

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a "letter", written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk * This is Litir 224.*

Bha dragh air na h-ùghdarrasan gum feuchadh na prìosanaich-chogaidh Ghearmailteach, a bha ag obair anns a' mhèinn-iarainn ann an Ratharsair ri linn a' Chiad Chogaidh, ri teicheadh bhon eilean. Agus, gu dearbh, dh'fheuch feadhainn ri sin a dhèanamh. Aon turas, ghoid leth-dhusan dhiubh geòla air an oidhche, agus dh'iomair iad a-mach gu ruige bàta mòr aig an robh einnsean, a bhuineadh do chompanaidh na mèinne. Ach bha fear a' bhàta air am maignòto a thoirt dhachaigh leis, agus cha deach aig na Gearmailtich air an einnsean obrachadh.

Bha an oidhche garbh agus, a rèir choltais, cha b' fhada gus an robh cur na mara air cuid de na prìosanaich. Feumaidh gur e saighdearan, seach maraichean, a bh' annta. Co-dhiù, thug iad a' gheòla air ais gu tìr, agus choisich iad gu tuath a dh'àite air cladach an iar an eilein, far an do chuir iad seachad an oidhche.

Ach cha robh iad fad' air falbh bho bhaile beag croitearachd air a bheil Bail' a' Chùirn agus chunnaic dithis chroitearan anns a' bhaile sin toit a' tighinn bhon chladach. Bha na Gearmailtich air teine a chuir thuige airson rabaid a ghlac iad a ròstadh. Uill, cha robh iad saor fada. Agus ged a dh'fheuch feadhainn eile ri teicheadh fhad 's a bha iad ag obair anns a' mhèinn, cha d' fhuair aon duine dhiubh air falbh bhon eilean.

Ach bha an obair aca cruaidh agus cunnartach, agus chaill dithis phrìosanach am beatha anns a' mhèinn. A bharrachd orrasan, agus na bu mhiosa na sin, chaochail dusan prìosanach eile as dèidh a' chogaidh nuair a sgap a' flù gu dona air feadh na Roinn Eòrpa.

Bha deagh chàirdeas eadar cuid de na h-eileanaich agus na prìosanaich. Gu dearbh, ghabh feadhainn truas ris na Gearmailtich oir cha robh mòran bìdh aca, agus bhiodh eileanaich a' toirt biadh dhaibh gun fhiosta do na h-ùghdarrasan. Ach, mar a shaoileadh sibh, cha robh cùisean buileach rèidh, agus rinn cuid dhen luchd-obrach gearan gu robh an tuarastal aca ro ìosal agus gur iad na Gearmailtich a bha ga chumail sìos.

Chaidh ceistean a thogail ann an Taigh nan Cumantan mu dheidhinn anns a' Ghearran, naoi ceud deug is seachd-deug (1917) agus chaidh coinneamh phoblach a chumail anns an eilean air an treas là dhen Mhàrt. Am measg na bha an làthair, bha Àrd-neach-lagh' a' Chrùin an Alba. A rèir aithris, bha a' choinneamh gu math sradagach. A bharrachd air droch thuarastal, bha cuid de mhuinntir an eilein dhen bheachd nach robh iad a' faighinn Cothrom na Fèinne a thaobh cosnaidhean anns a' mhèinn, agus gu robh na prìosanaich-chogaidh a' cluich spòrs air fearann a bhuineadh dhaibhsan. Bha na h-eileanaich ag iarraidh an fhearainn sin airson biadh fhàs dhaibh fhèin.

Air a' cheathramh là dhen Dùbhlachd anns a' bhliadhna sin, thàinig a' chùis gu ceann, nuair a dhiùlt na h-eileanaich obair a dhèanamh anns a' mhèinn. Bha iad air stailc aig an dearbh àm 's a bha an rìoghachd an sàs ann an cogadh mòr. Chuir na h-eileanaich iarrtas gu stiùirichean na mèinne airson pàigheadh a bharrachd de dheich tasdanan gach seachdain agus airson tuilleadh fearainn dhaibh fhèin. Dh'iarr iad cuideachd gum biodh na mèinneirean a bhuineadh do dh'àiteachan eile a' falbh dhachaigh, agus gum biodh na

prìosanaich Ghearmailteach cuideachd air an cur a-mach às an eilean. Thill a' chùis don phàrlamaid agus, an turas seo, ghabh am Prìomhaire, Lloyd George, pàirt anns an deasbad.

Bha a' chùis a' sìor theasachadh. Chaidh casaid a chur as leth stiùirichean na mèinne gu robh iad a' cleachdadh prìosanaich-chogaidh airson an stailc a bhriseadh. Chì sinn dè thachair an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: ghoid: *stole*; geòla: *dinghy*; einnsean: *engine*; maignioto: *magneto*; garbh: *rough*; tuarastal: *wages*; Taigh nan Cumantan: *House of Commons*; an Gearran: *February*; sradagach: *heated (lit. sparky)*; cosnaidhean: *jobs*; fearann: *land*; an Dùbhlachd: *December*; tasdan: *shilling*; am Prìomhaire: *the Prime Minister*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: gum feuchadh na prìosanaich ri teicheadh: *that the prisoners would try to escape (flee)*; ri linn a' Chiad Chogaidh: *at the time of the First World War*; dh'iomair iad a-mach gu ruige bàta mòr: *they rowed out to a large boat*; a bhuineadh do chompanaidh na mèinne: *which belonged to the mining company*; cha deach aig na Gearmailtich air an einnsean obrachadh: *the Germans couldn't get the engine to work*; cha b' fhada gus an robh cur na mara air cuid: *it wasn't long until some were seasick*; bha iad air teine a chur thuige: *they had lit a fire*; airson rabaid a ghlac iad a ròstadh: *to cook a rabbit they (had) caught*; nuair a sgap a' flù: *when influenza spread*; ghabh feadhainn truas ri: *some took pity on*; cha robh mòran bìdh aca: *they didn't have much food*; gun fhiosta do X: *without X knowing*; cha robh cùisean buileach rèidh: *things weren't altogether smooth*; nach robh iad a' faighinn Cothrom na Fèinne: *that they weren't getting a fair go (lit. Opportunity of the Fenians)*; nuair a dhiùlt na h-eileanaich obair a dhèanamh: *when the islanders refused to work*; bha a' chùis a' sìor theasachadh: *the matter was continually growing more troublesome (lit. heating up)*; airson an stailc a bhriseadh: *to break the strike*.

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: Am measg na bha an làthair, bha Àrd-neach-lagh' a' Chrùin an Alba: *among those present was the Solicitor-General for Scotland. I want today to tackle the issue of how we derive a suitable Gaelic for of a title like "Solicitor-General". First of all, it is important to be aware that some historically validated titles have long existed and do not require reinvention. For example, a Procurator Fiscal is Neach-casaid a' Chrùin. To the general population which is not well versed in legal niceties, the Gaelic name is actually more meaningful than the rather obtuse English form – it literally means "prosecuting person of the Crown". In the case of Solicitor-General, an ordinary solicitor is neach-lagha, ie a law-person. But what is meant by "General"? A straight translation here (eg Coitcheann) is inappropriate and we have to ask what "General" actually means. That is why the "Àrd" is introduced – to indicate he/she is the top person. Similarly a "General Secretary", where it represents the head of an organisation, is referred to as an Àrd-rùnaire not a Rùnaire Coitcheann. Àrd-neach-lagha a' Chrùin tells us it is the head solicitor ie Solicitor General but we need (ann) an Alba to tell us it is in Scotland. And, of course, if we are dealing with a similar office in a country with a republican constitution, we would have to drop the Crown reference and say, perhaps, Àrd-neach-lagha na Dùthcha. Official Gaelic titles associated with the Scottish and UK parliaments are available from Faclair na Pàrlamaid at www.scotland.gov.uk/dictionary.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: bha iad air stailc aig an dearbh àm 's a bha an rìoghachd an sàs ann an cogadh mòr: *they were on strike at the very same time the country (kingdom) was involved in a great war. Aig an dearbh àm: at the exact same time.*

* "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig