

BREAKERS OF MEN

OR

TORTURING THE TWELVE

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An Exposure of the Brutal and Coercive
Treatment of the Twelve I.W.W. Men
in the Gaols of N.S.W.



Published by
I.W.W. PRISONERS RELEASE COMMITTEE,
MELBOURNE.

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TO THE READER.

The writer of this pamphlet, a laborer, who served a sentence in company with nine of the Twelve in various gaols in N.S.W., here sets down in sober language his experiences and opinions, after some close and understanding conversations with several of the men whom he there met.

He makes grave charges against the general administration of prisons in that State, but what concerns us more, he emphasises the fact that the Twelve are being specially singled out amid the horrible conditions he describes herein, for still worse treatment.

We make no comment upon the conclusions he draws, as to the possibilities of reforms, but we do wish to call the attention of workers that the master class, far from differentiating them as "political" prisoners, is actually killing the men by a process that can only be described as slow murder.

Let this fact be understood by the mass of workers, and we will be well satisfied that this contribution will not have been in vain.

—THE RELEASE COMMITTEE.

BREAKERS OF MEN:

Or,

TORTURING THE TWELVE.

IT will be my purpose in this pamphlet to place before the revolutionary workers of this country facts in connection with the manner in which the twelve I.W.W. men have been, and are being, treated in the bastilles of N.S.W., since their incarceration in September, 1916, as well as to touch on various matters connected with prison administration in the N.S.W. gaols—mostly as they concern the twelve. Now, many workers believe that the twelve men are receiving special treatment and consideration; in fact, believe that they are being treated as political prisoners.

Such, however, is not the case. On the contrary, the men have actually been treated worse than ordinary prisoners, at least up to the latter end of 1918, while some of them have been specially marked out for persecution at the hands of the most servile and cowardly, yet cruellest, prison officialdom that exists in any country in the world.

Vance Marshall's excellent little book, "Jail from Within," only gives a rough outline of conditions as they exist in New South Wales prisons.

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Now, many people naturally expect that, consequent upon the exposures contained in that book, the Government, or the Czar of Prisons, in the person of the late Comptroller-General McCawley, would have made some effort to remedy the abuses and to safeguard prisoners against the persecution of officials.

But no attempt was made to do anything. The same despotic tyranny and persecution prevails to-day as then, and as 20 or even 50 years ago. There are over 500 rules in connection with the prison regulations and general orders, which prisoners are expected to know, yet not one of them wherein they have the slightest chance of obtaining justice from the authorities.

An instance in point: One regulation empowers each and every prisoner to take his turn in acting as delegate in the cook-house. According to that regulation he is empowered to watch over the weighing, cooking and handling of the prisoners' food, and to condemn any rations that he may consider to be unfit for human consumption.

In Goulburn Gaol one day towards the end of 1918, Donald Grant was acting as delegate, and on that day condemned the potatoes, which were, and had been for some time past, diseased, and unfit for men to eat.

That evening at 5.30 Grant was taken out of his cell into the cook-house, and confronted with the Governor (now dead), the visiting surgeon, Dr. Gillespie, of Goulburn, and Warder Reynolds. And this is what occurred—as told to me some time after by Grant in Bathurst.

Doctor: "Do you say these potatoes are unfit for human consumption?" Grant: "Yes, certainly I do." Doctor: "What is wrong with them?" Grant: "I am not an entomologist, but they are diseased

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and unfit for men to eat." Doctor: "Well, a man like you ought to be kicked, and if I had my way I would have you kicked." Governor to Grant: "Do you still say they are unfit for men to eat?" Grant: "Of course, I do!" The Governor then ordered Grant to be locked in the punishment or black cell.

About three hours later he was taken out and brought before the visiting justice, and charged with making a "frivolous complaint." (The "spuds" which were produced to the beak had been "readied" in the meantime.) The following statements were made and sworn to. When the doctor was questioned by Grant before the beak, relative to his statement that evening, that "if he had had his way he would have him (Grant) kicked," he denied using the words, but qualified them by repeating, "But I do so now." Warder Reynolds was then questioned by Grant, and admitted that the doctor did use those words to Grant in the cook-house (sworn). Grant then addressed the beak, on the plea that he was merely acting within his rights, as a delegate, on behalf of the rest of the prisoners for that day, in condemning food which he conscientiously believed to be unfit for men to eat, and which had been the subject of complaints by prisoners for some time past, with the result that the beak appeared to be sympathetic.

Then the Governor hopped up and addressed the beak to the effect that Grant was a very intelligent man, and, therefore, one who was a danger to prison discipline.

He made rash and false assertions as to Grant having been the cause of a lot of trouble in jail. When asked by Grant to give facts, he replied, "Yes, I will give facts. At a concert held in the gaol recently the prisoner refused to stand when 'God Save the King' was being sung, when ordered to do so by a prison official."

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The Governor was alluding to an incident that occurred a short while previously, when Grant and McPherson attended one of those patriotic affairs, and while "Gor' Save" was being sung remained sitting. Upon being ordered to stand by a warder, they informed him that they had conscientious objections to doing so.

The Governor then stated that Grant had been endeavouring to cause a go-slow strike among the prisoners. By this statement he was referring to the fact that about 40 of the long-sentence prisoners in "B" wing had been, for some weeks past, leaving their dinners on the barrow on "rabbit" days.

Practically the whole of the long-sentence men had been requesting that they be taken off rabbit, and put on meat, but without success. As rabbit at any time—especially the manner in which it is cooked in jail—is a **very unpalatable food** to the average person, the men refused to touch their dinners on those days at all. By so doing they were without a meat diet for 48 hours continuously, as prisoners only receive meat once a day at mid-day.

Governor Millard next informed the beak that he was having great difficulty in conducting the prison, in his opinion due to Grant's influence. He asked that a heavy penalty be imposed, with the result that Grant received 48 hours in the punishment cell on 16 oz. bread and water a day.

WHAT "SOLITARY" MEANS.

I will now describe, at some length, the system of cell punishment inflicted on prisoners for breaches of the regulations.

In the first place, after a man has completed his solitary confinement his punishment does not then cease, for he forfeits, for some considerable time

after, many concessions, and all indulgences. He is not allowed to have lights in his cell, or books either, for three weeks after; is not allowed to receive or write letters for two months, and loses his allowance of tobacco, matches, tea, and sugar (only given to long-sentence prisoners who have served twelve months of their sentence) for six months.

He is also reduced to a No. 2 ration for a certain period (according to the duration of cell confinement) before he goes on to a No. 3, and, if engaged on work carrying a No. 4, then on to the latter or highest ration.

The gaol regulation book states, that where a prisoner has been confined for a period of seven days after completion of punishment, he must remain on a No. 2 for one month, then on a No. 3 for a month, even though, during those two months, he may be working on a job that carries a No. 4 ration.

Another regulation states, that consequent upon the recommendations of the Prison Dietary Board of 1911, a certain scale of rations has been laid down, based upon the decisions of expert dietetical authorities, as food requirements for the preservation of the health and strength of persons engaged in tasks of different capacities. For instance, those who are engaged on the hardest description of labor, such as blacksmithing, carpentering, boot-making, axe-work, etc., receive the highest ration, a No. 4, consisting of 8 ozs. hominy morning and evening, a 24 oz. loaf of bread per day, and for dinner, 16 oz. meat (uncooked, and including bone, fat, and gristle), 16 oz. vegetables (uncooked weight), 1 oz. rice, and 1 oz. sugar. Those who are engaged at moderate labor receive a No. 3 ration, which consists of 8 oz. hominy morning and evening, 18 oz. loaf of bread per day, 12 ozs. meat, 12 ozs. vegetables (both uncooked), 1 oz. rice and 1 oz. sugar. While those who are doing light labor, such as

sweepers, washermen, etc., receive a No. 2 ration, consisting of 8 oz. hominy morning and evening, 18 oz. loaf of bread per day, 8 oz. meat, 8 oz. vegetables, and 1 oz. rice per day.

Prisoners who are serving three months or under, or those doing separate, i.e., the first portion of one's sentence—ranging from 7 days to three months, according to the length of sentence and number of convictions—or those awaiting transfer to another gaol, receive the actual starvation ration, a No. 1, which consists of 8 oz. hominy morning and evening, a 14 oz. loaf of bread per day, 6 oz. meat, 6 oz. of vegetables and 1 oz. of rice.

To return to the punishment of prisoners for breaches of discipline: where the cell punishment is over 7 days, but under 14 days, he goes two months on each ration, and one extra month for every 7 days or portion thereof over that.

GRANT DOES "SOLITARY."

Now, in the case of Donald Grant, recently sentenced in Long Bay to 21 days in the black cell for refusing to address a warder as "Sir," he must remain three months on a No. 2, then another three months on a No. 3, even though during that period he may be engaged on the hardest description of labor, carrying a No. 4.

That is just one instance where, according to the decisions of the Prison Dietary Board of 1911, it is impossible for the man to preserve his health and strength, because, for six months, he remains on a reduced ration, though perhaps engaged on his former work, carrying a No. 4.

As before mentioned, all indulgences are forfeited for six months after cell confinement, when he then goes on to a No. 1 indulgence for three

months. This consists of 1 oz. tobacco, 4 oz. sugar, 2 oz. tea per week. He then continues on for another three months on a No. 2 indulgence of 1½ oz. tobacco, 6 oz. sugar, and 2 oz. tea before going on full indulgence of 2 oz. tobacco, 4 oz. tea, and 8 oz. sugar per week.

Several of the twelve have during their incarceration been sentenced to cellular punishment, with its accompanying loss of privileges and indulgences; some on the most trifling breaches. Fagin has been "pounded" for insolence on at least two occasions, so has Jack Hamilton. Only last year Larkin was given 7 days and 6 months coercion for insolence to a warder. I will describe this system of coercion, or as it is called in official prison circles, non-association.

After a prisoner completes his punishment he is isolated in a small walled yard, about 7 feet by 15 feet long, and put at any work that may be given him. He is escorted to and from his cell to the coercion yard after all other prisoners are at work, and during the whole period is unable to speak to his fellow-prisoners, as well as being deprived of all concessions and indulgences.

THE MAN-BREAKERS AT WORK.

Fellow-workers, ask yourselves the question: Is it possible for the twelve to do their full time under such conditions without being either driven mad or breaking up? F. W. Johnston, from Broken Hill, did practically the whole of his sentence in Goulburn in the coercion yard, and as Grant told me, became so that he was unable to speak to his fellow man after his long punishment. Another man there, of whom Grant mentioned to me and of the facts concerning whom he is prepared to swear, has been in the coercion yard for over two years, and when spoken to is practically unable to reply.

In no other prison system in the continent does a prisoner's punishment continue on after he has finished his confinement to the black cells. Neither does he lose any concessions or indulgences, excepting while actually undergoing his punishment in the cell. Neither are they subjected to the same petty tyranny and persecution that is the lot of the unfortunates confined in N.S.W. prisons. This frightfulness and tyranny is undoubtedly more marked in both Bathurst and Long Bay Gaols than in most of the others. It was primarily due to this form of frightfulness that brought about the "Buckley Riot" in Bathurst in February of last year.

It is well that workers should know the facts concerning this brutal affair—one that is by no means a rare occurrence in N.S.W. prisons.

One Sunday in February, while most of the prisoners were locked in their cells, the negro Buckley was alleged to have been brutally assaulted and kicked by several warders, including one named Bligh. The awful screams of the man, as well as the sounds of kicking and thudding, could be distinctly heard by every man in the wing.

On the next day Grant, Reeve, Glynn and Fagin interviewed Governor Steele in regard to the alleged kicking. He informed them that he was glad they had come to him about this affair, but that he could assure them that there had been no kicking. Later that morning it was reported throughout the gaol that Buckley was in a bad way. On parade, after dinner, word went along the line for all men to stand solid and ask that an inquiry be immediately held by the visiting magistrate. However, due to a misunderstanding by most of the men, only the four and one other man stood out, and they repeated their request to the Governor. The latter expressed to Glynn his surprise to see him mixed up in an affair of that sort. Glynn replied that it might be his

turn next, while Reeves informed him that he had been threatened with a kicking by a warder in Long Bay. Reeves also had occasion to lay a complaint to the visiting justice some time before in reference to threatening language used to him by a warder. He received little sympathy from the beak, being informed that he was there to be punished and obey any orders from all officials.

SOLIDARITY, EVEN IN GAOL.

Next day on parade after dinner 29 men stood their ground, and put in a request that an immediate inquiry be held. Their names were taken and about three o'clock 24 of them were brought before the visiting justice under an armed guard to lay their complaint. Each man was brought in singly to the Star Chamber to state his complaint and then escorted out and lined up face against the wall. Each man was then taken singly back before the beak, charged with making a false statement, and sentenced to 7 days. That night Bathurst "lags" enjoyed one of the few concerts that have been held there for years, for right throughout the night these rebels, who understood the value of solidarity even in jail, kept a roaring sing-song going. Most of the men were then sent to other gaols, where they received an additional sentence of from 24 hours up to six days for holding the "entertainment." I will digress for a moment to explain what happened to a few of these men who were sent to Goulburn.

One of the men, Nugget Gleeson, serving a five years' sentence, in addition to doing seven days over the Buckley affair, received an additional six days for taking part in the "concert." Furthermore, he was put back into "A" division, or Separate, to complete his sentence. That is to say, he was confined to his cell during the whole 24 hours, excepting for

one hour in the morning and afternoon in the coercion yard, right up to the date of his release on June 27. For being put back into "A" division by McCawley's orders he lost about 12 days remission, as well as 39 days for his actual period in the punishment cell. For every day that a prisoner is confined to cell punishment he loses three days remission, though there is nothing in the regulation book that states that remission may be lost because a man is put back into "A" division. So it appears that McCawley's action is actually against the rules of the prison system. Two other men there were treated somewhat similarly, though not quite so harshly.

To return to the "Buckley Riot" in Bathurst. Next day on parade the I.W.W. men stood out and refused to go to work until an assurance was given that an inquiry would be held into the alleged kicking. Twice they were ordered to their jobs by that monster of iniquity, Chief-Warder Ure, and twice Glynn, acting as spokesman, refused. They were then approached by the Deputy-Governor. After a discussion with him, and realising they were only four, and could do no further good in the matter, they decided to go to work. In this instance the prison authorities, being afraid of any publicity that might be given the case, did not attempt to punish the men. However, a day or two later, when Mr. Nicholls, M.H.R., for Macquarie, visited the gaol to interview the four, he was told by Chief-Warder Ure that he could only see one of the men—Reeves—as the other three had already had one visit for the month.

Now, that was a deliberate lie, for not one of the men had had a visit that month. Nicholls mentioned to Reeves that he wanted to see the other three, too. Grant tackled the Chief-Warder after for being deliberately deprived of a visit, and the

latter lied to him by stating that Nicholls had only asked to see Reeves.

It must be understood that no one had seen Buckley since the alleged kicking. He was not even taken out of his cell to be tried, but the magistrate brought there to him.

For over a fortnight he was kept in his cell without anyone getting a glimpse of him.

Why was he kept there during the whole time without having an hour's exercise? Was it to allow time for his wounds to heal? The other men who were sentenced over him were allowed two hours' exercise per day.

When the I.W.W. men waited upon the Governor in regard to the kicking they were told that the matter was a very serious one, that Buckley would probably be taken outside and tried in a criminal court for maliciously wounding, for he had stabbed Warder Bligh with a knife in the neck. If that was so, why was it that they did not take him outside and try him? They evidently had a sure case against the man. Was it because the negro had been so brutally man-handled that it would be unwise for them to take him outside into an open court? Why, they took a prisoner out of Parramatta and sentenced him to life for merely attempting to stab one of the high officials there.

This man Bligh was back on his job a day or two after the occurrence, with a piece of sticking plaster about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch square on his neck. As a recognition of his great "courage" in handling the negro, with about six others to help him, he shortly afterwards received a stripe.

WHERE SOULS ARE CRUSHED.

If ever there existed a frightful hell-hole wherein men, especially those who are prepared to stand on their dig. a little, are subjected to every insult

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and tyranny, wherein the food supplied is of the vilest, unfit to sustain men in proper health and strength, wherein the majority of the warders regard their victims as mere playthings, where there is treatment calculated to drive men to desperation, then that place is Bathurst Gaol. Unless a man is a "shelf," that is, an informer on his fellow prisoners, and prepared to fawn at the feet of officials, the chief warder in particular, he has a hard lot to contend against. One great indignity which prisoners there are subjected to more so than anywhere else, and which is even repugnant to the warders themselves, is the searching of prisoners every evening at lock-up time before 5 o'clock.

The prisoner stands in his cell face to the wall, coat, vest and boots off, and trousers unbuttoned. He then faces the searcher with arms outstretched at right angles to the body. The warder runs his hands down the prisoner from the finger tips all over his body and right down to the soles of his feet. If he is suspected of having any tobacco concealed about him anywhere that may escape the vigilance of the searcher, he is ordered to "strip naked." I knew one man who, after tobacco had been found on him, was ordered to be stripped every night for a fortnight. The chief warder has even stooped to the tactic of placing a knife in an inconspicuous place in a prisoner's cell for the purpose of detecting whether the warders were making a thorough search of the cell.

The doctor visits the gaol daily for the purpose of examining prisoners who desire his services, either through sickness or requests for a change of diet, etc., the doctor being the only person who has the power to order a change. Well, the whole thing is an absolute farce. The prisoners who have requested to see him are brought in, one at a time, and there make their request to the doctor with the chief warder standing by. In all cases the doctor does

not act on his own knowledge or experience of each personal case, but is guided by a nod or shake of the head of the chief warder.

A few instances in point: The gaol fireman, performing the heaviest and most fatiguing work of any prisoner there, requested the doctor that he be put on stew. The doctor informed him that he could not do so, as he (the fireman) was not sick. Not long after, the head gardener, a fine healthy looking fellow, engaged in a congenial occupation, made the same request. The doctor first said "No," but the chief warder replied, "You had better put him on it, doctor," which the latter there and then did. The same thing occurred in regard to another healthy looking individual, Dempsey by name, working in the tailor's shop at light labor, who was put on stew, while other men, who are practically dying, are unable to get it.

I have spoken to men in Bathurst who have served sentences in gaols in other States and other parts of the world, and all were agreed that the prison system of N.S.W. was the most brutal of any. The question will naturally be asked why is this the case? Why is it that that State lags far behind all the rest in the matter of prison reform? The only apparent answer to the question is this: The prisons administration of N.S.W. has been for the past 20 years or more absolutely under the control of one despot, the late Samuel McCawley, Comptroller-General of Prisons. This man has wielded more power over the administration of prisons than many a tyrant or dictator in history has held over a people. His conception of the proper treatment and reform of prisoners belong to the era of the old convict days. It is said that he was descended from one of the heads of those times. Anyway, be that as it may, he has on numerous occasions, since the incarceration of the twelve, done everything to make their

time as hard for them as could be. I will describe some happenings concerning him and some of the twelve.

About the time of the general strike in 1917, McCawley, when going his rounds in Parramatta, said to Grant, "I see by the papers that the people are stoning and lynching the I.W.W.'s in America." "Yes, I dare say," replied Grant, "but the mad mob stoned and lynched Christ once, but they worship Him to-day." This Czar would make it a practice, while showing his bourgeois visitors over the gaol, to point out to them the I.W.W. men. On one occasion in the carpenter's shop in Parramatta, where Grant was working, he said to a couple of visitors, "**This is Donald Grant, the I.W.W. man, doing 15 years.** I suppose you have heard of him. He does his sentence very well."

The bourgeois appeared surprised and said to Grant, "Is that so?" "Yes," replied Grant; "thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just." The other visitor appeared to be much more surprised than the first, and asked Grant again if he was the man. "Yes," said Grant, "I am the man, and," pointing to one of the "old birds" he was working with, Ryan, in over the Eveleigh hold-up, "this is my mate, Charlie Peace."

Needless to mention that McCawley and his bourgeois friends beat a hasty retreat out of the shop.

After the men were convicted at the Criminal Court they were all lined up in Long Bay and addressed by McCawley thus: "Well, men, you are now convicted felons and criminals. This government has re-introduced hanging, and will probably introduce flogging, so look out for yourselves."

I mention this now because I will later prove what a loathsome hypocrite and detestable monster the man actually was. I will proceed to give some facts relating to the treatment meted out to the men,

who, after the appeal cases in March, 1917, were sent to Goulburn.

ISOLATED IN GOULBURN GAOL.

Upon their arrival there they were put to work in the workshops with other prisoners until the following afternoon, when a warder came hurriedly into the shops, acting evidently upon orders received from the office, and removed the men. For the next three months they were isolated from all other prisoners and placed in the small isolation or coercion yards, previously described. They had to wash in their cells and were escorted to and from the yards, while all other prisoners were on the works. The men protested to the Governor against their treatment, and stated that there was nothing in the regulations which provided for their isolation, but were informed by him that he was acting on the Comptroller's orders. When the winter was well on its way, and being unable to stand the perishing cold in a small bricked-in yard—and no man who has never put in a winter in Goulburn Gaol can fully realise the tortures which men endure in those yards or in the damp and bare cells—the men began to kick some, with the result that they were put back into the shops with other prisoners. However, though they got along well with the other men, they were only allowed to stay there till the commencement of the spring, when they were removed, and this time were placed all together in the larger exercise yards. Here they remained isolated for seven months. During that period they repeatedly protested to the Governor against their treatment, and requested that they be allowed to interview the Comptroller, but nothing was done. They again commenced to kick when winter came, so were placed back in the shops. Again they were removed and

put back in the exercise yard. They repeatedly interviewed the Governor for the purpose of seeing McCawley, but the former was always evasive, and it was apparent to the men that he had been instructed by McCawley that he was not to be approached by the men. The Governor would always endeavour to persuade them not to persist in asking for an interview with McCawley, which according to the regulation book they were entitled to once a month. Some few weeks later, about the time of the Royal Commission on the charges against the police in Sydney, Considine, M.H.R., visited the men. The Governor took the visit, and they commenced to explain to Considine all about the facts of their treatment. The Governor excitedly informed Considine that he would stop the visit, as it was against the regulations to allow complaints to be made.

Considine informed him that he intended to sit there and hear what the men had to say.

The Governor spluttered and threatened and stammered. As one of the men told me, it was a sight worth seeing to watch the antics he cut. He then left hurriedly for his office, leaving Considine and the men to it. About ten minutes later he came back (after evidently ringing up McCawley) and informed Considine that he could hear any complaints which the men might make to him, as the prison authorities were not afraid of publicity!

A few days after this McCawley visited the gaol. The men were called before him, and this is what he said: "Men, the Governor informs me that you are desirous of going into the workshops and to be associated with other prisoners." "Yes, that is so," they replied. "Of course, you are **not like these other criminals,**" replied McCawley, "and I do not want you to be contaminated by them. Had I known that you wished to enter the shops, you could have done so at any time. However, you may choose which shop

you care to work in." When the men went to work amongst their fellow prisoners they learnt that some of the warders had circulated the yarn throughout the gaol that the men had previously asked to be taken out of the shops, and did not wish to be associated with criminals.

It should be evident that that move originated from some higher source than the warders, and was designed with the object of still further punishing the men, by reason of the fact that they would receive the contempt of their fellow-prisoners. Grant informed me that he was told by a member of the Catholic prisoners' choir in Goulburn that McCawley, when speaking to them, said: "You must have nothing to do with these I.W.W. men, as they are criminals of the worst type, and must be dissociated from you men."

I will relate another incident to prove the insincerity of his statement to the I.W.W. men in Goulburn.

While Grant, Larkin and Glynn were doing their time in Parramatta they were working alongside men who had been in gaol practically all their lives. In one case they were working with a man who had actually served a total of 32 years in gaol.

Their "moral" welfare was not catered to very well then in that gaol. Again, when Grant was being brought from Long Bay to Parramatta, he was hand-cuffed to a notorious murderer named Tucker, serving a life sentence, who had been in the O.B.S. (under observation where prisoners who are supposed to be of unsound mind are placed), in Long Bay for two years, and was being brought to Parramatta to be given a trial at his trade. Also when being escorted from Parramatta back to Long Bay he was chained to another well-known criminal, actually serving a sentence as an habitual criminal.

I mention these incidents, not to convey the im-

pression that Grant was horrified to be chained to such men, but to give still further proof that McCawley was an absolute hypocrite, as well as being unfitted to have had control over the lives of the thousands of unfortunates who have passed through his hands in the N.S.W. prisons.

Right from the time that the men were committed in October, 1916, up to the conclusion of the appeals in March, 1917, while the men were in Long Bay, the electric lights were switched on in their cells every hour, from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m., by the senior warder, who would open the spy-hole and peep in to see if they were secure.

The men informed me that it was **an agony of torture** to them, and was preventing them from obtaining hardly any sleep at all. It is only those who have been confined in prison who are in a position to realise this. For even when everything is quiet in the gaol wings at night, a man rarely enjoys a comfortable night's rest. This is undoubtedly due to the unnatural conditions pervading the whole prison environment.

CAST AWAY FROM THE WORLD.

Prisoners are kept in their cells for about 123 hours out of a week of 168 hours, or exist there for actually nine months in the year. Also the loud monotonous bawling of the guards on night duty every half-hour, "All's Well," goes through the wings like a thunder-clap. They appear to be competing against one another, to see who can bawl the loudest.

It will be readily understood that the confinement of prisoners in a bare cell (as blankets, mats, etc., have to be taken out during the day) for such long periods must result in their deteriorating physically and mentally. Men become despondent and dormant in mind, while the germs of consumption thrive on

victims who are without the necessary vitality which exercise and sunshine give to combat it.

It will be said that books are supplied, and that the prisoner's time may be well occupied in reading. However, everyone knows that to enjoy reading, one must be provided with a suitable environment, as well as suitable books. Now, both these essentials are lacking in gaol. The vast majority of the books in the prison libraries are merely light fiction of the poorest description, generally cast-outs and those which the public do not read, from the Sydney and Suburban School of Arts:

A strict censorship of all books by the prisons' librarian is in operation. I was told by several men who were in Parramatta at the time that a large number of books sent there from the Sydney School of Arts—some of them by the best of authors—were condemned by the prison's librarian as unfit for prisoners to read. If books are fit to be on the shelves of that institution—perhaps for years—for their patrons to read, surely they should be also suitable for men in gaol? The absolute intolerance and ignorance of those prison heads is appalling. An amusing incident happened in Bathurst last year. The Governor—a man who is unable to spell the simplest of words or to speak more than two consecutive sentences without breaking—informed Grant that he had received a book for him. Upon Grant asking the name of it, he replied that it was “something by Milton or Mill Stewart, or someone.” The book was Stuart Mill's “Principles of Political Economy.”

CENSORSHIP OF LETTERS.

Another matter that is causing the twelve great annoyance is that concerning their letters, both those received by them and those written to friends out-

side. Practically all letters sent to them are censored so much by the Governors in each gaol that nothing remains to read. Letters which they write to friends are often not sent at all, but handed back, because they are supposed to contain some word or sentence which it is against the regulations to mention. As Hamilton told me in Goulburn: "The last letter I wrote out was handed back to me, though there was not a word in it about prison affairs or current events. About all I mentioned was that the weather was very cold."

The above will give an indication of just another form of unnecessary persecution that the men are being subjected to. I have heard people state after but a twenty minutes' visit to the men that they look all right. Now, I wish to contradict that and say that not one of the nine whom I came in contact with is all right—far from it.

ALL ARE SUFFERING BAD HEALTH.

Grant is suffering severely from catarrh, and has undergone two different operations, as well as being in indifferent health in general, while Larkin is having great trouble with his eyes. While I was in Bathurst Glynn applied for a transfer to another gaol on the grounds of ill-health, but was refused it. He is far from being in good health, and since he was sent there from Parramatta had lost 12 lbs. in weight. He weighed himself—contrary to regulations—while acting as delegate in the cook-house. King is in good spirits, though remarkably pale; both he and Hamilton suffering from that dread malady, miners' complaint. Reeves has rheumatics very bad, and has to receive treatment every day; while poor Fagin is in a very low condition. It is wonderful how he keeps alive at all, for as is well known at all times he was only able to eat certain foods; now he eats but little of the prison diet.

They all clearly show the marks of their already long confinement, and it will go hard with some of them at least to face another winter in either Bathurst or Goulburn.

THEY STILL HAVE FAITH IN YOU.

It must not be supposed, however, that the men are complaining or really despondent, in other words, are doing their "lagging" hard. Such is not the case. All the men I met are doing it as well as is possible for anyone who is placed in their position to do. They look to the future with confidence, having still the same implicit faith in the class to which they belong as they did in the days of their active organising and propaganda. The message given to me for industrial unionists on the outside, by both Glynn and Grant in Bathurst and the five in Goulburn (Teen, King, Hamilton, Beatty and MacPherson) was that they are grateful for everything that has been done on their behalf, but that the immediate aim must be job organisation and job control with its logical outcome, job action, to secure their release.

Their desire is that members and sympathisers should get into and utilise every society and combination that is in a position to assist in that end.

NO CHANCE FROM THE START.

I must now state here that the twelve, while awaiting trial in Long Bay, had no possible chance of organising their defence. Not only were they refused bail, but during the whole period McPherson, Beatty, Teen, Hamilton and Fagin were only allowed one hour's exercise per day in the small trial yards morning and afternoon. Each man was escorted to and from his cell separately and at different hours, so that they could not converse with one another. However, the other seven were allowed to

be together in the larger yards and out all day. By these methods the authorities were endeavouring to divide the men against one another and force statements from any one of them unknown to the others. It will now be seen that in the case of the above men they have been subjected to a strict system of coercion and isolation, commencing from the time of their committal up to Considine's visit to Goulburn about September, 1918.

I think I have outlined sufficient facts to show that the twelve have had very much more than their share of prison tyranny and persecution, and everything herein stated can be endorsed by the men or others, as well as showing that, due to the frightful prison regulations and discipline in existence in N.S.W. prisons, it is impossible for the men to stand it much longer without becoming physically and mentally ruined.

CONDITIONS WORSE THAN FORMERLY.

Sufficient has also been shown to give the lie direct to a par. in the Australian "Worker" announcing the decease of Comptroller-General McCawley, in which it was stated that the man was regarded as a great prison reformer, and cited the fact that during his regime four prisons had been closed and three reduced, which statement merely goes to show the absolute lack of knowledge of the laws which operate in capitalist society on the part of that reactionary bourgeois-socialist journal, in ascribing the closing of a few prisons to the activities of "the great prison reformer."

Why, anyone who has served sentences in the gaols of N.S.W. during the past 20 years could have told the "Worker" that the only reform of any consequence to prisoners that has been enacted during that period was the abolition of the nine months'

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solitary, which prisoners who were doing a sentence of two years and over were compelled to undergo. After that was completed in the old days their treatment was far better in every particular than what it is to-day. The only prisons in the Commonwealth wherein prisoners are not allowed to see newspapers are those in N.S.W.

In Pentridge the "Age" is posted up in each yard every morning for the men to read, while in S.A. and W.A. and Queensland gaols prisoners are allowed all the weeklies, as well as any books which friends may care to send them. Another reform inaugurated in Pentridge, which makes the lot of prisoners there at least a little tolerable, is that of being allowed to eat their meals in the yards instead of being marched in and locked in their cells. They are also allowed to be in possession of any musical instruments which they care to have, as well as to play various games in the yards, such as ludo, dominos, chess, draughts, etc. These pastimes are unheard of in N.S.W., for while in the exercise yards prisoners must keep walking continuously, either singly or in two's. Whilst exercising on Sundays they are compelled to keep marching in the yards in single file continuously for the hour and six paces apart, with absolute silence, of course. How do these "great reforms" of McCawley compare with those in operation in Pentridge?

PRIVATE EXPLOITATION OF PRISON LABOR.

Another "reform" (it would be well for someone to get at the actual facts) alleged by Grant to have been adopted in Parramatta was that of broom-making for a private firm by prisoners in that gaol. He told me that brooms were being made there for this firm, which he believes to be A——, of R——, a certain Sydney suburban firm. The men kicked against it

and refused to make any for this firm, but the prison authorities countered that move by having the firm's brooms placed amongst Government work. He also mentioned to me, and is prepared to swear to the fact, that prisoners there have been engaged making various articles for McCawley's private use. A pair of toilet brushes he himself helped to make. He also alleged that suit cases were made there for Hall and other members of the Cabinet. Several of the prisoners who were there at the time are in a position to prove this. Again, Mrs. Holman's private books (French novels) have been regularly sent to be bound by prison bookbinders in Long Bay.

Anyway, a comprehensive review of the real doings in N.S.W. prisons—with its abominable kickings of men in dark cells, starving and isolation of men, the power and despotism of officials, backed up by the Comptroller-General and Minister for Justice (this latter man, by the way, had not visited either Goulburn or Bathurst gaols for over twelve months)—will not be known until the twelve men are released. They are in possession of facts relating to prison administration, which will be an eye-opener to the workers of this country. Doings that would be considered impossible take place in the bastilles of the "freest and most enlightened democracy in the world." Let us speed the day of their release. If some move, no matter how small or insignificant it may appear to be, is not made soon, they must give up all hope. As Glynn said to me in Bathurst last Easter: "If we are still here this time next year, then I am prepared to do the lot." Yes, and a brutal prison Czardom at the behest of the ruling-class will see to it that they do the lot—if the workingclass are prepared to continue to allow them to have their way.

Through loss of remission, due to alleged breaches of regulations, the men may be kept there for their

full sentences. Yes, fellow-workers, the twelve are in there; and are being kept there because they defied the ruling-class (and politicians) of this country, and refused to become the intellectual prostitutes of that class, though some of them were offered good positions to do so.

TRUE REASON FOR THEIR IMPRISONMENT.

They are there because they and the organisation to which they belonged succeeded partially in arousing the masses of the hitherto dormant, meek, and obedient wage-slaves to a realisation of their own power as a class on the industrial field, and which culminated in the numerous strikes of 1916 and 1917. Furthermore, they were put there for the reason that some of them were amongst the foremost Marxian scholars in Australia, and had been inculcating the revolutionary doctrines of that great economist into the minds of the toilers with considerable vigor. For it must be borne in mind that the ruling-class had not been opposed to learning on the part of the toilers so long as it was disseminated by trade union leaders or the pseudo Labor press and the W.E.A., but when a new movement arose that set out to overthrow the antiquated and fallacious arguments of those interested mis-leaders of Labor, it was a vastly different matter.

At first the capitalist press and their hirelings treated it with silent contempt, expecting it to have a short life. They said it was only a rabble of I-Won't-Work's, bums and anarchists, and its foolish teachings would never catch on in these waters where the mass of the working people are very respectable. Jack being considered as good as his master. In fact, they maintained there was no master-class in existence in this "free and enlightened country" at all—we were all workers. In a comparatively short

space of time the principles of the new movement were being propounded and discussed throughout the whole country, wherever bodies of workers were grouped together. It was being accepted as the only possible form of organisation to effect the overthrow of capitalism by the whole of the militant and intelligent section of the workers. In fact, it was giving demonstrative proof that it was in reality the greatest national force in the Labor movement of the continent.

From the standpoint of the capitalist class something must be fixed up for that purpose of checking its advance. So their intellectual prostitutes set to work on a campaign through the press and on the platform by endeavouring to answer and overthrow the newer economic teachings of the I.W.W. But the more they wrote and spoke on the subject the clearer it became to thoughtful toilers that the economics of these apologists for capitalism was all moonshine.

As the movement continued to advance and had first taken the lead in arousing the masses to take action themselves through a general strike in the event of conscription being fastened on them, it became apparent to the master-class that the most successful method, from their standpoint, to deal with it would be to institute a "frame-up" against some of its most active and able adherents.

Recall to your minds the activities of the organisation at a period when the growing power of militarism made increasing demands for conscription. Around the personalities of the spokesmen for the organisation gathered enormous crowds at every public meeting held. Where now these applauding masses?

Contrast the resolution of these representatives of

the militant proletariat with the weak uncertainty which prevailed everywhere else at the time.

Remember how their behaviour and utterances inspired and encouraged when the prospect was especially cheerless.

With the announcement of the Referendum came the arrests of the ill-fated twelve. So cunningly did the masters play their hand, that after the "victory," these men who had toiled long and striven hard for the defeat of militarism, were deserted by the class in whose interests they had so manfully battled.

Do not delude yourselves, fellow-workers, that it was by mere expression on paper of a majority opinion that you staved off the imminent danger which hovered over your heads.

No!

What the master class really was afraid of was **not** the agglomerate expression of individuals voicing their disapproval, but of the changing attitude, infused with the idea of class resistance, which was beginning to show itself amongst the toilers. That the master class had no doubt as to the agency which was creating this new spirit, is well shown by the vindictive hatred and spleen displayed towards the men when their cases were being heard and judged upon.

With these facts in mind, do not forget the great debt you owe these pioneers who boldly dared and showed the way.

Know, as they taught, that it lies in your power to bring them into the sunlight again, otherwise their lives will gradually fade and flicker out in masters' gloomy dungeons. Strive, therefore, by every means at your disposal, political as well as economical, to the end that they may be freed.

Let it no longer be said, to the disgrace of the

workers of Australia, that they made no serious attempt to rescue them from their fate.

Realise that only by your intelligent and determined efforts will these men be released from their martyrdom. Realise this well, then do your duty, and **DO IT NOW.**

