

BRITISH ARMY AND SPECIAL BRANCH RUC **BRUTALITIES**

DECEMBER, 1971 — FEBRUARY, 1972

at the Palace Barracks - 10/10



*Thomas Ryan RUC
Belfast - 10 Dec - 71*

30p \$1 U.S.A.

Compiled by Father Denis Faul, Dungannon, and Father Raymond Murray, Armagh

BRITISH ARMY AND

SPECIAL BRANCH RUC

BRUTALITIES

DECEMBER, 1971 — FEBRUARY, 1972

Compiled by Father Denis Faul, Dungannon,

and

Father Raymond Murray, Armagh

FOREWORD

“An excellent example concerns the way in which the law should work. Broadly speaking there are two possible alternatives, the first one being that the law should be used as just another weapon in the government’s arsenal, and in this case it becomes little more than a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public. For this to happen efficiently, the activities of the legal services have to be tied into the war effort in as discreet a way as possible which, in effect, means that the member of the government responsible for law, either sits in the supreme council or takes his orders from the head of the administration. The other alternative is that the law should remain impartial and administer the laws of the country without any direction from the government”

---Brigadier Frank Kitson, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Quoted in *The Sunday Press*, 31 October, 1971.

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword: Brigadier Frank Kitson	2
Four Phases of Torture	5
Illegal Arrest and Illegal Treatment	6
Arrest Under Special Powers	7
Who are to Blame for the Brutalities"?	8
The Principal Methods of Torture used in Holywood and Girdwood Barracks	9-10
Extracts from Statements of Prisoners	12-50
General Sir Harry Tuzo writes	52-53
The Case of Sean Anthony Hughes, Dungannon ...	54-56
Kidnapped: The Story of Sean Collins	57-58
Armagh Schoolboy Beaten by British Soldiers ...	59-60
Doctors and Detention Centres	61
Opinions of Detainees on Doctors at Interrogation Centres	62-64
Reaction to Torture in Northern Ireland	65-72
Cry for Justice	73-74
Appendix: Three Lurgan Men, Arrested "In Suspi- cious Circumstances"	75-77
An Englishman's Observation	78
Letter to the Turkish Government	78

FOUR PHASES OF TORTURE

Since the introduction of internment on 9 August, 1971, the use of brutality and torture can be divided into four phases

1 9 August - 11 August 1971 —Brutality inflicted upon men arrested and brought to Ballykinlar Camp and Girdwood Barracks.

2 11 August-17th August - Torture inflicted on 11 men by hooding, spreadeagling against a wall for days, being subjected to a high pitched noise, deprived of food, drink and sleep, and being badly beaten—all these tortures happening simultaneously.

3 23 August - 10 December - Interrogation with brutality and great number of torture methods in special Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) interrogation centres in the Palace Military Barracks, Holywood. These men were detained on H.M.S. Maidstone and Crumlin Road Prison.

4 10 December-February 1972 — Torture in RUC interrogation centres in Holywood and Girdwood Barracks to force men to sign statements admitting crimes that the police wanted to connect them with. The men were then charged on the basis of torture statements.

This Pamphlet is mainly concerned with Phase 4 — Phases 1, 2, 3, are dealt with in "Belfast, August 1971, A case to be answered" by Danny Kennally and Eric Preston, Independent Labour Party, and "The Mailed Fist," issued by the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland in collaboration with the Association for Legal Justice.

ILLEGAL ARREST AND ILLEGAL TREATMENT

In a statement on 8 February 1972, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Commander Albert Anderson, said that since August of last year 2,357 persons had been arrested under the Civil Authorities-Special Powers Acts; 923 detention orders had been made, and 631 persons had been interned. At the present time, 8 February 1972, 591 persons were still interned and 195 still detained. This means that over two per cent of the adult Catholic male population of Northern Ireland (100,000) have been arrested under Special Powers and held incommunicado from their relatives, doctors, and clergy for 48 hours. During this period of "disappearance" about 20%, or more than 400 of these men have been treated with brutality and torture. Their relatives, neighbors, and friends, have been put through a 48-hour period of mental agony. Presuming that each man has twenty close relatives and friends one can say that the whole Catholic population has suffered grievously.

After the 48-hour period of arrest under Special Powers, 923 were detained for one or two months, and the vast majority (631) were interned. Detention is merely an administrative stage on the road to internment. Both detention and internment constitute imprisonment without trial. At the present moment, mid-February, 1972, a total of over 800 people are prisoners without trial in Northern Ireland and this number is rapidly increasing. All except one or two persons are members of the Catholic population. This procedure of imprisonment without trial is immoral, unjust, illegal by international standards of law, and of doubtful legality in Northern Ireland law even with the assistance of a tyrannical Special Powers Act.

In addition, since August, 1971, as a result of arrest under the Special Powers Act and interrogation—often with brutality—in the 48 hour incommunicado period, over 150 men have been charged and remanded.

ARREST UNDER SPECIAL POWERS

What happens when a man is arrested under Special Powers? In the Belfast area, for example, a man is lifted in a private house by the military, usually in the early hours of the morning. The house is often damaged in the search and arrest. After arrest the prisoner quite often receives summary punishment from rifle butts and boots on the spot and in transit to the nearest army billet and police station where they are often abused. From there they are taken in a Saracen to PALACE BARRACKS, HOLYWOOD or GIRDWOOD PARK BARRACKS. There they are interrogated by officers of the Special Branch. Brutality is often inflicted upon many of these prisoners, most often by officers of the Special Branch RUC, but sometimes by British Army personnel. At the end of the 48-hour period the man is either released, or charged, or detained. During the 48-hour period his relatives suffer a great deal of mental agony.

WHO ARE TO BLAME FOR THE BRUTALITIES?

The extracts from statements we offer here contain allegations of grievous psychological and physical brutality which took place in Holywood Palace and Girdwood Barracks. They are recent cases having occurred in a period from November 1971 to 31 January 1972. There is medical evidence available for sixteen of these cases which confirms that their injuries are consistent with the stories they tell in their statements. In a number of cases priests themselves have seen physical signs of severe injury.

The statements reveal that these brutalities and tortures were inflicted by British Army personnel and RUC personnel, particularly Special Branch men. We feel compelled to apportion the major share of the blame to officers of the British Army and senior officers of the RUC who must have known what was going on even if they did not always participate. We find these officers devoid of honour and guilty of inhumane conduct. They have actually broken the laws of the state and of God and their conduct would be condemned by civilised persons. It is our urgent wish that this brutality should cease immediately, but, since it has continued, despite repeated publicity, we can only resolve to bring to the attention of the world and international tribunals of justice as many cases as we can. It is particularly important that the British public should know the atrocities that are being committed by their army and by the authority of their government. It is our reluctant duty to point out, that not only army officers and police officers are dishonored by these statements, but also army doctors, and people who were in charge of persons in custody. As priests we place the utmost stress on the sacredness of human life and deplore any action which imperils it. We are also bound to deplore whatever degrades a man and takes away his basic human rights. Therefore we appeal to decent people in the community to assist us to bring legal brutality to an end. Our most earnest wish, as theirs, is for peace with justice. While we feel for the victims of brutality, we express our concern and sympathy for all who have been bereaved and suffered in the present troubles.

We have gathered from the statements a number of names of police officers who were responsible for brutality and we have communicated them to the appropriate authorities.

THE PRINCIPAL METHODS OF TORTURE USED IN HOLYWOOD AND GIRDWOOD BARRACKS

- 1 Placing a man in "search position," single finger of each hand to the wall, legs well apart and well back, on the toes, knees bent, for prolonged periods.
- 2 Heavy punching to the pit of the stomach to man in "search position."
- 3 Kicking the legs from under a man in the "search position" so that he falls to the ground, banging his head on the wall, or radiator, or ground.
- 4 Beating with batons on the kidneys and on the privates in "search position."
- 5 Kicking between the legs while in the "search position." This is very popular among the RUC officers and they often do it for periods of half an hour or an hour.
- 6 Putting a man in "search position" over a very powerful electric fire or radiator.
- 7 Stretching a man over benches with two electric fires underneath and kicking him on the stomach.
- 8 Rabbit punching to the back of the neck while in "search position."
- 9 Banging the head against the wall.
- 10 Beating the head with a baton in crescendo fashion.
- 11 Slapping the ears and face with open hand.
- 12 Twisting the arms behind the back and twisting fingers
- 13 Prodding the stomach with straight fingers.
- 14 Chopping blows to the ribs from behind with simultaneous blows to the stomach.

- 15 Hand squeezing of the testicles.
- 16 Insertion of instruments in the anal passage.
- 17 Kicking on the knees and shins.
- 18 Tossing the prisoner from one officer to another and punching him while in the air.
- 19 Injections.
- 20 Electric cattle prod was used.
- 21 Electric shocks given by use of a machine,
- 22 Burning with matches and candles.
- 23 Deprivation of sleep.
- 24 Urinating on prisoners.
- 25 Psychological tortures:
 - (a) Russian roulette.
 - (b) Firing blanks.
 - (c) Beating men in darkness.
 - (d) Blindfolding.
 - (e) Assailants using stocking masks.
 - (f) Wearing surgical dress.
 - (g) Staring at white perforated wall in small cubicle.
 - (h) Use of amphetamine drugs.
 - (i) Prisoners are threatened; threats to their families, bribes offered, false confessions are used.

These tortures of prisoners clearly violate the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and their Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, as well as the European Convention of Human Rights, and the Second Vatican Council Constitution of the Church in the Modern World.

ANY ONE OF THESE ACTIONS INFLICTED ON A PRISONER IS AN ASSAULT, CONSTITUTING ACTUAL OR GRIEVOUS BODILY HARM.