

## Time to Think

Open University Journeys in British and Irish prisons during the years of conflict, 1972-2000

### Oral History interview clip transcript

Name of Interviewee: **John Allen**

Interviewed by: **Jenny Meegan**

Date of interview: **12/07/2017**

#### **Important**

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

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**Clip title: A geography tutorial in the H Blocks 1990**

Duration: 00:01:58

Clip start point in full interview: 00:10:11

Clip end point in full interview: 00:12:25

[010:11] I got sat down by, I don't know who the guy was but it was clearly someone, who was the main spokesperson for the Republicans and I thought he was going to ask me about the course and the teaching, to ask me what I was going to teach, not a bit of it, he actually sat me down and told me the political line, why they were in there, why they were political prisoners, exactly their position and that went on for a good twenty minutes. Got someone else to bring me a cup of tea and they wouldn't let me move until they, it was fairly clear what the line was. And then showed me around ..... And then, taken to another room, a small number of students and was talking about in this case Block 6, *Uneven Development and the International Division of Labour*, [blocks refer to Open University single units of teaching] which is strange in some sense because you are spanning across the globe, explicitly a day school, if it had been in June, pretty much they were coming up to Block 6 at that point in time and what I do remember was how enthusiastic the students were and how sharp they were. I was still kind of reeling from the fact that I have been given a political lecture, because it completely threw me, because nothing had ever happened like that from previous prison experience and that was obviously the difference between, in their head, a political prisoner and just a criminal prisoner as it were, one makes those distinctions. Having taught that Block and having gone through it and had the questions, I was then ushered out for lunch and then told that I would be going to a different part of the Maze Long Kesh to teach a loyalist prisoner in the afternoon.[012:25]