

From the Editors

The Journal of Prisoners on Prisons is a vehicle of empowerment that provides a venue for the disparate voices of all prisoners internationally. Committed to the struggle for social justice, the journal adheres to an editorial policy that, while restricted to the writings of prisoners and ex-prisoners, is inclusionary. Among other concerns, the journal does not endorse racist, sexist, homophobic or other forms of hate literature, and it is committed to an abolitionist stance in relation to capital punishment.

Given the parameters of our editorial policy, the writings of political prisoners and prisoners of war represent a welcome addition to our publication record. When the opportunity arose for us to tackle the problems for social justice posed by the situation in Northern Ireland, we readily accepted the challenge. As North American prisoners of the international media, we felt that we were not fully equipped to provide commentary about the highly complex sectarian nature of politics in Northern Ireland. We decided that we would devote two of our editions to the writings of prisoners of war there. In the previous issue (volume 7, number 1) a set of essays written by prisoners and ex-prisoners of war identifying themselves with the Republican movement was published. In this edition, we have provided a number of essays written by prisoners and ex-prisoners of war who identify with Loyalism.

Additionally, we felt it was crucial to resist the temptation to comment on either the writings themselves or the political context from which they emerged. The reader should find herself being sensitized to the complexities of Northern Ireland from the variety of perspectives voiced in the narratives constructed by prisoners of war in both editions, regardless of their political ilk. From the perspective of the editorial board, the issues of social justice posed by the conflicts in Northern Ireland apply to all prisoners of war, and it is our mandate to ensure that such captive voices will be heard. In order to accomplish this task, it was necessary to draw upon a variety of resources. Many of the essays in both editions have been written specifically for this project; many others, distributed previously by other means, were submitted for publication for the two special editions. We hope that the final result properly represents a collage of perspectives that, while not exhaustive, provides a relatively thorough representation of the political nuances that characterize Northern Ireland. Any omissions or misrepresentations remain the responsibility of the journal.