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"NO PRESSMEN ARE TO VISIT IRISH PRISON CAMPS"

—General Macready

THE REASON WHY

On Saturday, January 1, 1921, Patrick Walsh, aged 19, of Meelish, Co. Mayo, died suddenly in the Town Hall, Galway, where he had been imprisoned without trial or charge for three weeks. Walsh was arrested on November 21, and for the first three weeks after his arrest was kept in a small camp at Clarmorris, Co. Mayo.

On Monday, January 3, Michael Mullin, aged 27, of Springtown, Co. Galway, died in the "Isolation Hospital" at Salthill, a suburb of Galway City, where he had been imprisoned for three weeks without trial or charge. Mullin was arrested on November 28, and before his internment in the Town Hall, Galway, was kept in confinement at an English Military Camp at Yarbally, Co. Galway.

Both of the deceased were in excellent health when they were arrested. They were both of fine physique and were well known athletes in their districts. Their deaths were a consequence of the barbarous treatment meted out to them while they were in custody.

In many parts of Ireland there are now places of detention in which sometimes upwards of fifty uncharged prisoners are kept before their despatch to the larger internment camps. The conditions of imprisonment at these places of detention is instanced by those which existed at Earls Island, Co. Galway, during the weeks spent by Michael Mullin in that prison.

There were then twenty-seven prisoners at Earls Island. The prisoners were housed in a small galvanized iron shed. The shed was so defective in lighting arrangements that even at mid-day it was impossible to read in it. Prisoners who had spent three weeks in the shed were taken away practically blind. There was no fire allowed and no artificial light. Although it was mid-Winter, the twenty prisoners had but three blankets between them, the English Officer commanding the Camp explaining that "blankets are not necessary for pigs." Hardly a day passed at this Camp on which the prisoners were not assaulted. Military Officers came into the shed and threatened the prisoners with death. They fired shots through the roof of the shed and informed certain of the prisoners that they had "only ten minutes" to live. Constables and troops also assaulted the prisoners, in some cases tearing out their hair, and in others beating them mercilessly. One young man was taken from the shed by military. He was handcuffed, and was then punched about the yard by soldiers and struck with revolver butts. Several of his teeth were knocked out. After the mauling he was thrown back into the shed still manacled. Another young man was taken from the Camp after being informed that he was to be half-hanged and then drowned. He was brought out on a plank bridge over the river, and was told to prepare for death. He was then ordered back to the shed. There were, of course, no beds in the galvanized shed. The prisoners were not even able to

undress as they never knew when they would be taken from the shed to be assaulted, threatened or taken away. No warning of removal was ever given them, and their guards gave them to understand that if they were undressed when they came for them they would be taken away in that condition.

Patrick Walsh and Michael Cullen were brought from such camps as these to the Town Hall, Galway. The conditions in the Town Hall were almost worse than at Earls Island.

The prisoners at the Town Hall are housed in a room 30 feet by 100 feet. In this room one hundred and twenty men are kept day and night. Before the prisoners were brought into the Town Hall this room had not been cleaned. It has not been cleaned since. The floor is filthy and is crawling with vermin. No means are provided to the prisoners to clean it. No disinfectants or means of removing vermin were supplied until recently when these have been sent in in small quantities by the prisoners' friends. There is no fireplace in the room and no means of heating it. There were no sanitary arrangements until the prisoners themselves erected temporary lavatories. As there is no drainage these have to be cleaned by the prisoners every day. While this cleaning is in process the building becomes almost uninhabitable from the stench. There was no proper means of ventilation in the room in which the prisoners lived day and night until the conditions became so bad that the Chaplain took the law into his own hands and ordered the prisoners to smash the windows which the Officer commanding the Camp would not allow to be opened.

Under these conditions an epidemic of mumps broke out in the Town Hall on December 23, 1920. After some days, those affected were brought away to the "Isolation Hospital" at Salthill. In this so-called Hospital the conditions are as terrible as in the Town Hall.

The patients sleep on plank beds and owing to the shortage of bed-covering, they wear their clothes day and night. There is no heating, coal being supplied only for cooking purposes. The patients do their own cooking. The river rises at high tide to the door of the building in which the "Isolation Hospital" is, and in consequence the Hospital is always damp and excessively cold. Rats infest this hospital and at night run in and out among the patients' plank beds. Patients are sent back to the Town Hall on the orders of some minor official at the Hospital. After being some days among the non-infected prisoners at the Town Hall, they are hurried back again to the "Isolation Hospital" as they are discovered to be still infected. It was at this hospital that Michael Mullin died of influenza on the 3rd of January, 1921.

Fourteen prisoners are now at this Isolation Hospital.

The kind of medical attendance given to the prisoners at the Town Hall is instanced by the circumstances of Patrick Walsh's death. The Medical Officer at Renmore Barracks, Co. Galway, is supposed to attend the prisoners daily. He does not do so. Nobody knew the seriousness of Patrick Walsh's condition until he collapsed while walking in the Town Hall. A doctor, who is also a prisoner, then discovered that Walsh had pneumonia. But before assistance could be summoned Walsh had died.

OMISSION

In the list published in the *Irish Bulletin* of yesterday's date (Vol. 4, No. 12) of the murders and destruction of property committed by English Military and Constabulary during the period January 1 to January 15, 1921, the murder of Michael McAuliffe of Dysart, Lixnaw, Co. Kerry, on January 1, 1921, was omitted. McAuliffe was mortally wounded by Constabulary who opened fire without warning at a party of mourners at a funeral on December 12, 1920.

This brings the total of murders committed by the English Armed Forces in Ireland in the first fifteen days of January to fifteen.