2 x Soccer Balls; Navy Anoraks; Ammunition Boots (as per uniform); every man supplied with PT slippers; Toiletry; plus a constant supply of Cigarettes and Tobacco.

Internally this is how the cash was spent in the tuck shop, with each man spending his individual share and for which we are all grateful.

Please keep up the good work and every success for the future.

Again from all of us behind the wire, Thank you.

CAGE 12 SENTENCED		LOYALIST DETAINEES	
9-1-73	£28.35	15-2-73	£7.99
16-1-73	£16.57	20-2-73	£7.11
23-1-73	£32.28	27-2-73	£7.00
30-1-73	£32.88	5-3-73	£7.00
6-2-73	£35.08	13-3-73	£16.00
13-2-73	£31.85		
20-2-73	£40.45	TOTAL	£351.95
27-2-73	£42.28		
5-3-73	£29.72		
13-3-73	£18.21		



ABOVE: THE ULTIMATE DISASSOCIATE, AS WELL AS POLITICAL DENIAL, OF THE LOYALIST PRISONERS DURING THE TRIBUNAL OVERSEEN BY LORD SCARMAN INVESTIGATING THE:- 'VIOLENCE AND CIVIL DISTURBANCES IN 1969'

LIBEL CASE AGAINST THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

During the end of 1973, notice was brought to the Committee's attention of the Daily Telegraph Newspaper having printed a front page story highlighting that a Protestant publication (*namely the Ulster Constitution*) which the Fleet Street metropolitan based paper attributed to the Orange Cross Movement, had carried a content statement that .. **"if Loyalists want any attention paid to their wishes then we would have to bomb where it hurts, in London"**.

After advisement the Committee instigated a civil, slanderous and defamation action against the Daily Telegraph which was unheard off back then, for working class folk to even think about taking on a libel case against a powerful national newspaper.

However in order to open proceedings, we first of all had to pay an upfront £120 cash deposit retainer fee to a well known, local city centre firm of solicitors, and following on, at our first consultation with an eminent Queen's Counsel and learned Barrister, where both openly told us .. **'the sky's the limit'** .. as far as financial compensation was concerned.

The whole saga carried on for over three and a half years and we knew by then that each side was trying to buy us off.

This was evident when at the next stage in the process, the legal firm wanted another £120 up front, to add to the first payment which then followed on with a request for £1,350 in legal fees before the QC and his junior Counsel, would even proceed with the case, which we were informed by letter would last three days at least, and possibly five.

Considering that the case was listed for hearing over four decades ago, just imagine what would be the size of their legal fees in this day an age; just multiply it by one hundred?

When we attended our next and final consultation, in the High Court Building, we knew that both the eminent Queen's Counsel (QC) (*who later went on to become a Senior Crown Prosecutor*) and his Barrister (BL, later QC) colleague had done an about-turn, as well as changing their tune advising just how difficult it was to prove libel or intentional defamation in any court of law.

The so-called advocates then gave all the excuses under the sun; telling us that .. the Telegraph would bring in the best UK legal brains rather than let the paper lose to small-fry such as the working-class members of our Committee, or would use all the dirt they could against each of us, including our relationships with what they referred to as .. **'criminal elements in Long Kesh.'**

They went on about us losing any respect we had built up over the years; and even would you believe, to the extent in being made homeless if the claim failed and we had to pay the plaintiff's legal fees etc; finally both giving us their ultimate expert guidance .. **'we should accept the settlement offered.'**

Knowing their characters, and even perhaps shadier dealings, from previous encounters, Dad was obviously furious, and not one to mince his words, verbally tore into them, referring to the first consultation with them euphorically telling us that in compensation terms, **'the sky's the limit'** but now derided the Committee by advising it to take the measly offer on the table; Dad accused both as well as the solicitor in tow, that each had no scruples in laying off heavy bets on their dud racehorses or sending men to jail, even moreso to the gallows if it came about, without losing a night's sleep whilst their big fees, usually from the public purse, via the legal aid pot, was guaranteed. Indeed as one retired senior police officer once said about such legal counsel .. **'it is often more about theatrics and the psychology of minds than those they represent'.**

My Father knew from his own political connections, that as a member of the Ulster Unionist Party, our own solicitor, a locally elected Member of Parliament, *even though he was representing the Orange Cross in this libel application*, was also a close friend of William Deedes, a Tory MP and later a 'Noble' Lord; the editor of the Daily Telegraph [*both were members of the twin Conservative and Unionist Party back then*] with each regularly ensconced and meeting up at Westminster.

He accused our solicitor of cosyng up to Deedes in the Commons' library or the subsidised drinks' lounges of the Houses of Parliament, in order to by us off with a pittance offer.

That seemed to incense both senior counsel who had been engaged by this recommended solicitor, to represent the Orange Cross, whereby each now demanded their fees in advance or they would remove themselves from the case, and the proceedings would have to begin over again with new counsel.

Knowing we were in a no-win situation; having us over a barrel by not having the cash to pay up front, we had to accept the ultimatum of a mere £2,400 final settlement with the two lawyers guaranteed their fees from the newspaper. At least we did extract a written apology which reluctantly was later printed on the back page of the Telegraph .. **over five years after the complaint was first lodged.**

Thereafter would you believe that the day I called to the solicitor's office to collect the redress cheque I was then handed six, yes six separate cheques, each one made out for £400, payable in the individual name of a member of the Committee.

This attitude only reinforced the earlier belief that over time, we were being treated, by these learned gentlemen as a mere group of simpletons that could be bought off with a quick buck.

I refused to accept the compensation payment in this way as it was the corporate Orange Cross group that took the defamation action against the Daily Telegraph and not ANY individual, so insisted that a single cheque be made payable to the Orange Cross which, after much huffing and puffing and legality about the other cheques having already being filled out and signed, was again reluctantly agreed.

<p>OUR REF: WSM/EMG/McR</p> <p>Mr Edward Spence 10 Upper Charleville Street Belfast BT13 1JG</p> <p style="text-align: right;">17th January 1977</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Re: Orange Cross -v- The Daily Telegraph</u></p> <p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>Further to our recent letter we have arranged a consultation with [REDACTED] Q.C. and [REDACTED] B.L. at the Law Courts, Chichester Street Belfast on Thursday 20th inst. At 4.30p.m. You should meet our [REDACTED] in the main hall a few minutes before. Please telephone [REDACTED] secretary, as soon as possible, to confirm the above and that all plaintiffs will be present.</p> <p>We have had a further discussion with Mr [REDACTED] who takes the view that this case could last for three day, and probably five days on present indications. We have also considered the question of his fee and that of Mr [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED] fee for a week would be £750 and Mr [REDACTED] £500 which, together with VAT makes a total of £1,350. Leaving aside our own fee for the time being, we would require to be put in funds for £1,350 before the hearing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yours faithfully [REDACTED]</p>	
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THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

So, with the Daily Telegraph having already accepted to pay all legal fees, I also asked for the return of our original up-front £240 retainer fee we had already paid in advance.

Again I could hardly believe my ears when the solicitor had the bare-face cheek to tell me that with any successful claim, a client would usually allow him to hold onto this payment as a personal thank-you present.

Sternly advising him that if he didn't pay up I would go straight round to the High Court and report him to the Law Society, the notary wasn't backward in coming forward with another cheque.

In fact some time afterwards the newspapers carried a story about the NI Law Society reprimanding a local legal firm for undue delay in a client's compensation payout, including interest, by withholding payments longer than necessary after the completion of any successful court action.

All three advocates have since passed, through time, and out of respect for the deceased, (*despite them being disrespectful when representing us*) any reference to their identity, shall remain, as they say in legal parlance, 'in camera' and details similarly redacted on the illustrated documentation copy.

However such underhand actions by the principal in question eventually attracted him the nickname of 'rotten' in later editions of the Orange Cross Magazine which was seen as an apt and appropriate pseudonym for such *inappropriate* legal behaviour in the manner in which the team of advocates had handled the entire process.

Apology printed in Daily Telegraph 18th February 1979

ORANGE CROSS MOVEMENT

In our issue of the 14th September, 1973 under a headline "Bombs Campaign Prepared by Protestants", the following statement appeared.

"A threat to bomb London was made publicly in a recent issue of the Ulster Constitution, a small circulation Protestant publication, produced by the Orange Cross Movement. If Loyalists want any attention paid to their wishes, then we will have to start bombing where it counts - in London. It seems that while Westminster is prepared to ignore the elected representatives of the Ulster people, she will skip to the tune of anyone who threatens to bomb London."

The attribution to the Orange Cross Movement of the reported threat was inaccurate and should have referred to an entirely different group which has no connection with the Orange Cross Movement.

We are informed that the Orange Cross Movement directs its activities to the provision of assistance of a welfare nature for Loyalist Prisoners and at no time has the Orange Cross Movement been engaged in, advocated or lent any support to actions of the type described in the report. We, therefore, regret the attribution to the Orange Cross Movement of this threat.

We unreservedly withdraw the attribution to the Orange Cross Movement and apologise to its Officers and Members for any damage which may have been caused to their reputation or standing by reason of the publication of the article.

FOURTEEN DAYS IN MAY 1974

In May 1974, the Ulster Workers Council (UWC) called for a general strike against the Sunningdale Agreement, a complete stoppage that lasted for 14 days. During that period the Orange Cross was one of many groups across the Province that set up an information centre in Craven Street Unionist Hall, where farmers along with many other community spirited folk from the farming community brought appreciative commodities like potatoes, butter, bread, milk etc for free local distribution.

This was just one such outlet assist centre amongst hundreds of others throughout the Province and every single one of them kindled the dominate spirit of No Surrender, that was to the fore during the entire length of the two-week strike. Indeed one of the Orange Cross Committee asked during an interview what they would do when the food ran out, was heard to tell a television crew ... **"then we'll eat grass if we have to ...!"**

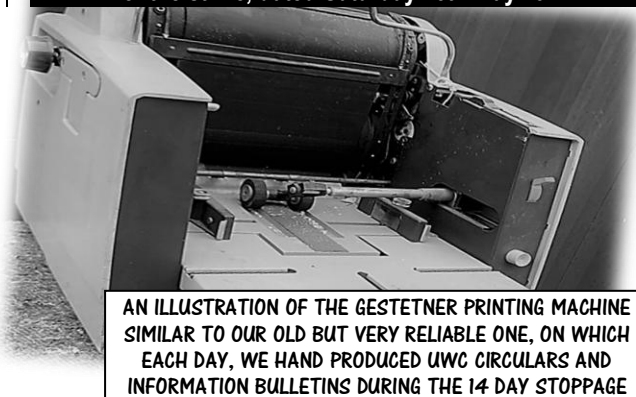
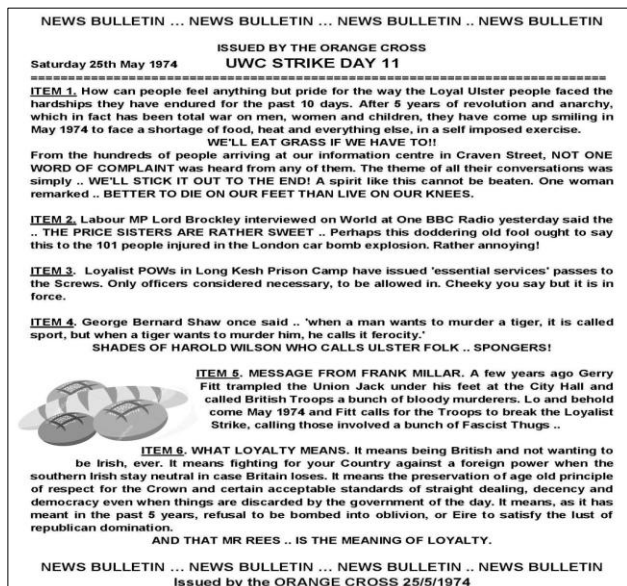
A similar response was given to Prime Minister Harold Wilson when he referred to the Unionist People of Ulster, as 'spongers' whereby Ulsterites also cut up their kitchen sponges and

attached them to their coat lapels in a two-fingered salute to the UK Premier.

At the same time with all regular printing firms having closed for the duration of the strike, and therefore no magazine available, we issued a daily news bulletin handout from the street corner to the passing public; even members of the Parachute Regiment waited diligently each morning at Craven Street, to see what the news bulletins were saying.

These were printed on an old-fashioned hand-operated Gestetner machine which churned out the bulletins after we first of all typed messages onto a waxed template page before being able to print out items containing some local information, welfare assistance we could provide, contact numbers etc, but in particular words of encouragement from several of the more popular councillors, quotes from behind the wire in Long Kesh as well as varying humorous wee snippets to keep up morale.

Left, is a copy of one such bulletin issued on day 11 of the strike, dated Saturday 25th May 1974.



THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

"LONG KESH IS ON FIRE .."

At about 5:00 am during the early morning hours of October 16th, 1974; I received a telephone call, from one of the true welfare officers in Long Kesh inform me that the Provo prisoners had set fire to the camp and it was currently in turmoil with the army taking over the authority of running the 'prison'. He wanted to let me know that Gusty had requested him to ring my home and inform me directly that despite the carnage, all the Loyalist Prisoners had been safely ensconced within the hospital wing.

Even though an immediate offer of welfare assistance from both the Orange Cross and the LPWA, it was another few days or so before we got any response from the NIO due to the emergency imposed, military security blanket.

Jim McDonald of the LPWA and myself were then asked to travel to the prison along with reps from the LPA to see what could be done in order to assist the Loyalist Prisoners in getting some semblance of humanity as well as normality, if you could call it that, back into the compounds, particularly with the lack of every day by day common living facilities and utensils etc.

You can imagine just what we came across, as the military had taken over complete control and after being security photographed; under heavy guard, we were escorted in armed jeeps, through the burned-out remains to meet Gusty and a few other Loyalist Prisoners' COs.

Gracefully I must add how everyone within each of the welfare groups; social services on the outside, and perhaps, though a bit reluctantly, minor assistance from some of the prison service itself, collectively pulled together and we gradually and eventually, managed to arrange the necessary replacement comforts such as cooking utensils, plastic cutlery, bedding, toiletries etc.



However following the fire, the atmosphere was so solidly overcast it could be literally cut with a knife and for a substantive period thereafter relations between both sides of the opposing paramilitary factions was null and void.

Afterwards Long Kesh soon became notoriously known as the most terrorist populated prison in Europe and obviously of interest the world over, year on year thereafter.

"LONG KESH, MAY YOU ROT AND BURN IN HELL"

After the notoriety of the camp's major, destructive pyromania, anything associated with Long Kesh .. *now long gone and may it continue to rot in its own demise ..* attracts more than just a passing thought from gullible collectors, with money to burn. *No pun intended however!!*

One interesting item though that was recently put up for auction, and certainly drew a lot of attention was an 'official' visiting permit to visit Gusty Spence in Long Kesh, requested in the name of the three most senior NIO Officials and back then two of whom, Stanley Orme and Don Concannon, had overall responsibility for the Prison Service in Northern Ireland and both could come and go as they pleased within any of the country's penal establishments without the requirement of a visiting permit and right away that should have had alarms bells ringing.

Listed at a Dublin auction house as a:-

"Maze Prison visitor's card issued to Merlyn Rees while serving as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at his address at Stormont allowing him along with Stanley Orme, Minister of State for Northern Ireland, and Donald Concannon, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to visit Gusty Spence. A scarce and interesting piece of ephemera (collectable item) relating to what must have been a most intriguing meeting."

Note the bit that says identification must be produced, which surely should also have brought; immediate attention to the bidder, even though collectors will go practically bonkers for this memorabilia.

All the writing is in Gusty Spence's own hand including the Governor's signature and obviously the original raw card must have been procured perhaps by, or from a senior warder's desk!!

A prisoner's Christian name was never put on a visiting pass; for example AA Spence along with a designated prison number

as the regime only indentified them by numbers in an attempt to dehumanise and demoralise inmates.

Long Kesh (*a term never used by the prison authorities*) and the date 12th July, when the prison is closed during what is a public holiday in Northern Ireland, these should have immediately highlighted that it was not the real deal.

However in this case, one unfortunate punter was gullible enough to pay €120 at the Dublin auction house for a bluff visiting pass, albeit the actual paper is the only genuine article in this instance.

Given that money making scenario, who knows, some entrepreneurial warder in search of a fast buck, may have already appropriated fresh visiting permits and eBay could soon be flooded with some former inmate's details scribbled across the visiting card. After all, thousand of poll cards were stolen in 1966 and no one has yet to be made amenable for a similar theft of government property!!

A	C	IN	Permit No.	OUT	A	C
VISITING PERMIT FOR H.M. PRISON MAZE LONG KESH						
Name of person to be visited <u>GUSTY SPENCE</u>						
Visitor(s) Mr./Mrs/Miss <u>MERLYN REES</u>						
Mr./Mrs/Miss <u>STANLEY ORME</u>						
Mr./Mrs/Miss <u>DONALD CONCANNON</u>						
Evidence of identity is required to gain admittance to the Prison.						
<u>Robert James Spence</u> Authorising Signature						
Date of visit <u>12th JULY 1975</u> time <u>10</u> a.m./p.m.						

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

Following a year of turmoil during 1974, the Orange Cross Magazine thereafter ran a regular series of Christmas and other similar greetings, throughout its pages particularly for supportive folk all over the country and abroad, supplemented with further similar insertions and a continuing Twelfth greeting advert in the News Letter in 1976, to hopefully boost morale and demonstrate that their Cause and continuing incarceration was not going to be pushed aside and they would not become forgotten men!



Below, a couple of the poems that were written in either Crumlin Road Goal or Long Kesh many of which became standard recordings in many of the later released Loyalist song books, tapes, and disks.

A LOYAL HEART IN ME

From Loyal veins my life I drew, in Loyal arms I lay
From Loyal lips that lessons drew, that led me day by day
And hushed to rest at a Loyal Breast and rocked on Loyal knee
They wore and grew and thank God too, a Loyal Heart in me.
Then came the day for all to view, when scorn and lies held sway
Those evil men with no virtue, they swore my life away
But for dare or ill I'm Loyal still, they never can decree
To force retreat or stop the beat, of this Loyal Heart in me.
At times I sigh, at times I jest 'mid scenes and faces strange
The passing years have in my breast, brought little or no change
Memories of old ever bright I hold, since rocked on a Loyal knee
And for her dear sake no jail will break, this Loyal Heart in me.

LOYALTY

When rewards for Loyal deeds are ridicule and scorn,
And powerful men treat us as slaves, who've been free-men born,
When faith and freedom are assailed for which true men would die
Then one million loyal Protestants shall know the reason why.
Should justice to politicians yield and loyalty be a crime,
And jail deprives us of our rights won in olden time
Should falsehood, fraud and perjury be lifted up on high
Then one million loyal Protestants shall know the reason why.
If Bills of Rights and statute books be freely watered down,
And if the role should be allowed to shame the British crown
If Lord Carson and Craigavon in shame and dust shall lie,
Then one million loyal Protestants shall know the reason why.
If chains for freedom shall be forged and appeasement given length,
And indecisive Government give the rebels strength,
If all that we love and cherish, be calmly thrown away,
Then one million loyal Protestants shall know the reason why.
Another man must surely come to take this weaklings place,
To stand up to those conquered and look them in the face,
To tell them 'No Surrender' we'll fight or else we'll die,
If not, one million loyal Protestants must know the reason why.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 'H' BLOCKS

During 1976, the NIO moved to de-categorise, in fact, criminalise the status of incoming inmates by forcing them into the newly constructed H Blocks; a move which created tension and hostility both within the cellular blocks and wings as well as on the outside, on both sides of the community.

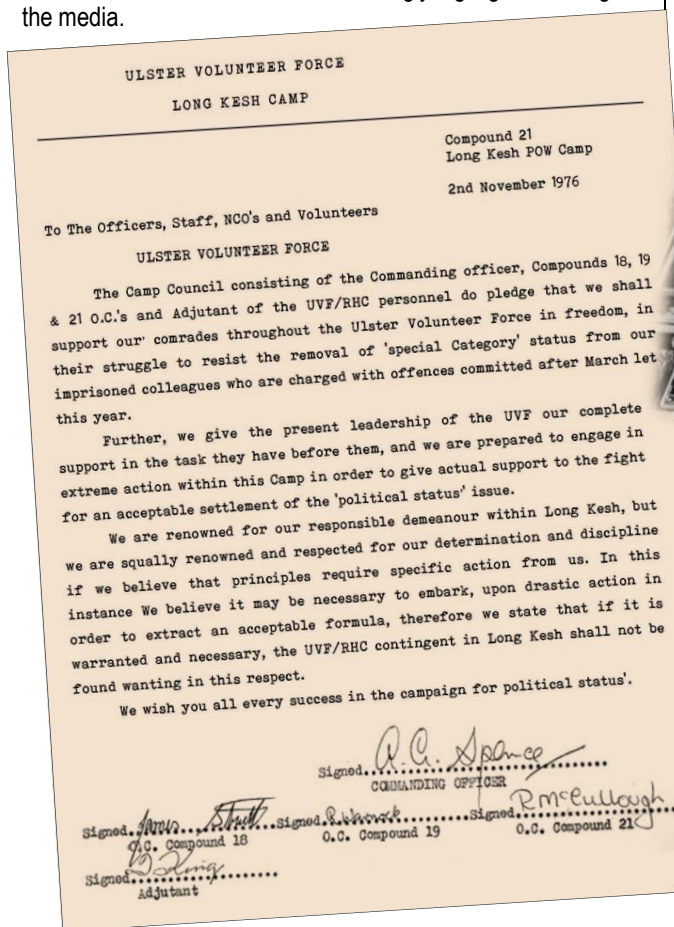
This resulted in attacks on prison officers and their homes as well as the suspension on visits, intake of parcels throughout the entire prison system etc.

It was not just coincidental that over the next few weeks activity and callers at the stall became overtly quieter and fund raising dropped dramatically including our own magazine sales.

This occurred moreso not long after a letter of support was passed from the Compounds to the organisational leadership on the outside, which was also condemningly highlighted throughout the media.

It was very evident that many folk did not want to be seen as being associated with any backlash against those prison warders who lived in their own community.

In the end we even had to cease publication of our own magazine; which made us rethink how to re-finance the Orange Cross funding if we were to carry on providing comforts and depositing the regular tuck shop spending money for the Loyalist Prisoners.



Copy of the letter sent out from the Long Kesh Compounds during November 1976, in support of whatever action the Ulster Volunteer Force on the outside, deemed necessary, to sustain the 'Special Category' status of those Loyalist Prisoners of War, sentenced after March 1st that year, being committed by the Government to serve their Incarceration in the newly constructed 'H' blocks and renamed ... HMP Maze (Cellular)

THE ORANGE CROSS SOCIAL CLUB

During the previous years, we had been organising weekly bingo sessions and regular dart competitions in the nearby Unionist Hall which was loaned from the local branch as Dad was the area secretary. We also obtained one-day, Saturday drink's licences through supportive landlords, which also went down well amongst the community patrons, during these social nights and weekends.

After a while the local Unionist Branch decided to fold and Dad and I made approaches to the DoE to take over the renting of the building which we succeeded in doing and the intermittent socials become a regular thing over more evenings.

Finally the Committee decided that the stall was not proving to be financially viable any more although Big Ernie Scott took it across town and opened it up in Sandy Row for a very short period, before it closed over there as well.

In 1978 the Committee applied for a club licence and following a personal and very amiable visit from the Resident magistrate, Mr Charlie Stewart, the application was successful although we

had to incur a name change to get the registration through the legalities and the Shankill Sports and Recreation Club was established, but as you would expect .. *the Orange Cross remained on everyone's lips and that's the name to which is it was and always will be referred.*

It was a smashing meeting place, never once during our time there did the police ever have cause to call for any adverse reason (except at Christmas just before the annual licence renewal, to collect a customary bottle or two for the local station party) and a central meeting point for many overseas visitors.

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

Through this outlet the Committee was still able to continue making a regular financial deposit to the UVF/RHC Compounds as well as supplying whatever was needed, in terms of competition award shields, football kits, training

equipment, ex-army kit bags which were then filled with sand, and used as punch bags and other practicably adapted items to be used for boxing and similar sports training equipment.



The colourful, leather embossed welcome signage made by the Loyalist POWs in Long Kesh that adorned the main entrance hall of the new Orange Cross Social Club in Craven Street, Shankill Road

In early 1980 Dad unfortunately died of a massive heart seizure at just fifty-six years of age; undoubtedly brought on by an unwarranted attack on myself by a pickaxe wielding gang, (*including would you believe, some Loyalist ex-prisoners*) who at the time were intent in taking control of the Orange Cross Social Club. This was, after they had abused an earlier privilege of being allowed to hold a meeting one Sunday morning, by their uncaring folly on vacating the premises that could have placed both my Father and I, as Club trustees, in an untenable position within the licensing legislation and other law enforcement authorities, and thereafter they were refused use of the premises for any further closed summits.

Not long after that unsavoury incident, as I locked up the Club one Thursday night in January that year, investigation later revealed the gang included some of the lads Billy Spence had personally worked tirelessly for, day and daily for many years, whilst they were in Long Kesh, had been involved in the assault, in which at first, *thankfully wrongly*, was thought to have left me with a broken back. In the aftermath of the attack I was located lying on waste ground by my Dad and others, including a senior member of the UVF and taken to hospital for treatment. A few years later as if by fate I was in the fortunate position of being able to administer the same first aid response when he too was very seriously injured, after republicans had shot him several times during a gun attack on his home.

Dad felt let down by this type of bullying and was never his old self again. Just over a month or so later he passed away not long after, feeling unwell, he left a Royal Black District Chapter meeting, to go home early.

However, as if to put the boot in, the prison authorities refused Gusty, even a short term, parole for the funeral and although our Bobby was granted permission for a few days on the outside, in principle, he would not accept it unless his brother Gusty received the same recognised compassionate release. This was still refused, even with high valued guarantees from various prominent people in the community, so neither Gusty nor Bobby could personally attend.

Sorrowfully, in October that same year, Bobby, still in his early fifties, also died suddenly of a massive heart attack whilst exercising around the internal perimeter of Compound 21 in Long Kesh.

Despite this now having two older brothers tragically passing away within the space of less than seven months, Gusty was again refused parole for Bobby's funeral as well.

Later a bronze plaque was erected within the Club premises to Dad's memory, which contained a verse from Gusty's poem, .. *A Loyal Heart*. This verse is also etched onto their Mother's, and our wee Granny, Bella's headstone in Roselawn Cemetery .. *and the memorial plaque?* When the Club finally closed its doors, I removed it into personal care and is now erected on the wall within my own garage.

Even though the few remaining Committee Members were determined to carry on, though by now reduced in numbers, as several were unfortunately getting on a bit and illness was taking its toll with others, resulting in myself gradually being left to carry through the work on my own to look after the Orange Cross's affairs.

THE ORANGE CROSS
THIS ROOM HAS BEEN RE-DECORATED
TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE
WILLIAM JAMES (WULLIE) SPENCE
WHO DIED SUDDENLY ON 27TH FEBY 1980
AFTER A LIFETIME DEDICATED
TO LOYALISM AND ORANGEISM
TO HIM WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING WORDS
IN TESTIMONY OF OUR APPRECIATION
"AND HUSHED TO REST AT A LOYAL BREAST
AND ROCKED ON A LOYAL KNEE
THERE WOKE AN GREW AND THANK GOD TOO
A LOYAL HEART IN ME"

However and obviously, the time needed for full commitment was ebbing. With the result that within a couple of years, in 1982, except for the grateful assistance of my immediate family members and loyal friends, I was single handily trying to cram everything in during each day. Following a serious illness to my younger five-year-old son soon told me to slow down and prioritise my commitments.

At that period I was still involved in full-time employment with my Council job, since I left school in 1960; but which unfortunately was worryingly in the frame for full inessential severance from the entire industry within a few years. As well as undertaking the Club administration, whilst at the same time arranging finances and visits to Long Kesh as well as being committed to fulfilling my promise to Dad that to continue highlighting the case for Gusty's release; in reality, I was not affording enough hours to my own Family with two young boys in tow.

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

It was by then that I took the unilateral decision to approach the late Jackie Hewitt with whom, over the years I had worked closely in undertaking the welfare requirements of the Loyalist Prisoners. He readily agreed to arrange a meeting with his grouping, whereby a suitable date near the end of that particular financial year, to ask if they would be amenable to integrate the workings of the Orange Cross into the highly functional and larger, Loyalist Prisoners' Welfare Association (LPWA).

However in the meantime would you believe it, when word got about that I was taking early retirement I even had a local 'entrepreneur' present himself at the Orange Cross Club having the bare-faced cheek to offer me a small fortune if I would sign the drinks licence over to him.

This was a person who had established himself with a reputation for having closed more clubs than the police and at one time unbelievably penned a detrimental letter to the Editor of the News Letter, criticising the leader of the Volunteer Party; he then had the audacity to sign my name and address on it to what I later learned was for ... 'authenticity'.

He soon got a short shift and told where to stick his dosh although in reality the licence was only issued in my name as a Trustee, it belonged to the Orange Cross and in turn the welfare of the Loyalist Prisoners.

Hence the earlier mention to Ric Clarke as having been friends with him for years through the Orange Cross and our association with the prisons, it was Ric who recognised the name on the letter, which had already been trimmed for inclusion in next day's paper, lying on the Editor's desk and being aware of my own handwriting, thankfully at the last minute, Ric stopped his boss

from publishing the letter, knowing that it hadn't originated from me.

Anyhow the LPWA reps, along with Jackie and I had an initial cordial meeting where the records and finance books, as well as other important documentation, were entrusted to the group for auditing.

The accounts etc were soon given a clean bill of health by the team and this then allowed me to make contact with suppliers and other agencies to advise of the transfer to the LPWA as well as amending the Club Constitution for renewal in the names of the incoming, new trustees.

Thus, after twelve years or so, at the beginning of 1983 the Orange Cross formally ended its tenure in holding a torch for the Loyalist Prisoners.

However the Shankill, Social, Sports & Recreation Club remained, but continued to be fondly known as the Orange Cross and a meeting point for overseas visitors, for years thereafter, until redevelopment of the area forced it to close its doors.

Unfortunately in February 1989, and not long after he had been released from the compounds of Long Kesh, young Stevie McCrea then aged 37, and a whole lifetime in front him after years of imprisonment, was cold bloodedly gunned down inside the premises, by an IPLO republican murder gang, operating in broad daylight.



LOYALIST HUNGER STRIKE - MAGILLIGAN PRISON 1986

Interestingly the Orange Cross name was still held in respect amongst the various Loyalist Groups and in July 1986 I was approached by the leadership of both the UVF/UDA to be their joint mediator to the Government due to the on-going twenty-six day hunger strike in Magilligan Prison. One of those refusing food was my own cousin, Frankie Curry along with south Belfast UDA member Joe Nellins.

Following a pre-consultation, with both groups united as to what they were seeking, along with Mrs Nellins and Mrs Curry, the North Belfast MP, the late Cecil Walker had arranged a meeting at Stormont with the Security Minister Nicholas Scott on 10th July 1986. The Minister's first words to me were .. *how's Gusty doing?*

The formal request for humane changes in the jail was discussed at length and although his advisors were against conceding anything to the prisoners, a favourable response by the Minister was obtained to look at changes, if the strike was ended and he was not being seen to be coerced by threats.

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

Scott also arranged for the three of us to travel to Magilligan the next day (11th July) without hindrance to meet with the two lads on hunger strike, who at that stage had been hospitalised.

The smell of death was overpowering as we entered the small rooms within the prison hospital wing.

After a long discussion with Frankie, in his mother, my aunt Cassie's presence, and Mrs Nellons meeting with Joe, during which we both relayed a promise that I would personally not let them down; and if both ended their fast, gave them a guarantee that Minister Scott would come across with many of the changes in the regime.

However, both lads required a direct order from their respective CO's, to stand down; as it was, though I had an official memo from the Security Minister to carry certain documents with me. Explaining the high possibility of unrest on the street should any of them die, if there was any delay in halting the hunger strike, particularly at that period in July, the Governor was then contacted directly by internal phone to advise of what was happening in the hospital wing and for him to enable what had to be done as the next stage in the process to finally end the strike.

He flatly refused permission for me to speak to either of the two commanders in order to further explain the situation and in turn, to allow each of them to issue the formal order to end the strike, which was imperative at that delicate stage, with the Twelfth of July date, the very next day.

The Governor's dogmatic attitude to such a request was that .. he was in charge of the prison, not the UVF or UDA .. and so prevented any direct contact with the jail leadership.

I had been aware that Reverend Ian Paisley was also at the jail on a pastoral visit and quickly got the Prison Doctor to get me



through to speak to him, as I had known him through his former friendship with my late Father. He was giving an interview in the car park and when Paisley finished I got the opportunity to outline the situation to him.

Fortunately he did concede to my urgency of the seriousness of the impending situation and used his privileged position to return into the jail where he explained to both CO's what I had put to Frankie and in turn Joe.

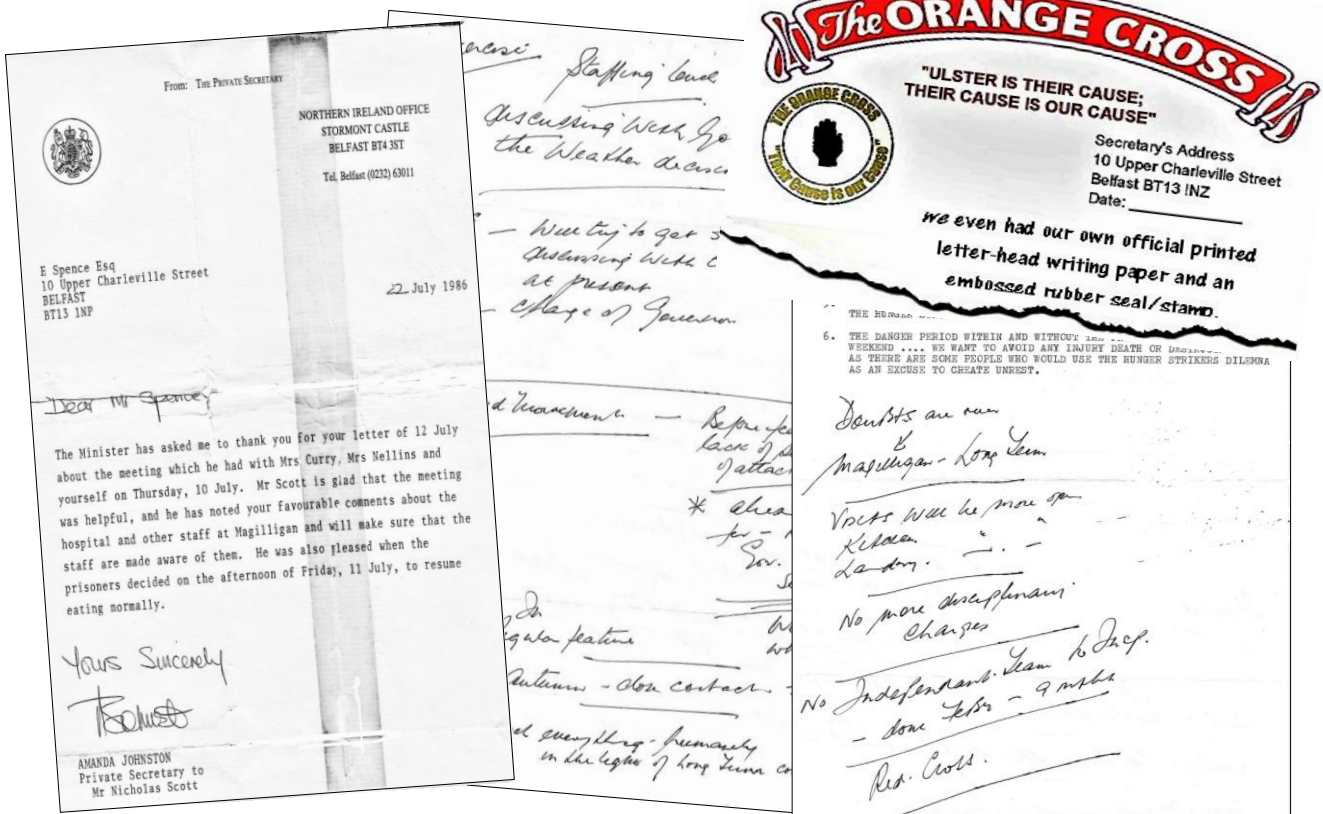
ABOUT A HALF HOUR LATER REVEREND PAISLEY CAME OUT TO TELL ME THAT .. 'BOTH LADS WERE TUCKING INTO SCRAMBLED EGGS AS WE SPEAK.'

There were no mobile phones back then so when we reached the nearest café, where the late Jackie Hewitt appreciatively treated us to lunch, I was able to use the public telephone to relay the good news to both the organisational leadership back on the Shankill and the tense situation, just a day before the Twelfth that year, had ended and any possible loss of life, both in the prison and even on the streets, thankfully had been prevented.

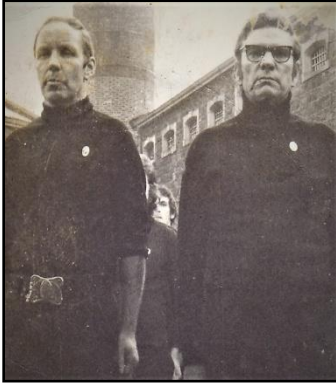
AS YOU CAN POSSIBLY GUESS, IAN PAISLEY SAW THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLICITY AND THAT EVENING, THE BELFAST TELEGRAPH RAN THE HEADLINE .. 'PAISLEY ENDS THE HUNGER STRIKE'.

However, I know differently as my own retained scribbled notes will show, along with the official correspondence from Nicholas Scott thanking the two ladies and myself; and I'm glad to say the Security Minister kept the best part of his

word to implement several of those reforms after the Loyalist hunger strike had come to an end that Eleventh Night in 1986. The bonfires so celebrated!!



THE LOYALIST PRISONERS - A SALUTE & FINAL TRIBUTE



There have been a number of Loyalist Prisoners who unfortunately have passed away in the cages of Long Kesh POW Camp or behind the grim stone walls of Crumlin Road goal over the intervening years. Tommy Mawhinney and my own uncle, Dad's brother, Bobby Spence were two epitomes of those volunteers who should have been enjoying their halcyon days in sunnier clime, not imprisoned in some rusty old Nissan hut, behind barbed wire, watch towers and patrolling attack K9s; nor being locked up by some overpaid, uncaring dressed up zealous jailor with a bunch of keys dangling from a belt, trying to look more officious than those little despot fascists who caged courageous men, and women, in similar captive environments.

But unlike their well-heeled turnkey captors, true men like Bobby and Tommy, to name but two of many others who had been incarcerated during those troublesome days since the mid-sixties, were a totally different breed of Ulsterite and when the call came to face the enemy, and defend their homeland, each and every one of them was not slow in coming forward to enlist in the ranks of the Ulster Volunteer Force. Invariably most had already seen active service as part of the Crown Forces and in combat or

conflict, saw off more fearsome enemies than any group of sectarian, Stasi-styled soldiers of Ireland.

Indeed, during the Korean War Bobby Spence's full name even had to remain anonymous, so much so that he never received any meritorious award, for his exploits, as the special forces' incident in which he and his fellow submariner had engaged in, would have been viewed then as an international incident.

For whilst its de facto dictator Josef Stalin continually denied any involvement or officially belligerent during the war, the Soviet Union did play a significant underhand role in the conflict; providing military training, along with material and medical services as well as their offering pilots and aircraft, most notably the MiG 15 fighter jet. So the capture of such a plane, even with the North Korean (KPAAF) and Chinese (PLAAF) markings, would have been solid proof that the Ruskies were tangibly, if not directly, involved.

So, under cover of darkness, on the evening of July 21st, 1951, both Bobby and his naval colleague quietly manoeuvred their two-man sub along the Imjin River towards Korea, near Hanchon, on a reconnaissance mission behind enemy lines, when they came across the wreckage of a Russian MiG-15 swept-wing fighter, referred to as .. *Fagot* .. by NATO forces.

Quickly returning to report the result of their covert mission; Naval Command immediately ordered both crewmen to clandestinely guide their mother ship, the frigate *HMS Cardigan Bay*, back towards the enemy site.

On arrival the crew of the frigate, now protected from any enemy air interference by *HMS Kenya*, attached a crane hook to the Russian plane, quickly brought it to the surface and swung it onto the deck of the *Cardigan Bay* then stealthily, but post-haste, returned to base with the captured jet fighter.

In so doing it further enabled the air intelligence boffins to examine this far superior aircraft (*brought into service in 1949*) to those used by NATO and in turn, officials in the London Foreign Office were, *albeit privately*, able to confront Stalin's stooges' with their irrefutable evidence that NATO were now fully aware of the Soviets assisting both the Korean and Chinese military.

Britain finally ended its involvement in another unnecessary war by disengaging during July 1953; unfortunately given the nature of how a Soviet Union MiG fighter was procured had to remain a mystery to avoid an international incident, so much so that the Whitehall mandarins classified and secreted it with red tape, to the bosom of other MoD basement files, never to be released to the public. Hence the courageous Royal Naval submariner from the noble Shankill Road merely got a nod of appreciation, but with no award to show for his braver than the brave action.

However as time marched on and more unrest heralded, this time in 1969 on our own shores in Ulster, Bobby stepped forward and faced up to the rebel insurgency, using his battle skills to take the fight to the enemy. Unfortunately like many a brave Loyalist who, through his regimental motto of **STRENGTH AND GUILE**, defended his kith and kin during those troubled years, Bobby was another Son of Ulster to end up as a Loyalist Prisoner of War in Long Kesh POW Camp, being detained in cages behind barbed wire, and ironically guarded by ... **British Military personnel**.

Like Tommy, (*above right, both pictured in the Crum*) our Bobby's adventurous life didn't last too much longer, and whilst leisurely exercising round the interior of a prison compound in October 1980, he died from a fatal heart attack, aged just 51; but like the SBS hero he was, having served his Country with distinction, courage and honour, and like many others who have since passed, some whilst still imprisoned, many after release but all, each and every one, will never be forgotten. For Valour

ORANGE CROSS PAPERS LODGED FOR RESEARCH

The Orange Cross Committee was the first Loyalist Welfare Group to engage in supplying comforts to, and for, the Loyalist Political Prisoners during the earlier commencement of what was known as the .. 'Troubles'.

All in all given that the Orange Cross comprised of a small group we were able, within those eleven to twelve years, to allocate well over £200,000 in cash alone into the Crum and Long Kesh as well as much more in kind, through finance expenditure and outlay for supplies and comforts for the Loyalist Prisoners. Remember that was over fifty years ago and currently the Bank of England's website calculator advises that the UK's annual inflation rate between that era and 2021 has progressively increased yearly since then by 5.07% to a current rate of around 1,155%. In essence the purchasing power of £100 back in the mid seventies is equivalent to £1,126 in this modern age to equate to a total of £2.5 million. A staggering thought and no mean feat indeed!!

From the start, each copy of the Orange Cross fortnightly periodical was deposited with the Linen Hall Library archives; a few years back when Belfast's oldest and last subscribing library sought to digitise these, permission was gratuitously agreed.

Then in June 2019, our own retained full file set of 102 copies of the Orange Cross magazines along with the original Gestetner generated, daily bulletins associated with the Ulster Workers' Stoppage in 1974, were also lodged with the Public Records Office for posterity; how to contact the Public Records and the catalogue reference number can be found on the next page.

THE ORANGE CROSS ~ 'THEIR CAUSE IS OUR CAUSE'

The Committee was a forerunner, and no doubt an encouraging precursor, for the later formation of the two larger Loyalist welfare groups that were widely established, as the prison population of Loyalists escalated and the increasing dependency in assisting families was further required.


In putting together this little information booklet and my personal memories and recollections over those years, I trust it will ensure for future generations that the voluntary work undertaken by the Orange Cross Committee, a small grouping, did achieve both its aims and promises.

Throughout those years the Committee pledged itself to being the voice of the Political Prisoners, and undisputedly we answered that commitment by Providing Comforts for Loyalist Prisoners because .. Their only Crime was Loyalty and Their Cause was truly, our Cause'. Hopefully, we did our duty.

HOWEVER THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION WILL ALWAYS REMAIN UNANSWERED ..
WHAT WAS IT ALL FOR; WAS IT ALL WORTH IT AND WHEN WILL WE EVER LEARN?

THE FULL SET OF 102 ORANGE CROSS MAGAZINES (1972 - 1976) ALONG WITH 13 ORIGINAL COPIES OF THE UWC STRIKE BULLETINS (1974) AND 2 CALENDARS WERE DONATED TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE IN JUNE 2019 TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE USE OF RESEARCHERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. CATALOGUE REFERENCE NUMBER D4732: A COPY OF THIS BOOKLET WAS ALSO FURTHER ADDED TO THE FILE IN JULY 2021: REFERENCE D4732/3/3.

ANOTHER COPY WAS GIFTED TO THE LINENHALL LIBRARY OPPOSITE THE CITY HALL.

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PRONI

Your Ref PTE 54/2019
Our Ref CO1/18/28042
19th June 2019

Dear Mr Spence

Re: Deposit of Records – Orange Cross Papers (D4732)

I am writing to confirm the terms of deposit in respect of the documents you recently transferred to PRONI on the 14th June 2019.

The records consist of issues 1 to 102 of the Orange Cross Newsletter, 13 news bulletins and 2 calendars. The papers range in date from 1972-1976. These records have been assigned


CATALOGUE REFERENCE NUMBER OF:- D4732.

Thank you for gifting these records to PRONI. I believe that they will be of considerable interest for researchers in the future.

If you have any queries in relation to your deposit, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours Sincerely,

Liam O'Reilly
Private Records
Records Management, Cataloguing and Access
Tel: 028 9053 4856 / email: Liam.O'Reilly@communities-ni.gov.uk



Linen hall
library
established 1793

Linen Hall Library

BELFAST LIBRARY & SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE

30th July 2021

Mr Ed Spence
By email

Dear Mr Spence,

I hope this finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of the Linen Hall Library to thank you for your generous donation of *The Orange Cross* to the collections.

It is support of this kind that helps make the Linen Hall Library the unrivalled resource that it is, and I am grateful.

Yours sincerely,

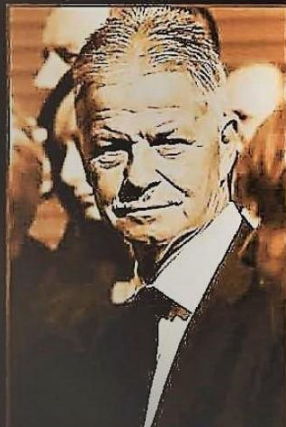
Samantha McCombe
Librarian



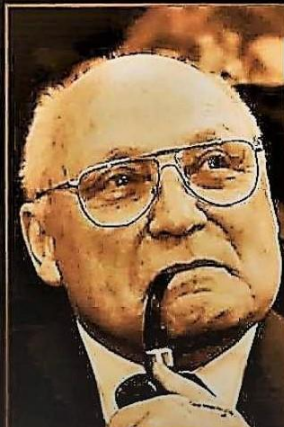
**TO FIGHT IS TO WIN, TO REFUSE TO FIGHT IS TO LOSE;
WE HAVE BEEN TRUE AND WE HAVE FOUGHT.. LOYALIST POW'S**

The ORANGE CROSS

William
(Plum)
Smith



Augustus
(Gusty)
Spence



David
(Davy)
Ervine

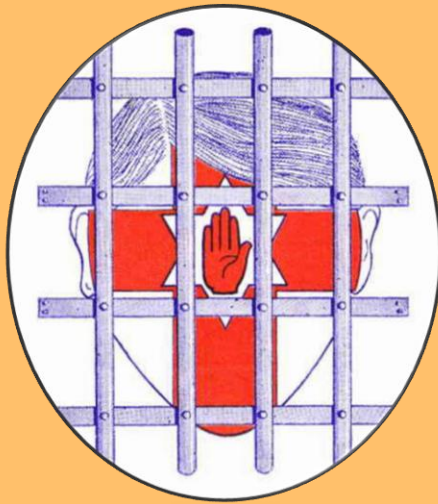


**"Whatever you say, say nothing
When you talk about you-know-what.
For if you-know-who could hear you
You know just what you'd get –
They'd take you off to you-know-where"**

Colum Sands



*My own brave land why have you
Gone and left me here to die;
Within these cold and silent walls
Proud Ulster tell me why?
I have brought to you no shame
Nor refuge did I take;
When you were torn apart by foes
But resisted, for your sake.*



*Some look askance at me today
A criminal am I?
Forgetting that it was Loyalty
Made me answers Ulster's cry.
For when the war was at its height
I staunchly played my part
And offered up my own life's blood
Even from the very start.*

