

Viewpoint

Tuesday, September 27, 1983

Answers needed

EVERYTHING that has emerged about the Maze escape serves only to underline the enormity of the breach of security and to justify Mrs. Thatcher's description of it as "the gravest in prison history."

As the high-level inquiry gets under way, the questions become obvious - how did the prisoners obtain guns, who was the alarm system ineffective, and how did the escapees evade so many internal checks?

Specifically, why was the outside gate open, and what was the only way of blocking the escape route was for a gallant prison officer to park his car across it. How were the prison staff deployed on Sunday? Where was the Army presence, and in the case of that serious breach of prison security had been identified by any army unit, without being rectified?

Any investigation of the escape must take into account the highly abnormal prison situation in Northern Ireland, where 250 of the 850 prisoners are the H-Blocks or serving life sentences. No other prison, anywhere, has to cope with such an embittered and committed group, with little to lose by attempting to escape and little to do but lay plans in virtually segregated conditions.

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'STAINED' FROM 'HIS MASTER'S BEDROOM'

By Laurence White and Graham Bardgett AS THE huge manhunt for the 21 IRA men still at large after the mass break-out from the Maze prison went on today, police warned that many of the escapees could still be lying low in the province.

Paisley slams Maze inquiry as 'whitewash'

THE Rev. Ian Paisley today demanded a public judicial inquiry into the Maze jailbreak, saying the one already started by the Secretary of State, Mr. Prior, would not allow current events, not allow the inquiry, headed by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir James Hennessy, to begin yesterday, but the DUP leader said "it seems it will be nothing more than a rest of the whitewash which followed the 1981 Cromlin Road break-out."

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Mr. Paisley told a Press conference that only a public judicial inquiry - with proper steps to protect sensitive security detail - would adequately meet public outrage over what he claimed was "obvious" smuggling in and concealment of weapons, the leaving open of the main gates, and the failure to man five watchtowers.

Mr. Paisley said he believed the prisoners who had not subsequently been captured must by now have crossed the border into the Republic.

And a senior police officer told the public: "It is even more vital now that no-one should approach any of them because they are a dangerous and desperate men".

The warning came as Sir James Hennessy, the UK's chief inspector of prisons, began his probe into how some of the province's most dangerous terrorists were able to break out of their high-security H-Block, killing one prison officer and wounding six others.

Meanwhile, it has been revealed that a special RUC investigation team led by a chief superintendent has been set up to find the killer of Mr. Ferris, who tried to foil the mass break-out.

Mr. Robinson said it emerged that seven guns - two of them replicas - had been discovered, and those still at large may have more. He repeated his assertion that this could only have happened through some form of "collusion" and said that for an hour the four wings in the H-Block were held, without an alarm being sounded.

Mr. Robinson said the question of the various keys used inside the Maze had to be examined closely. The four wings could only be opened by a special key that is held inside the central administrative section that runs between them, and a further key was needed for the prisoners to actually break out of the block itself.

The Northern Ireland Office said they had no comment to make on the DUP claims, as the matter was now the subject of an inquiry.

Forum group's pledge after rumpus

MEMBERS of the all-party delegation from the New Ireland Forum today resolved that last night's attack by DUP demonstrators would not seriously hinder their fact-finding tour of the province.

Mr. Brian Lenihan, who claims he was hit on the shoulder and arm with a flag pole during the attack, said today in Londonderry that the demonstrators did not represent the broad mass of the loyalist population in the North.

Mr. Lenihan and his fellow Fianna Fail TD, Mr. David Ahern, were seen at a dinner at the end of the first day of the demonstration by DUP councillors and officers had passed peacefully outside the Guildhall where a 12-strong Forum delegation were in a meeting with representatives, religious and civic community at a reception organised by the Mayor, Councillor Len Green.

Mr. Ahern described the incident as an "unprovoked attack" and complained about the lack of police protection for the Southern politicians.

Mr. Ahern said he did not have a clue where he had been hit, but he was not seriously injured in this attack.



Emotionally overcome, Mr. Patrick Gilmore's daughter greets her father, when he arrived back in Londonderry last night.

No holiday camp, says Gilmore statement

MR. PATRICK Gilmore, the Londonderry man who was kidnapped almost 11 months ago and who returned to his home last night, spoke briefly today about his ordeal.

He refused to answer questions but in a radio statement he did not have a clue where he had been held.

Mr. Gilmore said he was now in hiding, and his family were forced to flee from their Creggan home after the house was besieged by an angry crowd during the night.

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Verdict awaited in murder trial

A VERDICT was expected later today at the court-martial in the Curragh Military Barracks, Co. Kildare, of Private Michael McAleavy, the Belfast soldier accused of murdering three of his Irish Army comrades in the Lebanon.

Twenty-two year old McAleavy, of Rockville Street, Falls Road, has pleaded not guilty to murdering Corporal Gregory Morrow of Lurgan, Co. Armagh, and Privates Peter Burke and Thomas Murphy, both of Dublin.

Today was the 36th day of the court-martial which is being conducted by seven army officers.

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Advertisement for 'The Famous Grouse' Scotch Whisky. It features a bottle of whisky and a rooster. Text includes 'THE FAMOUS GROUSE', 'FINEST SCOTCH WHISKY', and 'Quality in an age of change.'

Woman (80) dies in accident

AN 80-year-old Belfast woman has died after being struck by a car. Mrs. Rose McAllister, of Welsh Street, died following the accident at Cromac Street, Belfast, at 10.10 yesterday. The police are appealing for witnesses to come forward.

Weather forecast section. It includes a heading 'WEATHER' and a 'FORECAST FOR tonight and tomorrow' section. It also mentions 'The Moon - Last quarter - Sept 27. Lighting-up time - 7.43 p.m. till 6.49 a.m.' and 'High tides tomorrow - 3.12 a.m. and 3.44 p.m.'

TV Page 6

Alliance split over Forum sparks row

A ROW brewed in the Alliance Party today over a breaking of ranks on the New Ireland Forum.

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