

# LINCOLN PRISON

ARRESTED  
CHARGED  
IMPRISONED

DIARY OF A  
PEACE PROTESTER

MORE COPIES AVAILABLE FROM:  
108, LAURIE AVENUE, NOTTINGHAM.  
TEL: 0602 708459

ARRESTED  
CHARGED  
IMPRISONED



'IN A DARK TIME, THE EYE BEGINS TO SEE'

THEODORE ROETHKE

A FEW WORDS...

**ARRESTED  
CHARGED  
IMPRISONED**

# **DIARY OF A PEACE PRISONER**

by J.C.DEACON

NOTTINGHAM 1986

## For Les

This world isn't ruled by democracy,  
You'd better get that in your head,  
This world is ruled by violence,  
But I guess that's better left unsaid.

## A FEW WORDS..

This diary was written during my imprisonment in H.M.P Lincoln, and sent out on prison paper in letter form. It has been printed without any changes or additions.

The two prison sentences were imposed by a Nottingham Court for refusal to pay fines totalling ninety pounds. They were incurred at Huntingdon Magistrates Court, in November 1985, following C.N.D. actions inside U.S.A.F. Molesworth in Cambridgeshire.

I wrote this diary in my cell, for my own pleasure and sanity, and as a comforting means of maintaining contact with the outside world. It was not my intention to create a literary masterpiece or a critique of the prison system. People reading this with those expectations, will certainly be disappointed.

As I sat, weeks later, typing up the text of this diary, I was struck by a variety of criticisms and disappointments with its contents. It seemed, in parts, to be so cold and aloof, detached and self protective. It seemed raw, unflowing and repetitive. It seemed pretentious and middle-class, naive and insensitive to the realities of imprisonment. It seemed to lack reaction to, and analysis of, the awfulness of prison life. It seemed to fail on so many accounts.

But then, as I continued typing, I remembered the cell.. the bars.. the feelings of numbness and isolation.. the fear and disorientation.. the oppressive humiliating treatment which filled and swamped each hour.. and I felt that even if an iota of that managed to squeeze its way through the rhetoric and limitations of this diary, then I would be satisfied... and I continued typing.

# H.M.PRISON GREETWELL RD. LINCOLN

## FRIDAY 30TH MAY 1986

Well, after 2 hours we finally made it into court. The longer the time had drifted by, the further away the emotion and purpose and essence of the court case had seemed to get. Doubtless I was too reasonable, too polite with them.. a factor which the magistrates exploited to the full. I ended up not reading out my statement, and they left with a sense of propriety that was totally unpleasant and unbefitting the situation.. Mind you.. what's new! The laughter and the tinkling of cups that escaped from the Magistrates' room clearly showed their contempt, as they supposedly withdrew to consider their judgement. But, as I left, sentenced to two weeks imprisonment for 'wilful refusal' to pay a court fine, and handcuffed to a policeman on one side, and holding onto Jean and Melissa on the other, I felt a sense of dignity and strength.. and happiness and sureness in what I was doing.. No doubts at all.. Kissing you both gave me that final seal of approval and certainty.THANKYOU.

In I went to the cell-block beneath the courts.. Usual procedures.. Shoe laces out.. Possessions documented.. a sense of saddening familiarity. Put in a cell with three others.. One had a radio on which was broadcasting the one o'clock news, which was carrying the story of my imprisonment. The other prisoners were quite amazed at this.. Myself slightly flattered. Usual questions and statements: 'Why are you doing it?'.. 'You're wasting your time!'.. 'Leave it to the politicians.'.. 'If we don't have nuclear weapons the Russians will attack!'.. ETC..

At 2-30, I was put in a mobile cell-unit, to take me to Lincoln prison.. I was in this 5 feet by 3 feet steel box with another prisoner for two hours, before we arrived at Lincoln, after picking up more prisoners at Newark and Mansfield. My 'companion' was Irish and had been arrested, after 12 months on the run, as he landed in Scotland (for a robbery in Nottingham). He'd been brought down by plain clothes C.I.D., on the train... who dutifully handcuffed him at each station.. and passengers had mistook HIM for the police, and asked him where he was taking THEM (the C.I.D.!). He was very politically minded, and he talked of the I.R.A. and the Irish situation in general. I had quite a headache when I arrived at the prison, after the claustrophobic 'cattle-truck-like' journey.

It seemed more 'relaxed' than Leicester prison.. I was weighed and measured quickly, but had to wait two hours to be processed.. and had to endure conversations about sex, money, drink, etc.. Depressing stuff ! Every now and again I heard the prison officers outside the cell say "C.N.D... blah blah.." etc. Finally it was my turn. "Occupation ?", he said.. "Social worker..", I replied.. 'Labourer' he wrote down ! They let me keep tobacco, Nivea, books, newspaper, hairbrush and pens.. which was far more generous than Leicester. Mind you, I was VERY polite ! They were convinced I'd been to Lincoln prison before for C.N.D. (confusing me with Dave or Pete, I think !). Took clothes off.. got prison clothes. A sarcastic officer said, "Two weeks, big deal !" "Yes", I replied, "it is insignificant, I suppose". "Yes you are," he shouted, "now F\*\*\* OFF !". I changed into the blue prison gear.. got tea (cabbage, potato, bread).. and waited. People hovered round to cadge tobacco off me (everyone 'homes in' on a 'soft-touch'). As we waited to be taken up to the cell wings (housing the 630 convicts) there were the usual stories about unfair convictions, incredible punishments, etc.. After a while you learn to take everything with a large-ish pinch of salt - trying to separate factual injustice from fictional horror stories. I was inspected by the doctor, who insisted he could tell by looking at me that I'd taken drugs when I was 16. I laughed, of course, knowing my medical history perfectly, and he retorted, wagging his finger at me that he had 25 years experience in knowing about people like me !

We were all taken to A4 landing to be allocated cells.. I looked over the prison officer's shoulder, as he went through the list of cells, and found out which cell Les was in. (Another C.N.D. prisoner, and close friend, who'd been given 40 days for non-payment, yesterday). I almost managed to get put in the same cell as Les by saying that he was my brother-in-law (!) - but in the end the officer changed his mind, and put me in cell No. 11 (Les was cell No. 7). Apparently the warder went later to Les and told him that I'd arrived, which was comforting for Les.

I was put in with a civil category prisoner called John. It's hard walking into a cell for the first time, when you've got to be with a person for a week, 23 hours a day.. and you're a little 'different' to most prisoners. Anyhow, he asked me what I was in for, and when I cautiously replied, "C.N.D.", he said, "Brilliant". Phew..! It turned out that he was left wing.. politically aware.. and really friendly. We've had some tremendous conversations. What a relief to be 'banged up' with someone so lovely. He's doing 3 months for Contempt of court (breaking a court injunction not to see his wife). I'm very lucky ! We talked for hours about politics.. relationships.. Didn't see Les as we'd been locked up for the night. Read a bit of Steinbeck's 'Cannery Row' and went to sleep.. twelve-ish. The view out of the cell window is a great improvement on Leicester's immense brick wall.. I can see countryside, woods, hills.. Frustrating of course, but preferable to Europe's highest prison wall, in Leicester. Mind you, I CAN see a graveyard inside the prison grounds, where prisoners were buried after hanging.. not so pleasant ! Still, the general tempo and atmosphere in Lincoln prison seems definitely more relaxed than Leicester.

## SATURDAY 31ST MAY

Woken up by prison bells, that seemed to start about 6.00am, to get up the kitchen workers, cleaners, etc.. couldn't get back to sleep.. Still, the birds singing outside the window were a welcome sound. Cell door opened at 8.00am for 'slop-outs' (emptying toilet buckets), cleaning cell, getting fresh water, etc. SAW LES ! Had a brief frantic chat in the recess (landing toilets). How strange to be reunited in this peculiar place.. but how refreshing.. something brilliant to look forward to. It was hard to know exactly what to say at first ! Babbled for 2 minutes about our court cases (I'd gone to his), news coverage, Jean, Lara and Scarlett (his wife and children).. then we went down several flights of stairs to pick up our breakfast (cornflakes and bread). It was so exciting and comforting to be together, albeit for minutes snatched here and there during fleeting moments outside the cell.

I then had to go through reception procedures - see various officers.. be allocated a workplace (sewing mail bags) - though I had no intention of working. Someone came up to see me (a prisoner) who had been at the recent Chilwell demo, at which Les had spoken after the Libyan bombing.. and who was a member of C.N.D. During Les's reception period a prison officer had come up and said that he and his family were C.N.D. members and that he admired Les going to prison. Saw Welfare Officer, who said, "You're making everything very difficult for yourself." Then I had 'canteen' where I was advanced 70p (a week's wages) - I bought tobacco for Les and also gave him some more that I'd brought in. Les has been told that he'll lose his remission for refusing to work which will also mean no tobacco or canteen money - so the more I can give him the better.

Exercise in the prison yard followed next, for half an hour. (Everyone walking in a huge clockwise circle..endlessly pacing out a well-worn route behind the prisoner in front..institutionalising, dehumanising, absurdly limiting.. The odd thing is that in Leicester prison, everyone winds in an ANTI-clockwise direction!!) After several 'revolutions' I soon met up with Les and at last we had a chance to talk in a more relaxed way. Exercise is the best time in the day for Les and I. It's a chance to strengthen ourselves, to discuss, plan, laugh, and support each other. What a difference it is, being in prison with another anti-nuclear protester..and more importantly a close friend. How much more bearable the walls become when I know that 20 feet away (4 cells), is Les. How uplifting ! How heartening !

It started raining, so we finished exercise early. (In times of bad weather there often isn't a chance to walk outside for days if not weeks.) Les and I then queued to pick up our lunches on stainless steel trays, to take back to our cells. Really tasty and certainly filling! (Cabbage, potatoes, roll, mushroom and soya pastie, veg. soup, rice-pudding) No danger of starvation!! It's surprising how uplifting a meal can be in prison.

After lunch, came the 'treat of the week'-The film ! (Shown in the cinema/chapel) The pleasure for Les and I was more in being able to leave our cells and talk, rather than in seeing the film-'Gremlins', a pretty frothy, inane affair from Steven Spielberg, but nevertheless a change from the violent/crime/escape stuff that's usually fed to prisoners to supposedly enable them to express their pent-up feelings of anger and frustration.. The psychological depths to which the Home office sink are indeed murky! The film was followed by an hour of T.V. football coverage, by the end of which, the wooden benches were taking their toll, and I almost wanted to say: "Can I go back to my cell now, please ?!"

By 3-30, we'd had our evening meal and were about to be locked up for the night..an unbearably long period of 16 hours in the cells. I managed to first pass Les my copy of Alice Walker's 'The colour purple', as the prison officers had refused him all his books, on Reception, when he'd

declined to give them his date of birth. (Including a book he'd recently written entitled: 'Which side are you on? - Peace protests in the wake of the Libyan bombing'.) Doubtless too subversive for prison circulation! (and it DID have a picture of me in it!) At least we were both getting the 'Guardian' each morning, which we'd rather cheekily ordered before our imprisonment. Quite a Godsend.

Spent the evening talking to John. He then did exercises (Press-ups etc..) whilst I read a few chapters of Steinbeck's 'Cannery row'. Weekend nights seem so long in prison.. So slow.. If you ring the buzzer, and say to the arriving officer, "Can I go to the toilet, please?", he will tell you to "F\*\*\* off". If you ring again you're in trouble. Mind you, the prison regulations booklet that every prisoner is given on Reception, says: 'If you require anything whilst in your cell, please ring and a prison officer will arrive and help.. etc..' - Like hell! I went to bed feeling really happy.. It's strange and comforting how joy and happiness can be found in a thirteen feet by seven feet cell. Mind you, as I was saying to Les, It's easy to forget why you're here and bury yourself into things to cheer yourself up.. and lose contact with the fact that we ARE different to most other prisoners.. though for simplicity and ease of sentence we may choose to pretend that we're not.

## SUNDAY 1ST JUNE

Usual routines - slop-outs, breakfast, etc.. During exercise Les and I started to talk about Monday morning, and the consequences if they insisted we worked, and punished us for refusing to do so, with loss of remission. Les has decided that if that happens he'll go on hunger strike until the remission is returned. We discussed getting publicity out, having a picket/demo etc.., keeping strong. We both bring a lot of support to each other being in prison at the same time. I think I'll refuse my food as well, if my remission is taken away from me.. Not a decision to be taken lightly, I know. Still, my fourteen days are of little consequence next to Les's forty.

In from exercise to collect our lunch trays.. (Really good again!).. our 'Observer', and our letters (Les 4, Me 2) and then back to the cells again. Out at 2-00 to watch T.V. for an hour or so beneath the cell landings. Les and I chatted (of course!) rather than watching 'Eastenders'. I tried to get another 30p out of the canteen so I could buy Les some more matches, and cigarette papers, but was told to "clear off!".. Obviously I'm only worth a total of 70p!! Back to the cells. (What a surprise!!)

I wrote a bit more of this diary on backs of envelopes etc.. I'd like to take it out with me when I'm released, but, rules being rules, it seems that I'll have to labourously copy it all out in minute handwriting in my weekly prison letter, and 'smuggle' it out that way. (The last time Pete was released from prison, they confiscated all the jottings.. etc.. that he'd made on scraps of paper.) It's also annoying and inexplicable that in Lincoln prison you're restricted to buying only two letters a week (on top of your statutory 'free' one) whilst in H.M.P. Morton Hall it's three, and in H.M.P. Leicester the figure is five. Why the difference? And why restrict the numbers of letters that people can send out at all? You can only use your 'wages' to

buy letters, which only amounts to the princely sum of one pound twenty-five pence, anyway! You'd think that they'd encourage people to write rather than smoke themselves to death. You'd likewise expect all prisons to have the same restrictions.. Yet, here I can bring in toothbrush/paste etc.. whereas in H.M.P. Leicester I couldn't. Strange.

During the Sunday 'treat' of T.V. Les and I talked about how active campaigners often drop out of the Peace-movement once they have children, steady jobs, financial commitments etc.. together with Les's resolve that he doesn't do likewise. We also spoke of how the closer we get to 'success', then the more 'dangerous' and 'threatening' we appear to the Government.. who will make things tough for us. Thus, the harder things get for us, the closer we're getting.. a sign of our success. For the first time ever, I feel strong enough, and confident enough to continue my protest in prison. On previous occasions, I've 'towed the line' and behaved like any other prisoner. However, now, with another C.N.D. campaigner inside Lincoln gaol with me, I feel support, inspiration, solidarity, and anger: 'How dare they throw us into prison!'

After tea, we're locked up for a period of FIFTEEN hours without the cell door being opened once. The cell takes on universal significance for the three of us.. Toilet, bedroom, dining- room, bathroom, lounge, etc.. all cramped into our thirteen feet by seven feet brick coffin. Inhumane. Degrading. Barbaric.

For a while I read the Nottingham C.N.D. bulletin which Les had given to me at tea. It informed me that I was in prison and that I'd appreciate people writing to me!! Then I fed the pigeons, flicking stale slices of bread through the bars. Next activity was reading the 'Observer', swiftly followed by a quick nap, which led to more reading, and a brilliantly honest chat with John about relationships. Then, a few more snippets from the 'Observer', a quick 'night-cap', (a plastic cup of water!) and it was time for me to retire to the top bunk. One more day gone; a long, long day. I lay there, thinking about tomorrow.. feeling nervous about the prospect of likely

confrontations with the prison authorities - being hung, drawn and quartered at the very least! John was snoring; (He warned me that he might, and that it had contributed to his Divorce!) See what he means! I piled towels and blankets on top of my head, and tissues in my ears. I tried to turn the noise mentally into something else.. but No, it always remained a snore, a niggling, rasping, irritating, vibrating snore!

## MONDAY 2ND JUNE

I woke up with the usual bells ringing on the landings..I'd prefer the bleep of my alarm-clock anyday,to these continual janglings and tollings. Still, at least I can hear the twitterings of birds outside my cell window. I watched them for quarter of an hour this morning-the pigeons and sparrows doing their funny courtship dances on top of the prison workshops(Tailor-workshop;Mailbag- workshop;Fishing-net and rope-workshop).David Bellamy,eat your heart out!

Got up,and went with Les to officially sign up as vegetarian,at the landing office.(Yesterday,Les and I missed out on the vegetarian dish because we hadn't signed the appropriate form-There's an official piece of paper for everything!) Before they'd help with anything they made me go back up the four flights of stairs,because I didn't know the first digit of my prison number,and had to check on my cell door.Aghh...!! I also asked for my radio to be transferred to me from my private property,which they said would be done in the next two days,after it had been searched. Finally,I asked the officer how often we got a change of clothes,and a chance to shower.'Once a week' was the answer to both.Disgustingly and painfully inadequate. Never mind,we got porridge for breakfast which was very welcome. There's something very comforting and filling about prison porridge in the morning..Mmm..Hot,sticky and thick..Think what you could flypost with it!!

It'll be good to have a radio,but not vital. I enjoy my snippings of news and plays on Radio 4,but listening to Radio 1 blasting out all day would be excruciating.I'd much rather have silence.I once shared with someone in H.M.P.Leicester,who turned the cramped cell into a disco with blaring D.J.s etc.. "O.K..Let me out! I'll pay the fine! I'll do anything..but just move me from this cell"...But shh..the censors may be reading this,and shift

me to a noisy cell!! There seems such a necessity to give each other 'space' in a cell.. Physical space,sound space, mental space.. You name it. John's really good, really sensitive about it, despite starting me off on interesting conversations just as I'm trying to get into a book!

John was collected to work on the gardens this morning - a prestigious job, because you can be out in the open, and also pick up the Prison officers' fag-ends. One may laugh,or be aghast, but John doesn't have to spend any money each week on cigarettes.

Thank God I've managed to go to the toilet yesterday, and the day before. It's such a relief, mentally and physically, not to be inflicted with constipation. (Which marred my previous stays with Her Majesty. Hurray for my bowels!!

There was an article in yesterday's 'Observer' about privately run prisons in America. When asked about security, the Governors of the establishments said, "We'll have armed guards and patrol vehicles driving around inside.. Then we'll have three security fences. If prisoners manage to get through all that, the dogs will get them.. and if they survive them, we'll shoot them". Nice!! John was saying that he saw several I.R.A. men on exercise in this prison the other day, in the secure exercise-yard / 'cage', with four armed prison officers around them.

Exercise period. Every second Les and I expected to hear our names called out for work,but they weren't,and hence there was no confrontation. Whew! We enjoyed ourselves,walking round and round and round..Laughing,joking and imagining funny scenarios- Like being in the cell and having a prison officer unlocking the door to let you go down to collect your breakfast,and shouting at you,"Come on,get a move on!",and replying to him, "Actually I've got a slight headache..Do you mind just fetching my breakfast for me..and knock quietly when you enter,please,there's a good chap!" Les and I squirm when we dream up more and more outrageous things to say and do, that we'd never dare!

However, I'm sure it must sound all very puerile. We walked round for about half an hour.. I suppose we must cover between one and two miles, as we circle the yard.. Feels good to be outside despite the prison guards and dogs.. So much more a sense of space than H.M.P. Leicester's compound where you paced directly beneath oppressively high walls, with no sign of grass or plants.

Came back to the cells. As John was working it felt quite peaceful to have the cell to myself for a while.. writing.. looking out of the window. I can see a brilliant skyline, (as I said before), of fields and woods and clouds, as well as the nearer buildings and cars. Quite uplifting.

I've just been given my radio.. batteries included! (Which is more than they did when I was in H.M.P. Morton Hall !) I switched it on and the first thing I heard Radio 4's, 'Down your way', with Brian Johnstone. So there you go! Together with 'The Guardian', a radio would be a Godsend if I ever had the misfortune to do a longer sentence. Letters arrived.. Seven ! A lovely feeling of being remembered, supported and wanted. The officer said, "Is it your birthday or something?", "Yes" I replied.

Lunch was really filling:- Veg.soup, cabbage, potato, bread, rissoles, sponge-pudding and custard. Picked up my newspaper on the way.. I usually keep it to read later in the day. I've smoked quite a lot in the last few days, due to a mixture of tenseness and frustration, but I'm determined to stop today. (He says with certainty !) It's definitely a disadvantage to smoke in prison, and not only on health grounds - The One pound twenty-five pence wage isn't nearly enough to keep someone in cigarettes all week. Listened to 'News at one', and then went out for exercise again. I felt remarkably tired, having almost fell asleep after lunch, following the exhaustions of lying on my bed all morning. Being in a cell all day is remarkably tiring.

Apparently the last person to escape from Lincoln prison, in 1916, became the President of Ireland.. so there you go! One of my shoes is catching and chafing as Les and I complete our super-quick circuits of the yard.. Ahh.. Still, at least Les and I haven't had our names called out for work. Back to the cell, and finished reading the regulations. What a load of old humbug ! Everything seems to boil down to 'possibilities' and 'with the discretion of' and 'maybe' and 'under certain circumstances' and 'can be considered'. Not a definite rule in the book that's in favour of prisoners' rights. You should see the list of things the prison SHOULD provide for me, and hasn't. Mind you, it's more than your life's worth to complain.

I've just seen some visitors enter through the main gate.. Perhaps there's visiting during the week as well as weekends?.. Not that it affects me on such a short sentence, - and to be honest, the one and only prison visit I ever got was so emotionally traumatic that I'm almost secretly relieved to not have one. Slept for two hours.. Les came into the cell, when they unlocked us for tea, and woke me, and I walked bleary-eyed down the landing and stairs to the kitchens. Not very appetising, but under the circumstances...!! We swapped books, and then were locked up for the evening.

John had been given some copies of 'The New Statesman', by the Left-wing gardener, which was welcome reading. Listened to 'P.M.News' on Radio 4 - It's an odd feeling that's hard to explain or expand on, but listening to the radio in here seems different to how I remember it at home. Maybe it's because it's much more important here than on the outside, where I often listen to it in a casual 'background' way when I'm cooking or whatever.

I still feel bleary..lethargic almost. Weather's fairly thick. Still, it's not so chilly as it was a few days ago, when I had worries about coming down with a cold:-unbearable in prison, without proper treatment, care, sympathy or facilities. Despite the calmness of the evening, the quietness outside is punctuated by prisoner's

screams and singing, abuse and laughter.. an eerie discord that drifts into my cell through the open barred window.. Racial taunts, bartering for tobacco, hatred for the 'Rule 43's', (The sexual offenders, the 'Nonces', the 'Beasts'), Jokes, maybe a song,.. a richness of strident expression and defiance, echoing across the prison yard, and making for the hills. I had a bit of a cigarette that made me feel ill, so I put it down. Good one! I could strangle the prisoner who's impersonating a Muslim chanting prayers out of his cell-window, in order to wind up the Asian prisoners.. Insulting.. provocative.. pathetic.. Just as well I'm peaceful!

Listened to 'Monday night theatre' whilst writing a letter. Not the most brilliant of plays, but none the less enjoyable. Made my bed. (Changed from bottom bunk to top.. the height of excitement!) Looked out of the window.. so still and silent.

## TUESDAY 3RD JUNE

Woke up when warder put cell light on at 6-00am. There was an electrical fault, and it flashed on and off like a strobe; -really painful, irritating, torturous. I buried my head under the pillow and listened to the news. Up at 7-00, and complained about the light. Immediate attention was promised but none forthcoming. Les 'popped-in' for a fag, and then down we went for breakfast. (Beans and porridge). Fed the pigeons again. I've just found out that not only is it 'illegal', but also that there's the number of your cell engraved above your window, on the outside of the building, so they can trace whoever throws things out. Whoops! Mind you it's my 'flagrant and wilful lawbreaking' that lead me to being here anyway! Talked to John about 'corruption' and 'protection' in prison, which includes the prison officers as well. Hard to believe, in some ways, but nonetheless true. If you've got tobacco to trade on the 'inside', or money or influence on the 'outside', then you can get anything in here.. Drugs, smoked-salmon, drink,.. you name it.

9-00am. Search of all the cells on the landing.. simultaneously. You had to pick up your bedding and wait outside your cell with an officer, whilst the cell was meticulously searched by another officer.. (and all this happening to 20 cells at once).. looking for unauthorised goods, etc.. Then we were individually frisked. All very dramatic!.. and all they came up with in our cell was a copy of the 'Guardian'.. the height of subversion! It's pouring with rain outside, so no exercise. I could do with a bath. One a week is disgustingly inadequate. One of the obvious advantages of H.M.P. Morton Hall, was the unlimited number of baths and showers you were allowed. Far more civilised.. Hygienic. Still one makes the best of bad circumstances. I had a wash in the plastic bowl. Cleaned my teeth. (they let me bring a bit of toothpaste in, which I'll pass on to Les when I go. John's going to give him his as

well, so Les's teeth are going to be sparkling when he comes out in four weeks! I'm also going to try to get my radio transferred into Les's name, when I go, which'll be a Godsend to him.

I lay down on my bunk, and listened to the radio. I still feel a bit thick-headed and lethargic.. Not depressed, but inactive. Not surprising really. A mixture of diet and lack of exercise I expect, plus probably an unconscious feeling of being 'cooped-up' and 'hemmed-in'. If I felt 'perfect' then I'd feel much more worried!!

Had lunch (pastie, soup, cabbage, potato, roll, sponge-pudding, and custard) and collect 'Guardian's and letters with Les - just one postcard today, which sounds ungrateful - but I'm usually so well treated, letterwise, in prison, that I get into a habit of expecting more.. what it is to be spoilt! Exercise with Les. He talked about the letters he got.. the people who they were from. It was exciting and special to think of the people.. imagining what they were doing. We also talked about the underlying sense of tenseness that runs beneath a lot we do here, because any time we could be called to work, and have to go through explanations, and refusals, and being put on report, brought to the Governor, and finally punished.. with possible loss of remission, causing us to maybe start a hunger-strike. You can imagine it's quite a strain as we're circling the exercise-yard, talking and laughing.. and suddenly our names could be called out.. and the process would start. Ah well!..

Les has found it a bit difficult to sleep at night. It's not that he's not tired-simply that when he puts his head down he starts to think rather than sleep. Apart from John's snoring, I've managed somewhat better, thank goodness. I feel really angry about the absurdity and injustice of the letter system here. You can only buy a total of 2 letters. Why?.. You can only receive, officially, as many letters as you send out. Why?.. You are limited to only two sheets. Why?.. How inhumane to restrict people's contact with the outside world. Started

to listen to the afternoon theatre on the radio, but it was pretty trite, so I switched it off, and wrote up my diary. Tea-time.. Worse yet. Cabbage, potato, and strange fried/battered bit of bread and butter. Yuk! Even the pigeons were scornful. Carried on writing.

John went off to the gym. Had slop-outs. Saw Les. Felt more chirpy, and invited Les into the cell for thirty seconds! Mind you, he had the ingratitude and audacity to say it resembled his own! Back to writing. Had a lovely break looking out of the window. Had a wash. More writing.. trying to get as much as I can on to four sides. How preposterous and painstaking. Les and I both reckoned earlier today, that with the exception of maybe sharing with each other, we'd prefer to have cells on our own. Simply because it gives you so much more mental space and freedom.. and a necessity to only have to think of your own needs and desires, rather than someone else's. It must sound selfish, but honestly in a thirteen feet by seven feet brick 'tomb', you tend to be clear and honest about your own needs in order to survive.

Finished the letter, watched the prison shift change, out of the window. Chatted to John who's fascinated with mysticism - though somehow I don't want an in-depth conversation on that subject at the moment. Float mentally away from the prison.. Feel happy thoughts.. escape. In this frame of mind I wanted to write things of incredible significance and importance.. phrases that transcended this harsh cell, but somehow my words lacked the strength and vitality to squeeze through the bars, and join my drifting thoughts. Slept.

## WEDNESDAY 4TH JUNE

Woke up at 6-45, (Flashing light again) Bells, clanging, banging, jangling of keys, footsteps, shouts, and a constant chorus of keys. Cell unlocked, slop out, saw Les! Felt much more bouncy today, (albeit tired). He'd finished the 'Colour purple', which he found very moving. Went downstairs to get our quota of porridge and bread, and returned to eat it in the luxury of our apartments. John went off to work in the gardens. Had a wash..The hot water felt refreshing and wakening. Wrote a letter. Found out I could get the radio transferred to Les's name when I left which was brilliant news for him. Passed him the remains of my tobacco and papers. Had exercise. It was really sunny, which was uplifting. With a bit of imagination you could be at the seaside, (give or take!) We almost got called for work. They called out both our workshops but not our names..Phew!! We both felt in great moods..laughing, and feeling optimistic, cheerful and silly. I had the audacity to go to the wrong toilet, and was shouted at, and called an 'ugly fucker' by a bawling officer.. Obviously some tender term of endearment !

Back to the cells. I carried on writing, with 'Gardener's question-time' twittering on in the background. What plant would they recommend to brighten up my thirteen feet by seven feet bedsit?! Les had mentioned on exercise about me 'going out' on Friday.. Half jokey, half serious. It's going to make quite a difference to him. I know I'd find it really disheartening if he was 'going out' first, and that I was still left inside for another few weeks. Mind you, the police have still got an outstanding 'committal warrant' on me, so I'll probably give myself up next week, to come and see Les for seven more days. Solidarity! He's really pleased at the prospect. I'll try and bring him some more tobacco and books. Collected 'Guardian' and letters with Les. Today we've both got three so we're still speaking! Another good meal.. Cabbage, potato, veg. soup,

roll, stuffed pancake with soya and curry filling, and tapioca pudding. No problem about losing weight in prison! We sent our compliments to the Chef!

Back to the cells to read my precious letters. I put on the news and heard about people killed after the World cup match between Belgium and Morocco. Inside prison, you feel so helpless when you hear of disturbing news..so unable to do anything about it..to express your grief or anger. God knows what I would feel like if the U.S. bombed Libya again, or whatever. I'd pay my way out immediately, if I could..and if I was unable to, I'd feel awful, trapped, frantic. Chatted to John about royalty, asbestos,..you name it!!

Opened my letters. So lovely to get, but also obviously frustrating.. Not being able to immediately reply or speak to the senders. Reading and re-reading words. Examining meanings. Wanting reassurances, support. Listened to the news with Robin Day, had slop-outs, and a quick chat with Les in cell. He's now on his own, since his cell-mate was transferred to H.M.P. Ramby this morning. Discussed and shared letters. He's really pleased to have the cell on his own.. a chance to reflect.. to be quiet. Exercise. Well Les and I had our afternoon constitutional. Our little spin along the prom. Our tete a tete on the problems of the universe. Very enjoyable as usual. Les gave me a few messages to give to people on Friday. We laughed a lot. Solved a 'Guardian' crossword clue, and talked about missing people, and the 'pressure', though bitter-sweet, of getting letters from loved ones. Then back to the cells. We looked at some of the doors we passed on the way, and many prisoners were doing between three and six years. What an awful feeling.. almost a lifetime in contrast to our puny weeks. Horrific thought.

Wrote a bit more. Listened to 'Afternoon theatre'. Fell asleep and woke up a bit disorientated and in the middle of a dream.. just in time to jump off my bunk-bed, as a Prison officer shouted at me to 'Get my tea!' - Cabbage and potato.. What a surprise! Passed Les some matches, (he'd

run out), and snatched a quick conversation, and then I found myself banged up in this cell again. Second surprise of the night!

Listened to 'P.M.news' on Radio Four. How refreshing it was to hear Mrs.Thatcher's voice echoing and resounding around my cell.., as she addressed the Conservative Women's Conference. Did she realised, as she spoke, the full extent of the joy she was bringing to one blue-clad prisoner on Lincoln's A-wing?.. As he leapt to his feet, hand on chest, in rapturous ecstasy? All very discomfoting, I can tell you!

Quick slop-out, getting fresh cold water and hot water for washing, in the plastic jugs. Washed plates, and tried to go to the toilet.(Unsuccessfully) After my initial optimism a few days ago, the bread and potato diet is striking back and winning! Saw Les briefly and discussed what we should do tonight. Decided to stay in and have a quiet evening! Back to the cells. Wrote a letter for an hour or two. John's getting 'gate happy', as they say, hardly able to contain his excitement about going out on Friday, after a three month sentence. I'm trying to forget about it, so that the final hours don't drag. Also I don't want to keep on reminding Les that he'll soon be on his own.

Tomorrow morning I've apparently got to go through 'discharge procedure', and see the Governor who'll ask if I've got any complaints about my treatment. Les says I should read out a list a mile long! I'll see. I'm sorely tempted to launch into an attack on the inhumanity of the prison system, despite it falling on deaf ears.

It's getting late. Less shouting from the cells than last night. Night songs from the birds.. Quiet murmur of voices.. and the huge tree outside the prison is still shaking uncontrollably with laughter and joy.

## THURSDAY 5TH JUNE

Woke up at 6-30: - bells and flashing light in cell. (No they haven't mended it yet!) John's snoring was truly record-breaking this morning. I listened to the radio, to try and half cut it out. 7-00am, cell unlocked and an elderly, crotchety Warden spat out his early morning greeting: "Right you fuckers, out of bed!" What poetry ! What sensitivity ! How little a morsel of humanity and gentleness would have cost him.

Les has been getting up at 5-30 each morning, and reading a little, at the cell window, before the commotion and din begins. Saw him soon after 7-00, and we went to the Landing officer, to try and arrange transferral of radio into his name when I go. "Hands out of your pockets!", the officer greeted Les with. We both grinned. Beans, bread and porridge for breakfast. Looks like a beautiful day, out of the window. Such a shame that Les and I will be much too busy to go for a walk in the hills.

Wrote out a list of complaints to read to the Governor, if I have the courage. John showed me a poem he'd written. Waited to be called for 'discharge procedure'. Slight butterflies! Slop-out.. Managed to go to the toilet. Whew!! Down below for discharge palava. Weighed. Canteen. (I was given the princely sum of 27p, which I blew on a box of matches and three 'civie' fags for Les). Queued up to see the Governor.(Or in this case a representative of..) Another bloke being discharged, used to be at Molesworth peace camp. Small world! When I was called in I expected the usual humiliating treatment.. The shouts, the sarcasm, the 'call me Sir' rigmarole. But it didn't come, unlike for the previous person in the queue. I wasn't asked if I had any complaints, (which I was expecting and had mentally psyched myself up for, with my notes on a piece of paper, about 'loss of dignity' and 'degrading inhumanity'). Before I knew it I was outside the door. Maybe I should have been more assertive.

Taken up to A4 landing to collect my towel. I'd managed to persuade them into letting me have a shower. Les was also in his cell so he got one as well. Got the usual witticisms about looking like 'Lofty' from 'Eastenders' as well as comments about whether Les and I were 'queer' and wanted to share a shower. (They are constantly abusive, when two people are friendly to each, as Les and I are). How sad and pathetic. The feeling was indescribable to finally get a shower after one week in the same underwear, socks and vest. You wanted to stay beneath the boiling hot water for ever! Les started singing 'subversive' songs at the top of his voice, ('The diggers song'), which doubtless reinforced their prejudices against us as lunatics. As we left, clothed in fresh uniforms, Les was called up to the central office. I hovered around, wondering if the moment of 'confrontation' had come. "Why have you just had a shower?", they shouted. "You're meant to be on Wednesdays with your workshop?". "Because firstly I'm refusing to work, and secondly I was told to go and have one", Les replied. "Right. We're watching you!", they snapped back.

Off we went to collect newspapers, and go to the library.. The once in a weeks chance to take out six books. (Coming a little late in my stay for me !) The selection was actually really good, considering, and Les soon had six books for the next week, including Kafka and Greene. Back to the cells, where I wrote more of this letter. Got together a package of things to give to Les: Pens, paper, books, toothpaste, etc.. It'll be like Xmas for him! Letters 'delivered' to my cell. Eight! "Someone loves you, Deacon!", he said, and how true. Les and I both received letters today from my friend Pam in Swaziland. International support! Started 'The colour purple'.. Brilliant. Lunch was excellent as well. What a life!

John had managed to get some matches and papers for Les as well, so things won't be disastrous even if they punish Les with loss of wages. It's strange and understandable how much more bearable prison gets, when you're going out the next day. Looking out through the bars

feels different.. Rather than being an outside world you're excluded from, it becomes a place you're soon to be reunited with. Rather than being a perfect, scenic, enviable vision, it becomes an imperfect, 'same as it was before' picture of complications and hassles, from which you've been removed or 'protected' whilst in prison.

Quick nap. Robin Day's 'News at one' has a soporific effect on me! A whirl of dreams and thoughts about release, and 'The colour purple', and my letters, and the news. Slop-out and then exercise. Passed on pens and things to Les. Read out some of my letters I'd received, as we circumnavigated our exercise patch, and Les did the same. Really uplifting and enjoyable.. Something to look forward to and share.. We laughed and capered around the yard. Somehow prison seems to increase our strength together rather than diminish it.. Laughing.. Slapping each other on the back.. Even the thought of having our names called out seemed less frightening. Mind you, when exercise finished, and we were walking towards the cells, Les's name was called out to report to the central office. Immediately I felt worried, curious, wanting to know what was happening. I dilly-dallied on the landing.. went to the toilet.. got some fresh water.. before I was finally locked in my cell, and still no Les. How frustrating it feels. I really don't want to leave Les alone in here. I desperately would like to be doing the same sentence as him.. seeing each other every day, and being released the same morning. But somehow, if I rang my buzzer now, and suggested doing longer, it would most certainly reinforce their belief that Les and I are crazy. In fact, the'd probably release me this afternoon out of spite.

I can hear noises out on the landing, as usual, but in the circumstances I can only think it is something to do with Les, and glue my ear to the door. Nothing. Despite leaving Les behind, it'll be a welcome relief to leave this cell tomorrow morning. To say goodbye to the piss-bucket, the blue uniform, the bars, the slamming door, the bunk-bed and grey blankets, the spy-hole, the plastic cups and plates and knives and forks, the graffiti, the prison soap, the brick walls, the shouting, the scraping of keys, the white

bread, the stainless steel trays, the white plastic water jug, the strip lighting, the lack of privacy... and the huge oak tree that towers over the prison wall, and laughs fit to burst, as I squint through the cell window.. Yes I'll be especially glad to say goodbye to the tantalising oak, and join it on the outside.

An officer has just come in and said, "Where's your mate?" (Talking about Les, who's apparantly not in his cell). Obviously he hasn't come back from Central office yet, and the officers on this landing don't seem to know where he is. I'm trying not to feel worried or nervous, but I am. I asked the officer to tell me when he comes back, or when they find out where he is. I'm sure he won't.

Thinking of you Les. Be strong, be firm, and please may no harm come to you. I feel so helpless. So unable to do anything. I could shout, "I want to see Les", but they'd only laugh. If you haven't appeared by tomorrow morning, I think I'll refuse to leave the cell. We'll see. I'm sure they don't get many prisoners refusing to be discharged! I feel incredibly protective about Les. Panicky. Angry.

Tea. I walked along to Les's cell, and peered in through the spy hole. It was empty, and Les's bedding and personal possessions had disappeared. "Where's Les?", I asked the prison officers, on duty at the end of the landing. "Don't know", they replied. Nobody seemed to know or care where he was. It was as though he'd never been in his cell, or existed. Even his prison card on the cell door had vanished.

Eventually I found out what had happened, from another prisoner, who'd been out of his cell at the time. Several prison officers had gone to Les's cell about an hour ago, and removed all of his stuff. Les, himself, had been taken to the punishment block, and placed in solitary confinement, for refusing to work.

So, it had finally happened. I felt like immediately DOING something. Anything. To express my protest, support, anger, frustration... However, after talking with John, I realised that it was important for me to get out tomorrow morning, and inform the press, C.N.D., his family and friends. Knowing Les, and having talked about it with him, I'm sure he'll continue to refuse to work, and eventually they'll take away his remission from him, and he'll start his hunger-strike. Tomorrow I'll ring up the T.V. and radio stations, get statements of protest together, and organise a demonstration/blockade for Monday morning.

I feel so helpless in this cell.. Only hours to go until my release, but every minute seems like an eternity. Thank God I'm with John, who's sympathetic, and brilliant to share ideas with. John's told me the run down for the punishment-block: Total removal of priviledges. No tobacco. No communication with any other prisoner in the block, on pain of further punishment. A bare cell, other than a table and chair, and a bed thrown in at night.

But I know that Les's strength will carry him through.. His total sense of rightness and moral certainty, and a wealth of support on the outside. Punishing Les will strengthen his resolve not break him, and outside C.N.D. support will grow and grow. If they had any sense, they'd do nothing. But in their ignorant blindness, and unswerving dedication to rules and regulations, they'll only dig a deeper pit for their eventual demise... Says Jeremy!! I'm sure I sound very emotional. I am!!

I spent an hour on the top bunk-bed, lying there, feeling angry, upset, frustrated, tense. Even had a cigarette. Patience! You'll be out tomorrow morning, and you can transfer your anxiety into words and action.

Listened to the radio, read the paper, and talked to John, and finally became more relaxed, calmer, more positive, (if that's possible when a friend has just been thrown in the punishment-block) Soon it was dark outside,

quiet, still. The end of an emotionally draining day. Time to sleep, rest, and await a morning that would bring release, waiting friends, and sanity.

Thinking of you Les. Be strong. Be happy. We're with you.

## FRIDAY 6TH JUNE -THURSDAY 19TH JUNE

I was released from the prison at 8.00am, Friday morning. Jean, Lara, Melissa and Paddy were at the gate to meet me. Somehow the intense joy of walking out of the prison and being reunited with them was tinged with the pain of leaving Les behind in solitary... and it showed. I immediately told them of the situation, and they too became worried and downcast. How awful to have to break news like that.

We drove back to Nottingham in silence. Jean was upset, and only thankful that the visiting order which Les had sent out to her a few days ago, had not been cancelled because he was in the punishment block. She would be able to see him in the morning.

The moment we reached Nottingham I plunged all my nervous energy into going round the local press and radio stations, and giving interviews about Les's situation. It became number two news item of the day. I felt exhausted, and angry.... and vented alot of my anxiety "on the air". (Which I suppose fulfilled their criteria of dramatic interviews !).

Jean and Paddy visited Les in the afternoon, and came back with upsetting news. Les was in a shocked and shaken state. He'd been pushed around in the punishment block, and taunted and abused by aggressive prison officers.

He'd slept in the corner of the cell on the floor. He'd been frightened, isolated and upset. He'd cried for them, that they could behave in such a way, and for himself... and they jeered. He'd been brought before the Governor on Friday morning, surrounded by prison officers, and sentenced to three days loss of remission, suspended so long as he

agreed to work. The Governor dismissed Les's statement about the illegality of nuclear weapons as irrelevant to his imprisonment in Lincoln Prison, and his wilful refusal to work.

Alongside the obvious trauma of the visit was immense relief. For Les, the comfort and support of seeing and holding Jean and Paddy... and the cleansing release of sharing the awful details of his last 24 hours. For Jean, the painful reunification with Les, in circumstances so alien and heartrending to both of them... and the comforting knowledge that Les would agree to work, and not be thrown back into the punishment block, with God knows what potential incidents, and would not go on hunger strike.

I suppose that in the next few days, I had no time or inclination to really think about or express my feelings on being in prison. I was wrapped up in racing around and feeling angry and frustrated about Les. I wrote to him every day, but in a tone of lightness and humour rather than grief. It was a time of cold resignation.

My immediate reaction on release had been to organise a protest outside the prison gates. However, after thought, this was soon changed to a welcoming demonstration to meet Les when he came out, for fear of retribution and victimisation inside. I'd also planned to get myself "sent down" again, straight away, using my outstanding committal warrant, so that I could be close and supportive to Les. But that too was changed. I finally decided to "give myself up" on Friday 20th June, so that I could be with Les for the last five days of his forty day sentence, and be released the same day. I told Les in my next letter.

The hectic days running up to my second sentence passed with unbelievable speed. What a completely different sense of time span there is between "outside life" and the dragging claustrophobia of a prison cell. The one, seems to race by with unrelenting enthusiasm, regardless of wish or activity, whilst the other seems jammed in some excruciating stage of time-warp... and ticks by with agonising monotony.

Before I knew it, it was Friday 20th June and I was walking into the Canning Circus police station, toothbrush in hand, to give myself up.

## FRIDAY 20TH JUNE

This is essentially a thoughts and incidents letter. (Sounds like a police department). Two weeks ago, I documented my 'stay' by hours and days, but somehow it doesn't feel so necessary and vital this time. Partly because the routine hasn't changed and seems frustratingly familiar, and largely because this sentence seems much less daunting and endless, than the previous one.

Giving myself in at Canning Circus police station, Nottingham, on the outstanding committal warrant, was surprisingly simple. "Have you got the money?", "No.", "Have you packed your bags?", "Yes.", "Then we're taking you to prison." He seemed a little taken aback at my apparant calmness and even enthusiasm for the idea ! There was a moment of panic when they said they were taking me to Leicester prison, and not Lincoln. In my plans to rejoin Les for the final few days of his sentence, I'd forgotten entirely that Leicester Magistrates had originally signed the warrant, and that officially I should serve my sentence in H.M.P. Leicester. What a disaster!... And Les eagerly expecting me today, inside Lincoln Prison. Help ! Finally, after deft persuasion by me that it would be so much more easy and practical for them to take me to Lincoln, I succeeded in getting my choice of venue! H.M.P. Lincoln, it was to be ! (It almost sounds like a prize holiday on a T.V. show! "Now which, of the exclusive places on offer, do you wish to be imprisoned in ?", "I'd like to chose H.M.P. Lincoln, if that's alright", "Well, you've got it then ! Ladies and gentlemen, a big round of applause for our latest prisoner, on his wise decision !")

Soon I was in the cells beneath Nottingham's Guildhall Magistrates Court, being recognised, processed, and searched. An hour later, I was on my way to Lincoln in the

stainless steel horse-box, they call a 'mobile cell unit'. I was manacled to the 'black-sheep' son of a company director, (his words !), whose forte was less accounts, and and more 'borrowing' cars. Of course, I did check whether he'd borrowed my black mini, which was stolen last weekend, but he assured me that 'J' reg. bangers were not on his wanted list!

I found the other prisoners being received into the embraces of Lincoln 'nick' at the same time as me, much more friendly than on previous occasions.. A warm sense of cameraderie.. irrespective of nationality, sentence, or crime.

Soon I was on A4 landing, being allocated my 'room'. "Can I share with my 'brother' Les Parsons ?", I asked. "What do you think this is, Deacon, a holiday camp?", the officer retorted. "In that cell, with those two!" "But he is my 'brother'", I whined. "And what's wrong with those two ? Aren't they good enough ?", "They're great", I replied, "But they're not my brother." "Pathetic", he muttered. "Go on. Get in with Parsons!"

Moments later, he was unlocking Les's cell, and I walked in. Brilliant ! What enterprise ! Momentarily, Les and I were lost for words, as we shared the excitement and joy of being reunited. Then, Les, myself, and Jimmy, (Les's cell-mate), chatted in an excited way for several hours, about what had happened in the last two weeks, since I was last in.. Les obviously wanted to know about Jean, Lara, and Scarlett, his wife and children, and devoured ravenously every morsel of detail I could give. "What are they doing?", "How are they feeling?", "Are they alright?", etc..

It felt so remarkable and unbelievable to be in the same cell as Les that it didn't feel like prison at all ! Almost as though we'd met in some sparse hotel room by chance. Really, really, really wonderful. Almost dream-like. Familiar.

How absurd and painful that Les had been locked in this cell for two weeks, since I'd last seen him, whilst I'd been scurrying around on the outside, doing a million things. How awful. I felt a strange sense of guilt, and wanted to 'play' down where I'd been going, and who I'd been seeing, so as to seemingly not compound Les's sense of isolation.

I was conscious that I was a 'newcomer' to the cell, and didn't want Jimmy to feel 'pushed' out by our closeness. Besides, Les had struck up quite a friendship with him, and in fact the three of us got along famously. Jimmy was a lovable rogue. A con-artist. A mine of information on how to get round EVERYTHING! What they say about prisons being 'schools of crime' is certainly true. Jimmy was as proficient in his field as any university professor.. Cheque-books. Car-tax. Street selling. You name it, and he was a master of the art! He fascinated and entertained us for hours, with endless stories of deception and slights of hand, that left us speechless. True, he had no sympathy for those who'd suffered. True, he was cynical, and prejudiced, and sexist and racist. But he had a spark of life.. an incorrigible rascal with a 'Joie de vivre'.. and an abundance of sensitivity and caring for his children and loved-ones.

He'd even taken part in non-violent direct action, (Though perhaps not seeing it as that), in order to force the police and authorities to issue him with a fruit barrow licence. Whenever he'd been arrested for illegal selling, he'd forced the police to wheel his heavy barrow to the police-station, and count up every single grape, strawberry, apple, and orange on his stall, when they took him into custody.. which took them hours.. and then to repeat the whole laborious exercise when they released him. Eventually the infuriated 'powers that be' issued him with a licence!

As I said, the three of us got on well and spent most evenings talking until late. Les and I chatted a lot, but were sensitive about excluding Jimmy. We would have

preferred to have been alone in the cell, I think, and relished our laps in the exercise yard spent in both humorous and deep discussion. Still, to actually be in the same cell, is an incredible luxury under the circumstances.

I met many people I'd seen before. "Well you didn't stay out long, did you?!", was the usual comment, along with, "You must have liked the porridge!" I also met several new prisoners. One was a lorry driver, who'd refused to deliver a load to a nuclear base, years ago. (But now in for a driving offence). Another was the son of a tool shop-keeper, who'd been approached by the police during the run-up to the 'Reclaim Chilwell' action, two years ago, about not selling bolt-cutters to C.N.D. protesters. He'd refused. Another prisoner gave me 'professional' advice about cutting the fence at Molesworth.

In my first few prison sentences, I'd always believed that I was 'lucky' with my cell-mates, who'd always turned out to be caring and gentle. However, I now believe, after five prison sentences, that it's largely to do with the way Les and I, (for example), behave and relate and talk. Even the toughest, violent, hardened person, appreciates conversations about relationships, and family and beliefs.. They are topics they often don't get a chance to talk about, and are more than happy to share with someone genuinely interested and sensitive.

I also used to see prison in terms of 'lost time'.. isolated from everything you love. But now I feel that there's no need for that. Prison can be a rich and living experience. It can be an important, vital, and creative period, especially to those who are more used to reading and writing, and absorbed with T.V. and videos etc.. (Which you are denied in prison). But of course I'm extremely aware that C.N.D. prisoners are very privileged as well. We chose, (at this moment in time), to come to prison. We get a mass of letters. We have support. We believe in what we're doing. Very, very important and comforting things.

This time in prison I've felt peaceful and really happy.. and being with Les has been an enormous part of that. It's such a valuable opportunity to think and assess, and reflect and stand back from the bustles and pressures of outside life. Of course, I've thought about the punishment block, and solitary confinement, as I've lain awake on my bunk. But even that has lost a bit of it's horror, as I've talked to Les, and shared his experience in the 'block'. My unknown fear has been turned into one of a known quantity. It hasn't lost it's barbarity and inhumanity, but it has taken on the tone of a realistic ordeal, rather than of an unthinkable torture. I'm so relieved that Les, with retrospective mulling over the awful treatment, feels positive and strengthened, rather than broken.

Last night was heaven. I sat on a chair with my feet in a bowl of hot water, with Jimmy reading on his bed, and Les reciting poetry out into the still night, through the open barred window. Sheer, sheer bliss. Complete and utter peace. The richness and colour and sound of the beautiful words flowed hauntingly and lovingly around the cell, bathing us in mystery and intensity and calm. So incredible. A perfect moment. A living tribute to that saying: 'Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage, if I have freedom in my heart, and in my soul am free'. (Or something like that !).

Of course it's hard to always feel like that, with the oppressive and ritualistic degradation that fills each day, as well as the horrific and saddening tales that accompany each prisoner.. The senseless and violent crimes. The heart-rending 'backgrounds'. The anger. The stupidity. The insensitivity. The intractability of the courts. The brutal beatings-up by some police... And all compounded by the stony rigidity of the prison regime, with it's impersonal insulting officers, and the heart-rending resignation of most prisoners to their cruel confinement. Still, in the context of dictatorships, with their murderous and fearful detentions, with horrific tortures, we have much to be thankful for.. much to be relieved about. I often

wonder what strength we'd show in C.N.D., if members disappeared in the night, and peace prisoners were hideously mutilated.

Les and I have supported and inspired each other. One moment we're sharing our personal feelings and problems. The next, we're reading letters and poems aloud. Then we're discussing friends, and how we feel about the group of welcoming people, who'll meet us at the prison gates on Tuesday's release day. Then we're eyeing the rooftops, during exercise period, mentally noting the ease of possible protests during future sentences.

We're alert, alive, happy and together.. most importantly we're together.. as the sun sinks below the Lincolnshire skyline, and the breeze whispers into our cell through silhouetted bars, and the outside mammoth oak, that towers above our prison wall, merely sleeps and awaits our return.

My love to you all.

LES AND I WERE BOTH  
RELEASED FROM LINCOLN PRISON  
THE NEXT MORNING

Of course it's hard to always feel like that, with the oppressive and ritualistic degradation that fills each day as well as the horrific and saddening tales that accompany each prisoner. The senseless and violent crimes. The heart-rending 'backgrounds'. The anger. The stupidity. The inhumanity. The intractability of the courts. The brutal beatings - or by some police. And all compounded by the story of the prison regime, with its bitter and grinding resistance to the cruel confinement. Still, in the context of dictatorships, with their murderous and fearful detentions, with horrific tortures, we have much to be thankful for... much to be relieved about. I often

MY THANKS TO JAY WHO HELPED  
TYPE AND PRINT THIS BOOK WITH  
SKILL AND ENTHUSIASM AND MY  
LOVE TO ALL THOSE WHO  
SUPPORTED ME WHILST IN PRISON.

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS BOOK WILL GO TO  
NOTTINGHAM PEACE ACTION NETWORK

ARRESTED  
CHARGED  
IMPRISONED

LES AND I WERE BOTH  
RELEASED FROM LINCOLN PRISON  
THE NEXT MORNING

MY THANKS TO JAZ WHO HELPED  
TYPE AND PRINT THIS BOOK WITH  
SKILL AND ENTHUSIASM AND MY  
LOVE TO ALL THOSE WHO  
SUPPORTED ME WHILST IN PRISON.

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS BOOK WILL GO TO  
NOTTINGHAM PEACE ACTION NETWORK

ARRESTED  
CHARGED  
IMPRISONED

MY THANKS TO JAS WHO HELPED

ITIN We're alert, alive, happy and together.. most importantly we're together.. as the sun sinks below the Lincolnshire skyline, and the breeze whispers into our cell, through silhouetted bars, and the outside mammoth oak, that towers above our prison wall, merely sleeps and awaits our return.

ARRESTED  
CHARGED  
IMPRISONED

AND PROCEEDS FROM THIS BOOK WILL GO TO  
MOTTISHAM PEACE ACTION NETWORK

