

The 'Dirty Strike' of Irish Republican prisoners in British jails, 1976-81

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ABSTRACT:The 1976 decision by the British government to end political-prisoner (“special”) status for Irish Republican prisoners led to a five year campaign in Long Kesh prison that included refusal to wear prison clothing and refusal to use prison showers. In response to the beating of a cell-mate, prisoners refused to leave their cells to use toilets. This turned into a shit strike, with prisoners defecating in their cells, and smearing the walls with their shit. Women prisoners in Armagh jail joined the protest. These events will be examined in the light of other shit protests, and also in light of notions of “bare life” and biopower

CV:

Ed Emery is co-organiser of the Interdisciplinary Animal Studies Initiative at SOAS. Since 2000 he has organised a series of international conferences on elephants, camels, donkeys, mules, war horses, and sponges. He maintains a long-standing diary rubric *De stercore quaero* and is the moderator of the Shitology discussion list. At the present time his principal research activity is around the Arabic and Jewish dance songs of medieval al-Andalus.

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