

An Phoblacht

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H-Block rally in Belfast last Sunday

TIDAL WAVE OF SUPPORT

A TREMENDOUS and heartening tidal wave of support for the H-Block 'blanket men' and Armagh women prisoners has been evoked throughout the country, and abroad, by the courageous commencement, last Monday, of a hunger-strike to the death by seven 'blanket men': Leo Green (Lurgan), Brendan Hughes (Belfast), Ray McCartney (Derry city), Tom McFeeley (Co. Derry), Thomas McKearney (Co. Tyrone), Sean McKenna (Newry) and John Nixon (Armagh city).

'Seven' has the symbolic significance of being the number of signatories to the 1916 Proclamation: the prisoners' stand today necessitating that same

brand of republican heroism.

Media coverage of the prisoners' protest has been unprecedented; in one H-Block incarcerating one hundred and fifty previously conforming prisoners, all but a couple have gone back 'on the blanket'; international opinion is on the move, with British embassies around the world receiving raps on their door, and the knuckles, from those concerned with human rights; across the country North and South, there has been a wave of protest marches, rallies, pickets, after-mass meetings and lobbies, and in Belfast, last Sunday, a massive march took place which seasoned observers have described as easily the largest on the Falls Road in the last decade, and the largest in the North since Newry, in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday.

All this evidence and much more suggests,

so far, that the Irish people are not going to let down their H-Block heroes.

People are taking to the streets in public displays of solidarity in such impressive numbers that the British collaborators in the leadership of Fianna Fail and the SDLP are going to quake in their shoes and go crawling to their British masters pleading with them to grant the prisoners' five demands on a humanitarian basis in order to restore 'normality'.

But there must be no false illusions amongst those committed to the prisoners' cause. Despite the horrendous suffering in the H-Blocks and Armagh jail, despite the tens of thousands on the streets, and despite movement on the status issue even amongst British and Irish establishment circles, not nearly enough has yet been done to break

the cruel intransigence of the British government.

Last Sunday's Belfast march and other trojan work done throughout the country and by supporters in America, Britain and elsewhere abroad, is only a start — only a sound launching pad from which to perform the arduous task of winning the prisoners political status.

The revived spirit of unity and interest pulsing through the veins of the beleaguered Northern nationalist working-class people needs to be turned into monster demonstrations, the like of which have yet to be seen; the tremendous popular sympathy and hatred of British oppression being aroused from its slumbers in the South needs similarly to be transformed into positive protest action in the streets.

Let no man die in H-Block!

A cruel piece of teasing and political brinkmanship

THE FULL TEXT of the statement issued by the H-Block 'blanket men' last Friday, October 24th, dismissing the British announcement on civilian-type clothing, reads as follows:

"We, the republican prisoners in H Blocks 3, 4 and 5 reject as meaningless the substitute by the British government of prison issue clothing for prison issue uniform. The wearing of our own clothes we regard as a basic human right and as

only one of our five demands. Our conception of British rule and British courts in Ireland are as oppressors, and we are in jail for resisting that illegal occupation of our country. Thus it is appalling enough to be deprived of one's liberty for many years without then being treated as a criminal.

"We draw attention to the fact that the wearing in Armagh already have the basic right of wearing their own clothes which on its own has not met their requirements. The British still attempt to

criminalise them and we cannot settle for a situation that our own comrades find totally unacceptable.

"It is quite clear that the British are engaged in a cruel piece of teasing and political brinkmanship. In an attempt to defuse the momentum of growing support for the blanket men they hope to deflect widespread criticism from concerned Irish people and give an erroneous impression that they are taking positive steps to solve the problem. They

know that the resolution of certain issues will end the H-Block crisis but they continue to avoid them and to us they remain suspect. They are more concerned with the loss of British face than with the loss of Irish lives.

"We are not criminals and we are ready and willing to meet an agonising death on hunger-strike to establish that we are political prisoners."

LOYALISTS ATTEMPT TO RAISE THE STAKES FROM H-BLOCK TO THE UNION

BY PETER ARNLIS

LAST Tuesday's united loyalist stance against a resolution of the H-Block crisis was an attempt to elevate the British response to the H-Blocks into a test of its commitment to the Union. However, the pledge already given that day by Brit premier Thatcher at Westminster was one of 'No Surrender' anyway and there is obviously an uphill struggle ahead in the battle to win political status.

Just four days before last Monday's hunger-strike commenced it was announced in London that after the British Cabinet had been given a briefing on the H-Block situation by direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins it had taken a decision to allow all male prisoners in the North to wear their own clothes.

Cardinal O'Fiaich, Bishop Daly and the 'Irish Press' subsequently suggested that this was only the first move to actually resolve all the prisoners' demands, and that Atkins' elaboration on Thursday evening (that it wasn't their own clothes that prisoners could wear but prison issue 'civilian-type clothing') was a Northern Office bungling.

But whilst the timing of the announcement certainly appears to have been related to the hunger-strike, it was more an attempt to outflank the blanket men and throw their supporters into confusion, and it is questionable if the two-phased announcement was bungled, or if more 'concessions' were to follow.

prevailing within Armagh (where the women are already allowed their own clothes), and rejected the announcement as 'meaningless' and as 'a cruel piece of teasing and political brinkmanship'.

In a joint statement also issued on Friday, Cardinal O'Fiaich and Bishop Daly said that while they viewed Thursday's announcement as a step in the right direction they were "deeply disappointed that it stops short of what is demanded of the situation." Cardinal O'Fiaich had flown into London from the Bishop's Synod in Rome the previous evening for talks with Atkins and flew out again the same night —

according to some reports he was in a vexed mood.

THATCHER

By Friday evening, Atkins and the Minister in charge of prisons, Michael Alison, repeated that there would be no concessions on political status. And, whilst at first unconvincedly assuring loyalists that the statement on prison issue clothing was merely coincidental, coming just four days before the hunger-strike, by Tuesday — when the issue was raised for the second consecutive day at Westminster — Thatcher was fairly open about the timing of the announcement and inflexibly shut to the question of status.

On clothing, she said: "This matter had been under consideration for some time and if a decision had been made upon it, it seemed right that the decision should be



THATCHER — 'No surrender'

made before the hunger-strike started ... That decision has in fact been made and we shall now stand absolutely." But, she said, "There will be no concession to those on hunger strike. None at all."

UNIONISTS

South Down Westminster MP, unionist James Kilfedder, was vigorously applauded by Tory backbenchers when he attacked the gov-



ALISON — called hunger strikers 'crazy'

ernment's statement, and despite Thatcher's guarantee on Tuesday, her statement that prison issue civilian-type clothing will not be available to prisoners in Britain still smelt of a rat to the loyalists.

Undoubtedly, it was not merely this statement alone, which on Tuesday night, provoked all shades of unionist opinion to sign a joint statement condemning the Tory handling of the H-Block issue and accusing them of capitulation. The loyalists believe that a Tory defeat on the H-Blocks could have political ramifications for the Union, especially for a British government not practised in ignoring loyalist opinion — which is an attitude also prerequisite for withdrawal.

REMINISCENT

The statement — signed by the Democratic Unionist Party, the Official Unionist Party, the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, and two splinters, the United Ulster Unionist Party and the Ulster Progressive Unionist Party — said: "The government must learn that the Unionist family, whatever their internal differences, are one in their determination to defend and maintain the Union and to see the IRA defeated. They cannot and will not tolerate any deal with Ulster's enemies."

The increasingly successful H-Block mobilisation, and signs of increasing unity and militancy within the nationalist community are, to the loyalists, reminiscent of the early days of the troubles when the nationalist community made vigorous demands for justice and civil rights.

The loyalists are turning the H-Block issue into a test of Tory backing for their 'No Surrender' tradition, but it is Irish lives, the lives of republican comrades, that are at stake and the gravity of this latest development needs to be understood now that the Brits and loyalists, despite their niggling over semantics, aim to strengthen the partition of Ireland over the bodies of the Republican hunger-strikers.

QUALIFICATION

After the initial announcement — which undoubtedly raised some false hopes in relatives and which unjustifiably drew 'home and dry' satisfaction from some of those who had originally pledged themselves to the prisoners' five demands — all shades of loyalism vied with each other in rabid bouts of hysteria about having been 'betrayed'. Speculation that the growing weight of loyalist hysteria throughout Thursday, October 23rd, forced the British to make the qualification could be true.

The Brits may have had the qualification in reserve for just such an eventuality while slowly testing the ground for loyalist and nationalist responses. But nationalist people hadn't time to fully assess the announcement before the loyalists raised the roof and the Brits once again capitulated.

Paisley dubbed the announcement as 'surrender', the raving Reverend Robert Bradford (who, on RTE radio on Sunday referred to the prisoners as 'scum' and 'animals') called it an IRA victory and James Molyneux said it was 'clearly a cave in to blackmail'.

RESPONSE

Usually such loyalist outbursts are a good gauge of something favourable accruing to the nationalist people, but the blanket men's response, issued at 3 p.m. on Friday, put the British announcement into context against the background of their demands and the conditions



BLANKET MEN TELEVISED

FOR the first time ever a television crew was allowed, the week before last, to film 'blanket men' inside the H-Blocks of Long Kesh; but they were not allowed to speak to the men.

Presumably the British government were hoping to gain some propaganda victory out of the occasion; but, in fact, the grim conditions of the prisoners and their stark appearance, combined with other film of a jungle of concrete walls, barbed wire and look-out posts, could have done nothing but enhance — in viewers' eyes — the need for the men to receive humane treatment.

The TV crew were from the BBC 2 programme 'Newsnight' and their unique pictures were first shown on that programme on Monday evening; and RTE screened the same pictures on Wednesday evening. The two 'blanket men' are — left — Hugh Rooney (Short Strand, Belfast) and Kevin Toal (Armagh city). The men were described by the television commentator as living in 'quite unbelievable conditions' and as clearly having a 'well-defined command structure', shouting messages up and down the wing in gaelic.



Protestors in Derry at the weekend; inset: Pauline McLaughlin pictured in 1976

Pauline Mc Laughlin dying

THE FINAL SOMBRE NOTE at Sunday's massive H-Block demonstration in Belfast came with the announcement that the body weight of Armagh prisoner Pauline McLaughlin, now being held in Musgrave military hospital, is down to four-and-a-half stone, and that she is now facing death from malnutrition.

A startling report from the H-Block/Armagh information centre in Derry — Pauline's homeplace — revealed that last Wednesday she was refused, by the hospital's military authorities, a food parcel containing items of food she had requested in an effort to keep down some of what she eats. An undiagnosed stomach condition, aggravated by the total lack of medical treatment in Armagh, has meant that Pauline, who weighed nine-and-a-half stone when she went on the protest in October 1976, vomits up any food she eats, despite maintaining a healthy appetite.

Now, apart from her chronically emaciated physical condition, the potassium level in her blood is so low that if it drops lower her heart will collapse. In addition to callously refusing Pauline a food parcel which may be, literally,

Last Saturday, over one thousand people marched in Derry to demand medical treatment for Pauline McLaughlin and in support of the political prisoners in H-Block and Armagh. Speakers included Martha McClelland and John Johnston of Derry Sinn Féin, Liam Donnelly (Ulster Executive Sinn Féin), Rosealeen Bell ('Friends of Pauline McLaughlin' committee) and former blanket man John Deery.

Members of her family who visited Pauline last Saturday night reported that she has extreme difficulty standing up and cannot raise her arms. She is not receiving medical treatment, such as an intravenous drip, and her family are afraid that unless she is transferred now to a civilian hospital she may become the first fatal prison victim in the six counties of Britain's 'criminalisation' policy.

In Dublin, last weekend, the Armagh Prisoners' Solidarity Committee called for telegrams and phone-calls to be made to Free State premier Charles Haughey and to the Northern Ireland Office demanding the release of Pauline McLaughlin to a civilian hospital. They also suggested that messages of support in the form of cards, letters and flowers should be sent to Pauline in Ward 18 of Musgrave Park Hospital.



FRANK MAGUIRE

APPALLED

CONDITIONS in Armagh jail, where twenty-eight republican women prisoners remain defiantly on their 'no wash' protest, were described as appalling by Frank Maguire, Westminster MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, after his statutory annual visit to the jail last Thursday October 23rd.

Besides the jail being an old building, Frank Maguire said, the insanitary state of the cells could only be compared to slurry pits: 'Refuse and dirt clings to the corridors and flagstones and the stench in the corridors of 'A' wing is very bad.' He said that the women's health had suffered seriously because of being locked up twenty-

three hours a day for the past eight months, and because the cells were not cleaned for the first three months and were now sometimes allowed to run for four weeks before being cleaned.

He complained about the restrictions in the quantity and quality of food: the prisoners, he said, got little milk or fruit and because of this some of the women had lost stones in weight. He also objected strongly to the constant searching and harassment of the women and their visitors.

He claimed that the whole system in the prison was wrong: he had observed that in recent years seven of the women had contracted serious illnesses which had endangered their lives.

Armagh pamphlet

'WOMEN Protest for Political Status in Armagh Gaol', a thirty-page report by Women against Imperialism first published in April, has been re-issued in an expanded form.

Based on a series of submissions by lawyers, doctors, former Armagh prisoners, and smuggled communications from women currently on the 'no wash' protest, presented at a tribunal held in Belfast in April, the pamphlet both argues the case for political status and paints a vivid and comprehensive picture of the conditions in that twenty-eight women are at present forced to exist.

The particular merit of the pamphlet is that it illustrates in detail the barbaric and inhuman conditions by which

the British government has added an extra, vicious twist to the torture and abuse of women: sections are included on the lack of health and sanitary facilities; the physical attacks (often by male warders) on the women prisoners; the lack of medical treatment; ante-natal and childcare facilities; and the background to the escalation in Armagh, on February 7th, to the 'no wash' protest.

This pamphlet is an important contribution to rectifying people's lack of detailed awareness about particular conditions in Armagh. It is available, price 50p, from Belfast Women Against Imperialism, c/o 152 Broadway, Belfast 12.

Women Protest for Political Status in Armagh Gaol



REPORT BY

WOMEN

AGAINST

IMPERIALISM

STRIKERS TEMPTED

H-BLOCK HUNGER—STRIKERS have been denied medical examinations by the Long Kesh prison regime, who have also vainly tempted the strikers towards food through the placing of salt — which the men are prepared to take with water — only on their spurned meal plates.

A smuggled note from the H-Blocks reports: 'On Tuesday 28th October, two hunger-strikers in H3, Brendan Hughes and Tommy McKearney, were asked by a prison doctor, Dr Emerson, if they wanted a medical examination. They agreed to the examination but were then told that they would have to go to the 'Circle' (the administrative part of the H-Blocks) and this was conditional upon them wearing the prison uniform. As the men would not put on the uniform they were not examined or weighed.'

'The hunger-strikers have asked for some salt along with the water they are drinking but the screws have put salt only on their meal plates, in an attempt to attract them to the food. The food is left in the men's cells from one meal to another and the supper is left in the men's cells all night. Morale remains extremely high.'

H-Block beating

THE CRUEL INTRANSIGENT attitude of the British on the H-Block issue was reflected in the continuing brutality of prison warders to several blanket men in the week preceding the hunger-strike.

On Tuesday 21st October, Pat McCabe from the Beechmount district of Belfast was taken from his cell to the 'romper room' during a cell search. Following the degrading mirror search Pat's hair, moustache and mouth were thoroughly examined. When warders failed to find anything the whole search procedure was repeated, again to no avail. He was then beaten about the head with a flash lamp and punched and kicked. The following day, three men — Pat Lafferty, Archie Livingstone and Noel White — were beaten following a wing shift, and on Friday 24th October, Justin Livingstone (Portadown) was beaten about the face and body by three prison warders.

Another sledge-hammer

AT 6.45 A.M. last Sunday morning, a large force of uniformed Brits, accompanied by four plain-clothes men in a private car, raided a house in Mayfair Street in the Bone area of North Belfast. The house is known locally as an occasional meeting place for members of the Bone Relatives Action Committee and for H-Block protest groups. The owner, Joe Topping, has been on holiday for the last few weeks and was not present when the raid took place. The Brits leapt from their vehicles and attacked the front door with a sledge-hammer to force an entry, and once inside, holes were knocked through wall panels, floorboards were ripped up, and the contents of the house were scattered about, during a fruitless three-hour search.

Neighbours who went to the house to help clear up the mess afterwards came across a British Army issue portable stove on the floor. But when they returned some time later the stove was missing — giving rise to fears among residents that the Brits have been using the temporarily vacant house, possibly in the rooftop space, for the purpose of a spy-post.

Posing Brits

UNIFORMED British soldiers have been carrying out a door-to-door census in the Lower Ormeau Road area of Belfast. Whilst this is normal routine for the Brits (even though under the Emergency Provisions Act they have no authority for such a practice) what is unusually sinister is that the soldiers have been falsely claiming that they are carrying out a Housing Executive survey. One woman resident of Cooke Street was quoted in the 'Belfast Telegraph' as saying: 'Three soldiers in uniform called at my home and asked me questions about the age and occupations of household members. They said they were carrying out a census for the Housing Executive to help them (the Executive) with their redevelopment programme.'

Port smugglers

THREE BRITISH ARMY officers, including a major-general, were committed for trial at Canterbury crown court on a charge of smuggling alcohol when they appeared in Dover magistrate's court in England on Monday. Major-General Henry Salusbury Leigh Dalzell-Payne, aged 51, general officer commanding the Third Armoured Division on the Rhine; Major George Hancock, aged 35; Captain Hugh Humphrey, aged 24; and Staff Sergeant Brian Proctor, aged 48, are accused of fraudulently attempting to evade customs duty on thirty-five cases of vintage port and wine, at Dover port.

Crew killed

THE FIVE PERSON RUC crew in a routine land-rover patrol — four men and a woman, all constables, were wiped out in a road crash in the centre of Belfast at 1.30 a.m. on Tuesday morning, October 28th. The RUC land-rover drove blindly through red traffic lights at the junction of Chichester Street and Victoria Street — with blue light flashing and siren screaming — smack into an articulated lorry. The land-rover was cut into two pieces — its roof sliced away by the impact — and the five occupants, all based at Hastings Street barracks, were killed.

Belfast bombs

THREE commercial bombing operations were carried out by the IRA's Belfast Brigade within five days, including the successful breaching of the city centre security 'ring of steel'.

The first was in East Belfast on the night of Wednesday 22nd October when three bombs were planted on window grills at a furniture store on the Lower Newtownards Road: two exploded, igniting a fire but causing only slight damage. The second was in Ligoniel shortly before midnight on Sunday 26th October when Hicks and Bullicks mill suffered serious damage after several bombs exploded starting a large fire. The third was in the heart of the city on Monday evening, October 27th, when a 7 lb. bomb was planted outside a tailor's shop at the corner of Corn Market and High Street. A telephone warning ensured that the area was clear of civilians and when the bomb exploded just before 8 p.m., it caused fairly extensive blast damage to the front of the shop and the immediate interior.

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS: SOUTH

DUBLIN

LAST Saturday, October 25th, on the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork — who died after a long hunger-strike in Brixton prison, London — Sinn Féin issued an appeal in Dublin "to all Irish people and to all who value freedom and justice to speak on behalf of those who now have no means left of making their protest heard, except by the lonely sacrifice of hunger-strike in the H-Blocks."

The appeal pointed out that MacSwiney's "agony and death were the subject of ridicule and mockery by English politicians and press, but their real effect was to expose the immoral basis of English rule in Ireland and to inspire freedom-loving people throughout the world."

"Unfortunately, Terence MacSwiney was not the last Irishman to die thus at the hands of the British. In recent years Michael Gaughan and Pádraig Stagg made the same sacrifice, upholding the right to nationhood of their country and the right to human dignity of prisoners of war."

"On this historic anniversary we appeal to all who can in any way make their voices heard, to speak on behalf of the men in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh. The prisoners of war seek no more than a return to the status they enjoyed between 1972 and 1976. They have already suffered greatly. Their jailers must be persuaded to do what is right and so avoid the tragic consequences of another terrible hunger-strike."

BALLYFERMOT

Over one hundred people took part in an H-Block march from Ballyfermot on the outskirts of Dublin into the city centre on Saturday 25th October, to a meeting at the GPO in O'Connell Street which was addressed by Joe Stagg of the National H-Block Committee.

The march drew major attention being led by a youth on horseback bearing the tricolour, and including three horse-drawn floats with men in blankets inside cages.

GPO RALLY

Several hundred people attended an eve of hunger strike torchlight rally outside the GPO in Dublin on Sunday night, which took place in torrential rain.

The meeting, which was chaired by Christina Carney, of the National H-Block Committee, was opened by folk-singer Gerry Clilly singing Frankie Brolly's "H-Block Song" and closed by Ailish Byrne singing her brother Christy Moore's "Ninety Miles from Dublin".

Former blanket man Charlie Crumley, read the statement from the prisoners announcing the hunger-strike. Another former blanket man, Ciaran O'Hagan, spoke of the conditions in Armagh and, in particular, the dangerously deteriorating condition of Pauline McLaughlin. Two mothers of blanket men, Kathleen Greene and Maura McCrory (of the National H-Block Committee), asked for support and the latter made a strong attack on the inertia of the Fianna Fáil government on the issue.

Two passionate speeches urging all out effort during the hunger strike were made by Joe Stagg of the National H-Block Committee and Louis Marcantonio of the Dardale H-Block Action Committee in Dublin. The final speaker was Naomi Brennan of the Armagh Women Prisoners Committee.

BEAUMONT/KILMORE

On Monday 27th October, about one hundred and twenty people marched from Beaumont to Cromastie Court flats in Kilmore, Dublin, where an H-Block meeting was staged by the local MacAdams Sinn Féin cumann. The meeting, which attracted another two hundred people, chaired by Niall Taylor of the cumann, and addressed by Kathleen Greene, a mother of two blanket men, former blanket man



ABOVE: Drenched crowds at Sunday evening's rally at the GPO in Dublin. BELOW: Tuesday evening's platform at Dublin's Mansion House (from left to right): 'Magill' magazine editor Vincent Browne; Fr. Piaras O'Duill, and Christina Carney, both of the National H-Block Committee; 'blanket' mother Kathleen Greene; hunger-striker's brother, Terry Hughes; former 'blanket man' Charlie Crumley; and trade union leader Kevin McConnell of the National H-Block Committee.



Seamus Delaney, Kevin McConnell of the National H-Block Committee and Anne O'Brien of the Armagh Women Prisoners Committee. Another former blanket man, Charlie Crumley, read the prisoners' statement announcing the hunger-strike.

Halfway through the meeting a fracas developed when Special Branch agents, taunting local youths attending the meeting, a Renault van, belonging to the Special Branch, crashed whilst pursuing some of the youths, who had returned the insults with stones.

About one hundred youngsters began stoning the remaining three Special Branch cars, smashing the windows of two of them and forcing all three to withdraw at high speed.

When the Special Branch returned to take up position at the rear of the flats they were driven out once again. Local people, accustomed to regular Garda harassment in this working-class area of Dublin and the regular response to it, continued undeterred at the meeting, and over one hundred of them came forward at the end to promise involvement in a local action group.

MANSION HOUSE

A hunger-strike rally on Tuesday 28th October in Dublin's Mansion House, was attended by several hundred people.

The meeting was chaired by Christina Carney of the National H-Block Committee and addressed by committee chairman Fr. Piaras O'Duill; former blanket man Charlie Crumley; Kathleen Greene, mother of two blanket men; 'Magill' magazine editor Vincent Browne; Terry Hughes and Margaret McKeown; whose brothers are on hunger strike; Ruth Tailion of the Armagh Women Prisoners Committee; Bernadette McAisley of the National H-Block Com-

mittee and Joe Duffy, former president of Trinity College students' union.

RATHMINES/RANELAGH

An action group has been formed in the Rathmines/Ranelagh area of Dublin.

Members are currently engaged in collecting signatures for the international H-Block petition and contacting local community and sporting groups for support. The action group meets weekly on Monday night at Halla Croabh Liam Bultin, Observatory Lane, (beside Leinster Cricket Club), Rathmines Road at 8 p.m. The secretary, Nuala Smith, can be contacted by phone at 985549.

ARRESTS

H-Block and Armagh campaigners in Dublin have faced further severe harassment from Special Branch gardai over the last week.

On Tuesday 21st October, Vincent Doherty, a full-time worker at the Dublin H-Block office was arrested and held at the Bridewell for several hours, his second arrest in less than a month. The same evening, Naomi Brennan of the Armagh Women Prisoners Committee was also arrested as she left a meeting and she also spent some hours in the Bridewell.

On Saturday evening, 25th October, Sean Halpenny of the Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau and former Armagh prisoner Maureen Gibson (about to join an H-Block delegation on a European tour) were taken off a Dublin bus by Special Branch gardai and held in the Bridewell overnight for nineteen hours, during which they were constantly interrogated and Sean Halpenny was strip-searched.

BUNCRANA

A HUGE crowd took part in a prayer meeting, on the eve of the hunger-

strike's commencement, in the Market Square of Bunclara, Co Donegal. Among those present were Sinn Féin councillor Eddie Fullerton, and independent Fianna Fáil members Paddy Kelly and Euro-MP Neil Blaney. The following night Sinn Féin members staged a token hunger-strike in the Market Square.

CAVAN

AT A recent meeting of Cavan County Council, a motion proposed by Sinn Féin councillor Charles Boylan, and seconded by John Lovett (Fianna Fáil) was passed, calling for the immediate restoration of political status. The campaign of terror against H-Block activists by state forces was also discussed and condemned.

CLARE

TWO public meetings, organised by Clare H-Block Action Committee, were held in the county on Saturday 25th October.

The first, chaired by Frank Johnston, was in Shannon town centre and was addressed by Bridget Makowski and Martin Callinan, who also spoke at a meeting later in the Market Square Ennis, chaired by Mattie Shannon. A meeting to organise an action group in Shannon was due to take place in the town on Wednesday night.

COBH



COBH H-Block Action Committee staged a successful march through the town on Saturday 18th October. Following the handing in of a letter, and a copy of petition signatures collected locally, to Cobh UDC, a meeting was held which was addressed by Pat Guilfoyle and independent local councillor John Kidney, who are both members of

the action committee. (The latter is pictured here addressing the marchers, and shoppers, through a loud-hailer.)

The march then proceeded to the residence of the Bishop of Cloyne, Bishop John Aherne, where a letter was handed in asking him to end his silence on the prisoner issue.

A minute's silence was observed for the two recently murdered H-Block campaigners, Noel Little and Ronnie Bunting, before the march headed back into the town. Cobh H-Block Action Committee is open to all and meets every Tuesday at the ITGWU Hall at 21, Harbour Row, Cobh.

DUNDALK

A MEETING to set up a H-Block action group was held in the Tavern Bar, Dundalk, on Wednesday 22nd October. The meeting, which was addressed by a former blanket man, attracted over one hundred people.

GALWAY

TWO hundred people filled the ITGWU Hall in Galway on Friday 17th October for a concert of traditional music and the showing of the POW film, organised by the Galway H-Block Action Committee. The audience heard a first-hand account of the treatment of women prisoners in Armagh from playwright Margaretta O'Arcy, and international support for the campaign from American feminist Kate Millett.

LIMERICK

AT A recent meeting of the Janesboro Residents' Association in Limerick, unanimous support was expressed for the prisoners' five demands.

NENAGH

AN action group was formed to cover Nenagh and the surrounding areas of North Tipperary at a meeting in the Conradh na Gaeilge hall in the town on Thursday 23rd October. A campaign of action was drawn up and a public meeting arranged for Nenagh on Friday 31st October. The action group is representative of all local political associations and includes many unassociated concerned individuals.

RATHCOOLE

THE public library at Rathcoole, County Dublin, was crowded on Monday 27th October for an H-Block meeting organised by the South County Dublin action group. Speakers at the meeting included former Fianna Fáil government minister Kevin Boland, former blanket man Charlie Crumley and Peter Cunningham of Sinn Féin.

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS: NORTH

BELFAST

BELFAST has again been the scene of a torrent of activity in support of the prisoners, as emotions have begun to mount.

On Thursday 23rd October a meeting attended by about forty-five young people from the Short Strand area established a 'Youth against H-Block' group in the area, to involve as many young people as possible in protest activities.

Subsequently 'Youth' groups have been established in other areas of Belfast. Also on Thursday evening, three torchlight processions were held: several hundred marched in St. James and Beechmount, while around two thousand protested in New Lodge.

A crowd of two hundred students at Queen's University, Belfast, heard a former blanket man and the mother of a blanket man address a meeting that day. Afterwards, the meeting unanimously called on all students in Britain and Ireland to support the prisoners' five demands, and voted to carry the students' union-banner on the Belfast march in accordance with the policy of the students' union, which supports political status. (A call for 'special category' status has also been taken up by the Ulster Polytechnic students' union, who on Wednesday placed a support advertisement in the 'Irish News'.)

On Friday evening, members of the RAC and St. James' action group interrupted a 'Chieftains' concert in Andersonstown and a dog-racing meeting in Celtic Park to read out a statement and take up a collection; in both venues the demonstrators were well received. And in the Markets, several hundred attended a mass in St. Malachy's Church before holding a public meeting at which former blanket man Raymond Crane spoke.

On Saturday, around two hundred people attended a local meeting in Andersonstown addressed by Jimmy Drumm, Mary McDermott and Leo Wilson, and by former blanket man Ned Flynn and Mrs. McCaughy — mother of Armagh protestor Brieghe Anne McCaughy.

On Sunday, a huge crowd attended the Belfast eve of hunger-strike march in the afternoon, while a special mass for the hunger-strikers was said in St. Peter's Pro-Cathedral in the Lower Falls that evening. (All over Belfast, special masses, rosaries and devotions are being said for the prisoners.)

On Monday 27th October, extensive road-blockings coincided with the start of the hunger-strike, with traffic being stopped at the 'Black Man', on the Antrim Road, at Cromac Square and May Street, and in the Short Strand. Later that evening more than five hundred people turned out for a torchlight procession in Short Strand, while in the Markets area during the afternoon construction workers on building sites and in local businesses downed tools in solidarity with the hunger-strikers.

On Tuesday, almost three hundred women occupied the recently opened Primark store in Belfast city centre and remained there displaying placards for almost two hours. In the evening, a similar number of people attended an indoor support meeting in Turf Lodge, while torchlight processions involving several hundred people took place in the Bore and in Lemnaden.

And on Wednesday evening, successful pickets — each involving several hundred people (except in Ardoyne where the crowd was almost one thousand strong) — staged protests outside barracks at: Andersonstown, Flax Street (Ardoyne), Hastings Street (Lower Falls), Springfield Road, Henry Taggart (Moyard), Fort Pegasus (Whiterock), Fort Jericho (Turf Lodge), North Queen Street, Mountpottinger (Short Strand) and Musgrave Street. Torchlight processions were then held in the Lower Falls and Ardoyne.

DERRY

OVER one thousand people took part in a march in Derry on Saturday 25th October in support of Pauline McLaughlin and H-Block



ABOVE: Protestors blocking Derry's Craigavon Bridge on Monday. BELOW: Vigil in the Markets area of Belfast

and Armagh protesters. The following day, about a thousand took part in a midnight eve-of-hunger-strike march to Derry's Guildhall Square.

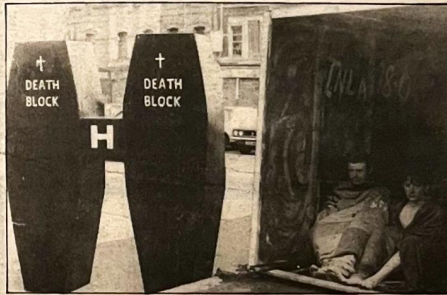
On Monday, several hundred demonstrators crippled the traffic flow into Derry by blocking the Craigavon Bridge for over an hour. Huge queues built up in the city centre and in the Waterside.

On Tuesday evening, more than one hundred demonstrators, attempting to enter Derry City Council's meeting in the Guildhall, came face to face with a group of loyalists protesting at the building of a GAA pitch in the Waterside. The council then decided to abandon its meeting, but is to meet an H-Block delegation.

Three protests took place on Wednesday: groups of about one hundred demonstrators occupied the premises of the local radio station, Radio Foyle, and of UTV, in the morning and afternoon. And in the early evening several hundred protesters assembled at the Diamond and marched down to Guildhall Square before marching on to Strand Road RUC barracks where they staged a protest for an hour.

In Dungiven, County Derry, an estimated one thousand people took part in a rally on Sunday, and in Strabane, coinciding with the Derry road-blocking, protestors blocked the bridge over the River Mourne, causing severe traffic congestion.

Strabane independent councillors



McCrory, James O'Kane, John O'Kane and O'Connell have signed the H-Block petition.

NEWRY

SUPPORT for the five demands of the prisoners has been forth coming from several local councillors in Newry.

A meeting last Wednesday was addressed by the chairman of Newry

and Mourne Council and SDLP councillor, Sean McEvoy, and by other councillors: Victor Fizzell (Alliance), Sean McCreesh (Independent), John Bell, Thomas McGrath and Arthur Ruddy (SDLP), and Jim Murphy and Eugene Markey (IIP). On Saturday a rally held in Newry was addressed by Councillors Sean McEvoy, Tommy McGrath and Sean McCreesh, and by Cyril Toman of Sinn Féin.

Meetings have been held outside chapels in the Newry area, meeting with a good response, in Ballymoyer, Newtownhamilton, Gullyhanna, etc. And devotions have been held for the protesting prisoners in Carrickananny chapel, which have been well attended.

TYRONE

THE high level of support in the Tyrone area has been indicated by activities over the last few days.

In Coalisland, on Saturday, about six hundred people attended a demonstration addressed by Paddy Bolger and Bernadette McAisley of the National H-Block Committee, Mrs Maura McKearney (the mother of a hunger-striker), and Brian McKeown of the local ex-prisoners' association.

The following day, after church-gate meetings in Augher and Clogher, three speakers, including Brian McKeown, were held by the RUC for a number of hours and questioned about H-Block activities, and speakers for after-mass meetings in Stewartstown were stopped by the RUC and prevented from reaching the mass. That day however, almost six hundred Tyrone people travelled by bus to support the march in Belfast.

On Monday, 27th October, the Cookstown/Omagh and Stewartstown/Coalisland roads were blocked by protestors, and in Dungannon the main Aughnacloy road and Ballygawley road were blocked for an hour. That evening a massive crowd of several thousand supported a torchlight procession in Dungannon, at which speakers included Sinn Féin activists Jim McGivern and Francis Molloy.

There was a further, sizable torchlight procession in Stewartstown on Tuesday night, and another well attended torchlight procession in Coalisland on Wednesday.

Recent RUC harassment has included the raiding of the H-Block Information Centre in Dungannon on the pretext of 'looking for under-age drinkers'.

duirt siad

"While the shame goes on, not only the cells of H-Block, but the entire land, lies in darkness."

American jesuit Fr. Daniel Berrigan, who was recently denied access to Britain's shameful H-Blocks, writing in 'the New York Times'.

"The demonstrations which have already occurred recall the high peaks of the 'Bloody Sunday' and internment days and unlike those moments of crisis, this protest comes after nearly five years of agitation, and much publicity, which has left the issue fairly generally understood throughout the country. On top of this, there's a strong nationally-based movement, spearheaded by the National H-Block Committee, to keep attention heightened."

A perceptive 'Irish Press' editorial, Monday/Tuesday October 27th/28th.

"How else can the decision of the government to allow all male prisoners in Northern Ireland to wear civilian clothes, be described, than as an act of madness?"

The editorial in last Friday's Belfast 'News Letter' summarising the loyalist stance on direct-ruler Atkins' pre-H-Block hunger-strike manoeuvres which they, the loyalists, viewed as a back-down to republican pressure.

"The basic principle is that prisoners, whatever their crimes are still human beings and must be treated as such. If our society is concerned as it is and must be, with the worth of all individual men and women, and if it believes that in the last resort what men have in common is more important than their differences, then it cannot treat as less than human those men it finds necessary to send to prison."

The British government's own report (I), produced in 1968 by the Younger committee on the treatment of long-term prisoners, the recommendations of which — on 'civilian-type' prison clothing and 'useful' work — observers believe could possibly form the basis of an H-Block settlement if the British adopted a flexible approach.

"The great English public wish they'd never heard of Northern Ireland. The most commonly-offered solution to the Irish problem is for Northern Ireland to be towed into the Atlantic and sunk."

'Irish Times' Northern editor David McKitterick on English chauvinism.

"I suppose it all depends on the accents used by the intruders. If they merely shout 'You fenian bastard' in an ordinary Ulster accent, the chances are that they are UDA or UVF or UDR (off-duty) or RUC (on or off duty). If, on the other hand, they shout 'Cor blimey you're a fenian bastard' then they will certainly be gallant lads of the British army."

'Homer' column, 'Andersonstown News', on how Northern nationalists should identify gangs of armed intruders who break into their homes, given the recent experience of residents in Belfast's Twinbrook estate.



Don't let them die!

TOMMY MCKEARNNEY aged 28 Moy, Co. Tyrone

THE McKearney family, like thousands of others has come in for intense harassment during the last decade.

Tommy's brother, Sean, was an IRA volunteer who was killed on active service in March 1974. Another brother, Padraig, is a republican prisoner on remand in Cumbin Road Jail.

Tommy was arrested in October 1977 and was taken to Dungannon RUC barracks and then to Castlereagh, where he went through seven days of interrogation and where he was physically beaten. Despite the fact that the police doctor, Robert Irwin, testified that Tommy was beaten, and that a key prosecution witness stated that Tommy was not one of those who held her at gunpoint, an alleged statement was ruled admissible and Tommy, after fourteen months on remand, was given a shooting of a UDR recommended sentence for the

recently released book about RUC interrogation, writes of Tommy:

"When Dr. Irwin saw him at Townhall Street a week later, he was pale, nervous and exhausted. He had a black eye that looked fairly recent and bruises whose colour suggested they were five to six days old. His forehead was swollen and many of the hairs at the back of the neck, forearm and abdomen were swollen and tender. His fingers were trembling."

"When he examined McKearney, Dr. Irwin was



angry. The prisoner had come from Castlereagh, pale and trembling, with a black eye, bruising and abrasions and no note from the Medical Officer. Castlereagh to explain how the injuries had been received."

Tommy's head and trunk had been covered with a black plastic sack and he had been beaten around the head whilst the bag was pulled tight around his throat. He had also been beaten on the stomach and had his fingers bent back.

Tommy was on the blanket in H3 Block since December 1978.

LEO GREEN aged 27 Lurgan, Co. Armagh

THE Green family, in Lurgan, have been subjected to intense harassment over the last ten years.

A few months after internment was introduced Leo's older brother, John, was arrested and interned in Long Kesh. He escaped from the Kesh in September 1973 but was assassinated just across the border at Mullish, County Monaghan in January 1975 by SAS gunmen who crossed from the North.

Leo's home has been raided regularly and on one occasion British soldiers stole jewellery and a sum of money out of the house. On another occasion Leo's 17-year-old sister was taken to Armagh back to the interrogation centre and made references to her mutilated brother and also made sexual innuendoes to her.

Leo was arrested in April 1977 and was badly beaten during five days of interrogation. He spent



SEAN MCKENNA aged 26 Newry, Co. Down

IN the early hours of internment day, Monday 9th August 1971, the McKenna's house in Newry — to where they had moved from their Monaghan home — was raided, and Sean, then aged 17, and his father, also called Sean, were arrested under the Special Powers Act.

Sean's father was taken away and interrogated for nine days and was subjected to the infamous hooded treatment and white noise. His case was among the worst taken to the European Court of Human Rights and the Commission ruled Britain guilty of torture. The premature death of Sean's father at the age of forty-two in 1975 is attributed to that torture.

After interrogation, young Sean was interned on the Maidstone Prison Ship and, later, he and his father, and several hundred other men, were transferred to Long Kesh.

Sean served the rest of his teenage years in internment and was released in February 1975. Shortly afterwards he moved back to his home, owned by his father in Edinubber, County Louth. By road the cottage was one-and-a-half miles from the border, but across fields it was just six hundred yards.

In the early hours of March 12th 1976 the front door of the cottage was smashed in and Sean was surrounded by SAS men in plain-clothes who dragged him out of bed. They said they would shoot him on the border and that if he or they would hand him in to the RUC, he would be spared. Playing for time, Sean took the wisest course of action and agreed to the latter proposal. The SAS men took him across fields into the North where he was put in a van and driven to Basbrook barracks.

His mother recalls: "I'll never forget that week. We searched for him everywhere. Rang hospitals. We discovered him missing from the Thursday and Friday morning papers. No word of him. No word of having him. Then on Monday morning I heard on the news that he would be appearing in court at status by twelve days."

RAY MCCARTNEY aged 25 Derry city

RAYMOND McCartney was only fourteen years old when he took an interest in and witnessed the civil rights protests on his native Derry streets.

Since then he has been in prison three times and has altogether served five-and-a-half years behind bars. His brother George was interned in



eleven". The SAS incursion into the South met with little objection from the Free State authorities. In the barracks, Sean had to answer any questions, but by this time too many witnesses had seen him for the SAS to assassinate him. He was kicked and beaten and kept in a dark room. After fourteen months on remand he was sentenced to twenty years for allegedly attempting to shoot an RUC man and has been 'on the blanket' since May 1977.

Because of his charges pre-date the March 1st withdrawal of the RUC, Sean would have been due for status had not the RUC, the date of IRA membership up until March 12th, the date of his arrest, thereby causing him to miss political status by twelve days.





accounted for Ray's movements, was ignored by the judge, who sentenced him to twenty-five years. Raymond's appeal against the conviction is to be heard within the next few months.

His mother says his reputation is 'Republican'. 'We taught our children right and wrong and we told them always to try to fight a wrong if they saw one. Well Raymond saw wrong being done in this country, and in his own way he is trying to rectify things.'

His father says of his decision to go on hunger-strike: 'He is a very determined person and would not enter into anything without carefully thinking it over. He told us he has programmed himself for this hunger-strike since the Pope's visit last year. As his family we are naturally concerned for him, but we will support him in every way we can.'



be piled on top of his 'sentence within a sentence'. This happened repeatedly and Tom never broke. One day the governor again came into Tom only to be utterly dumbfounded to find him reading a copy of that week's 'Republican News' in his bare and lonely cell. The governor didn't even bother to ask him if he read and sent him back to the H-Blocks.

Whilst in the Blocks Tom has been beaten and his food has been interfered with. He has a brother who is serving twelve years as a political prisoner in the Long Kesh cages, just a few hundred yards away from him.

old when he took an interest in and witnessed the civil rights protests on his native Derry streets. Since then he has been in prison about twenty times and has been in the H-Blocks for three years behind bars. His brother George was interned in Long Kesh and also spent a period on remand. Raymond's cousin, Jim Wray, was one of those murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday in January 1972.

In October 1972 Ray was charged with possessing a machine-gun but this was later withdrawn. Instead he was charged with possession of one round of ammunition and was jailed for one month. After his release he went on the run, avoiding internment.

He was arrested in October 1973 and was interrogated by British soldiers for three days before being interned in Long Kesh. He was released in March 1975 but was constantly harassed and held several times on three-day detention orders.

In February 1977 he was arrested and interrogated for seven days during which he was given a vicious beating by the RUC.

He was charged with killing the industrialist Geoffrey Agate and an RUC Special Branchman but Raymond strongly denied any involvement and a doctor testified that he had been beaten. Those charged with related offences were acquitted on the grounds that they had been beaten, and the vital evidence of witnesses, who

TOM McFEELEY aged 32 Dungiven, Co. Derry

TOM McFeeley and his wife Patricia have three children: Mary, aged 9; Rohan, aged 7; and Aine aged 5.

After much harassment in the North in the early seventies, Tom and his family moved South, but, in May 1974, he was arrested by the Free State authorities. However, in August 1974 he escaped from the jail in a mass break-out.

When he was re-arrested in the North, in May 1976, he was taken to Limerick RUC barracks where he was interrogated for seven days and beaten. On one occasion two of Tom's interrogators put a rubber tubing around his neck and choked him until he became unconscious; and his interrogators also burned him on his chin with cigarettes.

After nine months on remand he was jailed for twelve years for allegedly taking part in an armed raid and fourteen years for possession of a gun.

As a blanket man Tom has defied the prison regime at every available opportunity. For calling the men to attention before they went into their cells after Mass, he was beaten and put into long periods of solitary confinement, and he was segregated from the rest of the blanket men in an attempt to break his will.

In March 1978, in protest against these punishments (on this occasion after being held in solitary confinement for six weeks), he embarked upon a hunger-and-thirst strike. After eight days the prison administration gave in and he was released from solitary confinement.

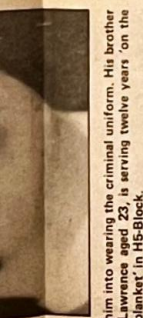
On another occasion in solitary confinement he again outwitted the authorities. Every few days the governor would come down to his cell and ask him if he would recant. When he ignored the governor, more days of solitary confinement would

natives available to us, we see no other way of ending this inhumanity. The Irish nation remains unfree, participated and at war with an alien government, torture in the prisons and oppression in the streets will always exist. And no different today than from the same old and the same old years ago, when the same alien government murdered Terence MacSwiney and young Kevin Barry.

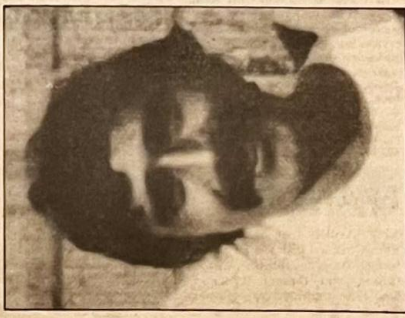
So, in the spirit of MacSwiney, and with the determination of eight centuries of uncompromising resistance, we the undersigned, of yet another Irish generation, declare our firm resolve to uphold those fundamental principles of right and justice, for there is no right in torture, and no justice in British justice.

We call upon the Irish nation to bear witness not only to our trials of inhumanity, but to the perennial wrong inflicted upon our nation by an alien government. We face death in the mind of those who are right. We leave our lives in the hands of the Irish nation and our souls to the most high God.

Signed,
Leo Green,
Brendan Hughes,
Ray McCartney,
Tom McFeeley,
Tommy McKearney,
Sean McKenna,
John Nixon.

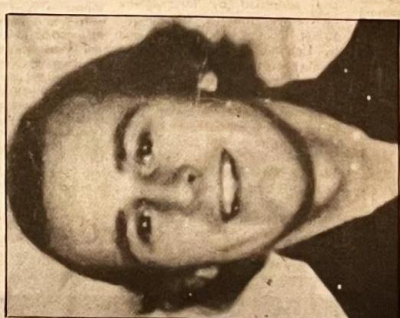


him into wearing the criminal uniform. His brother Lawrence aged 23, is serving twelve years 'on the blanket' in H-Block.



defence — he had attempted to stop the fight. This was ignored by the judge, who sentenced him to a further five years for assaulting a prison warder.

Brendan was then put in the H-Blocks where he went on the blanket since January 1978. He is in H5-Block.



fourteen years' imprisonment and has been 'on the blanket' ever since — he is in H5-Block. His brother, Leroy, aged 24, who was arrested in September 1975, has political status in the Long Kesh cages where he is serving eighteen years for allegedly attacking British forces. John has been beaten many times: on one occasion four prison warders attacked him and he was left with a black eye, cuts and bruises, and was then put in solitary confinement.

ation Leo's 17-year-old sister was taken to Armagh barracks where her interrogators made references to her murdered brother and also made sexual innuendoes to her.

Leo was arrested in April 1977 and was badly beaten before being sentenced to five years in the Long Kesh. His brother, who was sentenced in April 1978 to twenty-five years for allegedly killing an RUC man. He immediately went 'on the blanket' in H4-Block and there were many attempts to beat

BRENDAN HUGHES aged 32 Lower Falls, Belfast

BRENDAN'S father, Kevin, was interned in Cuntin Road jail in the forties. Brendan's brother, Terry, has been interned in Magilligan and Long Kesh in the second political prisoner in Long Kesh. His family, over the years, have suffered intense harassment and his father's home is regularly raided.

Brendan was arrested in June 1973 and was given a bad beating in Belfast's Springfield Road barracks. After interrogation he was interned at Long Kesh, from where he escaped in October 1973. Seven months later he was recaptured in a flat off Belfast's Malone Road, charged with possessing arms and ammunition, and sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment.

He had political status in the Long Kesh cages until January 1978, but as a result of an incident in the summer of 1977 he was stripped of political status and put in the H-Blocks.

His mother had insulted a prison guard and trouble spilled into the cages, where the prisoner was involved in a fracas with that particular warder. Brendan came out of the hut and according to evidence given in court by another warder, — which supported Brendan's

JOHN NIXON aged 25 Armagh city

THE Nixon family in Armagh city, and John in particular, have been the subject of British army harassment since the resistance mounted by nationalist ghettos after the introduction of internment.

In April 1973, John and his seventeen-year-old friend, James McGerrigan, were walking along the street having earlier been playing handball. A British soldier opened fire on them both, killing James McGerrigan and seriously wounding John, who spent two weeks in an intensive care unit. In order to 'justify' the murder the RUC subsequently charged John with possessing arms on the evening of the shooting.

Despite there being no forensic evidence, nor witnesses, the judge, on the word of a British soldier, sentenced John in February 1974, to five years' imprisonment. John then served as a political prisoner in Long Kesh.

John was released in July 1976 but, in December, he was arrested out of his Armagh home and taken to the local barracks where he was interrogated over a period of six days, before being charged with an armed raid on a post office. The evidence against him was the word of an RUC man who alleged that at the 'last minute' John made a verbal admission of guilt.

In September 1977, John was sentenced to

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS: ABROAD

AMERICA

THE highly successful extended speaking tours by former blanket men in America, in a campaign orchestrated by Irish Northern Aid, have received fresh impetus with the announcement of the H-Block hunger-strike.

Fra McCann, out on bail after his arrest by US immigration authorities, continues on a speaking tour of the East Coast, while Liam Carlin still successfully evades arrest and continues to speak and give interviews in California.

(Campaign co-ordinator, Belfast man Dessie Mackin, who faces extradition back to the North on charges arising out of a failed SAS murder bid against him, continues to receive messages of support, including from actress Jane Fonda, militant grape-pickers' trade union leader Cesar Chavez and two Canadian congressmen.)

The hunger-strike campaign in America kicked off with a successful torchlight rally held outside the British consulate in San Francisco on Sunday 26th October.

A second march and rally is planned in Chicago on November 3rd, again finishing in front of the British consulate. In New York, a national demonstration outside the British consulate has been called for November 8th while simultaneously demonstrations will be organised by Noraid in every city containing a large Irish-American population. All Irish-American organisations are being lobbied and mobilised to show their concern.

Pressure being exerted on President Jimmy Carter in the crucial run-up to the presidential elections by Mario Biaggi's Congressional ad-hoc Committee on Northern Ireland, after one hundred and thirty-three Congressmen sent Carter telegrams asking him to intervene in the H-Block issue to resolve the hunger-strike, has resulted in him issuing a statement in Washington to the Congressional Committee, in which he claims American investment would follow on a peaceful solution in Ireland.

That action, which, as commentators have pointed out, implies a recognition by Carter of the committee as a powerful ally, or a dangerous foe, will increase pressure on him to make a firmer statement of his position regarding the hunger-strike in the near future.

So worried at these implications are Unionist politicians in the six counties that they have sent Carter their own telegram urging him not to intervene, and are even considering sending a spokesman to America in an attempt to counter extremely successful Republican publicity.

BRITAIN

AN extensive campaign of pickets, demonstrations, meetings and lobbying, over the next few weeks,

has been drawn up in England, centred on London.

On Friday 24th October a torchlight march to Brixton jail to commemorate the sixteenth anniversary of Terence McSwiney's death on hunger-strike, organised by the RCT, attracted about two hundred people. Also that night, Ann Boyle and Maire O'Hare, two of five Belfast H-Block activists travelling to England, were held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) at Heathrow Airport on their way to Saturday's Socialist Feminist Conference in London.

Rather than disrupting the campaign however, the conference centred firmly on the question of Ireland as a result of the arrests. The conference's plenary session issued a statement supporting Irish resistance to British occupation, and Armagh prison protestors, and condemned the arrests and the PTA. (Labour MP's Jo Richardson and Clive Soley also 'condemned the arrests'.)

A large meeting held to discuss the arrests attracted more than six hundred people, who then went on to join a protest taking place, simultaneously, outside Downing Street, where three Belfast Relatives Action Committee members — Lily Fitzsimmons, Eileen McMillan and former Armagh protestor Rose McAllister — were undertaking a twenty-four hour hunger-strike. The feminists then went on to picket Rochester Row police station where Ann Boyle and Marie O'Hare were being held.

Also on Saturday, local Troops Out Movement branches and London IRSP held four meetings in London, while further demonstrations were organised by Sinn Féin and the RCT.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, police arrested thirteen people after H-Block and Armagh slogans had been prominently displayed on the National Gallery and other public monuments; four were later charged with 'criminal damage'.

That day, over twenty thousand leaflets were distributed at a massive anti-nuclear demonstration, and in the evening a picket was again mounted outside Rochester Row police station. Rose McAllister, too, was arrested under the PTA on her journey home to Belfast, and as we go to press both her and Ann Boyle are still being held, though Maire O'Hare has been released.

On Monday, a much-publicised and controversial press conference organised by Charter '80, was hosted in the House of Commons by Labour MP Ernie Roberts, and addressed by Mrs. Maura McKearney (mother of hunger-striker Tommy McKearney) and by Deborah Devenny (sister of blanket protestor Kieran Smyth).

At the press conference, which provoked outrage from right-wing Tories the following day, Ernie Roberts announced a demonstration in support of the prisoners on November 7th, and Charter '80 press officer Steve Dawe (Young Liberal national chairperson) announced a forty-eight-hour hunger-strike in Downing Street, beginning on December 7th.

On Tuesday, an interview with Mrs McKearney received extensive coverage

on the local LBC radio station, and Deborah Devenny and Charter '80 member Gerry Fitzpatrick took part in a successful phone-in programme on LBC.

An unprecedented number of meetings will be taking place in London in the coming weeks and a new film on the H-Blocks is being prepared, which will be available from November 7th, bookable through The Other Cinema: telephone 01-734-8508.

BIRMINGHAM

An hysterical campaign has been unleashed by the Birmingham media following the circulation of a petition calling on humanitarian grounds for the five demands of the prisoners to be granted, which was signed by eight local Labour councillors as well as by over thirty prominent local trade unionists.

Quit — Eight in IRA storm are told, screamed one front page headline in the 'Birmingham Mail', referring to the Labour councillors who signed the petition, while the 'Birmingham Post' claimed there is something 'alarmingly naive' about councillors signing such a petition without supposing this will be taken to mean support for the IRA. As usual in such cases, of course, the local press is creating and manipulating the 'outraged' response which it claims merely to reflect.

The predictable outcome came last Monday when a two-hundred-strong march organised by the Birmingham hunger-strike action committee was attacked by fascist National Front thugs hurling bricks and bottles, while the police presence was not in evidence until demonstrators had successfully fought off the National Front.

The day before, a blanket protest was staged outside St. Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham, leaflets distributed and the H-Block petition signed by half the congregation. To date, one thousand signatures have been collected in Birmingham and twenty thousand hunger-strike leaflets distributed.

When Brit Prince Charles visited the British Leyland Longbridge plant on Wednesday 22nd October, to officially launch the new Mini Metro, he was met at the gate by protestors waving H-Block placards.

WALES

At the recent annual conference of the Welsh nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, the following motion was adopted almost unanimously: "In view of the recent statement that the prisoners held in deplorable and barbaric conditions in Lough Kesh are now committed to a hunger-strike until death in an effort to achieve political status, this conference condemns the British Government's treatment of these prisoners and the fact that they are denied political status, and supports their attempt to achieve justice in the struggle for Irish independence. Plaid Cymru will actively support Charter '80 in its campaign for political status for Irish prisoners of war and will mobilise its membership into the activities of Charter '80."

CANADA

A MOTION passed last month unanimously by a local branch of the United



Belfast RAC protestors on taken hunger-strike at Downing Street — former Armagh prisoner Rose McAllister (left) and Lily Fitzsimmons

Food and Commercial Workers Union, in Regina, Saskatchewan, draws attention to documented evidence of prisoners being beaten and tortured, deprived of food and sanitation and confined to their cells, and calls on the Canadian Labour Convention to investigate H-Block conditions with a view to calling for the return of political status. As a next step, the local branch has submitted the resolution to the province's Federation of Labour Convention, which represents 160,000 workers in Saskatchewan.

DENMARK

THE Danish left socialist party, Ventr Socialisterne (VSI) has come out in support of the prisoners.

The six VS members of the Danish parliament have tabled a motion of support which the socialist and Social Democratic opposition have pledged to back. One of the six local mayors of Copenhagen has also pledged his support for the hunger-strikers and more of his colleagues are expected to follow suit.

FRANCE

A SPEAKING tour of France by former blanket man Kieran Nugent, former Armagh protestor Maureen Gibson, and Dermot Whelan of Sinn Féin, organised by the newly-formed National Committee for the Defence of Irish Political Prisoners (NCDDIPP) survived an early sabotage attempt by the Free State government when Maureen Gibson was first arrested by Special Branch in Dublin and held for a day in the Bridewell, and then detained for an hour at Orly airport near Paris after Free State authorities had contacted French immigration authorities apparently in the hope that the delegation would be deported.

However, the intervention of an official from the CGT (France's largest trade union) secured their release, and at a highly successful press conference the following morning, jointly organised by the NCDDIPP and the French section of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (the international League for Human Rights), upwards of thirty-five journalists representing the bulk of the French

national press were in attendance. The following day one newspaper described conditions in H-Block and Armagh with a front-page banner headline which read: 'Human Beings in Hell'.

On Tuesday afternoon Georges Marchais, secretary-general of the French Communist Party and a Euro-MP, during a meeting with the British Ambassador demanded the release of all Irish political prisoners and requested a visit to the H-Blocks.

Also on Tuesday, the influential French TV Channel 2 gave five minutes coverage to the H-Block issue on two occasions during the day. And the paper, 'L'Humanite' carried interviews with Maureen Gibson and Kieran Nugent.

GERMANY

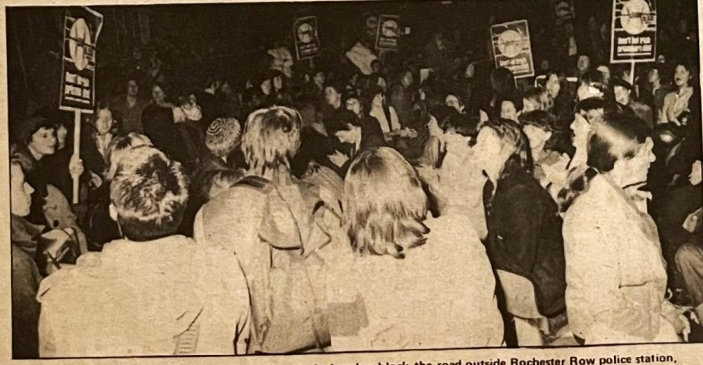
THE West German Irish solidarity group (WISK) mounted a picket on the British consulate in Frankfurt last weekend, in solidarity with the Republican hunger-strikers.

QUEBEC

TO MARK the tenth anniversary on October 16th, of the 'October crisis' in Quebec when, following the kidnapping of a British trade minister and a local politician by the now defunct FLQ, the Canadian government declared a state of insurrection in the largely French province, Quebec's three trade union federations organised a march in Montreal calling for an amnesty for the remaining five FLQ prisoners and the abolition of the decade-old repressive War Measures Act. Four thousand people took part in the march in which an H-Block/Armagh solidarity banner was carried by Irish republican supporters who distributed one thousand leaflets.

Two nights later the Comité d'Information sur les Prisonniers Politiques (CIIPP) put on a solidarity evening for the FLQ prisoners. Over two and a half thousand people attended the event at which the message from the H-Block men announcing the hunger-strike was read out in French. A message was also read out from Sinn Féin calling for the abolition of the War Measures Act and amnesty for the FLQ prisoners.

Further coverage of the H-Block and Armagh issue came when a CIIPP member was interviewed on local radio and made a comparison between Irish political prisoners and their Quebecois counterparts.



Women from the socialist feminist conference in London block the road outside Rochester Row police station, where two Belfast H-Block activists — Ann Boyle and Maire O'Hare — were being held last weekend under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

FIFTH ACQUITTAL IN SEVEN YEARS

Remand victim

BY B. SLOANE

KEVIN MULGREW, aged 25, from North Belfast, was released from Crumlin Road jail, last Friday, October 24th, following his fifth acquittal in seven years, during which time he has spent nearly three years imprisoned on remand, or more precisely, interned on remand.

His release signifies — on past performances — not the end of a nightmare, but another very brief interlude in a bloody-minded and determined campaign by the RUC to keep him behind bars.

His first arrest came in September 1973 when the RUC at North Queen Street barracks charged him with IRA membership on the basis of documents he was alleged to have been carrying. However, in their haste to secure a quick conviction, the RUC framed the charge incorrectly and were subsequently ordered to release him from Long Kesh and drop all charges.

BEATINGS

He was arrested again in October 1976 and taken to Castlereagh where several RUC men claimed to have witnessed him planting a bomb in Belfast's city centre. His persistent denials led to a series of late-night visits by plain-clothes RUC men who took him to the deserted interview rooms for 'softening-up', leaving him with perforated eardrums and extensive

bruising to the head and body.

Despite these beatings Kevin maintained his innocence and, in February 1977, after he had been held on remand in Crumlin Road jail, for five months, all charges were dropped without explanation. (A subsequent claim for personal injuries was hastily settled out of court by the RUC.)

GUARDING

In November of the same year, four British soldiers were staking-out business premises in Duncairn Gardens when IRA Volunteers planted a bomb in one of the shops that the Brits were supposed to be guarding. The unit got away safely but the RUC again arrested Kevin Mulgrew, charged him with the bombing and put him back into Crumlin Road jail.

At his trial fourteen months later, in early 1979, the Brits'

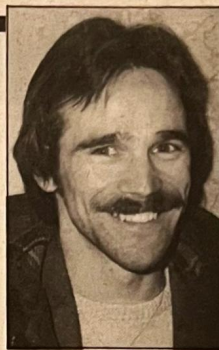
accounts were so hopelessly muddled and mutually conflicting that the judge ordered an immediate acquittal. Any joy Kevin might have felt at his release, however, was to be short-lived for in September the RUC were back.

On the word of a paid British army informer, Stephen McWilliams, he was arrested with several others, including Ardoyne republican Martin Meehan, and all were charged with IRA membership and kidnapping McWilliams. When McWilliams was shown to have lied under cross-examination in court, in March of this year, the judge ordered Kevin Mulgrew's release even before the defence put its case. (The others received twelve years apiece.)

CHASE

Instead of being released, however, Kevin was returned to jail to await trial on a further, and unrelated, charge.

In this case the British army said that they had identified Kevin as the man who had produced a gun during a chase. Their statements were corroborated by two RUC men whose written evidence was submitted nine months after the alleged incident. When it was



KEVIN MULGREW

pointed out in court that Kevin had been in jail on all the dates referred to by the RUC men, the judge ordered his acquittal. It took thirteen months from Kevin's initial arrest to his court appearance and subsequent release.

Like anyone else, falsely accused and imprisoned, Kevin will receive no compensation of any kind for his suffering.

Instead, because of death threats from the RUC and British army, he has been forced to leave his home and friends to seek obscurity at a new address. He is not confident that this obscurity will last very long and has in fact instructed his solicitor to log the bizarre events with Amnesty International in the hope that this will in some way slow down the relentless pursuit.

Bunting widow points accusing finger at SAS

SUZANNE BUNTING, the widow of assassinated IRSP member Ronnie Bunting has pointed an accusing finger at the SAS.

From her Belfast hospital bed — where she is recovering from serious wounds sustained when her husband and his comrade Noel Little were shot dead — mother-of-three Suzanne, aged 31, has given an interview, with the aid of a voice box, to the 'Irish News' in which she said: "The SAS were responsible for the double murder. There is absolutely no doubt about it."

In the early morning of Wednesday 15th October, two gunmen broke down the door of the Bunting home in Andersonstown. She recalls: "Ronnie came to bed at about one o'clock, and at about half-three we heard banging downstairs. We both jumped out of bed, but by the time we got up, the men were already pushing in the bedroom door."

Suzanne says she and her hus-

band tried to force the door closed "but then the shooting started and I fell back on the bed. The next moment, two men were in the room and started shooting Ronnie."

She jumped on the back of one of the men, whom she described as 'cool and calm' but he continued to shoot at her husband. She was shot herself, three times in the side, back and hand.

"While I still struggled with one of the men, the other left, casual like, without a care, and as he walked downstairs, he called: 'Come on George' — or 'George'. The other man then left, walking down the stairs backwards and it was

then he shot me in the mouth," she says.

Suzanne says the attackers were dressed in a khaki-type uniform: "They wore those green ribbed pullovers with suede patches on the shoulders and ski-type masks which covered their whole faces with only holes for the eyes."

"I still can't get over it. They knew which rooms to find Ronnie and Noel in. Noel was in the spare room with my young son — but they did not touch my child."

The interview was published in Tuesday's 'Irish News', provoking a response in Wednesday's 'Irish Times' from that newspaper's Northern editor and UDA 'confidant' David McKitterick

that members of the UDA were responsible for the double killing 'according to reliable sources'; that 'claims that the SAS carried out the assassinations are inaccurate'; and that the UDA was also responsible for the assassination earlier this year of IRSP leader John Turnly and former IRSP leader Miriam Daly.

The UDA obviously regard these killings as prestige 'operations' for which they want the 'credit'.

The 'conspiracy theory' lying behind the claims of SAS responsibility for the killing of the three IRSP members, previously floated in 'Hibernia' and the 'Sunday World', is that a squad of SAS men have been personally authorised by Brit premier Thatcher in a revenge 'wipe-out' mission for the death of her friend Airey Neave, assassinated by the INLA.

TV AD-MAN QUITS BRITS

ONE of the British army's television recruiting adverts features an enthusiastic gym instructor — Corporal George Napier — training young soldiers.

But twenty-five-year-old Corporal Napier has just bought himself out of the army because he did not want to serve again in the North of Ireland, according to last weekend's Scottish 'Sunday Mail'. The ex-soldier is now unemployed having paid £180 to leave the army after nine years' service.

"I had two reasons," he explains. "I had already done two tours in Belfast, and when I heard the battalion was going back for two more years, I didn't fancy the boredom and discomfort there again. And my wife and I did not want to take our new baby there."

As his wife Alison, says: "The money is good — but it doesn't make up for losing your husband." The corporal quit the army on the same day as four other experienced soldiers — all, he thinks, "because we had had enough of Ireland."

George Napier comes from a military family and joined up at sixteen but he now observes sensibly: "The older, mature person who's served in Ulster doesn't want to go

again — it's only the kids straight out of the pub who think it's great."

"There is massive boredom, and the living conditions are bad. Too much of your time is spent doing nothing — and thinking what might happen."

What might happen also worried his wife, Alison: "While he was over there last time, I used to rush into the kitchen when the TV news came on — I didn't want to hear."

George Napier added: "I didn't want to spend another two years without seeing my wife or son, so that really decided it for me." Which is something, as the 'Sunday Mail' observed, that the British army does not intend to use in its commercials.



Nevertheless, the rate of recruitment into the British is currently said by them to be good from their point of view: the official (and correct) explanation from the Ministry of Defence is: "the pay has gone up, and there is high unemployment."

The 'Sunday Mail' — on the same centre-pages as its article on Corporal George Napier, 'Why I've left the Professionals' — carries another article, about a foolish teenager, Jim Barr, on 'Why I'm joining up'. Jim Barr, aged 16, of 13 Jura Court, Dregghon, is the only one in his class at Greenwood Academy, Irvine, who has any pro-

spect of a job. But, he says: "My parents were shocked when I told them I was going into the army."

He is intending to sign up with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He says: "I've thought about having to serve in Ulster. It's not worried me too much. As a REME man I won't be patrolling the streets getting shot at." He hopes.

WHAT'S ON

DUBLIN
NOVEMBER CEREMONIES
National Graves Association
Friday 31st October

Liberty Hall
7.30 p.m. Lecture on Tom Barry ambushes by Robert Gahan, with songs, recitations and music.

Sunday 2nd November
10.45 a.m. Mass for all who died for Ireland
St Joseph's Church
Berkley Road

11.45 a.m. Ceremony at patriot graves
Mountjoy Prison
12.15 p.m. Tribute to 'Bald Fenian Men'
Manchester Martyrs' Cenotaph
Glasnevin Cemetery

ARMAGH PLAY
1 p.m. Wednesday 5th November
Swift Theatre, Arts Block
Trinity College

DUBLIN
Speaker: Margaretta D'Arcy
Organised by
Students against H-Block and Armagh

HUNGER STRIKE RALLY
8 p.m. Thursday 6th November
Mansion House
DUBLIN
Organised by Sinn Féin

CROSS-BORDER H-BLOCK MARCH
3 p.m. Saturday 8th November
Assemble Inisfree Gardens
FROM STRABANE
TO LIFFORD
Organised by
Strabane H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK RALLY
2.30 p.m. Saturday 8th November
Shopping centre
BALLYMUN
Dublin
Organised by Sinn Féin

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 8th November
CORK
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 8th November
LIMERICK
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 8th November
GALWAY
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 8th November
LEITRIM
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

NATIONAL H-BLOCK COLLECTION
Sunday 9th November
throughout the country
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

EDENTUBBER COMMEMORATION
3 p.m. Sunday 9th November
Assemble at Border Inn
Newry Road
Co. Louth
All nationally-minded organisations
welcome to attend.

DEMONSTRATION
FOR A BRITISH WITHDRAWAL
AND FOR IRISH UNITY
1 p.m. Saturday 15th November
Assemble: Embankment
LONDON
Organised by
Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 15th November
WATERFORD
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 15th November
DONEGAL
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK MARCH
Saturday 15th November
NAVAN
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

H-BLOCK CONFERENCE
FOR TRADE UNIONISTS
Sunday 16th November
DUBLIN
Organised by
National H-Block Committee

AONACH NA NOLLAG
Christmas Fair
5th, 6th, 7th December
Mansion House
DUBLIN

Campaign against unemployment

DUBLIN Council of Trade Unions, at its October meeting, has passed a motion instructing the Executive Council of Trades Councils to plan a campaign of meetings, demonstrations and work stoppages to highlight the dramatic loss of jobs due to redundancies and closures and the continued impact on jobs arising from the cut-back in public expenditure by the Free State government. They also call for the establishment of a council of unemployed trade unionists.

As a result of the Dublin action and a similar approach by the Meath Trades Council, a full-scale thirty-two county campaign is to be launched at the AGM of trades councils in Ballina in November.

The opening shot in the campaign will be a demonstration to Leinster House on Saturday 15th November.

Limerick residents not amused

RESIDENTS of four Limerick housing estates are campaigning against the opening of an amusement arcade in a local shopping centre.

The residents who live in Janesboro, Rathbane, Kennedy Park and Southill fear that the arcade, which will consist of snooker tables and electronic games, will eventually include gambling machines, and as such will have a detrimental effect on the youth of the area. Whilst they feel that there is certainly a need for facilities for young people in this area, the local people do not believe that an 'amusement' arcade run by businessmen, whose only interest is making a quick and easy profit, can satisfactorily fulfil this need.

Galway oil terminal refusal condemned

SINN FEIN in Galway has condemned the decision of Galway Corporation to refuse planning permission for a £2 million oil terminal as part of the Harbour Authority's plan for the development of the port. "This decision" they say "will prejudice the jobs and earning potential of many Galway workers, oil workers, dockers, harbour staff, oil rig workers and many others in a city already suffering a high unemployment rate of 22% of its potential workforce."

The refusal is ironic when existing storage capacity in the Free State is unable to hold the ninety days supply laid down, much of which is being held in British terminals. Sinn Fein in Galway will join the campaign against this decision already launched by the Harbour Board and ITGWU.

ARD FHEIS CRECHE

There will be a creche provided at this year's Sinn Fein Ard Fheis for the children of all delegates and visitors. The creche will be open whilst the Ard Fheis is in session.

ARD FHEIS RAFFLE

Counterfoils and cash for the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis Raffle should be returned to the National Finance Committee, 44, Parnell Square, Dublin, or to the NFC table at the Ard Fheis.

ACID TEST FAILED

BY KEVIN BURKE

THERE WAS AN international jazz festival in Cork, last weekend, which also happened to be the venue of the Free State Labour Party conference. But Ella Fitzgerald, Marty Grosz and Arne 'Papa Blue' Jensen certainly had more to offer the Irish people than Frank Cluskey, Michael O'Leary and, inevitably, Conor Cruise O'Brien.

Absolute dishonesty was the order of the day at this irrelevant gathering as the Labour Party dusted off its eleven-year-old 'socialist' programme designed apparently to overthrow capitalism.

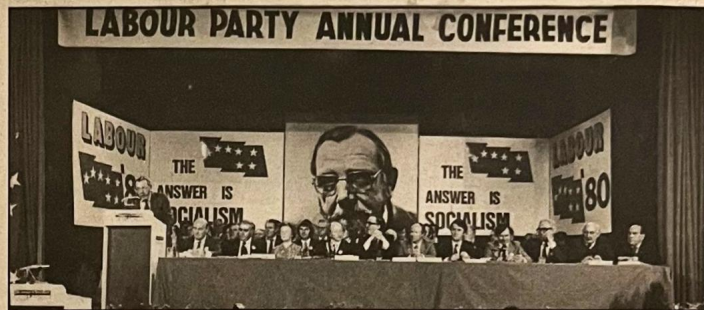
Fine Gael must wait this time, because Labour intends to go it alone at election time offering the socialist alternative, and only joining a new coalition government if Fine Gael joins the anti-capitalist onslaught.

However, party leader Frank Cluskey was at great pains to stress that voters, having given their first preferences to the new left should carry on down the card to vote for the old right, to make the 'unwanted' coalition possible. He somehow failed to wipe away the vision of Labour Leinster House members tripping over each other as they rushed for the black Mercedes which would be put on offer in a hung election.

LANDSLIDE

The Labour Party's socialism is to do with attempting to halt the landslide fall in their support in the trade unions which is causing them so much concern.

At the same time any appeal they may make to their electoral support has to be framed in working-class needs particularly in this period of economic hardship. And Fine Gael are thus freed to appeal,



Last weekend's Cork conference over-shadowed by Frank Cluskey — if his address is to be believed then the major problem in the North is not military repression but economic recession, which apparently needs 'power-sharing' to solve it.

financially as well as electorally, to their normal supporters among the businessmen and big farmers. Making a happy arrangement all round for these two groups of hardened cynical politicians.

If anyone was interested then they could go through the socialist programme offered by the Labour Party, picking holes here, exposing defects there, leaving the thing very much in rags. Or, perhaps, comparing its proposals with the performance of Labour Party ministers in government, such as when one of them paid £10 million of public funds into the private purses of a handful of individuals at Bula mines for the natural mineral resources of the country.

ACID TEST

But the acid test for any socialists is how do they stand up to the presence of an imperialist power in their country and what do they propose as a means of ending the ensuing military, political,

social and economic repression. In the case of the Free State Labour Party 'socialists' the answers are, respectively, 'they do not' and 'nothing'.

Nowhere at the party conference was there any condemnation of the assaults on the nationalist population in the North from the British army, the UDR, the RUC or any of their loyalist back-up forces.

If Frank Cluskey's address to the conference is to be believed the major problem in the North is that it is going through an economic crisis which apparently needs 'power-sharing' to solve it. (And in the major interview on RTE on Sunday, traditionally given by the Free State party leaders at Ard Fheis time to air their deepest thoughts, the North was not mentioned at all.)

DISHONESTY

There was an attempt made by some delegates to raise the issue of the prisoners in H-Block

and Armagh on humanitarian grounds. But this the conference rejected, with acting general secretary Seamus Scallan in a speech of monumental dishonesty blaming the hunger-strike on the IRA leadership — the efforts of whom, in fact, have been widely acknowledged as being the only reason why it has been delayed for so long.

Conor Cruise O'Brien made his usual contribution on the North (and received his usual warm welcome from his comrades): this time attacking fellow coalition minister and party member Justin Keating for purporting to favour British withdrawal in a recent press interview.

Small wonder that there is no Labour Party presence on any local council in the border counties of Donegal, Cavan, Leitrim and Monaghan, or for that matter such traditionally nationalist areas like Roscommon and Longford. The wonder is that there is a Labour Party presence elsewhere.

SINN FEIN ARD FHEIS PREVIEW

BY DAMIEN O'ROURKE

Lively debate expected

THE 1980 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, which takes place in Dublin this weekend will obviously be dominated by the hunger-strike in the H-Blocks. But the Ard Fheis will also opportunely serve to place the prisoners' struggle in the context of the overall struggle for a socialist republic.

Probably the one section which will attract the liveliest debate is that dealing with 'Women's Affairs'.

That discussion will centre around a new policy document entitled 'Women in the New Ireland', which is being presented to the Ard Fheis by the Ard Comhairle, and which proposes the establishment of a specific Sinn Fein department of Women's Affairs.

There promises to be some controversy surrounding the document particularly, perhaps, in deciding attitudes to contraception and abortion, and one Kildare cumann is proposing almost twenty deletions from the draft policy.

In all there are twenty-nine resolutions in the women's affairs section, which will be discussed on Saturday afternoon. Such a discussion has been long-awaited.

FEDERAL

There should also be interesting debate around Sinn Fein's federal policy with six motions on the card proposing that federal proposals be dropped whilst four argue for its retention.

Perhaps linked to this new look at federalism are several resolutions dealing with 'Organisation', including one from the Ard Comhairle

which express severe reservations about the effectiveness of Sinn Fein's own 'federal' Comhairli Cuigi, some proposing their abolition.

DOCUMENT

A number of resolutions follow up the 'Social Economic and Political Dimensions' document which was adopted at the last Ard Fheis.

There is some indication from around the country of deeper thinking about proposals in the docu-

ment with Cork looking for policies to be developed in the vital area of micro-chip technology and Belfast proposing the deletion of the glib support in the document for a current 'Buy Irish' campaign.

The Ard Comhairle has four resolutions in this section which are apparently aimed at toning down parts of the document dealing with land and property ownership and private enterprise.

WITHDRAWAL

Perhaps one of the most important resolutions on the card is one from Belfast Sinn Fein which proposes a change in Sinn Fein policy from a demand for a phased British withdrawal to a call for immediate withdrawal and simultaneous the disbandment and disarming of the

UDR and RUC by the British.

This motion was on the card of the last Ard Fheis but was not taken for debate despite the determined lobbying of some Belfast delegates. This time it looks certain to be discussed and will inevitably bring delegates into a sober consideration of how to deal with the loyalist monster.

Another set of resolutions, this time on organisation, provides an ironic comment on standard electoral democracy even inside Sinn Fein. Whilst several cumann have submitted resolutions asking that Ard Comhairle members give an account of their work in the year before elections, the Ard Comhairle itself proposes that no such pen-pictures appear on future nominees' lists. Perhaps next year delegates will be expanding their thoughts on democracy and proposing recallable delegates at all levels?

SERIOUS

The section on prisoners, which has been given extended time on Sunday, reflects the growing concern and determination on the issue, with proposals for extra demonstrations and the provision of more finance from the cumann.

Other resolutions cover such widespread areas as electoral policy in the North, more efficient publicity, development of the Sinn Fein education programme, and calls for youth and trade union conferences. Debate in recent years has been of an increasingly informed and serious level. Resolutions on this year's card indicate that this trend is continuing.



Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, January 1980.

KEVIN BARRY

60th ANNIVERSARY

COMMEMORATION



KEVIN BARRY
— hunger-strikers are his inheritors

UNDETERRED by driving rain, over six hundred people marched the half mile from Carthy's Cross to Rathvilly in County Carlow last Sunday to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the execution of Kevin Barry by the British in Mountjoy jail, Dublin, on November 1st 1920. Rathvilly is the village where Kevin Barry attended school for a number of years whilst living on the family farm at Tombeagh, Hacketstown.

The march was led by a large colour party of Na Fianna Éireann and Cumann na gCailiní from Dublin and Dundalk. The commemoration, organised by Sinn Féin, was opened by local republican Tom Kenny and wreaths were laid on behalf of local residents, Carlow Sinn Féin and various branches of the Republican Movement.

CROWE

Sean Crowe, director of the Sinn Féin youth department, gave an address in which he linked the torture endured by Kevin Barry with the sufferings of the men in H-Block and the women in Armagh. "The same system of repression,

which Barry endured, continues today", he said.

"He recognised the foremost enemy as British imperialism. But he also made it clear, in an essay which he wrote on 'Industrial Unrest' in 1913, that he stood with the workers against the grasping capitalists", as he put it. We must follow his principles until we bring about the fruit of his efforts — a thirty-two county socialist republic."

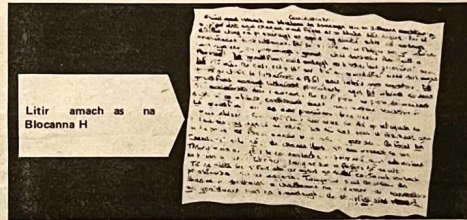
Ó CONAILL

Daithí Ó Conaill, vice-president of Sinn Féin, gave the main oration. In an impassioned speech, he recalled the suffering of Kevin Barry,

who as a Volunteer in the IRA had carried out numerous operations against the crown forces in the streets of his native Dublin. Recommending his listeners to draw inspiration from Barry's life and death, he said that the men on hunger-strike in the H-Blocks are the inheritors of Kevin Barry's ideals and means.

He said that the Irish people must not allow coffins to be carried out of the H-Blocks and that the British government must see the folly of their malicious prison policy and concede the prisoners' five demands or be overwhelmed by the wrath of the Irish people. The commemoration concluded with the playing of Amhrán na bh-Fiann.

Coinniollacha



dúinn dul amach go dtí an cíos le lúthaíocht a fháil uair amháin gach seachtain, dá gcaitfimis éadaigh lúthaíochta an phríosúin. Mura mbheadh a fhios agat faoin saol anseo, shíleáir go bhog na húdaráis, ag laghdú an bhrú ar na príosúnaigh. Ach ní siad ag bogadh, agus ag féachaint arís ar na pointí tá focal amháin le feiceáil i ngach chas. An focal — dá, Coinniollacha i gcoinní.

Níl aon athrú ar an saol. Thosaigh muid an agóid le coinní-

ollacha a chríochnú, agus admhaíonn na húdaráis é sin. Bhí na fógraí tuaiscra scríofa i litreacha beaga ag bun an ailt. Bhí siad ag iarraidh na coinniollacha seo a bhrú ar fhir a bhí ag agóid, ag dúitú éadach an phríosúin a chaitheamh. Sin an magadh.

Tá siad ag tairiscint soip do dhaoine atá ag agóid i gcoinne éadach phríosúin a chaitheamh ar coinnioll go gcaitheadh siad éadach an phríosúin. An dtuigfidh siad choicé?

dos na mná a chuaigh go dtí an leithreas gan cead. Bhagaí siad orthu go dtabharfaí an bheith dóbáid dá mbheadh trí fólaireamh acu. An Aoiné ina dhiaidh cuireadh cúigear chun bóthair agus chuaigh cuid eile des na mná amach in éineacht leo.

Anois tá an ceardchumann ag dúitú an stailc a fhógáir oifigiúil in ainneoin go bhfuil mórchuid den fhoireann oibre ar stailc. Léiríu an-mhaith é seo ar leisce a bhíonn ar fheidhmeannaigh na gceardchumann stailc a fhógáir oifigiúil.

IONSÁÍ

Tá tuairim ag na mná gur úsáideadh an riall chun fáil réidh le cuid den lucht oibre. Oireann sé don bhainistíocht fáil réidh le hoibrithe ar an mbealach seo mar fuair siad suim mhór airgid ón CEE le déanaí agus ní theastaíonn uathu bóthar a tabhairt do dhaoine ar an ngáth-bealach ag an seo.

Chomh maith le sin má éiríonn leis an mbainistíocht beidh éiríthe ea fáil réidh leis na mná is gníomhaí sa cheardchumann agus beidh an chuid eile des na mná fágtha gan ceannaire.

Is ionann aon ionsaí ar chearta na mban agus ionsaí ar an gcine daonna ar dh. Seasaimís leo chun a chearta a bhaint amach.



IN MEMORIAM

BLAKE, Peter; DRUMM, Maire; MAQUIRE, Dorothy; MEEHAN, Maurs; MCKUSHER, Seamus; MCGOLDRICK, Tom; MCKENNA, Martin. Clonard Martyrs Sinn Féin cumann remember with pride their friends and comrades from the Clonard area and from Sinn Féin who died this month. Mary Queen of Ireland pray for them.

MCKUSHER, Seamus. (5th Anniversary). In memory of our dear comrade Seamus. We will not take any steps backwards, our steps will be onward for if we don't,

the ghosts of our martyrs who died for you, for me, for our country, will haunt us into eternity. Always remembered by the Seamus McKusker Sinn Féin cumann, North Belfast.

MCKENNA, Martin. (1st Anniversary). The officers and members of the Martin McKenna Sinn Féin cumann, Edmonstone, remember with pride always in our thoughts, comrade Martin who died tragically on October 23rd 1979. Fuair sé bás ar son saoirse. A Socialist Republican, our steps will be onward for if we don't, true memorial.

MCDONNELL, The Republican Movement in Tipperary extend sympathy to the McDonnell family, Carrigrohane, Nenagh, on the recent death of their mother.

Sympathy

Solidarity Greetings

CLARKE, Danny. (H-Block). Solidarity greetings, Danny, on completing three years on the blanket. From father, brothers and sisters.

MCFARLANE, Brendan. (H-Block). Solidarity greetings to you, Brendan. Keep up your just struggle, victory to you and all your comrades on protest for political status. From Máiréad in Oslo and the Ireland Committee in Trondheim, Norway.

MCKEARNY, Tommy. (H-Block). Solidarity with you Tommy, and all your brave comrades, with pride and love from your sister Margaret, Jim and baby Margaret. We are behind you all the way.

MCMULLAN, Jimmy; MCKENNA, Finbar; McAULEY, Jim; MCNEARNEY, Paul; COSGROVE, Thomas; COMERFORD, Alec. Solidarity greetings to our comrades Jimmy, Finbar, Jim, Paul, Thomas and Alex on completing four years on the blanket protest for political status. Your courage is an inspiration to the Irish people. From the Clonard Martyrs Sinn Féin cumann, Lower Falls, Belfast.

MCMULLAN, Jimmy; MCKENNA, Finbar; McAULEY, Jim; MCNEARNEY, Paul; COSGROVE, Thomas; COMERFORD, Alec. Solidarity greetings to Jim, Finbar, Jim, Paul, Thomas, and

PETTIGREW, Brian. (H-Block). Congratulations to our son Brian on completing three years on the blanket, knowing you stand and that of your comrades will be victorious. Victory to the blanket men — the greatest Ireland has seen. You're always in our thoughts. From your loving mother, father brothers and sisters.

PETTIGREW, Brian. (H-Block). Congratulations to my brother Brian on this his 3rd year on the blanket. I send all my love to you. "They put you in a prison cell cold and damp inside, they handed you a blanket which you wear with ends from Donna, xxx, LTP. The blanket men! From your loving sister Katrina (Armagh).

PETTIGREW, Brian. (H-Block). Congratulations dear brother on completing three years on the blanket. God bless you and all your comrades on your struggle for political status. Victory to the blanket men! From your loving sister Bernadette, brother-in-law Jim and niece Clara.

PETTIGREW, Brian. (H-Block). Congratulations to your dear brother on completing three years on the blanket. You stand and that of your comrades will be victorious. Victory to the blanket men! From your brother Martin, sister-in-law Sheila and niece Laura.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

CONNOLLY, John. (H-Block). Happy birthday John. Hope your next one is spent in freedom. From Mammy, Sean, Anne and children. xxx.

HOGAN, W.J. Just to let you know that we are thinking of you on your birthday as always. All-did-love. From Breige and Gary.

HOLDEN, Michael. (H-Block). Happy birthday to you Michael. We are always thinking of you. "A country that oppresses another can never itself be free." Solidarity greetings from your friends in Birmingham. From Mary, Clare, Ira and Marie.

MCKEARNY, Alec. (H-Block). Happy 19th birthday Alec. "Though prison bars divide us and we are far apart, they have you in their keeping but they have you in our hearts." Your blanket is the noblest clothing an Irish man can wear. We can never be beaten while sons and daughters of Ireland fight like you and your comrades. We miss you and love you always. God bless you and all your comrades. From mum dad and all the kids.

MCKEARNY, Alec. (H-Block). Happy 19th birthday son. We miss you a lot. We are so proud of you in the courage you have shown against British torture

in the Hell-Blocks. God bless you. From Grannie and grandad, Ardgliss. Also from all the McCrory family.

MCCRORY, Alec. (H-Block). Happy 19th birthday Alec. "If I had a wish that wish would be to see you and Ireland free. But while there is still one of us imprisoned, none of us are free." All my love from Donna, xxx, LTP.

MCCRORY, Alec. (H-Block). Happy 19th birthday Alec. Men as brave as the blanket men are very hard to find. God bless you and all your comrades. From uncle Harry and cousin Hugh, uncle Bobby, Jean and kids. From Bridie and Michael Mallen and also from all your uncles and aunts at home and abroad.

MCCRORY, Alec. (H-Block). Happy 19th birthday Alec. Until our land is united and free we shall never bow down. All the best from Frank and Sarah Murphy and all the family. Also from Moya, Julie, Tony and Karen O'Neill.

MCCRORY, Alec. (H-Block). Happy 19th birthday Alec. "It is not they who inflict the most but those who can endure the most who will ultimately triumph." All the best from "Spud" (Crumlin Road) and Charlotte.

MCCOY, Noel. (Cage 12, Long Kesh). "I can't find the words to tell you no matter how I try, how much you really mean to us as everyday goes by. But when you read this greeting we hope that you will see how full of love it is, because you mean so much to us. Solidarity to you and to Thomas. We miss you both. God bless. From Mary Coin and family."

THE H-BLOCK APPEAL FUND wish to thank the many people who have contributed so far to the emergency hunger-strike fund, and in particular wish to acknowledge small anonymous donations from Belfast, Donegal and Dublin.

Thanks

H-BLOCK HUNGER-STRIKE USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Sinn Féin Head Office, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin. Tel: Dublin 726932

Sinn Féin POW Department, 5 Blessington Street, Dublin. Tel: Dublin 308783

National H-Block Committee, 30 Mountjoy Square, Dublin. Tel: Dublin 747200

H-Block Information Office, 51-53 Falls Road, Belfast. Tel: Belfast 23214

H-Block Information Office, Brandywell advice centre, Derry. Tel: Derry 67749

EMERGENCY H-BLOCK APPEAL HUNGER-STRIKE FUND

THOUSANDS of pounds are needed to finance the massive campaign of leafletting, poster, picketing and sending speakers throughout Ireland and abroad to publicise the plight of the H-Block hunger-strikers. Rush donations to the H-Block Appeal Fund, 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast, or 44 Parnell Square, Dublin.

Ionsai ar chearta na mban

LE TOMÁS Ó SÉ

"B'ionann é agus a bheith i do pháiste arís ar scoil. Bhí ort do láimh a chur suas le cead a iarraidh dul go dtí an leithreas agus ansin bheith ag súil go bhfeicfí tú agus go dtabharfaí cead duit." B'shin a thosaigh an stailc i Stability Electronics i mBaile Aontroma.

Ar an seachtú lá de Dheireadh Fómhair d'éisigh na bainistíoirí riall nuair go mbheadh ar na mná cead a iarraidh dul go dtí an leithreas. Dúradh gur an mhaithle le táirgiúil-acht a fheabhsú a cuireadh an riall i bhfeidhm.

Taispeánadh nádúr an riall nuair ná deineadh aon iarracht an riall ósanna a chur i bhfeidhm ar na fir sa mhonarcha chéanna. Tá suas le 400 duine ag obair sa mhonarcha agus mná a bhfuirmhór. Cás náireach é seo, an t-idirdealtóir ar bhonn ghnéis atá i bhfeidhm agus cás is leo é a léiriú an tsíle a úsáideann lucht an rachmais an t-idirdealtóir ar bhonn ghnéis.

CEARDCHUMANN

Stop suas le 200 bean ag obair láithreach agus shocraigh an ceardchumann go dtiocfadh feidhmeannach sinsireach go dtí an monarcha leis an cheist a phlé. Chuaigh na mná ar ais ag obair ar an dtuisctín nach



BY SEAN DELANEY

WHAT must have been the largest demonstration ever to take place in support of the H-Block and Armagh prisoners, organised by the National H-Block Committee in Belfast on Sunday, served a clear warning to the British government of the consequence of the anger of the Irish people should any of the seven hunger-strikers die. ITN television news broadcasts admitted that there were ten to fifteen thousand people present, whilst local 'Downtown' radio news said estimates were up to twenty-five thousand.

Throughout the early afternoon scores of black taxis and minibuses ferried supporters free of charge from all over nationalist Belfast to the Dunville Park assembly point, while coachloads of supporters from all over the North poured in — with strong contingents from Tyrone, Derry and Armagh — to form ordered columns of demonstrators which stretched over four hundred yards down the Falls Road, with other sections of marchers stretching several hundred yards up several side-streets off the Falls Road.

In response to an appeal by the organisers, there was no rioting either during or after the march, but as the march — led by a cavalcade of thirty-two black taxis and a banner proclaiming 'Victory to the hunger-strikers' — reached Andersonstown barracks, the air was pierced with the sound of taxi horns and chanting as people voiced their strength and defiance. The march, which took more than an hour for the whole of its length to pass any one point on the two-mile route culminated at the Busy Bee shopping precinct in Andersonstown, where the square and surrounding streets were packed as hundreds of youths clambered on to on-looking roofs to get a clear view, as rally (and Belfast Sinn Féin) chairperson Tom Hartley stressed: "One thing is clear today. In support of our imprisoned comrades we are a united people, and we are going to smash H-Blocks and Armagh."

Following a minute's silence for the four recently assassinated H-Block campaigners, and following the reading out by former blanket man Joe Maguire of a smuggled message from Armagh jail, pledging the women prisoners' solidarity

and determination, the chairperson of the National H-Block Committee, Fr. Piaras O'Duill, said of the huge turnout: "The British government has had their answer today." And he emphasised that "for the next few weeks we must all get out on the streets in protest throughout Ireland, north, south, east and west."

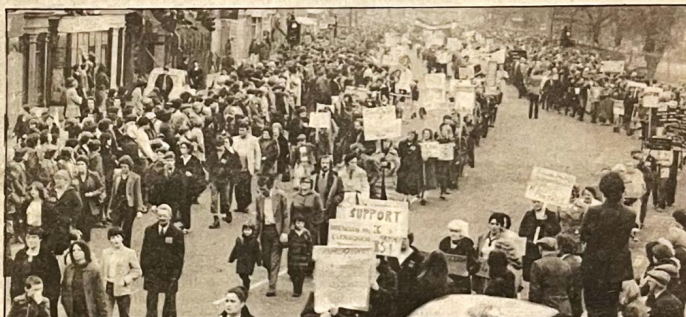
To thunderous applause the next speaker, Joe Austin of Belfast Sinn Féin challenged the Brits: "The British government has chosen the battlefield... but we will choose the tactics." On the breadth of support he said: "We who have marched today are not 'Sinn Féin' or 'RAC' or 'IRSP' — but we are the 'blanket people' and from tomorrow we are living on the blanket men's time." He concluded: "We are going to shove that blanket and H-Block and Armagh jail down the throats of the British."

Siobhan Molloy, of the IRSP warned: "We stand between these prisoners and the murderous intent of British imperialism; we mustn't let them die."

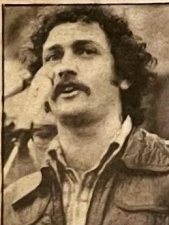
And the final speaker, Bernadette McAliskey of the National H-Block Committee, drew a series of historical parallels showing how the British government had often thought it had crushed Irish resistance, only to have that lie thrown back into their teeth. Appealing to the youth of Ireland to organise itself now in defence of the political prisoners and Irish freedom, she pointed out: "When the British robbed us of our language they did not notice that the Irish language does not have a word for defeat. Defeat will not be inflicted on us."

Referring to the fact that the execution of the leaders of the 1916 Rising had led to popular resistance and the eventual freeing from British military rule of twenty-six counties, she concluded: "Let me remind the British government, let one prisoner die and you may well light the spark that will free the remaining six." And, contrary to media misrepresentations, she meant counties, not just the prisoners.

BELFAST — ON THE MARCH



Above: A very crowded Falls Road at the beginning of the march route; below: the thronged square at the Busy Bee



JOE MAGUIRE



BERNADETTE MCALISKEY



SIOBHAN MOLLOY



JOE AUSTIN



TOM HARTLEY



FR. PIARAS O'DUILL