

An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS

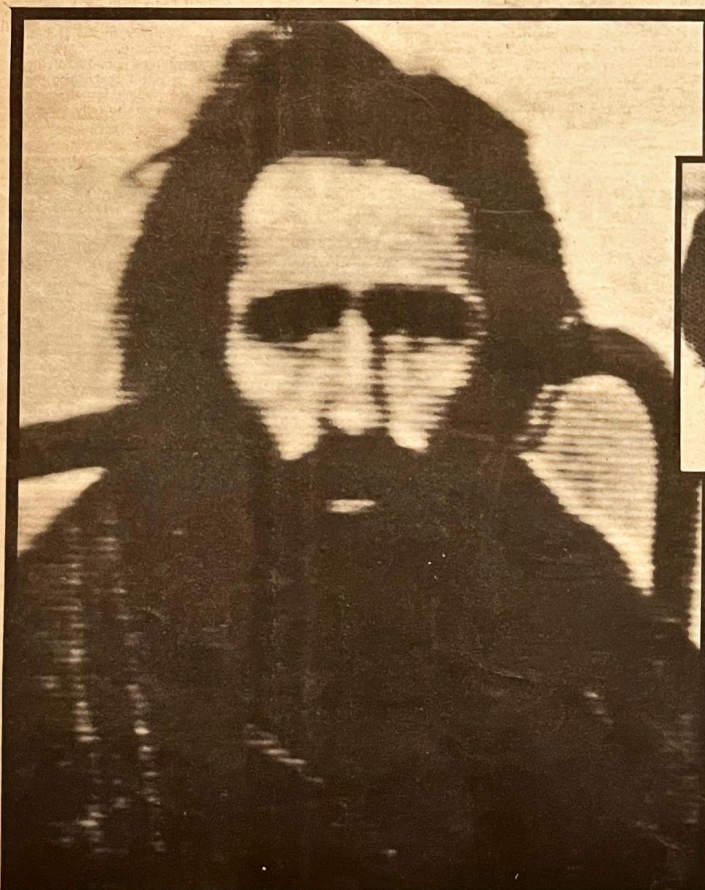


Sraith Nua Im! 2 uimhir 47 DE SATHAIRN Samhain 29

Saturday November 29th 1980

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H-BLOCK AGONY



SHOCKING pictures of the emaciated state of two of the seven H-Block hunger-strikers, shown on ITV's 'World in Action' programme on Monday evening, provide graphic testimony of the agony and sacrifices Irish political prisoners are going through at the hands of the British government.



The two are Belfast republican Brendan Hughes, aged 32 (pictured here, far left, after eighteen days on hunger-strike and, inset, near left, before being imprisoned in the H-Blocks) and Derry republican Raymond McCartney, aged 26 (pictured and profiled on the centre pages of this paper).

The time is gone for sitting on the fence and all true Irish men and women are needed now — more so than at any previous stage of this country's struggle for nationhood — to come out and demonstrate with their feet and voices that Ireland is fully behind the prisoners.

There is, at present, an obviously

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

PETITION SUNDAY

THE closing date for signing the international H-Block petition forms is this Sunday, November 30th. Forms will be available for signature outside numerous church gates throughout the country. Petition forms should be returned to the National H-Block Committee, 30 Mountjoy Square, Dublin, or 85b Falls Road, Belfast.

ALL OUT FOR THE BRITISH EMBASSY

NEXT Saturday, December 6th, there will be a massive hunger-strike march to the British embassy in Dublin, assembling at St. Stephens Green at 2.30 p.m. Buses are being organised throughout the country, North and South, to the protest. Details are available from local action groups and local press.

WEEKEND MARCHES: MONAGHAN & BELFAST

THERE are two main hunger-strike marches in Ulster this weekend: in Monaghan, on Saturday, November 29th leaving the Fergal O'Hanlon Memorial on the Clones Road at 2 p.m.; and in Belfast, on Sunday, November 30th, leaving Dunville Park at 1.30 p.m.

SALE OF WORK

AN Cumann Cabhrach's annual Christmas 'sale of work' will be held in Dublin's Mansion House over the weekend of December 5th, 6th and 7th.

16-PAGE ISSUE

THIS issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, like last week's, has been expanded from the usual twelve pages to sixteen pages in order to cover the H-Block hunger-strike.

Hunger-striker Brendan Hughes after 18 days on hunger-strike, and (inset) before he was imprisoned in the H-Blocks. By Monday another 18 days will have been spent on hunger-strike by Brendan and his six comrades.

H-BLOCK AGONY

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

orchestrated reaction against the H-Block 'blanket men', who are shortly to be joined on hunger-strike by three women comrades from Armagh jail. Beginning with the British administration and the loyalists in the North, this reaction, since the hunger-strike commenced, has been wholeheartedly endorsed by the leaderships of the Free State Labour Party and Fine Gael who are crossing swords with premier Charles Haughey.

HAUGHEY

In a concerted attempt to undermine Haughey (and possibly split Fianna Fail) they have consistently raked over the 1970 'Arms Crisis' and this week attempted to have him repudiate the demands of the 'blanket men', which he refused to do. (Thus partially taking up, for the first time since his coming into office, and the signing of the collaborationist joint communiqué with Thatcher last May, the 'republican' mantle which Síle de Valera has recently sported.)

In the eyes of the leaders of the Labour Party and Fine Gael, who are committed to the loyalist veto over Irish re-unification, the lives and rights of Irish men and women are of no consequence against their party interests. Furthermore, they strengthen the hand of British premier Margaret Thatcher and feed her intransigence.

THATCHER

This week Thatcher threw down what amounts to a challenge to the Irish people. For, although she has repeatedly said that there will be no political status, some people believed that this left the door open for other concessions or adjustments to prison rules, as one of the direct-rule Ministers, Alison, intimated on the 'World in Action' television programme.

However, Thatcher stated that if the prisoners 'continued with their hunger-strike it will have no effect whatsoever. It will just take their own lives... there will be and can be no concessions... I shall not move...'

SIGNAL

This must be the signal for all hitherto uninvolved, working-class or professional people, local politicians or clergymen to come down off the fence and take a stand with those who are slowly and painfully dying in their assertion that they have rights both as human beings and as Irish political prisoners.

The British have no right in Ireland, never had any right, and certainly have no right to attempt to make criminals out of those who resist their rule. Let us show them by the strength of our numbers that the continuation of the hunger-strike will have an effect on them, and will have an effect that may not just move them on this issue but might just shift them out of our country for good.



Dublin Leinster House lobby, last Saturday

Politics polarised

BY PETER ARNLIS

AS THE seven H-Block hunger-strikers approach the end of their fifth week without food, national and international protests have continued to put the British government under pressure and have continued to increasingly polarise politics and organisations in Ireland.

There have been three more statements from British premier Margaret Thatcher to say that there will be no concessions to the 'blanket men'. The last of which was made on BBC radio on Wednesday, the previous at Westminster on Tuesday, and the first, also made at Westminster, the previous Thursday. (The first contained, if the 'Irish Times', Friday 21st November, report is correct, a compromising slip: "Mrs. Thatcher inserted her statement about the government's determination not to give way to the 'political prisoners' demands...")

Last Monday, Thatcher visited Italy and had a forty-five minute meeting in Rome with the Pope at which the H-Blocks and the North were included in the discussion. According to an editorial in Wednesday's 'Irish Press' the Pope sent her a letter two weeks ago in which he expressed his unease, and which presumably

he again raised on Monday. If so, it had no effect on the Iron Lady who the next day ruled out any concessions.

HAUGHEY

Last Tuesday, in Leinster House, Free State premier Charles Haughey refused to define the Fianna Fail government's attitude to the prisoners' demands for political status when he was asked to do so by Labour Party leader Frank Cluskey and Fine Gael leader Garret Fitzgerald, during 'question time'. Haughey said, however, that he had, only the previous day, made representation 'at the highest level' to the British government, whom he said were obliged to ensure that "prison conditions are as humane and as tolerable as it is possible to make them."

Haughey continued: "Like a number of other people who are concerned about this issue, the government believe that, if some adjustments could be made in the prison rules themselves, or in their interpretation or their application, a solution would be possible."

(The problem for the Brits, however, is that while that might be the mechanics for implementing the five demands they have

adopted such a highly intransigent position that for Thatcher to do that would be a 'loss of principle' and her ultimate humiliation when the prisoners are victorious would be all the greater.)

SIDE-STEPPED

Haughey was continually requested to clarify his position with regard to the demand for political status but side-stepped the question by saying: "The government do not believe that political status should be an issue."

As previously reported many Fine Gael councillors have voted in favour of council resolutions expressing some sort of support for the prisoners' demands, and some have given their backing to broad-based local H-Block action committees — in both cases ignoring a directive issued last July by their party leader Fitzgerald.

And last week, in a letter to the Dublin newspapers, fourteen members of Cluskey's Labour Party expressed their support for the protesting prisoners, in effect challenging the party leadership, and calling for all trade unionists and party members to rally behind the prisoners.

Grave situation in Armagh

WITH THE grave announcement expected of the imminent start of the hunger-strike in Armagh jail by three republican women prisoners in pursuance of their demand for political status, one of their comrades has been released, having successfully defied Britain's attempts to criminalise her whilst serving a four year sentence.

On Monday, Shirley Devlin, aged 21, from Newington, north Belfast, was released from Armagh jail, where she has spent the last four years — the first six months on remand and the remainder of her sentence initially on the 'no work' protest and then on the 'no wash' protest. (Shirley was the first prisoner attacked by male warders on February 7th of this year, during the attack which subsequently led to the protestors being forced on to the 'no wash' protest.)

Shirley reports of the remaining twenty-seven women protestors: "Morale has never been so

strong, since we made the decision to go on hunger-strike. The women are committed; they will die, if necessary, in order to achieve political status. They will not give in to the Brits, no matter if they should all have to die.

"They are absolutely determined to make their own protest for status, without being pressurised by the hunger-strike in the H-Blocks. It is their right to go on hunger-strike, a right which they reserve as Republican POWs."

Shirley reflects the feelings of the women: "We are being treated like animals as it is, every day, and things are getting worse. So what have we to lose by going on hunger-strike — surely a more dignified death than having to die a daily death in the filthy cells of Armagh jail."

McLAUGHLIN

Shirley especially expresses great concern for seriously ill Derry republican Pauline McLaughlin, aged 23, whom she saw a fortnight ago at Mass: "She seemed



Anne Murray (Association of Legal Justice) and Lord Gifford at a press conference in Belfast on Wednesday where Lord Gifford challenged the British government to release seriously ill Armagh prisoner Pauline McLaughlin

to be stumbling as she walked. It seemed to me that her hair was weighing her down, her shoulders were hunched, her bones were sticking out and her jeans were hanging off her."

Latest reports, in fact, confirm that Pauline McLaughlin remains very weak and seriously ill. On Tuesday of last week, November 18th, potassium was injected into her blood stream, but a second injection had to be postponed because her arms are so thin that the needle hits the bone and her veins are so contracted that it is difficult to inject them.

GIFFORD

A British Labour peer, Lord Gifford, who held a press conference in Belfast on Wednesday, is urging the British government to release Pauline Mc-

Laughlin, who he points out now weighs only five stone.

Lord Gifford claims that Pauline is being inhumanely treated in Armagh jail and could die if there is not a change of heart by the government. Prior to his press conference Lord Gifford had met direct-rule Minister, Michael Alison, but Alison stated that he refused to release Pauline on medical grounds.

Lord Gifford has now challenged the British government to say that Pauline McLaughlin must die to be free: "The attitude of the Northern Ireland Office, and the government of which it is a part, is quite inhuman in that they are playing games of chance with a young girl's life. My reaction is that this should not even be a political issue. It should be a straight issue of human compassion, quite unrelated to the politics of the Northern Ireland situation. But so far I cannot bring any hope of her early release out of that meeting."



SHIRLEY DEVLIN — defiant



Twenty-year-old blanket man, Sean Lavery, from Belfast, pictured in 'World in Action' on Monday evening

Lasting impression

BY PETER ARNLIS

DESPITE the propaganda intentions of the British government in collaborating with 'World in Action', a British television documentary screened on ITV last Monday night, the lasting impression of the programme must be the sight of the 'blanket men' and the pathetic hunger-strikers filmed in their cells. Brendan Hughes, who looked gaunt and haggard, was interviewed, but this interview was cut from the actual programme.

In a cell containing two 'blanket men', one of them kept up a barrage of "We are political prisoners! We want political status! We are political prisoners.... Victory to the blanket men!"

Raymond McCartney who was filmed on the eighteenth day of the hunger-strike (that is, ten days before the programme was actually screened) gave the reasons for the 'blanket protest' and the 'no-wash protest'.

He said that the special laws and political courts had "proved to us beyond all doubt that these courts are set up to convict men, to convince people that we are criminals, which we are not. We are a product of the political troubles in the North of Ireland."

And then, speaking gravely, he concluded: "We and my six comrades are prepared to go through with this and we are prepared to die to prove that we are special prisoners and our five basic demands are just."

MISTAKEN

The mistaken view that the IRA can be finally broken if the hunger-strikers die without achieving their demands appears to be the main reason for the British government's intransigence. This has become clear from statements made by one of the direct-rule Ministers, Michael Alison, during the programme.

Unfortunately, the view that not only can the IRA be broken, but, if there is a distinction, that the whole struggle of the last twelve years will also be overturned should the political status issue be lost, has also been propagated by some speakers on H-Block platforms.

Certainly the British government hopes that those are the stakes, and it will be a tragedy for the Irish people if any 'blanket men' must go to their deaths before the British government brings the wrath of Ireland and international opinion on its head. But even should the Brits still foolishly withstand that wrath and remain intransigent the struggle would by no means be defeated, as republicans are well aware.

they are being presented. And Alison didn't elaborate on what room for manoeuvre there was for the Brits within the term 'better prison conditions', which their propaganda claims, anyway, to be the best prison conditions in Europe!

BIASED

That the programme was aimed at being biased in favour of the British was substantiated in a remark made by British premier Thatcher in Westminster last Tuesday, when she defended the 'World in Action' team having access to the prison camp.

She said: "There can be no such thing as a political prisoner, and it is thought that this (the programme) was one possible way of counter-acting the IRA propaganda campaign."

Interviewed on the programme were John McMichael (UDA), Marlene Jefferson (Official Unionist), Gerry Fitt (collaborator) and Michael Alison — all experienced spokespersons, who were under no pressure, and all anti-republican.

The latter part of the half-hour documentary was based 'around the life of Derry hunger-striker Raymond McCartney. Raymond's parents were interviewed, and Raymond himself from his cell bed was apportioned one minute to explain the H-Block situation. The interview with Raymond being the subject of loyalist attempts on Monday afternoon to have the programme banned.

UDA

McMichael, in his interview, incited people to violence, and made violent threats against people involved in the H-Block campaign. Acting with the indulgence of the Brits, it is no accident that the UDA is legal and will remain unoppressed.

McMichael warned that if the campaign of street protests in nationalist areas "reaches a stage where there is total breakdown in law and order, the loyalist paramilitaries must intervene... It could come up to a point where the loyalist paramilitaries may have to, and probably will have to, go into republican areas and take out the leadership of the revolt."

When quizzed on what that meant, he replied, "It means elimination." The most recent edition of the UDA occasional magazine 'Ulster' also talks in simple militaristic terms. It says: "We make no apology for having men serving life sentences. They are in prison because of armchair generals among our politicians who promised victory if our gallant men stood united and liquidated the enemy."

McMichael's statement was also a classic example of the UDA's irrationality. He said they feared a British government sell-out on their stance — that is, that political status or POW status, which they too are seeking, would be conceded! His confusion became even more apparent in his next statement, which was a statement against criminalisation:

"This is a war and as long as the British administration tries to fight it as a law and order campaign, as if it's a giant crime wave, the Provos... will always have the upper hand. This is a war and unless the British accept it as a war there are prepared to fight it as a war there will never be a solution."

There is nothing muddled about the men's demands, nor the way

UNIONIST BOYCOTT

FIVE OFFICIAL UNIONIST members of Derry city council, led by the Mayor, Marlene Jefferson, and two Paisleyite DUP councillors, staged a walk out of the council on Tuesday evening, November 25th, in protest over a decision to develop a gaelic football pitch at Lianagelvin. It was the second time that the issue has led to an across the board display of their sectarianism and a boycott of council business by the unionist members.

Whilst the debate was in progress more than one thousand loyalists, who had marched from the Waterside to demonstrate their opposition to the proposal, waited outside the Guildhall; and, at one stage, the council meeting had to be adjourned for about five minutes because of the noise made by the demonstrators. A small-scale riot developed, and a rubbish skip beside the Guildhall was set on fire, as the loyalists unsuccessfully attempted to intimidate the nationalist councillors (who form a council majority) from going ahead with plans for the pitch, but successfully ensured that the unionist councillors kept to the straight and narrow path of Orange bigotry.

Scare stories

THE FREE STATE gards have recently publicly speculated that the IRA is going to strike against British-owned stores, and other British concerns, in the twenty-six counties, as part of the H-Block protest campaign. The IRA, however, have made it clear, in a statement, signed by P. O'Neill, issued through the Irish Republican Publicity Bureau in Dublin that "no such attacks will be made," and that "the rumouring of such scare stories is almost certainly politically engendered and is aimed at undermining the growing broad-based support for the H-Block hunger-strikers."

Sticky expulsion

FOUR members of the Sticky 'Workers Party' in Mitchelstown, Cork, have been expelled from the party for helping to form the local H-Block action group. The four include the Sticks' man in North Cork, Mickey McEldowney, who was himself interned in the Curragh in the fifties. The four were reported to head office for their aberration from party policy by Joe Sherlock, the Sticks' Cork local councillor and perennial Leinster House candidate, and their expulsion was immediate.

Behaving suspiciously

LONDON POLICEMEN, who arrested three plain-clothes British soldiers behaving suspiciously in a car park, last Wednesday, November 19th, discovered, in the car, a loaded Sterling sub-machine gun with its serial numbers removed, ammunition, smoke bombs, thunderflashes and canisters of CS gas. Corporal Ivor Hirst, aged 25, Private Gary Crozier, aged 21, and Private Neville Edmonston, aged 19, all of the Second Battalion of the Royal Green Jackets, based at Tidworth in Hampshire, were remanded in custody at Walthamstow magistrates court, last Saturday, charged with conspiracy to kill, and theft and possession of arms (whose disappearance from the barracks had gone unnoticed). Their target, apparently, was a man who has been charged with the murder of a school-boy, Steven Edmonston, half-cousin of Private Edmonston.

Aggressive breeding

A BRITISH PARATROOPER, on leave from the North of Ireland, swore at a policeman in his home town of Sunderland because of his training, his commanding officer told the town's magistrates on Wednesday, November 12th. Para Peter Iredeale, aged 20, of Kayll Road, Sunderland, admitted being drunk and disorderly in August of this year. Lieutenant Robert Ellis, of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, told the court that Iredeale had been celebrating his birthday the day after returning from duty in South Armagh.

Lieutenant Ellis stated: "We like to breed our men in a very aggressive manner in Ireland. It has to be done. I can only surmise that this behaviour happened because of training in South Armagh.... It is very easy for members of my battalion to be very aggressive. I can only give my apologies to the court." He informed the magistrate that Iredeale was due to return to Ireland that day, and Iredeale was fined £15 plus £4 costs and packed off to terrorise the inhabitants of South Armagh.

Gift wrapped Rats

PRO-BRITISH ARMY propaganda sometimes comes in very strange packaging, but the gutter press of Britain's Fleet Street never tire of finding a new angle on the old theme of human or animal interest. The 'Daily Mirror', which supposedly favours British troops withdrawn from the North, featured on its women's page, last week, Thursday 20th November, a prominent article, which was basically an advert, headlined 'Gift-wrapped hero'. It read: "Remember Rats? He is the heroic little mongrel who used to follow the army into action in Northern Ireland. Rats hit the headlines earlier in the year when he retired from active service after being awarded a medal for bravery by an animal charity.... If you happen to be one of his fans you can buy a look-alike soft toy which is exclusive to 'Daily Mirror' readers."

Acceleration lacking

AMERICAN DEALERS waiting to sell the De Lorean sports car (being built with more than fifty million pounds of British tax-payers' money at Dunmurry in Belfast) are agitated, according to a recent issue of the British business magazine 'The Economist'. The car's delivery date has been postponed from this autumn to next spring; the price will be much higher than expected; and the car will travel fewer miles to the gallon than bargained for.

Westminster MPs too, are worried — there were questions asked recently in the British House of Commons about production delays. The factory was opened two years ago, but production targets have proved over-ambitious and now a question mark hangs over the car's market, especially given the price rise. And Lotus cars, a British firm, have had to spend months re-designing the car after prototypes designed by John De Lorean himself, proved to be disastrous, or, as 'The Economist' politely put it, 'hard to handle'.

Damaging film

FURTHER EVIDENCE has come to light of Brit sensitivity to any international exposure of the role of the disclosure of a British 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office' internal circular attacking 'The Patriot Game' film produced last year.

Peter Baldwin of the Brits' Overseas (Mis)information Department sent a circular (dated March 1980) to their embassies in more than a dozen Western European countries, plus Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Russia and America, in which he seemed perturbed that the film had been screened in London "as an unwelcome element of the 'Sense of Ireland' festival of Irish arts" and "in Belgium on the Flemish Television Service." The circular bemoans the fact that the film 'discredits' the British army (surely it is that army's activities which discredit it, without any help from American film producer Art MacCallig?), and also makes an interesting passing reference to the fact that the (British-based) United Troops Out Movement was a previous target for a similar circular in October 1979. The circular concludes by particularly urging the blocking of any awards to the film, because "while the film itself may have technical merit which deserves recognition, any awards would undoubtedly enhance a production which is damaging and highly critical of HMG."

South Fermanagh men fall foul of Brit/RUC bully boy tactics

BY B. SLOANE

WITHIN the last two weeks, a South Fermanagh youth and a farmer have fallen foul of the bully-boy tactics of the RUC and the British army, respectively, both of which forces have a notorious record of brutality against the nationalist people of South Fermanagh. Meanwhile in a Belfast court the trial of soldiers who brutally killed two South Fermanagh Catholics, eight years ago, has been postponed.

Nineteen-year-old Frank Quigley, from Buscragh, had to be detained overnight in Erne Hospital, Enniskillen, after he had been beaten unconscious by the RUC, on a road at Corran, in Roslea, County Fermanagh, at about midnight, last Sunday, November 23rd.

Earlier last week, a South Fermanagh farmer, thirty-year-old James Curry, had his nose broken by British soldiers as he walked from Clones to his home near Newtownbutler early on Monday morning, November 17th.

FIRST

In the first incident, Frank Quigley had been chatting with friends when he saw two men being manhandled by members of an RUC mobile patrol. He attempted to find out what was wrong but he was threatened by the patrol, and after he rejoined his younger brother, Paul, and an acquaintance, who were sitting on a grass bank nearby he was attacked by the RUC men.

He recalls, "We sat down for a smoke as we usually do before going home. Then, two more cars full of reinforcements pulled up and started rushing at us with batons. I was pounded on the

stomach by somebody shouting, 'What's your name?' Before I could answer I was hit again and fell on the ground. Then I was kicked by one of them who was shouting, 'What's your fucking name, Quigley?'"

When he next regained consciousness, Frank Quigley was being loaded into an ambulance, the twenty-man RUC force no longer in sight.

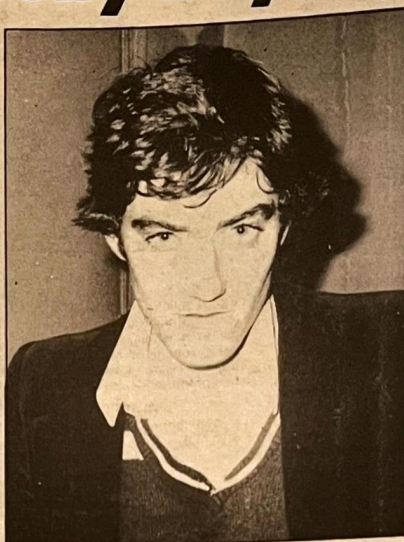
He is now extremely worried that he will have to wear a surgical support to help correct the injuries to his spine and legs, as well as having to take medicine to relieve the pain.

STRUCK

The second incident, involving James Curry, from Hollybank, happened near the border at Kilturk when he stumbled upon a group of Brits in a dug-out at the roadside, in the early hours of the morning. During the encounter James Curry was held by two of them while a third struck him in the face with a rifle-butt, knocking him to the ground.

The RUC eventually showed up, and their response was to arrest him and take him to Enniskillen barracks where, despite heavy bleeding, he received no medical treatment, and was not released for several hours.

Once home, his family doctor arranged admittance to Erne Hospital where James had stitches



FRANK QUIGLEY
— beaten unconscious by RUC



JAMES CURRY
— nose broken by British soldiers

inserted in his face and was treated for his broken nose. Ironically, in their forty-mile round-trip with their prisoner the RUC had passed the hospital twice even though their own police doctor had recommended X-rays.

Because of these, and other incidents, where schoolchildren, aged only seven and eight years, have been forced to stand barefoot in the rain after soldiers ordered them to remove their shoes and socks, community representatives have met together with parents and clergymen to discuss what action to take. Their greatest fear at present is the

unwelcome return of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders - regiment who beat up James Curry last week and who currently have four of their members awaiting trial for the killing of local men Andrew Murray, aged 24, and Michael Naan, aged 31, in October 1972.

POSTPONED

The trial of the soldiers, incidentally, was postponed to next year by Northern Lord Chief Justice Lowry in a Belfast court on Tuesday — the day originally set for the hearing of the case. Lowry, well-known for his susceptibility to the political needs

of the British government, probably decided that such a trial at this time (coinciding with the H-Block/Armagh hunger-strike) would not be a good idea.

Eight years ago, the double killing — in October 1972 — was dubbed the 'pitchfork murders' and was attributed to loyalists. But those charged are Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Sergeants John Byrne and Stanley Hathaway, both aged 38; plus a former member of the regiment, Iain Chestnut, aged 31; and Captain Andrew Snowball, aged 28, is charged with withholding information about the double killing.

SPY-POST DISCOVERED

BY PETER HAYES

A BRITISH ARMY spy-post in the Short Strand district of Belfast, accidentally stumbled on last week by two teenagers, may have been used to observe H-Block support activities in the area as well as to keep local republicans under surveillance.

The spy-post — located in a derelict terraced house in Clyde Street — was discovered last Wednesday afternoon, November 19th, when a pigeon, belonging to sixteen-year-old Andrew Rooney, who lives next door, flew on to an upstairs window-sill of the derelict house.

Andrew, and his fourteen-year-old friend Sean Smyth, clambered over the back wall and began climbing the staircase towards the pigeon, when — without warning — two uniformed Brits appeared at the landing and seized the two lads, one of them warning Sean, 'keep still, or I'll blow the head off you'.

blackened, immediately radioed for reinforcements, and when these arrived four other Brits emerged from one of the upstairs bedrooms, carrying sleeping bags, food, two large water tanks and two large green bags containing, presumably, photographic equipment. As the Brits withdrew, the two lads were taken to Grand Central army barracks in the city centre before being released shortly afterwards.

Local people have pointed out that the vantage point afforded to the Brits from the house, not only gave them a view of the two main social clubs in Short Strand, both situated in Clyde Street, and



Above: British soldiers were able to spy from the upstairs window of the derelict house where a breeze-block is missing; right: Sean Smyth stands beside another 'spy-hole', left of picture

of Thompson Street — a major thoroughfare in the district — but also looked out over Anderson Street to where local H-Block processions regularly parade past.

There have been instances of similar, discovered spy-posts in Short Strand in the past, notably late in 1975 when British soldiers occupied roof spaces in Chemical Street, and there is, more, current

evidence of Brits having occupied other derelict places in recent weeks, but this latest discovery — in a nationalist ghetto surrounded by overwhelmingly loyalist east Belfast, and with RUC harassment of local people escalating as the hunger-strike protests continue — adds a further sinister dimension to the undercover 'surveillance' activities of the British army.



Massive Leinster House hunger-strike lobby Dublin brought to a standstill

BY DAMIEN O'ROURKE

DUBLIN city-centre came to a standstill for more than four hours last Saturday, as by far the largest turnout the city has seen on the H-Block/Armagh issue marched from Parnell Square to Leinster House, providing a major boost for the campaign in the twenty-six counties.

Contingents from every part of the country joined the procession, which, in lines of seven, took more than an hour-and-a-half to cross over O'Connell Bridge, so that despite its circuitous route the first marchers had reached Leinster House before those at the back had moved off. Estimates in the Dublin media put the numbers at various figures from twelve to over twenty-thousand, but few would doubt that these were the usual conservative under-statements.

Kildare Street and Molesworth Street were thronged from end to end in a massive 'T' of people, as, with darkness falling, a group of youths climbed to the top of the main gates of Leinster House, behind the garda barrier, and burnt the union jack to cheers of delight from the crowd.

The meeting outside the gates was chaired by Fr. Piaras O Duill, chairperson of the National H-Block Committee, and opened by the committee's secretary, Christina Carney, who read a statement addressed to Free State premier Charles Haughey which was then handed in to Leinster House, calling for action from him on the hunger-strike.

Mrs. McKearney, mother of hunger-striker Tommy McKearney, spoke on behalf of the prisoners' relatives, thanking the demonstrators for their support, and pledging the support of the relatives for the hunger-strikers, to the end if necessary.

Neil Blaney, Euro-MP and Leinster House independent Fianna Fail member, was next to speak. He said: 'We can show to the members of this institution, behind us here, that the people of this country are behind the hunger-strikers and behind the Armagh women. Politicians have nothing to fear and a great deal to gain by showing themselves in favour of those brave men who are now on the brink of death, and by using the pressure of this institution can bring home to Maggie Thatcher that Britain has no right in this country.' He went on to condemn the

Castlereagh conveyor belt system which has put the prisoners where they are and urged each one listening to bring ten more with them next time they come out on the streets.

Former blanket man Liam Carlin, from Derry, spoke of the support for the prisoners he had seen in America, from where he had just been deported to London (where he had spent a further seven days in detention).

A delegate from the International Federation of Human Rights, Michel Zavarin from France, pledged the support of his organisation for the National H-Block Committee.

Pat Fahy of the Irish Independence Party said that the turnouts on recent rallies have given the lie, once and for all, that the Irish people will accept a British solution: 'What Maggie Thatcher is telling the Irish people is 'I am taking you on, let us see what your mettle is'. We will give the answer back: 'the prisoners' fight is our fight and we will carry that fight through to its conclusion'.'

Martha McClelland, from Derry, spoke of the Armagh women prisoners, outlining the treatment of Pauline McLaughlin, and reminding her listeners that the women were about to join the hunger-strike with their

seven comrades in the H-Blocks. 'Their lives are in your hands,' she said, 'they are depending on you to organise the Irish nation on to the streets until their demands are met.'

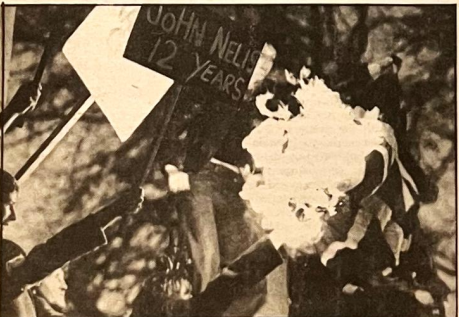
A letter from the youngest hunger-striker, Sean McKenna, addressed to the youth of the country was read to the meeting by Liam Connolly, a young member of the National H-Block Committee.

The final speaker was Bernadette McAliskey, of the National H-Block Committee, who paid tribute to the members of all the establishment parties who have defied the wishes of their party leaders and joined the march and given their support to the prisoners. 'Our prisoners are the symbol of our determination to continue against all threats of violence, brutality, torture and even death; to continue our rightful struggle for our national heritage,' she said.

The meeting ended with folk-singer Gerry Czilly singing Francie Brolly's 'H-Block Song', and an accordion group from Dungannon playing the moving hymn 'How great thou art', followed by the national anthem.



Above: On the platform, left to right: Martha McClelland, Pat Fahy, Neil Blaney and Fr. Piaras O Duill; below: a section of the huge crowd outside Leinster House



Above: The union jack is set alight on top of Leinster House's gates; right: Dublin comes to a standstill as the marchers move down along Parnell Square



Damp squib

THE three-hour debate in Leinster House on the Arms Crisis, resurrected after ten years by the series of 'Magill' articles, turned out to be a very damp squib as it opened on Tuesday night. If Fine Gael, by raising the issue again, were hoping to put Fianna Fáil at each other's throats (and in particular at Charlie Haughey's throat), then they had made another blunder.

In fact, Jack Lynch, whom 'Magill' accused of lying about how long he knew of what was going on, merely struck to his old time-honoured Jim Gibbons, whom it was hoped would go for Haughey, spoke for thirty seconds in which he said nothing new. Haughey himself has no intention of speaking at all, about his own perjury at his trial.

The only thing left is the O'Malley factor. 'Magill' revealed that Desmond O'Malley had met secretly with Haughey, after Haughey had been charged in 1970. O'Malley was then Minister for Justice and was pledging total loyalty to his leader, Jack Lynch. In the only significant piece of his speech Lynch asserted that he knew nothing of this meeting.

O'Malley himself is conveniently out of the country and not thought likely to rush back on Wednesday to contribute to the debate. In the end the Arms Crisis story remains as before.

All the Fianna Fáil cabinet either were involved in or knew of the planned secret importation of arms, and when it was leaked to Liam Cosgrave, Lynch picked his two major adversaries, Haughey and Blaney, as scapegoats. The fact that everyone started lying then and have continued to do so has been known for the last ten years.

Closed dock

WATERFORD docks has been closed down by pickets in a bizarre industrial dispute. The pickets have been placed by casual workers on the dock who are attempting to be taken on as full-time employees.

The current agreement on manning levels at the docks specifies a permanent workforce of thirty. Since the agreement, four members of the thirty have died and three more are on long-term sick leave. However, instead of these being replaced by the recruitment of casual men into the permanent workforce, the wages of the dead men are divided amongst the other permanent men.

The casual workers also face another problem in that the union at the docks, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, will not allow them to join. The picket, which has stopped all movement at the docks, was placed after the employers at the docks failed to carry through an agreement reached between all the parties concerned.

Elsewhere in Waterford, five building sites, belonging to the firm of Brendan Carmody, are being picketed by the workforce in protest against the proposed dismissal of two men.

The firm, which has a notoriously bad industrial relations record, has been taking on youths from the government agency, Manpower, at £20 per week and is hoping to replace several more workers with this cheap labour.

The firm is also in dispute with the Irish Transport and General Workers Union which guarantees continuation of employment, and in fact are known to have two major contracts coming up.

Unfair dismissal

WORKERS at Lenihan's hardware stores in Dublin are on strike this week over the unfair dismissal of one of their colleagues. Long-serving employee, Tony McDonagh, was dismissed when he accidentally clocked in the card of a colleague and then his own.

The mistake was discovered four days later because the card had been left untouched in the afternoon — an indication of McDonagh's innocence, who has also an unblemished work record until now.

The Workers Union of Ireland put a picket on the stores last Saturday and as a result the Talbot Street store was closed completely and the three remaining branches are being staffed by non-union shop staff and management.

Negotiations between management and union broke down because management were prepared to discuss compensation for McDonagh, (thus admitting they are in the wrong) but refuse to discuss reinstatement.

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS: SOUTH

A NUMBER of survivors of the Black and Tan War issued a statement last week in support of the hunger-strikers.

The veterans include Tom Maguire, former TD and O/C of the Second Western Division; Tom Kelleher of Crossbarry fame; Silé Bean Uí Dhoonachdas; Maire Comerford; Mai O'Daigh; Mrs. Patsy O'Hagan; Tomas O'Maoláin; Pax O'Faolain; Dan Gleeson, Tipperary; Daniel Gleeson, Dublin; Sean Dowling; Mortimer and Blathnaid Uí Rathaille; Ellis Clarke; Fionan Breathnach; and Fr. Tomas Breathnach.

Donegal

A capacity audience at an H-Block concert in Ballyshannon on Thursday 13th November was addressed by local Sinn Féin councillor Anthony O'Malley Daly.

A meeting was held in Lifford on Wednesday 19th November at which a local action group was formed. The committee is: chair: Liam McElhinney; secretary: Tommy McGinty; treasurer: Eamon McNulty and Noel Magee; PRO: Tony McDavid. In conjunction with the Donegal county H-Block committee, the action group has organised a torchlight procession and meeting for Raphoe on Friday 21st December.

On Sunday 16th November speakers from Bundoran and Ballyshannon spoke at a mass meeting throughout South Donegal. The speakers included two local councillors, Joe O'Neill and Gerry Sheerin, as well as Brendan Magill, Tom Bannon and Val Wynne. In the afternoon Michael McMahon of Bundoran addressed supporters after the Donegal versus Fingagh GAA game and the Finn Harps versus Home Farm soccer match, both in Ballybofey.

On Saturday 22nd November the local action group laid on transport to the Leinster House rally at a nominal fee. A large contingent travelled to Dublin from the area.

Dublin

ON Wednesday 19th November, sixty students at Kevin Street College of Technology attended an H-Block/Armagh meeting which was addressed by Paddy Bolger and Marie Mulholland. A ten-person action group was formed in the college following the meeting.

On Thursday, a group including Bernadette McAliskey, Rose Dugdale, Paddy Bolger, local councillor Tony Gregory and two Belfast dockers met several hundred Dublin dockers at Alexandra Basin. The port committee promised to consider a work-stoppage in support of the hunger-strikers.

Later in the day Bernadette McAliskey addressed a meeting of students outside Trinity College, prior to a march by almost three hundred students to Leinster House, where relatives of the hunger-strikers and of other blanket men were beginning a three-day token fast. The march paused at the office of the Union of Students in Ireland en route to demand an end to its silence on the H-Block and Armagh. At Leinster House a short meeting was addressed by Joe Stagg.

More than forty relatives of H-Block and Armagh prisoners took part in the three-day fast which culminated in the mass march on Saturday.

On Thursday a letter was handed in to Charlie Haughey's secretary urging the Free State premier to speak out in support of the hunger-strikers' demands. The letter was signed by Thomas Green, brother of Leo; Kevin Hughes, father of Brendan; and Margaret McKearney, sister of Tommy; all three of whom took part in the fast.

On Friday evening the relatives were joined at Leinster House by four Kerry men who had completed a twelve-day walk from Tralee dressed in blankets. The four, Eddie Jennings, Martin Ferris, John Kelly and Maurice Prendergast, were met earlier at Inchicore Bridge, on the city outskirts, by members of Dublin South City Action Group who marched the last few miles with them.

On Saturday morning, a march began from Dun Laoghaire into the city centre to join the big march on Leinster House, and by lunchtime several other groups were following their local banners on marches to the start at Parnell Square.

On Sunday afternoon in St. Stephen's Green, the Youth against H-Block group held another of their regular Sunday meetings which was attended by over



Above: Relatives of three hunger-strikers — Kevin Hughes, Tom Green and Margaret McKearney — protest outside Leinster House on Thursday 20th November; below: also on Thursday, students on the march from Trinity College, Dublin



two hundred young people. Prior to the meeting there was a march to Leinster House and back to the Green. Sean Crowe read a statement to the meeting from a young blanket man Eugene McCallion.

Galway

ON Thursday 20th November, the Society of Irish Playwrights presented Ulick O'Connor in his 'One Man Show' in support of the Galway H-Block campaign in the ITGWU Hall at Prospect Hill in the city.

On Sunday evening 23rd November, a social at the Glynn hotel in Gort, organised by the local H-Block action group, was attended by about two hundred people who were addressed by Kathleen Greene, who has two sons 'on the blanket', former blanket man Tommy McGinn, local Sinn Féin councillor Frank Glynn and Ned King of the local action group.

On Monday 24th November, Galway county council unanimously passed a resolution 'calling on the British government to accede to the five just demands of the prisoners in Long Kesh and Armagh', and also demanding that the Free State government take action in support of the demands. The motion was proposed by the two Sinn Féin councillors Frank Glynn and Paddy Ruane. The chairman of the county council, a member of Fine Gael, officially welcomed Kathleen Greene and Tommy McGinn, who were in the public gallery of the chamber for the meeting.

The same evening Kathleen Greene, Tommy McGinn and councillor Frank Glynn spoke at a meeting in Gort attended by almost one hundred people and chaired by John Flaherty. The meeting was also addressed by Rose Dugdale and Patrick Sanderson of the National H-Block Committee. An

H-Block action group was formed for the North Galway area.

Kerry

ON Thursday 21st November, several hundred demonstrators in Tralee marched through torrential rain in support of the hunger-strikers. Business premises in the town closed down for one hour in solidarity with the marchers.

At a meeting afterwards, the marchers were addressed by: Paddy Kelly, secretary of Fenit Labour Party and chairperson of the ITGWU's offshore section; Tom Foley of the 'Sticks', who is an urban district councillor and vice-president of Tralee branch of ITGWU; Nora Ward, mother of a H-Block prisoner; and Paddy Bolger of the National H-Block Committee's trade union group.

Kildare

AT a meeting on Thursday 13th November in Newbridge, a local H-Block/Armagh action group was formed. The committee are: chair: Frank Lunney; secretary: Joan McEvoy; treasurer: Miss Brown; and PRO: local independent councillor Evelyn Bracken.

The group held two meetings in the county on Thursday 20th November in conjunction with the Tralee to Dublin marchers. In the morning a meeting in Kildare town was addressed by Margaret McKearney sister of hunger-striker Tommy, and by Joe Stagg and Ann Conway of the National H-Block Committee.

Margaret McKearney also addressed the second meeting in Naas that evening, at which former blanket man Martin Lawlor also spoke.

Leitrim

FOUR hundred miners and their families marched through Drumshambo on Sunday 24th November to a meeting

which was addressed by their shop steward Paddy Keaty, who pledged solidarity with the hunger-strikers and promised further activity from all the mines in the area. The meeting was also addressed by local speakers Joe Gallogly, Peadar Crisnon and local county councillors John Joe McGil and Joe Mooney.

Offaly

AN H-Block action group has been formed in Tullamore. The committee members are: chair: Joe Coughlan; secretary: Phil Walsh; treasurer: Sean McGee; PRO: Liam Walsh.

On Friday 21st November, Liam Walsh chaired a meeting in the town which was addressed by former blanket man Martin Lawlor, Mrs Bradley, whose son is 'on the blanket', and Rose Dugdale.

Tipperary

MEMBERS of the Carrick-on-Suir H-Block action group attended the Dublin march on Saturday 22nd November along with a contingent from Portlaoise, Co. Waterford.

The following day an after-mass meeting at Grangemockler, Co. Tipperary, was addressed by Jackie Phelan of the local action group and Eddie O'Doherty, Sinn Féin local councillor.

Westmeath

AT a meeting held on Sunday 23rd November in St. Peter's Square, Athlone, following noon mass, over one hundred people listened to: Sinn Féin president Ruairi O'Bradaigh; Terry Hughes, brother of hunger-striker Brendan; former blanket man Tommy McGinn; and mother of two blanket men, Kathleen Greene from Belfast.

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS: NORTH

Armagh

IN A blatant piece of intimidation, RUC and UDR men, on Wednesday 19th November, went to homes displaying H-Block posters in the Callan Bridge estate in Armagh and demanded the posters be removed from windows. The names and addresses of those approached (who all refused to comply) were duly noted. Such acts of harassment have now become commonplace.

On Wednesday evening, public meetings were held, in the clubrooms in Armagh city, and in Portadown where three hundred attended, to plan forthcoming activities, and, in Portadown, to set up an ex-prisoners' committee.

The following evening, over a thousand people took part in a torchlight procession in Blackwatertown, which was chaired by Frank Hughes. Speakers were: twelve-year-old Angela McKearney sister of hunger-striker Tommy; Teresa Green, sister of hunger-striker Leo; Pat Fahy (IIP); and Liam Haddock, Tony Fields and Gerry Hart (Sinn Féin).

On Friday, the Armagh hunger-strike committee toured both Armagh city and Keady in South Armagh with a motor cavalcade, urging support for future activities, despite intense harassment from Brit patrols. And that evening the second forty-eight hour fast to be undertaken by seven people in Armagh city began at the H-Block caravan at the Shamleys corner.

After-mass meetings, on Sunday morning were held outside chapels at Tullysarron, Ballymacnab, Granemore and Clady; but the highlight of the day in North Armagh was the march in Armagh city, estimated by the organisers as four-and-a-half thousand-strong and said to be the biggest rally in many years.

Led by men and women clad in blankets, including the seven on token fast, the procession started from the gaelic pitch at Drumarg (where, at half-time, demonstrators had occupied the pitch during the club championship final between St. John's, Belfast, and Scots-town, County Monaghan, to appeal for support) and made its way to the rally point at Shamleys corner. (A massive force of RUC ordered off all entrance points to the city centre or Armagh jail leading from the nationalist ghetto.)

The rally was chaired by Eugene Casson, and speakers were Joe Austin (Belfast Sinn Féin); Mrs Josie Nixon, mother of hunger-striker John; Tony Fields (Armagh Sinn Féin) and Bernadette McAliskey (National H-Block Committee).

An equally impressive march took place the same day in the south of the county. Several thousand people marched the two miles from Creggan to a rally in Crossmaglen Square, several hundred yards from the local British army barracks. Paddy Short, chairman of the local civil rights association, chaired the meeting organised by the Crossmaglen hunger-strike committee, and it was addressed by Danny Morrison (Belfast), Cyril Toman (Newry) and Bernadette McAliskey. Most of Crossmaglen turned out for the rally which was also supported by Crossmaglen Rangers GAC.

On Monday, as part of a series of nightly estate meetings, a local meeting was held in Tegnevan estate in Lurgan.

And on Tuesday a torchlight procession into the town centre, took place in Keady in South Armagh, while in Lurgan meetings were held in Kilwike estate and at Aghagallon.

Belfast

THE rising concern of the nationalist people of Belfast was again demonstrated by a massive exodus from the city of H-Block supporters, in a fleet of buses, en route to the lobby of Leinster House in Dublin on Saturday. And as the condition of the hunger-strikers begins to move towards a critical stage, it becomes even more vital that each mobilisation, whether for local pickets and torchlight processions, or for mass rallies, is larger and more determined than the last.

Throughout Belfast, as in other parts of the North, nightly Rosaries in dozens of venues throughout the city are now an established feature, as are co-ordinating meetings, of local action committees, youth action groups and ex-prisoners committees. Despite escalating threats and harassment from the Brits and RUC, many streets now have support banners



Above: Crossmaglen march on Sunday; below: Armagh march on Sunday, in Irish Street



erected, and thousands (though as yet not all) of nationalist homes have posters in their windows, while there are a number of permanent H-Block displays, such as the impressive one on the top of a high-rise block of flats in the New Lodge, and mock H-Block cells in most areas where daily vigils and token fasts are maintained, more often than not by youth.

Other activities over the past week included:

Wednesday 19th November: In the Short Strand district a packed indoor meeting took place. Earlier in the afternoon, two local teenagers were held at gunpoint by a British army undercover unit, when they accidentally stumbled across a spy-post in a derelict house, which was apparently being used, in part, to keep H-Block processions in the area under surveillance.

Thursday: Again in Short Strand, the homes of several H-Block activists were raided in the early hours of the morning, and one - prominent RAC member and delegate to the National H-Block Committee - Eilish Carlisle was arrested and detained in Castlereagh for two days.

That evening, three torchlight processions took place in different areas of Greater Andersonstown: in Lenadoon, Rivendale and lower Andersonstown; and a torchlight procession took place in Ardoyne.

Friday: Forty demonstrators picketed inside and outside the leisure centre in Andersonstown where BBC cameras were present to film activities in the centre, which was recently judged the best of its kind in Britain and the North.

In line with their customary non-cooperation (and distortion) of most H-Block protests, the leisure centre picket received no mention on BBC news; neither did the fact, ironically but extremely fittingly, that BBC telephone switchboards had been seriously disrupted during the entire day by a concerted telephone-in campaign against BBC censorship and bias.

In the evening, an hour-long picket of Mountpottinger RUC barracks in Short Strand met with extremely abusive provocation from the RUC, who - particularly in this tightly-knit community - appear to be hell-bent on provoking widespread confrontation in the face of consistently peaceful and orderly demonstrations.

Saturday: Large numbers of buses left from each nationalist area for the march and mass lobby of Leinster House in Dublin.

Sunday: Torchlight processions took

place in the Lower Springfield Road area where two hundred took part, and in Turf Lodge where eight hundred took part. Earlier on, over fifty youths marched around Lenadoon, and in Ballymurphy two hundred children took part in a five-mile sponsored walk. Also that day, seven Ballymurphy ex-prisoners ended a seven-day fast which had begun on November 17th.

Monday: One hundred youths picketed Fort Jericho in Turf Lodge for one hour, followed by the beginning of a twenty-four-hour vigil. And in Twinbrook, H-Block activists occupied the local Housing Executive office for more than half-an-hour, pasting up posters inside before leaving in an orderly fashion.

Tuesday: The award ceremony, officiated at by Lord Mayor John Carson, for the presentation of the award to the manager of the Andersonstown Leisure Centre for the 'best leisure centre', was picketed by H-Block protestors despite

the venue of the ceremony having been shifted from the planned one at the leisure centre to the city hall, specifically to avoid any protests. Demonstrators handed in a letter to unionist Lord Mayor John Carson.

In the evening, torchlight processions were held in Twinbrook and in the Rossnareen area of Andersonstown.

Wednesday: An estimated eight hundred people marched through the New Lodge district on Wednesday evening, watched by a film crew from the BBC 'Nationwide' programme. Speaking to the crowd about conditions in Armagh jail and about her republican comrades, former protest prisoner Shirley Devlin, who was released on Monday, broke down, overcome with emotion.

Elsewhere in County Antrim, one thousand people took part in a march last Sunday between Waterfoot and Cushendall.

The focus of activity in the coming few days will be geared towards a massive mobilisation for the march in Belfast this Sunday.

Last Friday, following a meeting of hunger-strikers' relatives in Belfast, a joint statement was issued by them thanking all those 'who have generously given of their time and energy over these last few weeks, and have wholeheartedly supported the five just demands of our loved ones.'

'It has been a great source of comfort to us to see the many thousands of concerned people in all weathers walking the streets of villages, towns, and cities, throughout Ireland and the world.'

'We are conscious that the unity generated here by the hunger-strike crosses all political divides: humanitarians march with politicians, Irish people with French, American, and English. It is only this unity which can ensure that the evils of the H-Blocks and Armagh are finally exposed and destroyed.'

'We appeal to those political, cultural and religious leaders who have indicated privately their support to us, to do so now publicly. We believe that by publicly lending their good office in support of the demands at this time they can contribute significantly to the prevention of even greater tragedy in the H-Blocks and Armagh.'

The statement concluded by reiterating the prisoners' five demands.

Derry

THE main thrust of activity in Derry this week, as elsewhere in the North, has been on local area meetings designed to strengthen action committees, youth groups and ex-prisoners' committees. Efforts have also been concentrated on the putting up of street signs and ensuring a maximum display of window posters.

Other activities over the past week included:

Friday 21st November: A sizable crowd of demonstrators blocked the Strand Road in Derry for one hour in the afternoon, at five points - thereby causing massive traffic disruption.

Saturday: The contingent which travelled from Derry to Dublin for the

Leinster House lobby was the largest ever to travel over the border for a rally, during the past twelve years.

Sunday: A contingent of Derry trade unionists travelled to Dublin for a trade union conference on future possible industrial action in support of the hunger-strikers. And in South Derry, a four-thousand-strong crowd, along with six bands, marched from Lavey along a one-and-a-half-mile route to the village of Gulladuff. The meeting - the biggest yet in the South Derry area - was addressed by Kevin Agnew and Liam Haddock (Sinn Féin), and by Mrs. Noone (South Derry/S.W. Antrim RUC), and was chaired by John Dawy (Sinn Féin).

Monday: A picket and road blockade took place on Strand Road for an hour in the afternoon.

Tuesday: Massive traffic disruption was again caused when demonstrators blocked roads for an hour at three points in the town.

The focal point of the coming week's activity is the march to the Guildhall, taking place in Derry on Saturday afternoon.

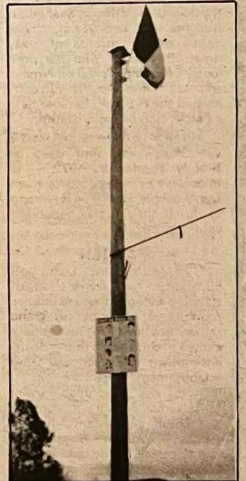
Tyrone

A magnificent turn-out of almost three thousand people from County Tyrone who travelled to last Saturday's lobby of Leinster House in Dublin, is a sound indication of the level of increasing support for the hunger-strikers in that area.

On Wednesday evening, November 19th, a crowd estimated by organisers as five-thousand-strong marched through the Moy to the family home of hunger-striker Tommy McKearney, where speakers included members of the McKearney family.

On Thursday evening, a meeting of forty of the total forty-eight clubs in the Ulster Council of the GAA, at a meeting in Carrickmore, decided that each club would send telegrams to premiers Margaret Thatcher and Charles Haughey urging them to 'create circumstances that will bring to an end the tragic H-Block hunger-strike.'

And elsewhere, a four-hundred-strong torchlight procession took place in



MOORTOWN-symbols of defiance

Strabane in west Tyrone, and the following evening seven hundred people marched through the village of the Rock. As at all these marches, there was an intimidatory RUC presence, but demonstrators resolutely refused to be provoked.

On Saturday, fifty-nine buses left the county for Dublin in an impressive display of support. On their return, several buses were stoned as they passed through the loyalist Mall in Armagh, and two women needed to be taken to the South Tyrone hospital in Dungannon, one receiving five head stitches.

However, on Sunday too, large County Tyrone contingents travelled to marches in Crossmaglen, County Armagh and in Armagh city.

In Loughmorrone on Wednesday night, an estimated crowd of three thousand people paraded through the village centre in a silent procession where the only sound was the rhythmic beat of a solitary drum. At a rally in the village, speakers included Mrs. Mullan (the mother of a blanket man) and Fr. McSean, of the Loughmorrone Smash H-Block Committee.



Belfast Lord Mayor, John Carson, being presented with a letter from the Andersonstown hunger-strike action committee at the City Hall on Tuesday

Portrait
of a
hunger
striker



RAYMOND M

Easy-going, but very ale

BY SEAMUS BOYLE

H-BLOCK HUNGER-STRIKER Raymond McCartney, whose twenty-sixth birthday is this Saturday, comes from a respected nationalist family in the city of Derry, where he, himself, is also very well thought of, especially in republican circles.

Noted for his pleasant easy-going nature, Raymond is normally a very alert and aware person, and a dedicated republican, who comes to the forefront in any crisis. Older than his years, he is the sort of person that someone would go to with a problem. Known as 'Raysie' to his friends, he is a generous person who would never see anybody stuck; and he smiles so consistently, that he was known as 'Smiler' to British troops patrolling the Bogside streets.

His family and friends who saw him on ITV's 'World in Action' programme on Monday evening were deeply shocked by his appearance and frailty.

The McCartney family, all of whom are totally behind Raymond in his prison protest, have consistently suffered heavy British army harassment throughout the last decade: their home, first in Orchard Row on the fringes of the Bogside, and then in Shantallow (for the past two years), having been raided upwards of sixty times. Raymond, who has previously been imprisoned on remand and later interned, is currently only in the H-Blocks because he is a Castlereagh brutality victim.

His twenty-two-year-old cousin, Jim Wray, was shot dead on Bloody Sunday in 1972 — an important turning-point for many Derry people, including Raymond, in firing their active republican commitment.

FATHER

Raymond's father, Liam, aged 55, used to own Derry's longest-standing window-cleaning business founded in 1920 by his grandfather. But, in 1975, his father — denied contracts for British government buildings and other establishment premises as a 'security risk', and unable owing to sectarian pressure to continue to cover Protestant housing estates — could no longer maintain the small family business, and now is unemployed.

His father stresses that Raymond is 'no criminal' and points to his good school record, both educationally and for discipline: at St. Columba's Long Tower Primary school (where was also an altar boy); and, after he had passed the 'eleven plus' examination, at St. Columba's college, where he passed seven GCE 'O' levels.

His father says: "He is very intelligent, knows what he is doing, and never does anything without weighing it up first. He told us that he had his mind made up about the hunger-strike for twelve months: he programmed himself to be able to stand up to it."

FAMILY

Raymond's mother, Elizabeth, aged 53, is not surprisingly very upset that her son faces death on hunger-strike; but she says that in a similar situation she too would have felt bound to take such a drastic step.

She points out: "I reared a family who were very good and

were never in any trouble." The whole family — a close family — have, however, suffered the weight of British army harassment.

James — aged 32, and a married teacher with two children — has had his home raided; whilst Liam — aged 51, and a married window-cleaner with three children — has been arrested on a number of occasions, and has been held several times for three days.

Gerard — aged 29, an unemployed joiner and married with one child — has not only been arrested and held several times for three days, and once for seven days, but was interned from September 1974 to December 1975 (being amongst the last batch of internees released) and was held in remand for nine months in 1978 before a charge against him was dropped. Noel — aged 28 — is held fairly frequently for a few hours and has been held once for three days.

Helen — aged 22, single, and a factory worker — is not living at home at the moment owing to the intensity of harassment of the family; she, together with twenty-year-old Elizabeth, a recently married factory worker, and sixteen-year-old Andrew, still at school, suffered the most, as youngsters, from British army

raids on their home — especially the regular raids in the early hours of the morning during 1972 and 1973 when they would have been aged fourteen, twelve and eight years, respectively.

GRAND-FATHER

The children's grand-father on their mother's side, James Gallagher, who died in 1969 at the age of eighty-two, was a particularly well-respected member of the nationalist community of Derry, being Catholic electoral registration agent in the city for thirty-four years until his retirement. He was also a well-known local republican, being interned in 1924, and he received an 'old IRA' funeral in 1969.

However, at the start of the 'troubles' in 1968/69, the McCartney family, like most Catholic families in Derry, were staunchly nationalist rather than republican. (Veteran republican Sean Keenan and his family were one of the few republican families in the city at that time.)

Popular belief was in constitutional means to achieve a free and united Ireland and people looked to Eddie McAteer, who was consistently elected to Stormont as Nationalist MP for Foyle until February 1969.

The civil rights movement and subsequent loyalist, and then British, armed reaction changed all that.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The first civil rights march in Derry city took place on October 5th 1968 when the sectarian RUC batoned several hundred protestors at Duke Street. That day, Raymond, just short of his fourteenth birthday, was with his brothers at a football match and when they heard about the riot they naturally went to see what was happening.

At a defiant several-thousand-strong repeat of the Duke Street march, the following month, Raymond and his brothers were present from the start; as they were to be at subsequent civil rights marches, with Raymond, especially, later taking an active part in the defence of the Bogside.

In January 1969, on the final day of the Belfast to Derry civil rights march, loyalists, including 'B' Specials, attacked the marchers at Burntollet, a few miles outside Derry; and when blood-stained marchers eventually struggled through to the Guildhall Square and mounted the platform, rioting against the RUC broke out. Later that night, the RUC, acting as a surging mob of loyalist hooligans, terrorised the residents of the Bogside.

Tension mounted through 1969 until the August 12th riots when Orangemen — the RUC and Apprentice Boys — attacked the Bogside, meeting effective resist-

ance in the 'Battle of the Bogside'.

The consequent arrival of British troops brought a 'honeymoon' period of relative, uneasy quiet. Older people generally accepted the troops because they saw them as being a buffer between them and the RUC; and the fact that the troops were on the streets was a sign of defeat for the RUC.

TROOPS

Younger people were more in a state of limbo: they certainly did not welcome the troops, but, initially, neither did they stone them.

Then, slowly, through a series of street confrontations between nationalist demonstrators and troops, with the troops preventing banned march after banned march from getting to the Guildhall in the city centre, people began to see the role of the troops as little different to that of the RUC — just that the troops were more efficient at putting the people down.

In June 1970, Bernadette Devlin (now McAliskey) was jailed for six months for riotous behaviour the previous August defending the Bogside, and serious

rioting (this time against British troops) re-started for the first time since then.

The already strained relationship between the troops and the nationalist people steadily deteriorated — re-inforced by news from elsewhere, especially Belfast — culminating with the shooting dead by the British army of two unarmed civilians, Seamus Cusack and Desmond Beattie, in July of 1971, and with internment in August. (Raymond, by now, was sixteen years old, nearly seventeen.) It was a very dramatic and traumatic, period in nationalist Derry.

For the first time ever in the city the Republican Movement really began to gather mass support and there was such an influx of young people into the movement that it could hardly cope with them.

'Free Derry' had become known by that name after the successful defence of the Bogside in August 1969, but it really became 'Free Derry' in the form of concrete barricades, etc., from internment day. Before then there were still very few active repub-

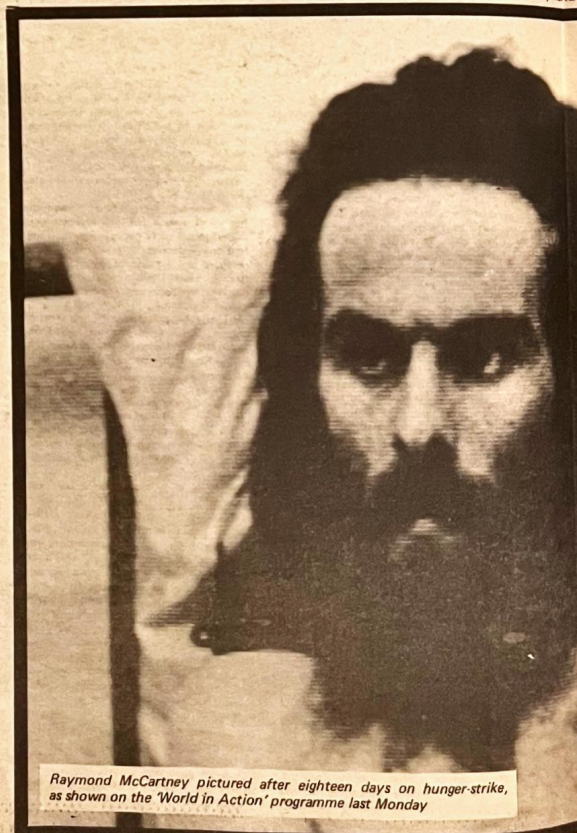
licans — it was still a period of interment and petrol bombs from the nationalist people began to originate the defence of their area, mill the Republican Movement roomed.

Then on 'Bloody Sunday' 30th 1972, British troops shot dead thirteen unarmed civil rights demonstrators (a fourteenth died wounds received, but firmly believing their murderous act IRA's popularity.

BLOODY SUNDAY
Raymond McCartney's brothers were marching; and their father; and then Jim Wray was also marching shooting started, Jim towards their grand-papa apparently to get away shooting, but he was outside the house. He went in through the back door, through the wall, lodged in the wall. The killing of them of the other victims, effect on Raymond



RAYMOND — then aged seven, pictured after making his first Holy Communion



Raymond McCartney pictured after eighteen days on hunger-strike, as shown on the 'World in Action' programme last Monday

MCCARTNEY

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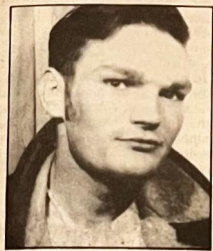
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thers. They were all in the Wrays' house — their usual place to congregate after a march — when the news of Jim's death arrived. They all cried, and they spent the next three days in that house, until the funeral.

Raymond's father states: "The biggest impact anything had on Raymond, I would say, was 'Bloody Sunday' with his cousin,



JIM WRAY, Raymond's cousin — murdered on Bloody Sunday

young Jim Wray, being shot dead. They were very close, very great friends, they went to the same school together until Raymond

went to college; then, after college, they were good friends."

The Wrays lived near to the McCartneys, and Raymond's mother remembers: "Many a night Raymond would have slept at Wray's, or Jim would have slept at our house. They were close cousins, definitely."

It was a time when the whole of nationalist Derry — initially shell-shocked though they were — decided that this was the end of marching: if the Brits wanted to shoot, then so would they. Everybody on the march knew that it was pure chance that it was others, and not themselves, shot dead that day.

ACTIVE

Raymond became an active republican.

From March 1972 to 'Operation Motorman' at the end of July (when the 'Free Derry' barricades were removed), was an intense period notable for numerous shooting attacks on British soldiers and RUC men, and commercial life in Derry's city centre was brought to its knees by the IRA's successful bombing campaign.

After 'Operation Motorman', when better known republicans had to take cover, Raymond became increasingly prominent.

In October of that year, just short of his eighteenth birthday Raymond was arrested in a car in the Rosemount area, by British soldiers, and was taken to the old Victoria barracks on the Strand Road where he was beaten and made to run the gauntlet.

He was remanded to Belfast's Crumlin Road jail, and four months later, in February 1973, he refused to recognise the court at his trial and was found guilty of possession of one round of ammunition discovered in his shirt pocket. He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and so walked free from the court, his time served.

To evade the possibility of internment Raymond went 'on the run'.

It was a time of many casualties amongst British troops and Raymond, who was sometimes stopped by them on the street, coolly talked his way out of many tight situations.

Although Raymond well knew that he could have been sitting safely in Buncrana, he chose to stay in his home area. But his almost daily brushes with British troops meant that it could only be a matter of time before he was arrested or shot.

RAIDED

In October 1973 he was recognised on the street by a British army intelligence officer, and after being chased by troops through Lisfannon Park in the heart of the Bogside he was arrested. He was interned in cage 6, (in the same cage from which that month-fellow H-Block hunger-striker Brendan Hughes escaped in

a dust cart).

It was a difficult time for the McCartney family. Raymond's father recalls their victimisation by the British army: "From October of the previous year, 1972, the house was raided by the Brits in the early hours of a Tuesday or Thursday morning, almost every week for nearly two years; their routine hardly varied; and they would go through all the cupboards and drawers, pulling all the clothes out."

"On Christmas eve, 1973, we were raided five times during that evening and it spoilt the family's Christmas, because all the next day we were expecting a knock on the door."

Meanwhile Raymond found that jail never bothered him at all, and he maintained his usual spirits — on top of the world. His brother Gerard, later to be interned with him, recalls: "I never saw Raymond having a bad day, although everybody else interned always had a bad day of depression — the big 'D' we used to call it."

INTERNEED

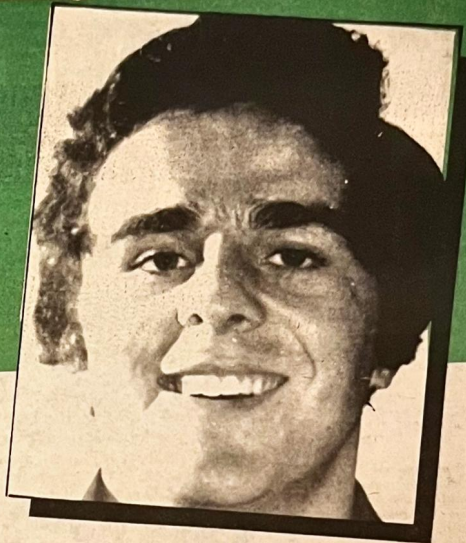
Raymond kept himself busy. He operated the semaphore flags from the interned men to the sentenced men; he was good at leatherwork and handicraft; he wrote frequent letters; and by the time he was released he was semi-

RELEASED

In March 1975, with the IRA/ British truce in full swing, Ray-



RAYMOND — pictured far left in 1974, with two friends



fluent in the Irish language.

Like other internees he got up to pranks. On one occasion he went round each hut in the cage, taking down the names of every man who wanted their mattress changed, and at a certain time he told them to take their old mattress outside. It was raining hard and there were all these men standing at the cage entrance with their mattresses over their heads. Meanwhile Raymond was lying on his bed laughing and, of course, there were no new mattresses.

On another occasion when Raymond was called for a visit, a fellow internee threw flour and sugar over him and he had to go and get showered and changed again. Then when that man was subsequently called for his visit, Raymond who was perched on the hut's porch roof, threw slops around him and he in turn, had to get changed.

mond was released from internment. During that summer he worked as a youth leader with the Bogside Community Association, being particularly concerned to help the youth of the area; a concern which was reinforced by his realisation of the importance of combating the RUC's attempts to use petty crime amongst young people as a lever to get back into the area.

Increasingly politically aware, Raymond was amongst the first to realise that the longer the truce went on, the harder it would be to get things going again.

In 1976, the truce having collapsed, he was again in the forefront of republican activity; and he actively contributed to deliberately dispelling any negative attitudes which were hangovers from the truce.

ARRESTED

On February 2nd 1977 the IRA opened up a new front in their guerrilla war when they shot dead Geoffrey Agate, the head of the American-owned Dupont factory in Derry. (It was the first of a series of short-lived attacks on foreign industrialists, designed to undermine direct-ruler Mason's efforts to prop up the six counties' collapsing economy through international investment.)

Some hours after the shooting attack British troops burst into a house in the Bogside and arrested Raymond and his friend John Donnelly, then aged 19.

The pair were taken to Strand Road barracks; and on the way Raymond told John: "I'll be out in four hours! I don't know about you." However both were held in the barracks overnight, detained under seven day orders.

The next day Raymond, John and two other arrested Derry men — Peter Anderson and Hugh Brady, both then in their early twenties — were transported to Castlereagh interrogation centre where they were systematically beaten and brutalised by the same team of RUC men over a period of several days' intensive mistreatment.

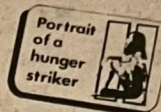
INTERROGATORS

Raymond's interrogators repeatedly slapped and punched him around the face and head, and having previously removed some of his clothes, threatened him with throttling while a sheet was tightened around his neck.

Raymond has recorded: "...I was slapped about the face and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE TEN)

RAYMOND MCCARTNEY



(CONTINUED FROM CENTRE PAGES)

the back of the head, pushed to the ground, and kicked and trampled on.

"At this time I was still naked and one of them brought me a white sheet. They would try to pull and tug at this sheet and one grabbed me and tried to choke me.

"They told me to stand with my hands by my side and they would then slap me. Everything I would deny resulted in me being slapped, punched, thrown to the ground, etc....

"One of them would pull my ears. One of them would always try the sweet talk and say 'don't do that, we will talk,' but now and again he would slap me. The other would fly off the handle and hit me, and when I went to the ground he would kick and trample me."

Each time Raymond denied his involvement in the shooting of Agate, or in the shooting dead the previous week of an RUC man in Derry, he would be beaten.

Eventually exhausted, but not broken, he initialised a caution and underlined a compromising statement invented by his interrogators.

DONNELLY

Meanwhile the similarly brutal interrogation of John Donnelly (arrested with Raymond) was interrupted when he was taken to Dundonald hospital to have his hand X-rayed to gauge the extent of damage deliberately done to it by the RUC.

Falls Road doctor, Joe Hendron, also a prominent SDLP member, who examined both men in Castlereagh, stated that John Donnelly's case was the worst case of assault on a prisoner he had seen. After six months on remand, charges were withdrawn against John Donnelly (presumably on the strength of the medical reports on his Castlereagh injuries). Of the other two — Peter Anderson and Hugh Brady — one had charges against him dropped after the second day of his trial, and in the other's case the judge ruled before the commencement of his trial that he had no case to answer.

Amnesty International's report on RUC interrogation, drawn up in early 1978, records (anonymously, but identifiably) Peter Anderson as brutality victim No. 52, Hugh Brady as victim No. 54 and John Donnelly as victim No. 55. Raymond McCartney, still in Crumlin Road jail on remand, was unavailable to be interviewed by the Amnesty team.

REMAND

Whilst on remand (for nearly two years including his three month trial), Raymond maintained his usual good spirits.

He had short hair then and he used to dress up, in his best available clothes, and go into the cell of a new prisoner, to whom he would claim that he was a doctor sent to examine him. Raymond would proceed to examine the other prisoner, asking him to strip, and then would open the cell door where there would be



Above: a family photograph of the McCartney family more than fifteen years ago; back row: Liam, Mrs. McCartney, Gerard and Jimmy; front row: Raymond, Helen, Noel and Elizabeth; inset: a recent picture of Raymond's parents, Liam and Elizabeth.

about twenty faces peering in at the naked newcomer, much to his embarrassment.

Another prank that Raymond played was to convince a newcomer that there was an escape on, and that, to assist it, the man — when returning to his cell at evening lock-up — should collapse and pretend he was sick, by moaning and groaning on the ground. The prisoner did just that for several minutes before realising that not only were all the other prisoners continuing to return to their cells, but they were all laughing at him.

The Crumlin Road prison regime's respect for Raymond, who was at one time in charge of the republican remand prisoners in 'C' wing, was reflected by the fact that in the summer of 1978 during a massive series of cell searches, designed to thwart a suspected escape attempt, Raymond's cell was amongst the first to be hit.

When a senior prison warden formally reminded Raymond that it was his duty 'as a prison officer' to prevent his escaping, Raymond sharply retorted that it was his duty 'as a prisoner-of-war' to attempt to escape.

TRIAL

In September 1978, after more than nineteen months on remand, Raymond's trial commenced, on charges of shooting Agate and the RUC man. In the latter case the only evidence was the forged confession and in the former case the only additional evidence was dubious forensic findings — a residue of gun powder found on

Raymond's coat, which, given its location, was much more likely to have come from the arresting soldiers' weapons than from him handling a weapon.

The non-jury trial lasted an almost unprecedented fifty-seven days.

Raymond gave detailed evidence of his ill-treatment, so too did his fellow brutality victims on his behalf, identifying the guilty RUC men in court.

During the trial three infamous RUC interrogators — McCoubrey, Bohill and Wilson — who appeared as prosecution witnesses, were simultaneously facing, in another court, charges of assaulting another prisoner (Maghera man Patrick Fullerton, whom they had beaten in Castlereagh with a broomstick shaft the previous November).

ASSAULTED

Raymond McCartney's trial was adjourned on occasion to enable his RUC interrogators to attend Newtownards magistrate's court in their own defence!

Five RUC men were on trial, in all, and finding them 'not guilty' the magistrate stated: "The guilty escape with the innocent. I cannot allocate any particular incident to any particular person and I therefore dismiss the summons, but I do not doubt that this man was assaulted."

The RUC men's defence was a denial that any assaults took place. In Raymond McCartney's case these RUC men also denied brutalising their victim and claimed that his authoritatively documented cuts and bruises were self-inflicted.

During the trial Raymond

McCartney's defence counsel produced several reliable witnesses who testified that on the morning of the Agate shooting he was on the Derry bus to Magilligan prison camp to visit a friend.

But, dismissing this evidence and Raymond's brutality claim, the judge — after a Christmas recess — found him guilty of both shootings and sentenced him to a recommended minimum term of twenty-five years' imprisonment.

Raymond has appealed his convictions and sentence, and, if he is still alive by then, his appeal is expected to be heard within the next few months. (One of Raymond's interrogators, who brutalised him — McCoubrey — is in fact the son-in-law of Lord Chief Justice Robert Lowry, the man most likely to hear Raymond's appeal.)

H-BLOCKS

When Raymond first arrived in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh in January 1979 he was met by a notorious violently sectarian, senior prison warden, Davey Long, who told him that this time he was not in an internees' cage but was a criminal and would call him, 'Long, Sir'. Raymond replied that he would call no warden 'Sir' and that he was a republican prisoner-of-war.

Raymond joined the 'blanket protest' and as a leading republican in H5-Block he received his share of harassment. Only about three weeks before the hunger-strike he got a beating from the warders, but he was never one to complain to his parents or others about prison conditions or harassment.

John Donnelly, the young man

with whom he was arrested, now aged 23, and Raymond's long-standing friend of twelve years states:

"The minute that myself and others of his friends and family heard that there was going to be a hunger-strike involving one 'blanket man' from each area, we knew right away that the man from Derry would be Raymond... He is a very determined person and unless they do get political status he won't falter in the hunger-strike, and will stay on it till death. There's no way he will give into the Brits."

ANIMALS

Raymond told his parents that the way he views the hunger-strike is like this:

"We are treated like animals; we are living like animals; and you — coming up to visit us — are also treated like animals. Something must be done so that we can be treated like human beings.

"For the past two years this hunger-strike has been on the cards, and it has been put off by people saying 'we'll do this and we'll do that'. Now everything has been tried."

During a visit a couple of weeks ago, although Raymond had physically got very much weaker, his spirits and morale were still high: he even teased his brother (married a year and a half, and still to get a home) that the 'blanket men' should add a sixth demand, to get him a home; and he noted that Tottenham Hotspur, the soccer team which he supports, had coincidentally done well since the hunger-strike had started.

RESPONDED

Leading Derry republican, Martin McGuinness, aged 30, who has known Raymond since 1972, praises the positive way in which the nationalist people of Derry have responded to the hunger-strike; stresses the need for, at this stage, massive peaceful street protests; but points out that more pressure needs to be urgently put on the SDLP and the Catholic church to take a firm stand on the side of the prisoners.

He says: "The hunger-strike has certainly brought everything to a head... During the Wednesday 'day of action' and march a fortnight ago, the people of Derry responded in their thousands — workplaces and schools stopped, all over. It was a very heartening experience. It was proof that the people of Derry have sympathy for the prisoners."

The need for peaceful protests stems not only from the need to maximise the number of people on the streets, but from the need to keep up the maximum pressure on the SDLP and the Catholic church — they must be given no excuse to back-slide.

Martin stresses: "We must demand that councillors and churchmen take a stand: if they are convinced that the prisoners are right then they should be out on the streets... At the moment there is an ill-wind blowing up against the SDLP and the Catholic Church." And it will not die down until both take a firm stand on the side of the prisoners.

Despite Raymond's appalling physical condition, his spirit and determination remain sound, as was evidenced by the interview with him (after eighteen days on hunger-strike) broadcast on television on Monday evening. And his family remain proud of him and steadfast in their stand behind him, whilst angry at the British injustice, inhumanity and intransigence which has brought him to his present plight.

America

THE New York state assembly has passed a motion calling on "the British to cede the rightful demands of these Irish men and women to be recognised as political prisoners thereby bringing an end to the hunger-strike without loss of life." Copies of the resolution are to be sent to the British consulate, the New York governor and the hunger-strikers.

So far three state assemblies — New York, Massachusetts and California — representing a total of fifty-eight million people, have passed such resolutions. At a press conference in the New York state assembly building on Tuesday 25th November, former 'blanket man' Fra McCann and former Armagh protest prisoner Rose McAuliffe accepted the resolution on behalf of the prisoners.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians, which is the largest Irish-American organisation in the United States, and the New York Brehon Law Society, comprising attorneys, law professors and law students, have both passed resolutions demanding that the British government give political status to the prisoners.

The American Indian Movement have pledged their support for the prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh.

Thousands of demonstrators marched in eighteen major cities across the United States, last Saturday, in the second day of national demonstrations called by Irish Northern Aid. The demonstrations were well supported by other ethnic minorities, city councillors, journalists, jurists and trade union leaders.

Four United States congressmen — Biaggi, Gilman, Fish and Wolf — have written to the US ambassador at the United Nations urging that that body become involved in finding a solution to the hunger-strike.

Britain

LONDON

A NEW film, "H-Block hunger-strike" (available through The Other Cinema: 01 — 734 — 8508), is now being extensively shown in the build up to a national demonstration which is being held in London on December 7th. Meanwhile, public meetings, street activity and church leafletting continue.

On Monday 17th November, the Labour Committee on Ireland held a joint public meeting about the hunger-strike with the journal 'Socialist Organiser'. The meeting was held in Dalston in east London, and was addressed by Westminster MP Ernie Roberts.

Two days later, the Brentford and Isleworth constituency Labour Party in west London passed a motion in support of the prisoners.

On both Wednesday and Thursday evenings, pickets were held outside Rochester Row police station in solidarity with former 'blanket man' Liam Carlin, being held by the police after being deported via London from the USA.

On Saturday evening, a press conference in support of the prisoners was given by Massachusetts state representative Marie Howe, who is the assistant majority leader of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and who was in London — en route to Belfast — following the British government's refusal of her request to visit the H-Blocks.

And last Monday, November 24th, the new H-Block film on the hunger-strike was shown to seventy people at a meeting organised by the South London hunger-strike action committee; the meeting was addressed by speakers from Sinn Féin and the National Union of Teachers.

A slightly unusual development in London last week came when two political dissidents from Eastern Europe who are exiled in Britain, Rudolf Bahro from East Germany, and Zhores Medvedev from the Soviet Union, criticised the British government's treatment of republican political prisoners. In a statement, Bahro said: "The methods used by the British government in Northern Ireland against its political opponents are qualitatively worse as far as brutality and injustice are concerned, than those adopted by any other state in Europe against its opposition."

BIRMINGHAM

Two more trade union branches have recently passed motions about the treatment of political prisoners in the six counties. The Birmingham district executive committee of the National Union of Gold, Silver and Allied Trades (NUGSAT) has passed a resolution supporting the Birmingham hunger-strike action

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS: ABROAD



Pickers at the gateway of the British embassy in the French capital city of Paris. Subsequently, after the arrest of seventeen pickets, a twenty-four hour armed police guard has been mounted on the building similar to the heavily-protected Israeli embassy.

group's call for the prisoners' five demands to be granted; and the Longbridge (British Leyland) 2nd 171 LE AUEW branch are calling for an independent, international enquiry into republican prisoners' demand for political status. Other resolutions are going through trade union branches shortly, some calling for affiliation to the local action group which is already supported by the local polytechnic students' union; the Indian Workers' Association; the Sparkhill Labour Party branch; UCAIT No 5 branch; and the social services branch of NUPE.

In addition to more than fifty locally prominent councillors, trade union officials and community workers who have signed a letter supporting the five demands, other recent signatories include some academics and David Edgar an author and TV playwright well known for his anti-fascist views.

COVENTRY

The executive of Coventry Trades Council has come out in support of the five demands, in response to a call from the Coventry hunger-strike action committee. Many other trade unionists and academics in Coventry have followed suit.

SHEFFIELD

One hundred and sixty people attended a meeting on Thursday, 20th November, organised by the local Charter '80 branch and addressed by Eilish Green, sister of hunger-striker Leo; and by Westminster MP Joan Maynard.

The following day Eilish Green travelled to London to give interviews to several socialist newspapers and to the London radio station, LBC.

SUSSEX

At a meeting held by one hundred and thirty Iranian and Turkish students at Sussex University, on Thursday 20th November, the students decided to join through the Iranian students' society — with the local Troops Out Movement branch in setting up a hunger-strike action committee, after they had watched the new hunger-strike film, and the film 'Behind the Wire'.

WALES

The National Union of Students in Wales have passed a motion in support of the prisoners' five demands, at their recent annual conference.

Canada

FORMER 'blanket man' Raymond Crane has received widespread coverage in the media on his tour of Canada. So far he has addressed meetings in Toronto, Quebec and Montreal and is at present touring the east coast area.

Several organisations around the country have endorsed the prisoners' demands. They include the Centre for International Workers Solidarity, which represents several workers organisations,

the Communist Workers Party, the New Democratic Party, the Arab Student Association, International Socialists, Committee on South Africa, and prominent individuals: Professor Nounoff of McGill University and playwright David Fennario.



Toronto picket

Denmark

THE Communist Workers Party of Denmark has issued a statement in Copenhagen calling for political status for the prisoners and condemning the British government's "attempts to criminalise the just struggle of the Irish people".

The European H-Block/Armagh delegation of former 'blanket man' Kieran Nugent, former Armagh protest prisoner Maureen Gibson, and Sinn Féin trade unionist Dave Farrell are due in Denmark next week.

Finland

THE Finnish League for Human Rights and Freedom has expressed support for the hunger-strikers and their demands. A spokesman for the league has said they will do all in their power to spread information and put pressure on other organisations in Finland to give support.

France

MORE than two thousand people attended a meeting in Paris on Wednesday 19th November, organised by the revolutionary group, OCI. The meeting was addressed by former 'blanket man' Deslie McCaillon and other speakers included lawyers and political activists. Messages of support were read out from several organisations, including the French teachers union.

A delegation representing human rights groups, elected at the meeting went to the British Embassy the following day and met the political secretary who refused to answer any questions. Eighteen conscientious objectors

from the French army, who are serving prison sentences have expressed solidarity with the seven hunger-strikers.

Germany

KIERAN Nugent, Maureen Gibson and Dave Farrell began a six city tour of West Germany on Friday 21st November. Much groundwork had been done by the West German solidarity groups. The delegation visited Bochum, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen.

At a meeting in Frankfurt, attended by nearly five hundred people, the delegation received the support of several cultural, political and trade union bodies. The tour received widespread coverage from the German media.

On Wednesday 26th November several H-Block/Armagh protesters occupied the British Airways office in Frankfurt, stopping all business for several hours, to draw attention to the hunger-strike.

Holland

A TOTAL of ninety-five political, cultural, humanitarian and trade union organisations signed the international H-Block petition in Holland.

The European delegation of Kieran Nugent, Maureen Gibson, and Dave Farrell, attended a press conference in Amsterdam on Monday 17th November, which was covered by two nationwide television services. Maureen Gibson was interviewed for a woman's radio programme. In the evening Kieran Nugent and Dave Farrell addressed a meeting at the Institute of Social Studies organised by Third World students.

On Tuesday 18th November, the delegation met the Dutch section of the World Council of Churches, who promised to raise the hunger-strike at their international meeting on December 1st, and write to the British government expressing concern. The delegation also met the Dutch section of Pax Christie, whose international committee has already expressed support for the five demands.

The Dutch H-Block Committee have been holding regular meetings, pickets, and lobbies, as well as producing posters, leaflets and banners. On Saturday 22nd November they placed an advert in a leading newspaper signed by all supporting organisations, and this week were received by the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Dutch parliament.

New Zealand

SUPPORT for the hunger-strikers has come from several organisations and individuals in New Zealand including: Auckland Trades Council; Auckland Public Service Association; Dave Morgan, national president of the Seaman's Union; J. Whimp, general secretary of Equity; and J. Hawk, leader of the Land Rights League.

Norway

A broadly-based H-Block Action Committee has been set up in Norway, which includes the three Irish solidarity organisations and six political organisations, the Left Socialist Party, the Socialist Youth League, the Workers Communist Party and its youth section, the youth section of the Communist Party of Norway and the youth section of the present government party. The feminist movement in Norway has also backed the prisoners' demands.

Portugal

SINCE the arrival of the H-Block/Armagh delegation of former Armagh protest prisoner Eileen McConville and Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs Bureau representative Richard Behal in Portugal, on Friday 21st November, the hunger-strike has received extensive coverage in the media in spite of the current presidential campaign.

On the day of their arrival the delegation met the Portuguese Human Rights League, the Portuguese Peace Council and the Portuguese Democratic Movement, who have members of parliament. All have backed the five demands.

On Saturday 22nd November, General Otelo, one of the presidential candidates, met the delegation and signed the international petition.

On Monday 24th November, the Women's Democratic Movement declared their support and pledged themselves to work particularly on behalf of the Armagh women. The same day, the delegation was received at the Palace of Justice by the public attorneys' trade union, who also gave their support.

On Tuesday 25th November, the delegation met the most powerful trade union in Portugal, the CGTP, whose executive assured the delegation of their full support for the hunger-strikers. The same day the delegation was received in the Portuguese parliament by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party parliamentary groups, and the Union of Left Social Democrats. All expressed support for the five demands and promised to raise the hunger-strike in the parliament.

Spain

BEFORE going to Portugal, Eileen McConville and Richard Behal were in Spain, where they continued their tour last week, meeting the powerful Spanish Human Rights League on Thursday 20th November. The league's committee is to call at the British Embassy in Madrid to deliver a strong protest about the prisoners' conditions.

Later that day the delegation met the Socialist Party of Spain, who are strongly represented in the Spanish parliament and who pledged support for the hunger-strikers.

Situation defused

LONG Kesh prisoner Seamus Mullan, of Lisnacreeagh, Garvagh, County Derry, remains seriously ill in the military wing of Belfast's Musgrave Park hospital.

He ended his fifty-eight day hunger-strike last Saturday, his twenty-sixth birthday, after learning that his lawyers were lodging appeal papers with the British House of Lords' Judicial Committee this week.

Seamus Mullan has continually protested his innocence of a black-mail charge on which he was jailed for ten years in May of this year. He spent seventy-two days on hunger-strike immediately following his conviction, ending it only when he obtained an appeal date. But when his appeal was dismissed, in September, he began his second hunger-strike.

Last Friday a Belfast appeal court turned down an application to have his case heard by the House of Lords, but granted a certificate to his lawyers allowing them to take the case to the House of Lords' Judicial Committee for leave to appeal against his conviction.

This unusual decision was taken, so Lord Chief Justice Lowry claimed, 'because a point of law of general public importance was involved'; but more likely it was to defuse what the British government saw as a potentially explosive situation. The death of Seamus Mullan on hunger-strike would have drastically raised the temperature of the steadily mounting H-Block protest campaign — a prospect which the British obviously feared.

Reports blocked

AIDAN PENDER, editor of the 'Irish Independent', has given orders that H-Block protests are henceforth not to be published in the paper. Since this instruction, the only H-Block news in the paper has been reports or ill-informed articles of an anti-hunger-strike nature.

On Monday last there was no mention whatsoever in the paper of Saturday's major Leinster House march (of which both the 'Irish Press' and 'Irish Times' carried reports and photographs).

Meanwhile the National H-Block Committee has lodged a formal complaint with RTE's Broadcast Complaints Commission about the 'Today Tonight' current affairs programme. In a letter to the commission, dated November 18th, they specifically complain about a programme, transmitted on October 29th, which did not conform with RTE's supposed statutory obligations of objectivity and impartiality.

The panel on this particular programme consisted of spokesmen from the Northern Ireland Office, the Official Unionist Party and the Alliance Party, and the presenter made no particular attempt to inject some balance into the programme. The commission point out that, in subsequent broadcasts on the same issue there was no attempt to redress the balance.

Indeed, RTE's idea of 'balance' on the H-Block issue was graphically illustrated as recently as last Monday, when former BBC man Barry Cowan interviewed Kathleen Green, mother of hunger-striker Leo, and the widow of an RUC inspector, for whose alleged shooting Leo was sentenced by a Diplock court. Cowan subjected Mrs. Green to a gloating insensitive interrogation about her son's former alleged actions and his present position.

On the other hand, the RUC man's widow, who herself continues to work for the RUC, was allowed to answer every question with a sickeningly hypocritical piece of bible-belt Christianity, whilst no effort at all was made to ask her to explain the notorious activities of the RUC colleagues of herself and her late husband.

Successful American tour

DERRY EX-PRISONER RETURNS HOME VIA AMERICAN AND BRITISH PRISONS

BY TERESA O'DWYER

LIAM Carlin, the twenty-three-year-old former blanket man from Creggan, was back home in Derry this week at the end of a successful tour of the United States publicising the H-Block and Armagh issues.

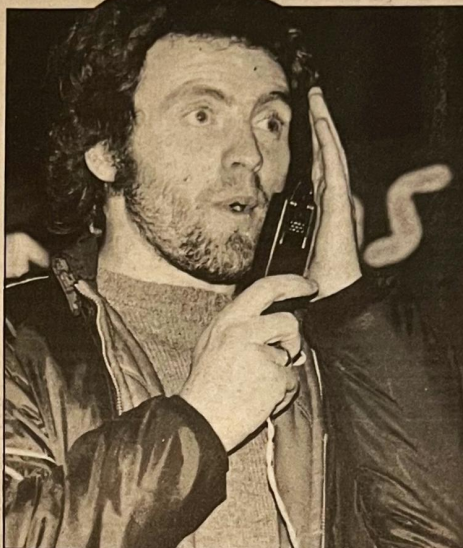
Liam Carlin was released from the H-Blocks last March having served three years and two months 'on-the-blanket'. Fourth eldest in a family of thirteen children, Liam entered Long Kesh a few weeks after one of his brothers had left the prison.

ARREST

He began his tour of America in August this year, a tour which ended on Saturday 8th November in Pittsburgh where he was arrested as he arrived at a major demonstration in support of the hunger-strikers.

Following his arrest he was held at the Alameda county prison — one of the most vicious prisons in America — for five days until a federal judge directed that he be deported to Dublin having entered the country illegally. (Liam Carlin was immediately replaced by former Armagh prisoner Rose McAllister, who entered the United States illegally within twenty-four hours to continue the publicity work.)

Liam Carlin was in fact put on a plane to London instead of Dublin by immigration officials. On his arrival there two Special Branch men with guns in hand rushed on the plane and arrested him under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He was denied access to a solicitor and refused permission to contact his mother. After seven days of frequent interrogation he was excluded from Britain.



LIAM CARLIN — speaking at the mass rally outside Leinster House last Saturday

When Liam Carlin arrived in the United States in August, two former 'blanket men' — Fra McCann and Kieran Nugent — were already there, and with them he attended meetings in New York. Following Kieran Nugent's arrest on August 28th, Liam went on to Washington where he did a half-hour live interview on the national 'Panorama' television programme. As he left the studio, reporters from the highly-influential 'Washington Post' and 'Chicago Post' newspapers interviewed him.

Going on to Philadelphia, Liam gave further interviews and helped set up Irish POW committees (affiliated to Irish Northern Aid). 'These', he says, 'spread like wildfire, especially among the young ones', and he left behind a set of these committees along the itinerary of his tour along

the East Coast, in the Mid-West and on the West Coast.

EVIDENCE

Evidence of the success of these committees has been the protests staged across the United States in support of the hunger-strikers. Liam Carlin points out that prior to the formation of the committees work had mainly been fund-raising. He stresses that the tours of the former prisoners have been for publicity not fund-raising, and each has left behind trade unionists, students, clergymen, city councillors and a host of others working in support of the hunger-strikers.

His tour went on to Cleveland, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Kansas City, New York and Chicago. In Chicago he did a four-hour television interview which was extremely

successful and the studio was inundated with phone-calls afterwards.

IMPRESSION

Liam Carlin's impression of the American public was that they were slow to get interested in the H-Block issue, but once their attention was caught they were eager for more information. Those, who he spoke to, were very aware that until then they had only been hearing the British version of events.

He recalls one television interview in Detroit where there was a telephone ring-in section on which the British consul refused to appear with him. Instead the consul foolishly sent in a statement, which Liam was able to cut to pieces. After the interview the station was flooded with phone-calls for three days from people supporting Liam and wishing to meet him.

INTERVIEWED

During his two weeks in San Francisco Liam was interviewed by all the newspapers, spoke at several colleges and was interviewed by a television station which sent a crew from Sacramento, as well as a Spanish-speaking television programme. Whilst he was there the Californian State Legislature passed a resolution supporting political status and recognising the bravery of the men on the blanket protest.

The State Legislature of Massachusetts also passed a similar resolution and went one step further awarding both Liam Carlin and Fra McCann official citations. Fra McCann was in Massachusetts to collect both of the awards. They were given 'in recognition of your heroic stand in suffering over three years of torture and degradation at the British — controlled H-Block of Long Kesh prison for the cause of civil rights for all the people of Ireland.'

After his twelve week tour of America, followed by twelve days in American and British prisons, Liam Carlin arrived back in Dublin in time to speak at the massive Leinster House rally and continue the campaign on behalf of the H-Block and Armagh prisoners.

Stailc ocrais sna Blocanna H

LE TOMÁS Ó SÉ

BÁS NÓ BEATHA na stailceoirí ocrais is orainne atá sé ag brath anois. Ní féidir gníomhaíocht ar a son a chur ar an méar fhada a thuilleadh. Is ionann gach lá ar an stailc ocrais agus dochar don chorp nach féidir a leigheas go deo.

Tá na hargóintí cloiste againn go léir. Ar ndóigáil leithéidí Fitt/FitzGerald/Scally againn ag tabhairt taocaíocht do rialtas na Breataine. Ach bhí an tuairim sin acu riamh. Bhí síl leithéid uathu mar féachann siad ar stailc ocrais mar ionas ar riall Shasana sa tír seo.

Aon duine a sheasann le neamhspleachas na tíre, le daonnacht agus leis an ceart caithfidh sé a áit a thógáil leis na stailceoirí ocrais. Má chasann tú do dhroin leao tá tú ag casadh do dhroin leao do dhúchas agus leis an ceart chun Éireannach a thabhairt ort féin.

DÚCHAS

Príosnaigh choghadh is ea na poblachtaigh sna Blocanna H. Tá cogadh ar síl sna Sé Chontae agus adhmaíonn gach taobh é sin. Cogadh ar son neamhspleachas na hÉireann is ea é. Ní ar mhaithe leao féin atá na fir agus na mná i bpríosún ach ar mhaithe leis an pobal ar fad.

Cuid de dhúchas na hÉireann is

ea é troid i gcoinne an ansmach agus an cur faoi chois. Tá saighdiúirí Óglaigh na hÉireann sa traidisiún sin. Tá siad ag leanúint Tone, Emmet, na hÉireannaigh Óga, na Finíní agus fir agus mná 1916. Bhí muintir na Sé Chontae faoi chois leis na céadtha bliain agus i rith an ama sin níor stopadh den iarracht chun fórsaí Shasana a chur amach as an dtír seo.

Deireann an seanfhocal go mbris-eann an dúchas tre shúilibh an chait agus is fíor go bhfuil sé de dhúchas ionainn grá a thabhairt don soirse. Dúirt an Piarasach go maith é nuair a dúirt sé nach mbeid síocháin riamh in Éirinn a fhad is atá Éire faoi smacht.

Ma fheachann tú ort fein mar cuid den traidisiún sin na cas do dhroim ar na stailceoirí ocrais.

DAONNACHT

Tá ne fir sin Blocanna H agus na mná in Ard Mhaca ag maireachtáil faoi choinníollacha nach acoim-

eádfai madra futhu. Tá siad ag maireachtáil i ndiaidh lae ina mún agus ina cach fein. Tá siad á mbualleadh agus á mbasadh agus ní rud ar bith sna cillíní mar bhia don intinn.

Tá drochbhia á fháil acu agus ní cead acu a gillíní a fhágáil chun luthaíocht ar bith a fháil. Tá gach iarracht á dhéanamh ag údarais an phríosúin spiorad na bhfeir pluid a bhriseadh.

Má sheasann tú le gnáthdaonachta ná cas do dhroim ar na stailceoirí ocrais.

'Sé dearcadh Shasana ná nach bhfuil siad chun geilleadh dos na stailceoirí ocrais. Mar a dúirt runaí ambasadóir na Breataine in Amsterdam, 'Is cuma linn mar gheall ar bheatha Éireannaigh.' Sin tuairim na Sasanaigh agus trí do chúinas tá tú ag comhoibriú leo.

Tóg seasmhach anois. Bí ar na sráideanna ag léirsiú. Más féidir leat, tóg do chomhoibrithe amach ar stailc leathlea ag tacú le hÉilteamh na stailceoirí ocrais. Caithfidh gach bealach a thriall chun a gearra d'fhail dos na stailceoirí



Cuireadh an brat seo ar foluain ós choinn Chóiste na Tríonóide i mBaile Átha Cliath ag an mairséil ar an Satharn seo caite.

Seas leis an dúchas, an daonnacht agus an ceart. Beatha dos na stailceoirí ocrais.

November memories

MY MIND is full of H-Blocks, Armagh jail, Pauline McLaughlin and the seven hunger-strikers. Never in men spoken in such low, mean, callous, pro-British tones: Gerry Fitt, Garret FitzGerald and Oliver Napier, all in one voice with England's queen and the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher.

In her speech the latter said there could be no political status for murderers and other criminals. Let us look for a moment at the names and titles given by England to Irish patriots down the centuries. Those who did not kiss the hem of their gowns or lick their boots in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were put to the sword and fire, and banished out into the wilderness as the wild uncivilised and murdering Irish.

At the invasion of Wexford, in 1669, the English were not content in killing the Irish defenders, over one thousand men and women, they then beheaded each corpse and laid the heads in circles at the feet of their chiefs.

Waterford was next. An English historian tells us:

"The English on their first arrival had swept the cattle from the surrounding country and had placed them in an outer enclosure of their camp. Confined within a small circle and mad with terror at the fierce shouts of the Irish who were thrown into confusion by cattle and the English won the battle after they had made a fierce and terrible slaughter of the Irish. Over a thousand Irish were killed and beheaded.

"This triumph of the English was blotted with an unnecessary and cruel act of vengeance. Seventy citizens of Waterford had been captured and it was decided to obtain large ransom for their freedom. Instead, the English decided that there was a way to strike terror into the Irish.

"The seventy citizens were hurried to the summit of a rock and then, after their arms and legs were deliberately broken, they were cast headlong into the sea."

TERRORIST

It is no wonder the English make great use of the word 'terrorist', because it was the English who coined it, the English who practised it in every generation of Irish history. Strike terror into the Irish, slay them by sword, arrow, fire or water, break their arms and legs and fling them into the sea. Terror and the sword. And so the English terrorists won the day.

Dublin was next. Amid great slaughter the city was taken, the citizens were driven out of their homes and the city of Dublin was given over to the men and women of Bristol.

For thirty-nine years the Bristolians were afraid to go outside the walls of Dublin. Then in 1209 they decided to go for a picnic to Cullinstown, Ranelagh. The wild Irish came from the hill and adopted the English terror policy and slaughtered the lot of them.

'Black Easter Monday' the English called it, and held a service every year for seven hundred years to mark the day. We are supposed to forget the past, but it is alright for the English to remember; and they used Black Easter Monday 1209 as another excuse to sally

forth to drive terror into the Irish.

CROPPIES

In 1798 the terror was the pitch-cap: Irishmen's heads shaved and boiling-hot pitch-caps pressed down on the scalps — the croppies. In Dublin, at Sarsfield's Quay, lies the Croppies' Hole, where countless United Irishmen are buried, including Matthew Tone, Wolfe Tone's brother, and Bartholomew Teeling. Most of these men were pitch-capped and then executed.

Sheep graze, and the Free State army play soccer, over these sacred graves. During the famine, when the English almost starved the Irish nation to death, the Croppies' Hole was used as a soup kitchen.

In every Dublin graveyard we find famine graves, and in Mount Jerome the grave of Thomas Davis, the Young Ireland leader, is just beside the famine plot. The Young Irelanders were 'the felons of our land'.

FELON

To England, the word 'felon' meant a terrible person: a terrorist, a thug, a murderer all wrapped up in one — a 'felon'. But the Irish bards answered back and flung ridicule on England's name: 'We

love them yet we ne'er forget, the felons of our land.'

In Fenian days, the word felon was used again, and the Fenians too had their own Gerry Fitt, Garret FitzGerald, and Oliver Napier: Bishop Moriarty who said that hell was not hot enough, nor eternity long enough, for the Fenians.

1916, Easter week, was — in England's words — Dublin's blackest day. Were they still thinking of 'Black Easter Monday', 1209?

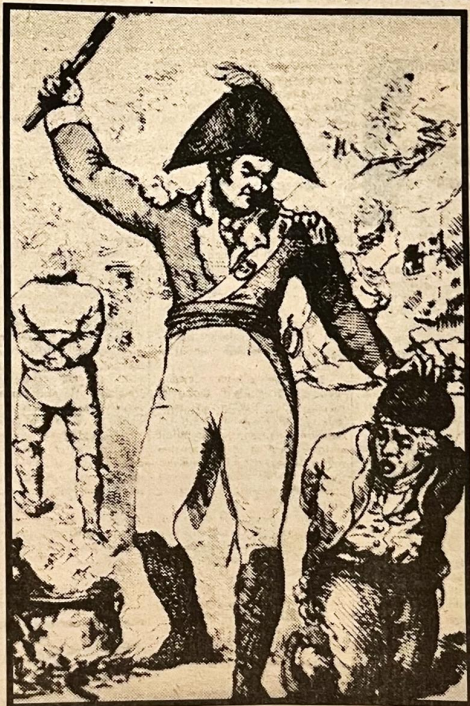
In Black and Tan days the IRA were 'terrorists', 'thugs' and 'murderers'. We know where they got the word 'terrorists': from the terror the English started in Wexford and Waterford and Dublin in the twelfth century.

THUG

The word 'thug' came from the thugs in India, the Indian freedom fighters who met English terror with Indian terror, until they won their freedom. The English are so thick and stupid that today they show us films of the Zulu war, the Indian wars, the Sudan war, omitting all the English terror and murder and showing the brave stand by the English Redcoats.

When will we see an English film of the so-called gallant English soldiers in 1798 in Ireland or of 1916. Wait for it: the BBC have made a series of films — 'Ireland a history'. These will be worth watching.

It will be interesting to see how the English can justify all their terror, murder, slaughter, starvation of the Irish nation for over eight hundred years. There must be



'In 1798 the terror was the pitch-cap; Irishmen's heads shaved and boiling-hot pitch-caps pressed down on the scalps — the croppies'



By Eamonn Mac Thomais

nothing in these films to hurt England's so-called pride. Remember all the fuss and all the bans on the Carrickmore film.

England only shows what it suits. It will never tell the true Zulu story, the true Indian story, the true Sudan story, nor the true Irish story.

CREAM

Despite all that has been said and written by England and the gutter press, the seven hunger-strikers, the men 'on the blanket', the women in Armagh jail, are the cream of young Irish manhood and womanhood; patriots and idealists of the finest kind in the world; Volunteers, unpaid, unrewarded, no self-gain.

Can Garret FitzGerald show me one man or one woman in Fine Gael who gave time, money, freedom and even life itself for their organisation without asking for or getting one penny reward? Can Charlie Haughey show me one man or woman in Fianna Fail? Can Frank Cluskey show me one in the Labour Party? Can Gerry Fitt deny that his pocket was well-lined with money since the first day he entered politics?

I remember well the day Garret FitzGerald announced he was entering politics. 'I always told my wife,' said FitzGerald, 'that the day I became forty years of age, I would take up politics.' Forty years of age, Mr. FitzGerald? By the age of forty years republicans have given almost three-quarters of a life-time of unpaid service to Ireland and Ireland's cause of freedom.

DEAD

November is the month of the dead, the month of holy souls. Republican memories for November, from Wolfe Tone, the Manchester Martyrs, to Kevin Barry and Fr. Griffin, whose body was found in a Galway bog after a Black and Tan arrest, in a long litany of names.

Another long litany starts in 1922, in Kilmainham jail, and this year ends with the death of Bob Mullally in the streets of Newbridge walking in an H-Block hunger-strike protest. Bob Mullally, who gave a life-time of unpaid service to Ireland, was one of the finest and truest Irishmen I have ever known.

Hunger-strikes bring to mind many names of those who made the supreme sacrifice, from Terence MacSwiney to Frank Stagg. But who remembers the name of David Fleming, the Kerryman, who went on hunger-strike for political treatment in Crumlin Road jail in 1946? In prison for the previous four years, Fleming had been subjected to every form of torture and indignity. He was, as he himself described it, 'kicked from one end of the prison to the other.' In a long drawn-out battle the Northern authorities, taking their cue from deValera, declared he would not be released or given political treatment. So was the unity of the Empire preserved.

David Fleming did not die on hunger-strike, instead he was driven insane. Years later he used to go back to Belfast jail seeking admission to finish his hunger-strike. His mental torture only ceased when he died from drowning.

WHAT'S ON

HUNGER-STRIKE PROTESTS

FUND-RAISING SOCIAL

Folk and pop music
8 p.m. Friday 28th November
Martin Forsythe's Club
TURF LODGE
Belfast
Admission 70p

RALLY

8 p.m. Saturday 29th November
Castle Street
KELLS
Co. Meath.
Speakers: An tAithe Piaras O'Duill
and Councillor Dermot Forde

FAST & RALLY

2.30 p.m. Saturday 29th November
NEWBRIDGE
Co. Kildare
A token fast will be held in the town
from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

2.30 p.m. Saturday 29th November
Outside 'Bottom of the Hill' pub
Finglas
DUBLIN

Followed by march through estates.

RELAY WALK

DONEGAL TO DUBLIN
Departs Ballyshannon
9 a.m. Sunday 30th November

Transport available for walkers to take them to point of assembly, enquires to: Old Barracks, Ballyshannon or O'Neill's, Ocean Bar, Bundoran.

PUBLIC MEETINGS EN ROUTE

SLIGO:
9 p.m. Sunday 30th November
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON:
8 p.m. Monday 1st December
LONGFORD:
8 p.m. Tuesday 2nd December
MULLINGAR:
8 p.m. Wednesday 3rd December
KILUCK:
8 p.m. Thursday 4th December
LUCAN:
8 p.m. Friday 5th December
JOIN MARCH TO BRITISH EMBASSY:
Saturday 6th December

FUND-RAISING FOLK NIGHT

Thursday 4th December
Holmpatrick Hotel
SKERRIES
Co. Dublin
Featuring Christy Moore
Bus from Parnell Square 7.15 p.m. going
via Swiss Cottage 7.30 p.m.

TORCHLIGHT MARCH

8 p.m. Thursday 4th December
Municipal Gallery
Parnell Square
DUBLIN
Organised by
Youth Against H-Block/Armagh

MARCH & RALLY

8 p.m. Friday 5th December
RAPHOE
Co. Donegal

PUBLIC MEETING

ON ARMAGH
8 p.m. Friday 5th December
Mansion House
DUBLIN
Speakers: Rose Dugdale, Bernadette
McAliskey and Neil McCafferty.

COBH BUS TO DUBLIN

FOR BRITISH EMBASSY MARCH
Saturday 6th December
Leaves 8 a.m.
GPO
COBH
Fare £3 return

STUDENTS MARCH

2 p.m. Saturday 6th December
Trinity College
DUBLIN
March to join march to British Embassy

MARCH & RALLY

4 p.m. Saturday 13th December
BALLYSHANNON
Co. Donegal

OTHER EVENTS

SINN FEIN

COMHAIRLE CUIGE LAIGHEAN
Annual General Meeting
Sunday 30th November
West County Hotel
DUBLIN
Two delegates for each cumann and
comhairle ceantair to attend. Observers
welcome.

SOCIAL EVENING

8 p.m. Sunday 30th November
No. 5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN
Organised by the Prisoners Welfare
Action Group in aid of the children's
Christmas party. Adm. 50p.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

For the children of prisoners
3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday 14th December
No. 5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN

The funeral of Bob Mullally

VETERAN republican, Bob Mullally, was laid to rest on Sunday 23rd November in Newbridge, Co. Kildare. His tri-colour draped coffin, flanked by a guard of honour, was followed by a large crowd of mourners to the local cemetery where wreaths were laid on behalf of Sinn Féin and local organisations. Bob's close comrade, Frank Driver, laid a wreath on behalf of the leadership of the Republican Movement.

Bob Mullally's sudden death came as a shock to his comrades and many friends. He died in the main street of Newbridge a few minutes after marching through the town with the Tralee to Dublin H-Block marchers.

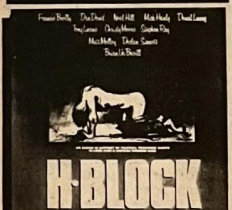
Dáithí Ó Conaill, vice-president of Sinn Féin, delivered a short oration at the graveside. He spoke of the life and work of Bob Mullally and high esteem in which he was held by everyone.

A vote of sympathy was passed by the Coiste Seasta of Sinn Féin at its meeting last Monday.

Sympathy

MULLALLY. The Newbridge H-Block Action Committee extend deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of Bob Mullally who died whilst taking part in an H-Block march on Thursday 20th November.

MULLALLY. The staff of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' extend deepest sympathy to the family of Bob Mullally, Newbridge, who died suddenly on Thursday 20th November. I mbeid na n-ádh na n-ádh go raib a n-ádh.



H-BLOCK RECORD

'H-BLOCK' — a long playing record album (also available on cassette) featuring poetry, music and song in support of political prisoners' rights in Long Kesh and Armagh women's jail features artists: Christie Broily, Noel Hill, Donal Lunny, Christie Moore, Brian Ua Bael, Mick Hanley, Matt Molloy, Tony Linane, Declan Sinnott, Dan Dowd and Stephen Ray.

The album — price £4 plus postage and packaging — is available from all leading record stores, and is also available from the Craft Shop, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin and the Art Shop, 53 Falls Road, Belfast.

THANKS

THE H-BLOCK APPEAL FUND wish to thank Des Whitley, Glasgow, for his generous donation of £35.

THE H-BLOCK APPEAL FUND wish to acknowledge the receipt of £100 from the republican prisoners in Portlaoise jail via Mary O'Keefe, Portlaoise.

AN CUMANN CABHRACH DONATIONS

DONATIONS to An Cumann Cabhrach, the prisoners dependants fund, should be sent, along with name and address for receipt, to: Mrs. Barrett, Treasurer, Central Committee, An Cumann Cabhrach, 44, Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

JOIN SINN FEIN

Anyone interested in joining Sinn Féin should contact their local cumann; head office at 44 Parnell Square, Dublin; 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast; or 15, Cable Street, Derry.

I am interested in becoming a member of Sinn Féin

NAME

ADDRESS



All letters should be addressed to the Editor — An Phoblacht/Republican News, 51/53 Falls Road, Belfast or 44 Parnell Square, Dublin.

Aonach na Nollag

A chara,

We are making our annual appeal for 'Aonach na Nollag' which will be held in Dublin's Mansion House on December 5th, 6th and 7th. As funds are urgently needed we are requesting your help to ensure that this year's sale is the greatest yet.

Cash gifts, vouchers, and items for the following type of stalls will be most welcome: toys, groceries/cakes, fruit, vegetables, plants, books, clothes, white elephant, minerals etc. (Only new clothes will be accepted).

Christmas is just around the corner again. Already preparations have begun. Streets and shop windows will light up. Food and drink are being stored. Children are writing to Santa. Excitement fills the air.

In the midst of this activity let us through our Christian charity remember the innocent victims whose fathers are being held in jails at home and abroad. These children, like all others, will write their letters, but only with your help can we in An Cumann Cabhrach ensure them the little things that may help them over the sad absence of their dads.

Goods may be sent to: An Cumann Cabhrach, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

P.S. By contacting the secretary of the Dublin Committee (telephone 314941), arrangements for collection in the Dublin area and where possible elsewhere, can be arranged.

Reagan's victory

A chara,

What does Reagan's victory in the US Presidential elections mean for the world? Not much perhaps — just one face replacing another — but it's an object lesson in how the 'free West' is ruled.

The governments of the 'free West' spend five hundred billion dollars annually, defending what they choose to call 'freedom and democracy' of Western capitalism.

The razzmatazz of majorettes and Reagan's tee-shirts sold a multi-million dollar multi-million package, and bought for all hands-on a multi-million dollar package. But where was the choice for the electorate: for free medical health, for jobs, for schooling — in the ghetto areas of New York, Chicago, Washington...? Where was the choice for the blacks: between Reagan — an associate of the Ku Klux Klan — and Carter — who worshipped in a 'Whites only' church before his election?

And where have we seen this before? In the British elections? At the Fiance Fair and theis? No choices: just the salesmanship of unfeeling promises.

For the fifty-two per cent of the US electorate who bothered to vote between Carter and Reagan, it was a choice between

less government expenditure (i.e. further cuts in social services) or higher income tax (i.e. lower pay). That is the lesson, for working people, of 'democracy' under capitalism: heads you lose, tails I win!

But Reagan's victory is also a warning to millions of people throughout the world fighting to exist in their own land. It is speculated that guns will now come to the RUC, after Carter's administration — under pressure — at least paid lip-service to human rights by curtailing arms supplies to these state terrorists.

And on a broader front, Reagan's electioneering deliberately sought to revive cold war hysteria — the 'need to stand up to the enemies of the Free World' — which, translated, means a determination to crush people's liberation struggles against imperialism — especially American imperialism — wherever they occur.

In our own time, America has perpetrated the dropping of the atom bomb, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Make no mistake: Reagan's appointees are ready to do it again in the name of the 'freedom of Western democracy'. Kissinger will almost certainly be a central part of the new administration, and it was he who personally authorised B-52 bombing and napalm attacks on the civilian population of North Vietnam during the last three months of war against the victorious Viet Cong.

In effect, Reagan has declared



RONALD REAGAN

— incoming US president

war on people struggling against regimes of horror, in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere, in the sphere of influence' throughout the world: the Philippines, South Korea, Chile, Brazil, Israel, El Salvador... the list is almost endless.

The lesson for struggling peoples everywhere, is, as Che Guevara said: 'it is the business of the revolutionary to create many more Vietnams'. Ireland — placed in the heartland of the Anglo-American imperialist alliance — is engaged to the forefront of that revolutionary struggle.

A second-rate movie-star will not quench our spirit, nor our resolve to rule our own land and aid others to achieve their just rights for liberation, to bring about a final end of Western-style democracy' and the Hiroshima that uphold it.

Kathleen Dwyer, Dublin.

Bloc H

A chara,

Ag crúinniú Dé Domhnaigh s'chuaigh thair mBeall Feirste tháinig eagrais éagsula Gaeilge chéile le grúpa agóide, in ambeadh Gaeilge a bhí ann, a bhí thair. Troidfidh an grúpa ar sda stadas

A chara,

To call Gerry Fitt the biggest turncoat in Irish history is, in my opinion, to give an awful lot of credibility to the so-called 'Republican Clubs'. However, Gerry Fitt will have the dishonourable distinction of being noted as the most dishonest political opportunist in Irish history.

Fitt's assertion that he supported political status in 1972 simply because he thought that 'the violence' would suddenly end is a ludicrous lie. He was well aware that in 1972 the Republican Movement in Belfast commanded as much support as he and his party did. Therefore, if Fitt had not supported political status it could very well have sounded the death knell for both him and his party in Belfast.

From before the ill-fated six-county Assembly opportunism has been a strong trait of Gerry Fitt. It was opportunism which caused him to act the Judas on the people over the 'rent and rate' issue.

Ever since he fell victim to opportunism Fitt has been a most deliberately dishonest person. His dishonesty over the past six or seven years has been so much that it would be practically impossible for him to support P.N.J. status, for the granting of it would credit his stance on the national question.

Fitt has now put himself into a position where he feels obliged to join the Reverends Paisley and Bradford in attacking Cardinal O'Flaherty. Unlike Fitt, Cardinal O'Flaherty puts very little value on material benefits. He is motivated mainly by pastoral and spiritual reasons as well as being genuinely concerned for the long-term well-being of the whole of the Irish people.

Gerry Fitt's concern is now largely restricted to his own long-term material welfare. This, however, is not really surprising. As the six-county state is a corrupt and illogical political misconception created by Britain, it follows that a certain degree of corruption will rub off on those who actively participate in it.

I wonder if it ever occurs to Gerry Fitt to think how many of the young men and women languishing in the fifth holes of H-Block and Armagh were but young children when, in 1968,



GERRY FITT
— dishonest opportunist

they saw him on television with the blood streaming down his face, caused by the baton of one of the notorious 'B' Specials?

No, of course not. Things have changed since then.

Gerry Fitt is now a well-paid well-fed respectable politician, not only warmly praised in that mother of parliaments, Westminster, but he is also now highly praised by stalwart loyalists like Orange Order leader Reverend Martin Smyth and other bigots. No longer do we have the Special Powers Act: it has been replaced by the Emergency Provisions Act. Nor do we have the 'B' Specials: they are now called the UDR; and the RUC now wear green uniforms.

One thing has not changed, however. That is, that all these new powers and new uniforms all serve the same basic purpose: to subjugate and intimidate the nationalist working-class people in the six-counties.

Yes, Gerry, you can fool some of the people, some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people, all of the time — as I am sure you will ultimately find out.

Dermot Finnegan, Derrybeg, Newry.

A chara,

After the party he had founded rejected him, and after the man he had nurtured and trained in political wiles proved how well he had tutored them by using a sly trick to out him, Gerry Fitt seemed to disappear into a well-deserved oblivion.

But not so indeed! The old warrior springs back on to the front pages with a blood-curdling speech that must have turned Bradford and Paisley green with envy. Fitt says that the hunger strikers are not prisoners-of-war because war has not been declared. Yet, walk down the street in any town, or along any country road, see the British army in full camouflage battle-dress and armed with bayonets, call to mind internment, 'Operation Motorman', the H-Block conveyor belt and SAS undercover gangs, and that state of war, declared or not, is only too obvious.

Fitt gives us an excuse for his outrageous stance and for his desire to 'keep his conscience clear'. What sort of conscience is that which is in opposition to the Cardinal and Primate of the Catholic Church to which we presume he still belongs. Cardinal O'Flaherty and Bishop Daly's opinion of his conscience was given in a joint public statement in which they forthrightly called his statement 'lies'.

We may be amused or amazed or disillusioned or disgusted by this 'tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing', but there is a tragedy to it. The chief actor — Fitt — and the rest of the cast of this foolish farce are the very people who should be giving help and support to the defenceless in this dark hour, instead of wasting time in stupid outbursts of futile contentions. The forces of evil and injustice ranged around us are not divided but stand solidly together.

Yet there is a good side also to the disgracefulness of Fitt's statement.

The downtrodden and forgotten people of the ghettos and from the hillside, now on the march on roads and by-ways and city streets, are beginning to realise who is on their side and who are false friends. The time for oily tongues and hypocrisy is past. He who is not for us is against us.

J. Donaghy, County Tyrone.

from Castleblayney Sinn Féin, regarding the situation of itinerants in the town, which was printed in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, August 30th, 'independent republican' councillor Patsy McGinn (Chairman of Castleblayney Urban District Council) stated at a recent council meeting that *AP/RN* had printed an anonymous letter attacking him on his stance on the itinerants. He also made a suggestion that the letter was not signed by the PRO of Sinn Féin.

I would like it to be known that the letter referred to was agreed to by all members of our cumann and was then signed by myself, the PRO. It followed a decision by cumann members that it was Sinn Féin policy to have a halt set up in the Castleblayney area for the itinerants.

J. Crowe, PRO, John Green Sinn Féin cumann Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.

Pearse Foundation

A chara,

At a special press conference held in Dublin on Monday 10th November (the 101st anniversary of the birth of Padraig Pearse) plans

for the future were announced by Fionndreachán an Phaisiagh (The Pearse Foundation).

The main event of the evening was the presentation of Gradam an Phaisiagh to Eamonn de Barra, President of Fionndreachán an Phaisiagh, who was a close personal friend of the Pearse family, and was in fact instrumental in having Scoil Eanna handed over to the nation.

Prizewinners in the art / essay / poetry competition who came from various parts of the country including Tipperary, Cork, Offaly,



Dublin and Carlow, were presented with their prizes.

The bilingual evening included poetry and prose readings by Coláiste Eoin/Iosagáin, all Irish Secondary Schools in Stillorgan Co. Dublin; a drama group from Ros Munn in Connemara where Pearse received so much of his inspiration; and music and dancing by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

Rathnoid O'Bradagh, Rúnáil Náisiúnta, Comóradh An Phaisiagh, 96, Sr. Talbóid, Baile Átha Cliath 1.

Castleblayney itinerants

A chara,

With reference to the letter



Dublin Leinster House lobby last Saturday