

An Phoblacht

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**PRICE
RISE**

AS FROM this issue the price of AN PHOBLACHT/REPUBLICAN NEWS will regrettably have to be raised to 20p per copy (Britain 25p), owing to cost increases across the board in producing and distributing the newspaper.

FACING

UP TO

ORANGE

THUNDER

THE incredible degree of indifference shown by the leadership of the SDLP in the North and the Fianna Fail government in the South to the real and growing danger of loyalism, and in particular Paisleyism, should not lull the beleaguered Northern nationalist people into a mistaken perception of the safety of their future well-being.

Nationalist politicians have smugly allowed the competition between Paisley and the Official Unionists, in the run-up to the local government elections in May, to blind them to the reality of the fact that the forces of loyalism are on the move, and are planning to forcibly demonstrate that they wield the veto over the future of Ireland and over whatever plans Thatcher and Haughey might agree upon. (Although Haughey's 'historic' pact is beginning to look more like an historic compromise of Free State neutrality in return for a morsel of recognition of the 'Irish dimension'.)

ARMED

Orange King Paisley has armed men at his disposal 'ready to break the law if necessary', he has sympathisers in the RUC and UDR, and in the British administration, and his 'Carson trail' has mobilised loyalists with the attainable goal of forcing the British government to ditch the terms of the Dublin summit communiqué.

The UDA remains openly legal to advocate an independent six counties through sectarian assassinations, and the Ulster Workers Council has been re-formed in what must be seen as preparatory steps for a loyalist stoppage should Paisley's rallies initially fail in their object.

The response of nationalist politicians to these developments has been abysmal.

SDLP leader John Hume spends

more time in Brussels than in Derry, and, when he has graced Irish company with his opinion of the Paisley threat, he adopts the usual stance which constitutional nationalists with an eye on their pockets have been bred into — soft-spoken moderation, which is a cover for capitulation, and which has been the fatal downfall of many other nationally dispossessed people.

TERRIFIES

Similarly, Paisley terrifies the trousers off Haughey and Fianna Fail, whose concept of partition

has not surprisingly been partitionist.

Fianna Fail have no concept or understanding of loyalism, which thrives on thunder, when it is not spilling blood. But the nationalist people of the North, who have lived under loyalist rule, and who have made all the sacrifices in attempting to change it, know how to face up to it because they have had to.

Presently it probably suits Haughey that Paisley is drumming up so much 'aggro' against the

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Armagh rally

OUTSIDE Armagh jail, this Sunday, March 8th, International Women's Day, commencing at 2.30 p.m., there will be a mass rally, including delegations from abroad, in support of the women republican prisoners on the 'no work' protest for political status.

The picket pictured here, was held last Sunday, March 1st, in Downing Street, London, to greet Brit premier Margaret Thatcher on her return from her US trip. The picket was in solidarity with the Armagh women and the H-Block blanket men, on the first day of Bobby Sands' hunger-strike for political status.



PAISLEY
— thundering



HUME
— weak-kneed

EXCLUSIVE!

Haughey's speech

A COPY of the address which Free State premier Charles Haughey would have made to last month's Fianna Fail and this in Dublin, had it not been postponed because of the Stardust fire tragedy, has been obtained exclusively by AN PHOBLACHT/REPUBLICAN NEWS.

For what he would have said about the North, in the light of the December Dublin summit, see page 5.



FACING UP TO ORANGE THUNDER

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Dublin summit, as this is being interpreted amongst Fianna Fail's grassroots that Haughey has re-unification in the bag and this illusion will strengthen his leadership.

But the fact that Haughey can show nothing but loyalists on the march, as proof that he has got anything, is extremely dangerous for the nationalist people, especially since it is probable that Haughey got nothing and will be intimidated from going any further now that the loyalists are warning him not to let his nose wander past Dundalk.

HIERARCHY

The attitude of the Catholic hierarchy, which often mistakes appeasement of the Protestant political status quo in the North as a necessary ingredient of its ecumenical policy, also bears responsibility for failing to point out the dangers which their six-county flock could soon be facing.

The response of the SDLP, Fianna Fail and the Catholic church to the hunger-strike and the prisoners' demands is an obvious case in point. A victory for the prisoners and a defeat for the British government would actually weaken British rule, demoralise loyalism and strengthen the hand of those who have Irish reunification as a political objective.

But these political and moral leaders lack the courage to stand up, and to stand over an argument against the British. Instead they make things easier for the Brits, either by remaining silent or by criticising the actions of the republican prisoners, which then divides nationalist support.

Republicans must remedy this situation by standing up and challenging silence and treachery, by presenting the arguments, and by bringing about a change in opinion. A change which will make it electorally unhealthy for Haughey and Hume to ignore either the plight of those on hunger-strike demanding political status of the British, or the prowlings of King Paisley whose unwelcome attention will increasingly turn to the nationalist people.

FREE STATE NEUTRALITY CONTROVERSY FLARES AGAIN

Chain reaction

BY KEVIN BURKE

THE CONTROVERSY over Free State neutrality and whether or not a defence pact is on offer from premier Charles Haughey to British premier Margaret Thatcher, in return for a deal on the North, was further fuelled, on Wednesday 25th February, by Northern director Humphrey Atkins on RTE radio, setting off another chain reaction of allegations and denials in Dublin and the North.

Atkins, speaking about the possibility of a defence pact, said, in his typically confused way: "This is something no doubt that can be talked about. Indeed, we have a common interest in resisting totalitarianism, any potential enemies, and, as I say, here we are off the coast of Europe, we are threatened, Europe is threatened. We have as close an interest as any other two countries in Europe and therefore, of course, this can be talked about."

He went on to say that it was too early in the life of the joint London/Dublin study groups to say when a decision on a defence pact might be made.

Atkins' anxiety to point to what Britain could gain from talks with Dublin could have been heightened by the fact that on the same day he had taken the unusual step of issuing a statement aimed specifically at Ian Paisley and denying all talk of deals, conspiracies and betrayals. The 'constitutional status' of the North was not one of the subjects to be covered in talks with the Dublin government, he said, only an advantageous friendly relationship.

However, his two statements were interpreted as contradictory — holding out the possibility of a deal on defence, whilst stating that there would be no change on the North. His RTE statement was almost certainly aimed at hotting things up in Dublin, possibly to assess, from public reaction, to what extent Haughey might be able to deliver on such a deal.

ANGRY

Haughey himself was obviously angry about Atkins' move and sent a very brusque Brian Lenihan, the Fianna Fail Minister for Foreign Affairs, on to RTE's 'Today Tonight' programme on Thursday to hotly deny that any negotiations on a military alliance were taking place. But Lenihan was also careful to distinguish the study groups from negotiations, saying that all matters were open for study but that the time for actual negotiations was some time off.

On the same programme, Free State Labour Party leader, Frank Cluskey, who has also found a stick — in the shape of neutrality —



• HAUGHEY



• ATKINS



• LENIHAN



• DE VALERA



• PAISLEY



• CLUSKEY

with which to beat Haughey with on the Thatcher/Haughey summit, belaboured Lenihan with accusations of bargaining away the Free State's neutrality.

The following day, Friday, Ian Paisley took up the defence deal again. He told a 'Carson trail' rally in Banbridge that the London and

Dublin governments are hatching a deal which would involve 'something on partition' in exchange for a new defence arrangement. "The 250,000 men of Ulster will not be on the Antrim hills when it happens and we will not be waving gun licences when it happens either," he said.

OXFORD

On the same night, at Oxford University, Fianna Fail's Sile de Valera was speaking in a debate on the North to the Oxford Union.

In a speech, about which she later admitted that she had beforehand 'had a chat with Haughey', she said that the creation of a united Ireland could lead to a 'reappraisal of Ireland's place within the scheme of Western defence'.

She illustrated her argument with references to the concern of Western observers over the instability of the North, and the anxiety of NATO states over the effectiveness of the British army on the Rhine because of its commitments in the North.

And to bolster her remarks, for home consumption, she recalled that in 1959, also speaking to the Oxford Union, the then Free State premier Sean Lemass had said that it was only partition that stood in the way of an Irish participation in NATO. And, of course, she was also echoing the statements of her grandfather, Eamonn de Valera, on the issue.

From Fermoy to Oxford, it would appear that Haughey knows when to use the historic name.

DEMANDING

On Tuesday 3rd March, the controversy surged yet again with a row in Leinster House. Labour and Fine Gael, hoping to embarrass Haughey to the maximum extent, were demanding a full two-day debate on neutrality, but Haughey stymied them by putting down a government motion for a three-and-a-half hour debate next Tuesday afternoon. Although not yet disclosed, the terms of the motion are likely to be particularly restrictive.

The neutrality controversy will continue therefore, with Labour, Fine Gael and Ian Paisley getting as much capital out of it as possible.

Haughey, on the other hand, now that the whole thing is out in the open, must try and balance between trying to sell the idea of a defence deal to the Irish people (hence Sile de Valera's kite-flying) and concealing his own enthusiasm for such a deal from the British for fear of weakening his eventual negotiating position.

Meanwhile, it has emerged this week that plans are already underway for a nuclear underground bunker at Renmore in County Galway, to house Free State cabinet ministers in the event of a nuclear attack.

THE REACTIONARY six-county Ulster Workers Council, the loyalist co-ordinating body that ran the 1974 stoppage which brought down the power-sharing Stormont assembly, has been re-formed. More than thirty shop stewards, representing power workers, petrol tanker drivers, and shipyard men, attended a sinister meeting in Belfast a week last Wednesday, February 25th, to elect a new twenty-one-strong UWC steering committee.

The exact intentions of the sectarian UWC are not clear but an attempt at another stoppage, this time against the Dublin summit, would be a possibility. However, newspaper reports that the UWC only has bread-and-butter trade union issues, such as unemployment, on its mind should obviously be dismissed as ridiculous, given its record and composition.

There are more reliable reports that the new UWC will be launching a campaign against the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions — which it must consider not to be sectarian enough — and to be pressing for an 'Ulster' trades union congress to be formed, to replace the current

LOYALIST UWC RE-FORMED

Sinister step



Leaders of the old UWC, plotting in 1974. At the head of the table is chairman Harry Murray, who has since wandered in the political wilderness, through the Alliance Party and the Peace People, before returning to the sectarian fold

dence is declared) to the British TUC. (At present 90% or more of all six-county trade union members, regardless of political loyalty, are in unions affiliated to the ICTU.)

Former leading members of the UWC are closely involved in its re-establishment, particularly the co-chairmen of the new committee, Harry Murray and Bob Paisley. Fifty-nine-year-old shipyard worker Harry Murray has wandered in the political wilderness, through the Alliance Party and the Peace People, since leading the 1974 stoppage.

PARAMILITARIES

The Dublin summit, British failure to repress republican resistance, and, ironically, the Paisley 'Carson trail'

rallies have played their part in reviving the UWC.

Loyalist paramilitaries, the UDA and UVF, are concerned not to be outflanked by Paisley's trade of bigotry and are anxious to muster support.

It is not yet confirmed to what extent these terror gangs support, or have fostered, the new UWC, but during the 1974 stoppage the UDA and UVF

were present at co-ordinating discussions which took place at Hawthornden House in east Belfast, where the UWC held its meetings in what was Bill Craig's Vanguard party headquarters.

The UDA also supplied the major 'muscle' in blocking roads during the stoppage. However, it was the power workers at Ballymford in County Antrim, near Larne, and the petrol tanker drivers whose strike action ensured the success of the 1974 stoppage, and whose 'weight' was missing from the failed 1977 Paisleyite stoppage.

POLITICIANS

Ian Paisley started last week that no approach had so far been made to him by the new UWC. "The workers are with me 100% in my campaign on the covenant," he claimed hopefully.

Meanwhile, former Vanguard leader William Craig has confirmed that he has had a meeting with the re-formed UWC and has admitted that if he is approached he will agree to join a 'co-ordinating committee'. Bill Craig, whose militant Vanguard tendency is currently existing uneasily within the Official Unionist Party, stated last Tuesday, March 3rd, that the meeting took place three or four weeks ago, and that it was after that meeting that he, at the prompting of UWC leaders, began to speak publicly of an anti-Dublin campaign.

The UWC has confirmed that it has had meetings with at least six prominent unionist politicians, but has declined to name them.



WAR NEWS



● Limavady's commercial centre devastated by an IRA bomb last week

Block-buster bomb

LAST Friday night a block-buster bomb devastated Limavady's commercial centre in County Derry, as the IRA bombed on with a vengeance, causing tens of thousands of pounds worth of damage and dramatically underlining the political instability of the six-county statelet.

Earlier that day an IRA sniper had wounded a British soldier in the South Armagh village of Crossmaglen.

CROSSMAGLEN AMBUSH

A British soldier was wounded when a foot patrol came under IRA gunfire in the South Armagh village of Crossmaglen, last Friday, February 27th. The soldier was shot and injured in the chest, although not seriously hurt, when caught in a short burst of fire.

The neatly-executed ambush took place shortly after 11 a.m. when an IRA Volunteer opened fire on the Brits, from the direction of Monog Road, as they patrolled the Dundalk Road.

The republican active service

unit returned safely to base.

LIMAVADY COMMERCIAL CENTRE DEVASTATED

THE North Derry town of Limavady was the target for an IRA van bomb attack last Friday night, February 27th, which created devastation in the town centre with no ensuing civilian injuries.

The block-buster bomb completely demolished the Northern Bank, damaged about fifty shops, offices and other commercial premises, and shattered shop windows within a three hundred yard radius. Half-a-dozen buildings may have to be completely re-erected.

Armed IRA Volunteers had commandeered the van during the afternoon in Derry city, and having placed 300 lbs. of explosives in the back of the vehicle they parked it outside the Northern Bank in Catherine Street, with the driver's door open and the headlights switched on.

A telephone warning was given by the IRA at 6.45 p.m. and the town centre was cleared of civilians. Despite their expertise British army bomb disposal men were unable to defuse the massive bomb, and at

9.15 p.m. it exploded with devastating effect, starting a blaze and causing structural damage and breaking glass in dozens of premises. Apart from Catherine Street, the seat of the explosion, the blast also hit buildings in Irish Green, Market Street and Linenhall Street.

The manager of the Northern Bank later admitted that the building might have to come down and added that it was unlikely that the bank would be re-opening at that location.

Among the first at the scene was David Robinson, Official Unionist chairman of Limavady district council. "The people who do this sort of thing are animals," he snorted, in a sectarian outburst.

As pouring rain added to the stock damage in the blasted shops, the bomb also put a damper on Limavady RUC barracks' annual dinner dance, which was taking place at a nearby hotel. The RUC men attending were called away to the scene of the explosion.

Robbery denied

THE IRA's Belfast Brigade have denied any involvement in an armed robbery in Andersonstown, a week last Wednesday night, February 25th, when several hundred pounds collected for the rebuilding of St. Agnes church was taken from the Holy Child primary school, where the money was being counted.

In 1971 he was awarded £1,300 in a compensation claim.

The Burns family believe that loyalists, with possible British army involvement, were responsible for the shooting, and "totally" discount as malicious, reports suggested by the RUC to the press that the killing was part of a family feud.

There was a heavy concentration of soldiers in the district an hour prior to the shooting, and three days before, British soldiers filmed the Rodney Drive entry with a cine-camera. Broadway Tower military observation post also overlooks the entry down which the gunmen made their escape.

The Republican Movement have sent their condolences to his family and on Wednesday afternoon his comrades paid their tribute to him by firing a volley of shots over his grave.



● JIM BURNS — shot dead

THE VICTIM of what is believed to have been a loyalist or British army assassination squad has been claimed by the IRA as a Volunteer, in a statement issued on Wednesday.

Jim 'Skipper' Burns, aged 33, was shot as he lay in his bed in Rodney Drive, in the St. James area of west Belfast, in the early hours of Monday morning, February 23rd.

The gunmen apparently identified the victim's back door without any bother, broke through the door and ran upstairs without turning on the light, went straight to Jim's room, and shot him at least four times. He died on his way to hospital.

Whilst an obvious target for loyalists, his work for the Republican Movement would have also made him a prime target for the British army. A member of the movement since 1964, Jim Burns was interned from October

1971 to 1974, and as a result of being brutally interrogated in Palace Barracks

SECRET DEFENDANTS

APPROVING A REQUEST by the RUC, a Belfast magistrate ordered newspapers not to publish the names, addresses or occupation of three defendants when they appeared in court last Saturday, February 28th, on a series of charges relating to burglaries in the Shankill district of Belfast five years ago. The charges involve the theft of £1,600 cash from a Shankill Road restaurant on March 23rd 1976, and a burglary in which goods worth £350 were taken from a North Street hardware store on January 28th 1976.

The three defendants, who were remanded to Belfast magistrate's court on April 15th, are Raphael McCullough, aged 35, John Baird Aitken, aged 30, and Duncan Boustead, aged 26. McCullough, who has been released on bail, is a prison warden from Muckamore, County Antrim. Aitken and Boustead, who are being held in military custody, are serving British soldiers stationed at Ballykelly barracks. At the time of the theft and burglary all three were members of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, which, after the recent revelation of its harbouring the Fermanagh 'pitchfork murderers' amongst its ranks, is rapidly becoming the most infamous of British army regiments, despite efforts by its officers, the RUC, and now a Belfast magistrate, to suppress the truth.

Plotting politician

A MUCH MORE SENSATIONAL CLAIM of politician plotting to assassinate politician, than loyalist leader Ian Paisley's claim against Official Unionist conspirators, has surfaced in Britain.

One week before leading Tory Airey Neave was assassinated by the INLA in March 1979, he discussed the possibility of assassinating leading Labour left-winger Tony Benn according to the February 20th issue of *'New Statesman'*, a radical but respectable British weekly. This claim has been made (and believed by the *'New Statesman'*, after investigation) by former British intelligence agent Harold 'Lee' Tracey, who appeared on the two recent censored BBC *'Panorama'* television programmes on the British intelligence services. A discussion took place between Neave and Tracey, according to the latter, just before the 1979 Westminster election, to form plans for an undercover 'army of resistance' in case of a Labour victory, and to use violent action if it seemed necessary to 'make sure Benn was stopped' from becoming premier. Journalist Duncan Campbell states: 'Lee Tracey, who disavows the possibility of the possibility of assassinating Tony Benn is revealed on page 3, was a long-term contract employee of M16.' A further discussion was arranged but Neave never made it.

Death threat

ONE OF the latest incidents of intimidation against nationalist political activists, occurred in the early hours of Thursday 26th February, at the home of H-Block/Armagh activist, twenty-seven-year-old Gerard Lavery, in West Belfast's Ballymurphy estate. At five o'clock in the morning, Gerard's wife answered a phone call, only to hear an English voice say: 'Tell your husband he's next.' This incident followed Gerard's constant harassment by the Brits, which has included several spells of detention in Castlereagh. A year ago, several shots were fired through his front window after he had made a complaint to Fr. Faul following RUC death threats while in Castlereagh.

Dangerous option

AN INFLUENTIAL British Labour Party committee is to recommend that the party should commit itself to the ultimate 're-unification' of Ireland. This superficially welcome response follows the circulation by the National Executive Committee's study group on Ireland of a consultative document, which poses a number of questions about existing policies and problems, and which was circulated to all party branches and affiliated trade unions. The Westminster study group states that the long-term interest of Britain and Ireland (by which they mean the optimum constitutional conditions to safeguard the stability of capitalist regimes in the two countries) lies in the eventual re-unification of Ireland more probably as a 'confederal state' than as a unitary state.

This dangerous option, which would involve the strengthening of the loyalist six-county statelet, would include, the study group proposes, constitutional provisions which would (in effect) preserve the present privileged position of six-county Protestants. Also in line with the interests of the British state, the study group backs 'Ulsterisation', through gradual British troop withdrawal and their replacement by the RUC; 'normalisation', through economic development and the reform, for example, of the Diplock courts and the return of jury trials; and 'criminalisation', with no restoration of political prisoner status in Northern jails.

Poll pull-out

THE MAJORITY of British voters are in favour of a united Ireland, according to yet another opinion poll published in Britain. This latest poll producing the usual uncomfortable results for British politicians committed to the Union was published last Thursday, February 26th February, by the popular British daily newspaper, the *'Sun'*. It derived its conclusion from a telephone poll of 817 British adults, conducted for it by Audience Selection Pollsters, earlier in the week, on February 23rd.

The results were weighted by sex, age, class and region, to represent the British electorate. Ireland was just one of the subjects covered by the poll. Asked whether the British army should pull out of the North of Ireland, 57% answered 'yes' and 40% said 'no'. A majority of 61% was in favour of the six counties leaving the so-called 'United Kingdom' and being united with the twenty-six counties, which 32% opposed. The remainder, 7%, did not know what they thought. More Labour than Tory voters wanted British troops withdrawn: 64% of Labour voters supported withdrawal, whilst 52% of Tory voters wanted the British army to stay in the North.

Staggering statistics

DIFFERENT SETS of official figures which show up the impoverishing effect of British colonialism on everyday life in the occupied six counties have been published recently.

The North had a lower income per household in 1979 (and higher unemployment throughout the seventies) than any region of Britain, according to figures published by the Central Statistics Office in London. Today the North's jobless figure, according to official statistics (which are always under-recorded), has almost touched 100,000, representing more than 17% of the insured working population — significantly higher than the British rate of 10%. Male unemployment in the North stands at 21%, female unemployment at 12%, and, as usual, the predominantly nationalist County Tyrone town of Strabane is the worst hit with almost 35% unemployment.

The figures which perhaps reveal the most heartbreak and the most official neglect are another set of official figures: for infant mortality and handicap. In 1977 there were 310 stillbirths and 438 babies died before their first birthday. The Northern infant mortality rate was higher than anywhere else in Western Europe and the incidence of spina bifida and related abnormalities of the central nervous system ran at 8.4 per thousand births, the highest in the world.

PAISLEY CONTINUES ON THE CARSON TRAIL

DANGEROUS CAMPAIGN

BY SEAMUS BOYLE

LOYALIST LEADER Ian Paisley's dangerous campaign of whipping up anti-Catholic sectarian bigotry and building his personal power base at the expense of the Official Unionists has continued with further rallies of hatred on his self-appointed 'Carson trail'.

The seriousness with which his contenders in the unionist camp are taking Paisley's campaign was exemplified by the line of the Monday 23rd February editorial of the loyalist Belfast 'News Letter', entitled 'Not Kong's men', which viciously attacked Paisley.

Although not daring to name him, Paisley was described by the newspaper as a fanatical clergyman, and a mob orator with a dangerous split personality, and was compared with the recent case of the young Anglican clergyman who was jailed for attacks on women and girls' and with the fictional 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'.

The 'News Letter' pointed out: "The same person can be rational and pleasant in private life — or, off the inflammatory subject, in public — but can become an almost unrecognisable King Kong when engaged in controversy, or addressing a mob."

ORANGE

Even before Paisley's second rally got under way at Newtownards, his third caused great controversy because of its proposed venue: Portadown Orange Hall. Through pressure from Official Unionists within the local Orange Order, initial permission for the Paisleyites to use the hall was withdrawn amidst a public furore and the rally was re-organised for a Craigavon council-owned hall.

Evidence that Paisley's anti-Dublin campaign is not only splitting the Official Unionist Party and widening division within the Protestant church, but is also rending apart the Orange Order (normally a relative bastion of unionist unity) was also provided on Monday evening, February 16th.

At a meeting of the Orange Order at Cloughmills, County Antrim, thirty Paisleyites heckled Official Unionist and Imperial Grand Master, the Rev. Martin Smyth, before walking out of the two-hundred-strong meeting — their spokesmen being expelled from the Order, on the spot, by Smyth.

In order to avoid being outflanked by Paisley's militancy, leading Orangemen had called the meeting to set up a new movement within the Order — the Orange Association for the Defence of the Constitution — to tackle present 'security and constitutional' problems.

NEWTOWNARDS

During his second rally, in Newtownards, on Thursday 19th February, Paisley against a background of rapidly escalating bitterness between his supporters and Official Unionists — claimed that the RUC had informed him of an Official Unionist plot to have him shot.

"I would not be surprised," proclaimed Paisley to his enraptured audience, "if there is an attempt to shoot me and cover it up as the work of the IRA."

The furore, which dragged on for days surrounding that ridiculous, but media-captivating, claim, was heightened when the RUC first denied (to Official Unionist leader James Molyneux) and then publicly confirmed, that such an anonymous tip-off to the 'News Letter' had been passed on via them to Paisley.

As well as unveiling the five-week-old mythical Official Unionist assassination plot at the Newtownards rally, Paisley alleged to his adoring followers that, during his



■ Paisley, speaking at the third rally along the 'Carson trail' in Portadown, during which he held aloft a UVF bandolier worn, he claimed, by his father in 1912

time in Crumlin Road jail, the then Stormont premier Terence O'Neill had attempted to have him certified insane.

And, implicitly threatening loyalist violence, Paisley said that he owed no allegiance to the British parliament, the British government, or to 'Margaret Thatcher, Charlie Haughey's darling', but, to the Queen, being Protestant', and he warned that there are other forms of action available in addition to the parliamentary disruption which he had caused the previous week.

PORTADOWN

Fists flew during Paisley's third rally, at Portadown on Monday 23rd February, as stewards moved to eject about a dozen youths carrying banners supporting the UVF and UFF, which were grabbed and torn up.

Paisley added a touch of drama to the rally when he held aloft a bandolier which he claimed his father had worn as a member of the UVF in 1912. But, unlike his first two rallies when he made sensational claims — that a British army patrol was being winged and dined by republicans when it should have been protecting Sir Norman Stronge (executed by the IRA), and of an Official Unionist plot against his own life — Paisley's imagination, if not his campaign, appeared to have run out of its head of steam.

Two days later, on Wednesday, February 25th, Northern direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins — indicating British government concern at the de-stabilising effect of 'the Carson trail' campaign — took the unusual step of issuing a statement specifically aimed at a political figure: Ian Paisley, of course.

Without mentioning him by name, Atkins spoke — to journalists at a Stormont lunch — of people 'who seek to stir up fear and tension' and defensively claimed, in what he called 'plain English', that all talk of deals, conspiracies and betrayals of the loyalists is quite wrong and that the constitutional status of the six counties is not one of the subjects to be covered in British talks with the Dublin government.

BANBRIDGE

Dismissive of Atkins' clarification, Paisley warned, during his fourth rally, at Banbridge on Friday 27th February, that if British troops were used to push the loyalists towards a united Ireland "then we will fight British troops. Just get it straight..."

"We are not going to have it. The 250,000 men of Ulster will not be on the Antrim hills when it happens and we will not be waving gun licences when it happens either."

Threatening loyalist sectarian violence, he warned: "If we cannot bring the 'B' Specials back we will have the men to do the work the 'B' Specials did." And, on the

same theme: "We will fight in the hedgerows and byways. We will fight to preserve the sepulchres of our fathers and our religion. We will pay the supreme sacrifice if need be."

Interviewed last Sunday, March 1st, on RTE radio's 'This week' programme, Paisley claimed that a Whitehall 'mole' had told him that defence negotiations between Britain and the Free State were definitely on the table as part of a process of all-Ireland integration.

Reinforcing Friday's threat of armed 'subversion' he stated: "If British troops were sent here by Mrs. Thatcher to force us at the point of a British bayonet into an all-Ireland republic then we will have to fight them." He denied that would be treason and claimed he would be 'standing for the law'.

DERRY

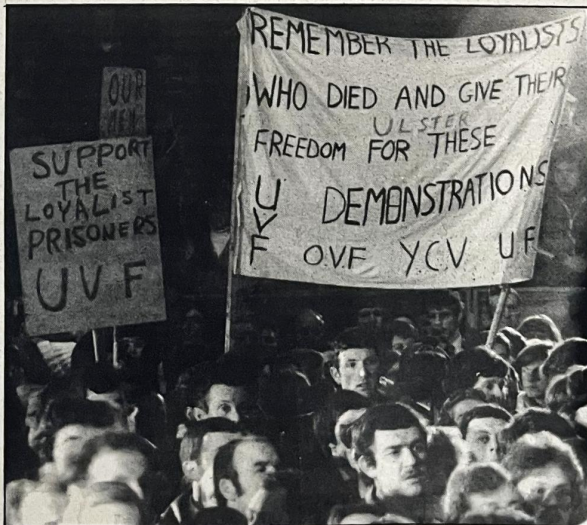
The fifth 'Carson trail' rally was at Derry last Monday, March 2nd, when Paisley attacked what he called a 'spurious and dangerous' new criterion that Northern Irish affairs can be discussed with Dublin on the basis that it was for the 'overall good of the United Kingdom as a whole'.

Presumably this was a distorted reference to Atkins' Stormont statement the previous Wednesday that "a friendly relationship between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland is to the clear advantage of the whole United Kingdom including, of course, Northern Ireland — and of the Republic too," which Paisley conveniently decided was a weakening of the British guarantee to unionists that the six counties will remain tied to Britain as long as that artificially created 'majority' so wish it.

Revealing the strong streak of 'Ulster independence' in his thinking Paisley stormed: "We must ever forcefully defend our right to determine our own destiny. Ulstermen and women have an inalienable right which is not in the least diluted by our responsibilities as part of the greater United Kingdom — to oppose and refuse anything which prejudicially affects and endangers our province."

At the same rally, Paisley's side-kick, Peter Robinson — alarmed, perhaps, by the re-emergence of the Ulster Workers Council as a direct competitor for loyalist working class support — made a direct appeal to the Protestant working class on the question of unemployment. He claimed that the British plan to 'ditch' the Belfast aircraft firm of Shorts, a major employer of loyalist labour, as part of their withdrawal plan.

The ultimate logic of Paisley's present course is crystal clear. If the British are withdrawing, as he so virulently claims, (thereby perhaps helping his 'prediction' to come true by sickening the British public and politicians of the unionist cause), and a united Ireland of any variety is totally ruled out at all costs, then his only option open — to preserve what he calls the Protestant 'way of life', by which he means Protestant privilege — will be an 'independent' six-county state.



These latter-day followers of the UVF boasted of by Paisley, were ejected from the Portadown rally. Their all-too-clear demonstration of the murderous link between Paisley's bandolier-waving oratory and the present-day UVF's sectarian activities is a bit too blatant, and embarrassing, for Paisley to handle at the moment, preferring as he does to merely incite loyalist murder, not take an active part in it

On his knees to the loyalists

A COPY of the address which Charles Haughey would have made to this year's Fianna Fail ard fheis on Saturday 14th February, had it not been postponed because of the Stardust tragedy, has been obtained exclusively by An Phoblacht/Republican News.

We reveal here what he would have said about the North, in the light of his controversial meeting with British premier Thatcher at the Dublin summit in December, and what he sees to be his next moves.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
by the
TAOISEACH

MR. CHARLES J. HAUGHEY,
T.D.,

at the
50th FIANNA FÁIL ÁRD-
FHEIS,

R.D.S., Dublin

Saturday, 14th February, 1981

[BY KEVIN BURKE]

IF HAUGHEY SUPPORTERS expected much to get excited about from his presidential address at the postponed Fianna Fail ard fheis last month, it was not going to be in the section on the North.

But the copy of his address obtained by An Phoblacht/Republican News does reveal a totally different emphasis to last year's speech as Haughey develops his strategy — or gives the impression he is doing so, depending on how you interpret his recent claims on 'historic progress'.

Whilst last year Haughey directed his ard fheis remarks almost totally at the British government, to the exclusion of the loyalists, this year he would have aimed his remarks on the North mainly at loyalist opinion, claiming in his opening remarks that the first step in his plan, persuading the British to consider new options, was successfully taken.

STARTED

"At the ard fheis last year," he was to have begun his remarks on the North, "I said that Northern Ireland had failed as a political entity; that a new beginning was needed and that the issue must be raised to a new plane by the two sovereign governments concerned."

"We have now started along that road. It is the only way forward and we are moving forward along it..."

Having briefly claimed the year's task done, and no doubt acknowledging the rapturous and vacuous applause, he would then have devoted the rest of the section to 'wiping the loyalists'.

His remarks here support the proposition that whilst Haughey is undoubtedly pleased — for the sake of the grass-roots support ensured him — to be continually attacked by Ian Paisley for his supposed 'republican plots' and his exaggerated influence with Thatcher, nevertheless Haughey believes that he can eventually persuade the loyalist king to form some alliance with him.

"Last July," Haughey was to have lyricised, "as I viewed once more King William's Victory on the Boyne three hundred years ago being celebrated with triumphal arch, banner, bonfire and triumphal arch, I wondered again about the meaning of it all..."

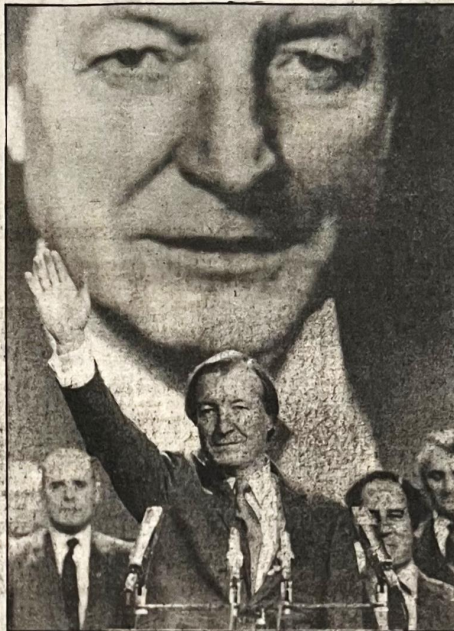
What he claims to have been wondering about is how, despite the supposed wish of loyalists to "enjoy equality of status with the other residents of the United Kingdom," this is certainly not so under direct rule.

"I know the people of Northern Ireland to be of a proud and independent outlook, with minds of their own," he would have blandished. "The present situation in which government is often carried on by ministers who have no local constituencies or loyalties by means of special legislation or Orders in Council is hardly compatible with that pride and independence."

FRAMEWORK

The framework for loyalist fulfilment, he would have suggested, is "the totality of relationships within these islands," in which "every aspect of the problem can be looked at in a new, positive and imaginative way" achieving "a full partnership in some new stable arrangement which would acknowledge the very special relationship that exists between Ireland and Britain."

In this new arrangement "Northern Ireland's political leaders would no longer be frustrated..." but



■ Charles Haughey, opening the later postponed Fianna Fail ard fheis, in Dublin last month

could play their full part in a developing situation..."

And so he would have continued flattering the loyalists whose "energies and talents... have never been fully released," and offering "new perspectives," "improved co-operation between Britain and Ireland," and declaring that "We are prepared... to look afresh at any aspect of the situation and seek new answers to old questions."

The "preservation of the Protestant way of life" is apparently no problem, for Haughey who is offering "any guarantees of religious and civil liberty which might be required in a new institutional context..."

This "new process" on which Haughey is engaged can, he would have claimed, "offer Northern Unionists an opportunity to incorporate a new element of stability into their political institutions."

DISAPPOINTED

If the oppressed, battered,

beleaguered nationalist people of the North were hoping for a mention in Haughey's ard fheis speech, or if they were expecting some word of hope for their suffering prisoners, they would have been sorely disappointed. They do not get so much as a mention, not a word, not a syllable. Forget it, it's not your plight that we are trying to relieve, it's releasing "the energies and talents" of the loyalists, it's guaranteeing the "Protestant way of life," it's "fruitful and constructive relations between Britain and Ireland," it's "the political and economic stability of these islands and of Europe," — that is what Haughey's message is to you.

But if Haughey's next move is to go on his knees to the loyalists, he is apparently forgetting one thing: that behaviour has never impressed them, it is only what they consider to be the natural and traditional position of their opponents.

Clinical contrast

IN the same week as plans to build a £30 million clinic in Dublin for rich foreign visitors were mooted, the February meeting of the Western Health Board finally decided to replace the orthopaedic unit at Leirtrim County Hospital with a rehabilitation unit, ending the general surgical facilities at the hospital, and adding to the mass over-crowding at Sligo hospital, to where the orthopaedic unit is to be transferred.

At the same meeting, the Board revealed that its fire prevention officer had warned, last November, that this over-crowding was so serious that "in the event of a fire the staff would be unable to effect any form of evacuation."

On Monday 2nd March, Longford Trades Council held a public meeting to launch a campaign to save the threatened Longford County Hospital, which after the Leirtrim transfer will provide the only surgical facilities between Mullingar and Sligo.

But as these hospitals are run down, the 'Irish Medical Times' announced that plans are well under way for building a £30 million clinic at Leopardstown in Dublin. The Industrial Development Authority are currently negotiating to provide grants for the three-hundred-bed hospital, which will cater for American and Middle Eastern private patients.

Although the consultants at the hospital will be Americans, a number of Irish doctors have already been approached about the scheme and the rest of the staff will be moved from hospitals here, further weakening the public health services.

Sligo dockers enraged



■ Dockers' picket last month

SLIGO dockers are enraged at the failure of the Harbour Board to keep the channel open for ships and arrest the port's decline.

After a coal boat got stuck on a sand bank in the estuary and had to be diverted for unloading to Galway, dockers picketed the monthly Harbour Board meeting on Tuesday 24th February. Under pressure, the Harbour Commissioners agreed to hire a dredging firm, but the future of the port is still uncertain.

Recently the dockers agreed to a rationalisation plan reducing the workforce from fifty to eighteen, and in the past three months only three ships have docked, giving the dockers total earnings of only £70 so far this year.

The latest blockage of the port occurred in spite of a Free State government grant for the development of the port which the commissioners have been spending. The dockers also point out that several of the commissioners are so disinterested in the future of the port that they do not even attend the Harbour Board meetings.

RIALTAS SHASANA AG MARU LEANAI

LE TOMAS Ó SE

Níl Rialtas Shasana sásta airgead a chaitheamh chun bís leanaí a sheachaint. B'shin an teachtaireacht shimplí a bhí le fáil ag seimneair a d'eagraigh an coardchumann an Public Service Alliance i mBeáil Feirste le deanaí.

Bhí an seimneair bunaithe ar Thuaisceart Baird maidir le bús agus cearta leanaí sa Tuaisceart. Folláidh an tuaisceart i m' Dheireadh Fomhair 1980. Níl Rialtas Shasana sásta na mbeáil a chomhlíonadh ach amháin iad sin nach gcoinníonn an airgead.

Deir síad nach bhfuil an t-airgead acu. San am céanna tá síad ag meidú ar na méid airgid atá a chaitheamh acu ar a bhíodas cogachta. Cuireann na firéir seo ar na súile dinín, más gá fós é, nach bhfuil daonnacht ar bith ag baint le Rialtas Shasana.

BÁS

Cuireann na figiúirí bás fearg orm agus ní fhéadadh aon duine glacadh leo go bog m'á tá croí ar bith ann. Sa bhliain 1977 amháin rugadh 310 páiste marbh agus fuair 438 leanaib bás roimh shroicint bliain amháin d'aois. Tá an ráta seo ar an cheann is measa i dtíortha forbartha an domhain ag fáigil an Ghreig agus

an Rumáin as an áireamh.

Ní hamháin sin, ach is iad na tíortha is measa atá fulaing: Faighneann a dhá airgead níos mó leanaí de chuid an aicme is bálaithe b'is i gcomparáid leis an aicme is gálaithe agus ní he sin deireadh an seóil.

Tá an ráta is airde sa domhan ar fad le spina bífida agus galair de leithéid sa Tuaisceart. Ar na ceanntracha is measa luais an dochtúir Baird ceannair na nduganna agus lathar Bheáil Feirste agus cuid de chathair Dhoire.

FAIC

Cháin an tuaisceart an droch-thíocht is cuís le go leor den trioblóid ach ní féidir leo faic a dhéanamh mar níl rialtas Shasana sásta rud ar bith a dhéanamh. Is ní stadfaid a dhéanamh ar an meid a bhí le rá ag Michael Alison an Aire atá in airm is a bheith ag tabhairt aire do na cúlraí sin.

Dúirt sé, "While I accept the general thrust on marketed resources can be provided or earmarked at this stage."

Bhuel, sin é. Níl Rialtas Shasana sásta faic a dhéanamh chun na páistí seo a shábháil. A luaithe is a bhailíonn síad leo as an tír seo is ea is fearr. Ansin, beidh seans éigin ag na leanaí sin.



Is iomaí páistí sa Tuaisceart nach sroiseann aois scoile ar chor ar bith. Níl Rialtas Shasana sásta airgead a chaitheamh chun na leanaí a shábháil

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BELFAST MARCH & RALLY ON FIRST DAY OF NEW H-BLOCK A PROMISING OPENING DIS OF SOLIDARITY

BY SEAN DELANEY

SEVERAL THOUSAND determined nationalist marchers braved torrents of rain in an impressive — and promising — opening display of solidarity, in Belfast last Sunday, March 1st, with H-Block blanket man Bobby Sands' hunger-strike for political status which began that day.

The highpoint of the demonstration came, at the rally at the Busy Bee in Andersonstown, when Bobby Sands' mother, Mrs. Rosaleen Sands, accompanied by his sister Marcella, stepped forward to the microphone to thank all those who were present in support of her son and his comrades.

Reacting angrily to a statement earlier that day by Belfast Alliance councillor John Cousins (whose electoral ward includes the Twinbrook estate where the Sands family live),

that Bobby was pressured into going on hunger-strike, Mrs. Sands said: "My son was not forced to go part in a hunger-strike. He is in his own free will."

Earlier, Belfast republican GIBNEY, a member of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, said: "The Irish people have one simple message for the Brits. You are never been wanted in our country, you so get the hell out of our country."

Calling on nationalist politicians to withdraw from local councils and British government bodies, he said otherwise they must run the risk of not being re-elected in the next local government elections.

He also urged popular rejection of the British census currently being prepared. On the day they are due collection, people should take the census forms to the most public s



HUNGER-STRIKE DISPLAY

in their area, and destroy them, he said.

Other speakers at the rally included national committee members Christina Carney and Fergus O'Hare, a representative of the national committee's trade union sub-committee (who called for a workers' national day of action next month), and a member of Belfast's Youth against H-Block/Armagh committee.

Although the march last Sunday was by no means as massive as the march on the eve of the previous H-Block hunger-strike, in part due to the atrocious weather, it was certainly an encouraging beginning to a campaign which must now steadily build up its impetus, not only in future pickets and marches on the streets, but in the schools, councils and workplaces, and in reinforcing the alienation of the nationalist people from the British political system in the North.



• Above: the march moves off from Dunville Park along the Falls Road; below, and left: sections of the crowd at the Busy Bee rally; inset right: Mrs. Rosaleen Sands thanks the crowd for turning out in support of her son, hunger-striker Bobby





Fr. Piaras O Duill (left) receiving the award from Sean MacAndreas

A/town award

A FULL house attended a folk night in St. Paul's GAA club in Belfast last Thursday evening, February 26th, organised by the local newspaper *Andersonstown News* to mark the presentation of their annual award, this year to the National H-Block/Armagh Committee. (Previous recipients in the award's four-year history have included the Association for Legal Justice, and the H-Block blanket men.)

Sean MacAndreas, editor of *Andersonstown News*, presented the award, a beautiful Shamrock Crystal trophy incorporating the four provinces in its design - to Fr. Piaras O Duill, chairperson of the national committee, and to Maire McCorry.

Fr. Piaras praised the courage of the political prisoners and said they are in the vanguard of the liberation struggle. Accepting the trophy, Maire McCorry said she did so also on behalf of the prisoners, on behalf of the two hundred and forty local action committees, and on behalf of the tens of thousands of people who supported the prisoners.

Ann and Francis Brophy provided an appreciated night of music, and the enjoyable atmosphere was muted only by the thought of the imminent hunger-strike.

Death of Thomas McDermott

THE DEATH occurred recently of Thomas McDermott, of Athleague, County Roscommon, one of the most active republicans in South Roscommon.

Having joined the Republican Movement sixty-two years ago, Tommy was imprisoned in the thirties and again in the forties. He was a close friend of Tony Darcy, who died on hunger-strike in Portlaoise, and was a staunch supporter of Sean Russell as chief-of-staff.

His remains were removed from Roscommon to Four Roads church and the funeral took place at Athleague, his ancestral place. The coffin was accompanied by a guard of honour. At the grave-side the oration was delivered by John Ugg McGilfr. Ar dheis De go raith a anam.

Clonmult martyrs

THE annual commemoration of the eleven 'Clonmult Martyrs', shot dead after capture by the British in February 1921, was held at Middleton, County Cork on Sunday 22nd February.

A colour party of na Flanna, na Gailinn and Cumann na mBan led the parade to the republican plot where the ceremonies were chaired by Pat Walsh of Cork Sinn Féin and the oration given by Gerard McCarthy. A Flanna bugler played the last post and reveille.

Sinn Féin AGM

Tralee
At the recent annual general meeting of the Rice/Sheehy Sinn Féin cumann, Tralee, the following officers were elected: chair: Pat Boyle; vice-chair: Mick Cunningham; secretary: Joe Tuohy; joint treasurers: Michael Horgan and Anthony Conway; and PRO: Nicholas Scollard.

Votes of sympathy were passed to the relatives of Jack Dowd, Liam Hannaway and Garrett Cotter, who died recently, and to the families of the Stardust disaster victims. Anyone wishing to join Sinn Féin in Tralee can contact the secretary, Joe Tuohy, 8, Connolly Park, Tralee.



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

Conference intervention

Dear Sir,
Your correspondent (*An Phoblacht/Republican News*, January 31st) manages to convey that there was some sinister purpose to my intervention at the H-Block national conference in Dublin on Sunday 25th January. He comments on my 'prepared statement' and that what I said was irrelevant to the motion under discussion.

It is true my statement was prepared - the preparation was done earlier that day on the back of literature I collected outside the door of the conference. I cannot perceive any special significance attaching to that.

Motion 30, which I was speaking, called on those who had campaigned for an end to the hunger-strike to now demand of the British government to fulfill the commitments they made in the agreement with the prisoners on the ending of the hunger-strike. I agreed with the general sense of the motion: that those who had hypocritically called for an end to the hunger-strike be exposed and those who had done so genuinely now be asked to lend their weight to the campaign to pressure the British government to meet its commitments.

However, what I was trying to say was that there was little point in attempting to involve such outsiders in the campaign and little point in attempting a mass re-mobilisation in support of the prisoners when actions were taken by the Provisional IRA, such as the killings of the two Stronges, the UDR man in Warrenpoint and the IRA Volunteer, alienating all but the bedrock support for the prisoners' cause.

I would have liked to have been able to say that the prisoners' demands can be secured only through a mass popular movement, such as that which developed in the pre-Christmas period. Also that the ultimate objective of the destruction of the Northern state and the creation of a democratic socialist republic again can be achieved only through a mass movement - it certainly cannot be done by a military campaign divorced from and uncontrolled by the mass movement.

I agree that those remarks of mine which were heard might not have appeared relevant to the motion but that was not my fault - certainly not entirely my fault.

One further point I would like to make: unless people who are not connected with any revolutionary organisation can be accommodated within a broad-based movement, such as the H-Block campaign, then the chances of attaining mass popular support are negligible.

Part of this accommodation must be the acceptance of the right of outsiders to express views which may not agree with those of the members of the revolutionary organisations. In this regard it was encouraging that the Vice-President of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, spoke up for my right to say what I believed.

Vincent Browne,
Editor,
'Magill',
Dublin.



Stardust tragedy

Dear Sir,

As a republican supporter and a weekly reader of your paper, I have for the first time felt compelled to put pen to paper to complain most bitterly about the lack of coverage given to what I consider a major national tragedy, the Stardust ballroom fire disaster.

Accepting the fact that it did not get front-page coverage, honestly thought that it would get a little more than three-quarters of a page out of a twelve-page paper.

I have read *An Phoblacht* for a long time now because I consider it to be the only truthful political national paper available. Having said that, your paper is about people too.

In the Artane tragedy, forty-seven young boys and girls lost their lives, but there are also lots of our youth who will be maimed, mentally and physically, for life. You and I both know about loyalist no-warning bombs, Special Branch, RUC and Brit harassment and brutality to the men in H-Block and women in Armagh. We know about Billy Reid, Alan Reid, Dee Delaney and Terry O'Neill.

I would not know about any of these things unless you took the time and space to leave these forever an imprint on my mind, and as a person who was physically affected by the Artane tragedy, I feel that your paper failed to relate the intense sorrow that the nation felt on St. Valentine's Day 1981.

Catherine Carton,
Dublin.

Tallaght harassment

A chara,

I would like, through the columns of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* to condemn the activities of the Special Branch in the Tallaght area.

Over a number of years they have failed to intimidate Sinn Féin members and have now stooped to a new low. Because they are not men enough to face our members they now wait until our male members leave for work in the morning, and then go to their homes and try to intimidate their wives.

I can say they will not succeed and I'll remind them that republicans have long memories.

Peter Cunningham,
PRO,
Wolfe Tone Sinn Féin cumann,
Tallaght,
Dublin.



ARMAGH PICKET

A chara,

We would like to publicise that there will be a picket on Armagh jail on International Women's Day, March 8th.

More and more women throughout the world use this day to focus whatever struggle they are involved in, in their own countries.

The primary struggle here is to get rid of British imperialism. The women in Armagh have suffered alongside their comrades in the H-Block, under the same State repression. Mairead Farrell, Mairead Nugent and Mary Doyle were the three women who took part in the last hunger-strike. On March 1st, another hunger-strike, commenced in the H-Blocks, with the Armagh women still on protest for political status. We owe it to the women to show our support at this picket.

Last year, hundreds of women travelled from England and the continent to show their solidarity. The demonstration will again be open to men. We want everyone who supports the prisoners to be in Armagh at 2.30 p.m., Sunday March 8th.

PRO,
International Women's Day
Co-ordinating Committee,
Belfast.

Leeds solidarity

Dear editor,

Please could you publicise the following events.

On Friday 13th March and Friday 20th March from 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. there will be torchlight protests in support of the H-Block hunger-strike on the town hall steps, the Headrow, in Leeds.

On Friday 27th March at 8 p.m. there will be a public meeting to support the H-Block hunger-strike, with speakers from Sinn Féin and the Troops Out Movement at Leeds Trades Council Club, at Saville Mount.

On Saturday 28th March, from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. there will be a 'Troops Out Movement' day school on Ireland with speakers from Sinn Féin, Information on Ireland, the TOM and Women & Ireland.

People should write for more details to:

Leeds Troops Out Movement,
Box 1989,
29 Blenheim Terrace,
Leeds, England.

Frank Carson

Dear Sir,

I read a well-known Belfast hoaxery is about to engage one Frank Carson to entertain the locals around the upper Falls area.

This man has done much to hammer home England's point of view that the Irish are a stupid, uncouth lot. His excuses for this distasteful way of getting rich, are that, one, the 'Northern Irish' enjoy being made fools of, and, two, that the 'jokes' he cracks are not really Irish but Polish.

One young man, Paul Baker, lies naked in an English prison being beaten up by both the criminals and screws, and ridiculed by the same type of jokes that Carson tells. This young man is from the Saltstown area of Belfast, about one hundred yards down the same street from where Carson comes.

Like his friend Fitz, who also claims to be a Saltstown man, Carson is finding doors opening

more easily to him in assisting the Brits in their propaganda war. This may all seem to be very trivial and insignificant, and I am sure Carson will pack the cabaret the week he appears, but it won't be on St. Patrick's Day as he will be on a special mission that day, entertaining a somewhat motley crowd.

On March 17th, when even people who have no connection with our country join in celebrations, Mr. Carson will be in West Germany presenting shamrocks to British troops and then afterwards in the British army mess hall he will be entertaining these enemies of Ireland who have a licence to kill the Irish.

I know and hope that the people will bring it home to whoever engaged this quailing, that his type of anti-Irish trip is not wanted in the republican districts of Belfast; and he and his mate Gerry should form a double act in his club in Blackpool where they will be very much appreciated.

Mrs R. McCann,
Divis Flats,
Belfast.



Gardiff march

A chara,

It would be a pity if your report (*An Phoblacht/Republican News*, January 31st) of the Bloody Sunday march in Cardiff last month gave readers in Ireland a too small impression of the anti-imperialist movement there.

Norwich TOM branch has therefore asked me to write and point out that the demonstration was well supported by Troops Out Movement branches, and also by the RCG, as well as by the many groups which you listed.

Chris Marshall,
for Norwich TOM,
England.

Easter ceremonies

A chara,

At a recent meeting of the Republican Commemoration Committee it was decided that a greater effort should be made in all areas this year to organise Easter Commemorations. If no commemoration has been held in your area in the past we would urge you this year to hold at least a wreath-laying ceremony.

Lita Campbell,
Rural,
Coisde Cuimhneachain na Poblaictha,
Republican Commemoration Committee,
44 Parnell Square, Dublin.



Glasgow solidarity

Dear comrades,

We have just got your last week's paper (*AP/RN*, February 21st) over here, so this letter is a bit late in the day perhaps.

The Glasgow 'Victory to the H-Block men and Armagh women' march on February 14th was marked not just by attacks by loyalists but by attacks from the press, Tory councillors, and from those who should do better - many British socialist groups.

Since the march, the loyalists, press etc. have been proud that their own prophecies of violence were met - by themselves - and are attacking the whole right of marching at all.

The loyalists over here, not being a majority and not being materially interested in British rule in Ireland would not be the bogey they are if it were not for the support they get from the loyal press and politicians for their bigoted ranting and violence.

The only way to beat these loyal Britons and their chauvinism is by mobilising the democratic forces in the working class. This is what the Glasgow H-Block Committee has begun to do. Ninety percent of those on our fifteen-hundred-strong march, were from Glasgow's working class. A class which has in the past shown its independence from the loyalty of its 'leaders', and the Labour Party, to the British government and imperialism.

The march was a success. Bad press, and bad favour in the British council are one thing. Truth and justice will win through in Britain as they will most certainly in Ireland.

Keep up the good work - despite your own bad press!

Maryanne Donnelly,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

Buntus cainte

A chara,

Through your letters page could I ask anyone who wishes to sell the 'Buntus Cainte' records (in good condition) to contact me c/o 44, Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

Chris Kelly,
Dublin.

SCOTTISH LOYALISTS ON THE MEDIA AND ON THE MARCH

Gun-running boast and display of bigotry

THE publicity-seeking claim on a television programme, last week, that weapons and explosives have been smuggled into the North from Scotland, has re-awakened demands for the banning of the UDA, especially since it was also openly claimed on the programme that Scottish loyalists have been training with the UDA in the North.

And, last weekend, in a militant show of opposition to an H-Block march in Glasgow a fortnight previously, five thousand loyalists paraded through the city centre, including one man on an open truck, dressed as the Pope.

Interviewed anonymously on the UTV television programme 'Counterpoint', the self-styled Commander of the UDA's 1st Scottish Battalion stated on Thursday night, February 26th, that seven rifles, two sub-machine-guns, and 10 lbs. of explosives, have recently been sent across to the North.

He also boasted that 'safe houses' have been provided in Glasgow for loyalists 'on the run', that weapons are being stockpiled in Scotland, where the UDA has two thousand members, and that certain sections of Glasgow have been 're-marked' for protection in the event of an IRA attack!

Also in the programme, a Scottish loyalists' spokesman said that they plan to organise counter-demonstrations every time H-Block campaigners hold a march in Scotland. A spokesman for the campaigners said that they intend to escalate demonstrations despite threats from the UDA.

Glasgow police chief Patrick Hamill defended his decision not to ban H-Block marches on the grounds that if one march is banned

then all will have to be forbidden.

POPE

Then, last Saturday, February 28th, a Scottish loyalist, dressed as the Pope, was among five men arrested during a five-thousand-strong parade through Glasgow.

Police ordered an open truck containing the men to leave the parade as it neared the city chambers. The one man was charged with 'breach of the peace', whilst the others — including two supposedly dressed as IRA men —



Glasgow loyalists have pledged opposition to the Pope's visit there next year



were released without charge.

One of the march organisers, a prominent Scottish Orangeman, said: "The theme of the truck was that the Pope has supported and boosted the IRA by failing to communicate them."

Among the slogans written on placards on the truck were 'RC churches openly shelter IRA murderers', and demands for the resignation of Glasgow police chief Patrick Hamill.

The parade was called to condemn the failure of the police to ban an H-Block march in the city a fortnight previously, when, after loyalist attacks on the marchers, one hundred and fifty people were arrested.

CASSELLS

Led by Protestant Pastor David Cassells (a former RUC man and

a cousin of Ian Paisley's wife), Saturday's parade was organised by a loyalist umbrella group, the Scottish Constitutional Defence Committee.

The parade, which made the city centre echo to the sound of drums and flutes playing Orange tunes, ended with a rally, where speakers attacked the Glasgow police chief and also pledged opposition to the Pope going to Glasgow as part of his British visit in 1982.

Pastor Cassells raved: "We don't want the co-ordinator of all republicanism to come to this country."

The loyalists' parade was their biggest show of strength so far in Scotland after a month of rising tension in Glasgow in the run-up to the second H-Block hunger-strike and with Paisley starting "on the Carson trail" in the North.

WHAT'S ON

**HUNGER-STRIKE
FUND-RAISING DANCE**
Friday 6th March
Star Ballroom
BALLYCONNELL
Co. Cavan

**MASS DEMONSTRATION
STOP THE RUGBY TOUR**
1 p.m. Saturday 7th March
Assemble Parnell Square
DUBLIN
March to Landsdowne Road

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
CONFERENCE**
12.30 p.m. Saturday 7th March
Mont Clare Hotel
Clare Street
DUBLIN

HUNGER-STRIKE MEETING
8 p.m. Wednesday 11th March
Ballyconnell/Bawnboy/Templeport
CO. CAVAN

HUNGER-STRIKE MARCH
7.45 p.m. Thursday 12th March
Assemble Rathfarnham Village

HUNGER-STRIKE PICKET
1 p.m. Thursday 12th March
Leinster House
Kildare Street
DUBLIN

**SINN FEIN MEETING
COMHAIRLE CUIGE MUMHAN**
2.30 p.m. Sunday 15th March
LIMERICK
Two delegates from each comhairle
central to attend.

CABRA SINN FEIN
ANYONE interested in joining Sinn Fein in the Cabra area of Dublin should contact: An rúnai, 161 Ratoath Road, Cabra West, Dublin 7.

THANKS
THE JAMES CONNOLLY SINN FEIN CUMANN, Ballyfermot, Dublin, would like to thank the people of Waterside, Derry, for their hospitality on the weekend of the Bloody Sunday commemoration.

COISTE CUIMHNEACHAIN NA POBLACHTA

Applications for speakers at Easter commemorations should be made as soon as possible, giving full details of venue, time etc., to:

An Rúnaí,
Coiste Cuimhneacháin na Poblachta,
44 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1.

Order your Easter Lilies!

Available from:
Mrs. P. King,
29 All Saints Park,
Raheny,
Dublin 5.
Price £10 per 1,000



Honour Ireland's dead — Wear an Easter Lily!

Garda torture

FOLLOWING the recent demands for extensions of powers of detention and interrogation made by gardai, the chairman of the Irish section of Amnesty International, Kevin White, has repeated that the gardai have been guilty of torture and that the Free State government has done nothing to prevent it.

Speaking at the annual conference of the Dublin University Law Society, on Wednesday 25th February, Kevin White said that the gardai's interrogation techniques, as exposed by Amnesty, were within the United Nations' definition of torture.

He went on to point out that to date, none of the recommendations of the O'Brien Committee, which

met in 1977 to 'recommend certain safeguards for persons in custody', had been implemented.

The O'Brien report, he said, noted that 80% of convictions in serious crimes were based on self-incriminatory statements by the accused person. There was an 'extraordinary coincidence' in the similarity of the garda procedures complained of in the O'Brien

report and those methods used by police in Chile, Greece, Spain and the Philippines.

"It has been Amnesty's experience that it is during interrogation of suspects that the greatest deprivation of a suspect's rights occur," he said. "It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that persons 'helping the police with inquiries' be aware of their rights and of the obligations that rest with the police at that time."

The previous weekend in Galway Derek Nally, secretary of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, had called for gardai to



● Amnesty chairman Kevin White — 'gardai guilty of torture'

be given the power to arrest anyone merely on 'suspicion'; to be allowed to search, take fingerprints and forensic samples from those people; and to use evidence from interrogation carried out before a formal caution is given.

DUBLIN UNEMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE

Action plans discussed

DUBLIN Council of Trade Unions held a conference on Saturday 28th February in Liberty Hall to draw up policy proposals and methods of mobilisation for the Council's Committee on Unemployment.

Opening the conference, Ben Kearney, president of the trades council, said that the Free State government "verged on the criminal in having done nothing to relieve the situation now facing working people."

Whilst those at the conference agreed that only a socialist system could provide answers to the unemployment problem, nevertheless the trade unions have the power to wrest some changes from the government if they can mobilise on the issue.

Outlining a number of policies which might offer some hope and overcome



Speaking at the unemployment conference: left to right: Jerry Shanahan (Dublin Council of Trade Unions unemployment committee), Ben Kearney (ICTU president), Peter Cassells (ICTU), and Brendan Walsh (UCD)

the apparent present apathy, Peter Cassells of the ICTU dismissed the private sector as neither having the capacity or ability to provide the necessary jobs. He suggested that state planning and

institutions should be created to carry out the development of various industrial sectors and proposed the control of financial institutions and an expanded tax base to finance the

programme.

Jerry Shanahan of the trades council's unemployment committee proposed the hard-pressed textile industry and the food industry as areas where import controls could provide immediate jobs coupled with development of present natural resources. He also suggested a state building programme.

Economist Brendan Walsh, from University College, Dublin, spoke of the long-term gravity of the unemployment problem which grows higher as successive recessions take their course, but does not return to former low levels in times of expansion.

In the afternoon session of the conference three workshops were held on social welfare, education and future strategies for the campaign. Suggestions for future action included work stoppages and demonstrations.

JOIN SINN FEIN

Anyone interested in joining Sinn Fein 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 Fein

NAME

ADDRESS

SINN FEIN TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

FACING FUTURE TASKS

BY DAMIEN O'ROURKE

Ballymun

THE Ballymun H-Block/Armagh action group in North Dublin has been re-activated and has started actively campaigning on behalf of the prisoners once again. On Saturday 21st February four members of the group, distributing leaflets in Ballymun shopping centre, had their names taken by Special Branchmen.

On Sunday, leaflets were given out at three local churches and were well-received, particularly at Shangan church where attempts at obstruction by the parish priest focused interest and support on the distributors.

Ballyfermot

TWO members of Sinn Féin in Ballyfermot have been charged with painting H-Block/Armagh slogans in the area on Wednesday 18th February. The first attempt to arrest the two was made by two land-rovers full of Free State soldiers, who jumped out and informed them that they were making a 'citizen's arrest', but would not say what for.

The two Sinn Féin members then broke free and ran off, but were afterwards arrested by Special Branchmen under Section 30 of the Offences against the State Act (relating to IRA membership). Taken to Kilmainham Garda station, they were later charged with defacing a wall.

Cork

THE general secretary of the students' union at University College Cork (UCC), Charles Kerrigan, has issued a press statement detailing Special Branch harassment and brutality to a fellow student engaged in the H-Block/Armagh campaign.

In January, UCC students proposed a motion at the annual congress of the Union of Students in Ireland condemning the harassment of students involved in the campaign. On February 12th, the UCC students' union issued a statement demanding that the Free State government ensure that this harassment ceased.

On February 21st, when Charles Kerrigan was attending a 'Students against H-Block/Armagh' conference in Dublin, Special Branchmen raided his Cork flat under the ridiculous pretence of searching for firearms. They arrested his flatmate 'on suspicion of IRA membership' and held him at the Cork Bridewell for four and a half hours until he was released without charge.

During his arrest, he was assaulted a number of times; his head banged against the wall until he gave an English version of his name and when he attempted to make a complaint later, his head was banged against a table until he was retracted.

Mayo

AN H-Block/Armagh action committee has been formed in Westport, County Mayo, following a meeting in the town on Wednesday 11th February.

The meeting was addressed by Vincent Doherty and Patrick Sanderson of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee. The committee elected is: chair: Gary Kennedy; treasurer: Walter Walsh; secretary: Michael McNeilly; and PRO: Seamus O'Maolchoin.

Meath

MEATH Trades Council, which in May 1979 was the first trades council to support political status for the H-Block/Armagh prisoners, has, at its latest meeting, passed a resolution calling on the Thatcher government to implement the settlement which ended the last hunger-strike. A copy of the resolution has been sent to Charles Haughey.

Monaghan

H-Block campaigners in Monaghan town gave an exemplary display of how to lobby politicians when they formed an early queue at the regular 'constituents' clinic of Fianna Fail Leinster House member Jimmy Leonard on Saturday 21st February. The whole session of the clinic was taken up solely by people demanding that Leonard support the demands of the prisoners and make their views known to Charles Haughey.

A large contingent from the Monaghan H-Block/Armagh action group took part with their banner in the Belfast march last Sunday, March 1st.

Wexford

AT a meeting of Wexford Corporation, on Monday 2nd March, a resolution was passed calling on the British government to implement the five demands of the H-Block and Armagh prisoners. The motion was proposed by Sinn Féin alderman Phil Kelly. During the debate a letter smuggled from the H-Blocks was circulated among the councillors.

SINN FEIN'S economic resistance department held a conference in Dublin's Liberty Hall on Saturday 28th February specifically for Sinn Féin trade unionists.

The conference was chaired by the department's director, Paddy Bolger, and opened by Sinn Féin president Ruairi O'Bradaigh.

Welcoming those taking part in the conference, Ruairi O'Bradaigh emphasised the importance of extending republican work in the trade union movement. He contrasted the strength of the movement in the small farming areas of the twenty-six counties with its comparative weakness in the major urban areas.

He said that the divorce of the national struggle from the social and economic struggle must be reversed. Members must be made aware that the struggle does not end with 'Brits Out' but is aimed at the removal of the capitalist system, and, putting in its place, control by the people, not only of the structures of government, but of their own places of work.

Paddy Bolger outlined the immediate tasks which his department face in regard to the trade union movement.

Firstly there is the need to make Sinn Féin members fully aware of the importance of action in the trade unions and to establish organisational links between republican trade unionists to enable concerted action. Not only should republicans work for support for the national struggle within the labour movement, but also should evolve and campaign for specific republican social and economic policies. In aiming at this the difficulties have to be clearly identified and faced up to.

ASSESSING

The morning session of the conference was taken up with assessing the current strength of Sinn Féin trade unionists around the country and a lively discussion arose with many worthwhile contributions from the floor.

There was a general feeling that work on the prison issue within the trade union movement has done much to focus Sinn Féin involve-



At last Saturday's Liberty Hall conference — from left: Ruairi O'Bradaigh, Paddy Bolger and Dermot Whelan

ment in that area and has made many members aware of the amount of untapped support there.

Peter McAteer, a shop steward at a Clones meat factory, outlined the success of the shut-down in the town for the December 'day of action' and of the consequent identification of republicans as trade unionists in the minds of the townspeople.

A resolution was passed committing those present to devote their energies and experience in the trade union movement in support of the current hunger-strike, and calling on other trade unionists to do likewise.

Many of the participants reported that although there are a number of trade unionists in Sinn Féin in their particular area, some of whom hold positions in their unions, there are never any co-ordinating meetings between them to agree on common action to further Sinn Féin's social and economic policies.

The high number of unemployed Sinn Féin members was also raised and the need for them to be organised was emphasised. The conference passed a resolution welcoming the new initiative 'Action on Unemployment' launched by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, and

pledged total commitment from republican trade unionists in building the campaign.

DOCUMENT

The afternoon session was opened by Sean Halpenny, of Sinn Féin's Foreign Affairs Bureau, who traced some of the historical and present links between the Irish republican movement and the international labour movement.

A draft policy document, entitled 'The Trade Unions and the Irish Revolution — A Republican View', was circulated at the conference and was briefly introduced by Paddy Bolger. A recall conference is expected to be held in the summer to amend and agree the document for submission to the next Sinn Féin ard fheis.

The rest of the afternoon session was again taken up by contributions from the floor concentrating on work to be done.

Two experienced trade unionists, Andy Connolly a full-time branch secretary in Meath, and Dermot Whelan, a member of Dublin Trades Council, briefly outlined their union experience and urged fellow republicans not just to snipe at the trade unions from the sidelines for being

bureaucratic and so on, but to get fully involved in trade union affairs and go for positions.

DIFFICULTIES

Some of the difficulties encountered by Sinn Féin trade unionists, raised at the conference, included the increasing stronghold that members of the 'Sticky Workers Party' are gaining in some unions, whilst Northern members spoke of the stonewall of loyalty in attempting to work in trade unions there.

The conference decided that a trade union representative should be elected on each Sinn Féin comhairle centaur, regular internal meetings should be held by trade unionists in each area, and following the conclusion of the present hunger-strike, a public meeting be arranged in each area to publicise Sinn Féin's trade union policies.

A national trade union committee has been elected from the conference as follows: Paddy Bolger, Dave Farrell, Dermot Whelan and Phil Flynn (Dublin), Andy Connolly (Meath), Peter McAleer (Monaghan), Eileen Lane and Kenneth O'Connell (Cork), and Mary Taylor representing the Sinn Féin women's affairs department.

TUC intimidation defied

THE British Trades Union Congress general council has approved a decision to expel any trades council which backs a conference due to be held next weekend in the English city of Coventry to win support for the H-Block hunger-strike.

The conference, which will be held on Saturday 14th March under the slogan of 'TUC Hands off Ireland', is being organised by the 'Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign', a campaign promoted by the revolutionary left-wing group, the RCT.

Five trades councils are supporting the conference in defiance of TUC intimidation, including one which was disaffiliated from the TUC last year for supporting a conference on Ireland under the slogan 'Bring the war to Britain'. The trades councils giving their support are Salford, Tordorn, Hackney, Wear Valley, and (already expelled) Tameside.

In the face of TUC intimidation, Spennymoor trades council has withdrawn its support, but its chairman will attend in a personal capacity. Coventry trades council, which plans to send two observers to the conference, may also face expulsion.

COVENTRY

A week last Monday, February 23rd, Lanchester Polytechnic students' union decided, under right-wing pressure, to withdraw its offer of premises for the conference, although it will be sending delegates to the



conference which will still be held in Coventry.

The next day, Tuesday 24th February, Coventry city council, which is controlled by the supposedly progressive Labour Party, stated that it did not want to hire out premises for a political event and opposed the conference on the grounds that it is divisive.

Then, on Wednesday, February 25th, the TUC general council endorsed the decision of its trades council joint consultative committee that 'no trades council could associate itself in any way with the Coventry conference and continue to be recognised as a local body of the TUC.' The TUC has sent a circular warning trades councils not to attend the conference.

INFRINGEMENT

A spokesman for the conference organisers pointed out that the TUC decision is a gross infringement of the right of trade unionists to work to change the current policy of the TUC, which is to back the 'Sticks' and Communist Party's pro-British 'Better Life for all' campaign.

The Coventry conference first hit the newspaper headlines after 'The Observer' newspapers, in an article entitled 'TUC warns H-Block rebels', in its issue of a week last Sunday, February 22nd, revealed the expulsion recommendation, after a leak of confidential minutes of the TUC's trades council joint consultative committee meeting held on February 9th.

A motion supporting the conference, passed by the defiant trades councils, supports political status for republican prisoners and urges the TUC to support the national liberation struggle in Ireland.

For further information about the conference, contact Dave Hallsworth, SPtAC, BM RCT, London WC1N 3XX, or telephone London (01) 274 3951.



● Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann protest rally last Saturday

Cultural protest

Several thousand people marched in pouring rain from Parnell Square to the RTE studios at Donnybrook in what was described as a 'mobile mini-fleadh

However, although a substantial victory seems won, it remains to be seen how RTE will carry out its promises. The Conradh na Gaeilge demand for more broadcasting in Irish still remains unsatisfied.

IN MEMORIAM

HUGHES, Charlie. (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Charlie Hughes, 'D' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Óglaigh na hÉireann, who was killed in action on March 8th 1971. Mary Queen of Ireland pray for him. Remembered always by the Lower Falls Commemoration Committee.

KAVANAGH, Albert, (9th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol Albert Kavanagh, Belfast Brigade, Óglaigh na hÉireann, who was shot dead by RUC while on active service on March 4th 1972. Mary Queen of Ireland pray for him. Always remembered by the officer board and members of the O'Callaghan/Kavanagh Sinn Féin camann, Belfast.

Sympathy

LOUDAN. Comhairle Cuige Laighean and Comhairle Atha Cliath, Sinn Féin express their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Tommy Loudan, Unity Flats, Belfast, and especially to his son, Tomboy (H4-Block).

SHANAHAN. Comhairle Atha Cliath, Sinn Féin, extends deepest sympathy to Paddy Shanahan in Portlaoise jail on the death of his wife.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Lisa and Karen, Marie, Eamon and Ciaran.

men and to the Armagh women. Solidarity from your comrade Gerald Rooney and from your friend Ellish Carlisle.

Solidarity Greetings

liberation struggle. We pledge our full support to those undertaking a second hunger-strike for political status. Victor to the Irish Republican Movement.

De bharr tacaíocht so-fheicthe

Ach mar is gnáth dos na Gaill,

Tá geimhle phian is léan mhuin-
tir na hÉireann bearnaithe go deo
anois.

APPEARS TO BE A
R WHICH REQUIRES

Ireland's freedom fighters in the H-Blocks and Armagh jail, on this March 1st, the fifth anniversary of Britain's failed attempts to criminalise the Iris



H-BLOCK HUNGER-STRIKE STARTS : NO WASH/NO SLOP-OUT PROTESTS END

DALY GIVES BRITS AMMUNITION

BY PETER ARNLIS

THE initially lone hunger-strike, launched by Bobby Sands last Sunday March 1st, and supported by protests in Belfast, New York and London, was the subject of an attack that same day from Catholic bishop Edward Daly of Derry, during an address to young people in the city, and was also raised in Westminster on Tuesday, when the second pledge in a week came from Northern direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins that the British government would not budge an inch in its position.

The week also saw the ending of the incredible endurance by the H-Block prisoners of the three-year-old no wash/no slop-out protest and by the Armagh women of their one-year-old similar protest.

Last week's last ditch bid by the Republican Movement to avert the hunger-strikes met with success in Armagh jail, but was declined by the blanket men who stated that they had "genuinely and sincerely attempted to end the deadlock" but that all their efforts "were ruined by British intransigence" and that there was no other course of action but the hunger-strike open to them.

Confirmation of the hunger-strike came in a formal announcement from the H-Blocks, issued in Belfast last Sunday just before the Belfast demonstration.

While this statement was being issued, Bishop Daly, addressing a conference of Catholic youth in Derry, attacked the hunger-strike as not being "morally justified" and urged the nationalist youth not to support hunger-strike protests by H-Block action groups unless such groups dissociate themselves from "groups which have a policy of guerrilla warfare."

He also attacked the continuation of the no wash protest, which, when it coincidentally ended the next day, drew no commendation from him, or immediate call on the British administration to reciprocate.

Last year, Bishop Daly and Cardinal O'Flaherty began a series of meetings with Humphrey Atkins from March to September, and it was clearly understood that it was only these discussions, aimed at settling the H-Block crisis, which were deferring the hunger-strike.

These talks flopped, but neither Bishop Daly nor Cardinal O'Flaherty (who flew off to a month-long conference in Rome) explained this to the waiting prisoners or publicly clarified their failure, when a clarification would have injected more support into the first hunger-strike campaign and perhaps swung the British earlier and definitively.

Bishop Daly also claimed that he felt he was used by the British and 'other groups' during the last hunger-strike. But Sinn Féin pointed out that he was certainly used by Humphrey Atkins but not by the prisoners or their supporters, because conditions in the H-Blocks had not changed.

TRIBUTE

His statement, which Sinn Féin said had played into the hands of the British government, was exploited by Humphrey Atkins, who last Tuesday in Westminster paid warm tribute to the bishop's condemnation of H-Block support groups, describing his comments as "undoubtedly helpful."

But Atkins did not comment on the bishop's criticism of the British, which was buried in the text of his long address, and which said: "I believe very much that prison conditions can and should be improved. I believe that all prisoners in the North should be allowed to wear their own clothes at all times. I believe that the inflexibility for which the British government was criticised at the European court is still in evidence."

The decision to end the no wash/no slop-out protest had been discussed by the H-Block and Armagh prisoners among themselves for some weeks, and was timed for the day after the start of Bobby Sands' hunger-strike.

In its propaganda the British government had been portraying (with some



As thousands marched in Belfast in support of the H-Block hunger-strike, which commenced last Sunday, Bishop Edward Daly (inset) launched a verbal attack on the prisoners' protest, thereby giving the British government fresh ammunition. In Westminster on Tuesday, direct-ruler Atkins described Daly's comments as 'undoubtedly helpful'.

success) the no wash protest as self-inflicted, and by concentrating on this issue had been able to camouflage the real issues which the prisoners dispute: prison work, the wearing of prison clothing and (were it not for the blanket protest) forced association with loyalist prisoners.

HIGHLIGHT

"With a hunger-strike in the H-Blocks now commanding increasing attention," said the protesting prisoners, in a statement on Monday, "we have decided to end the no wash/no slop-out protest and, by doing so, to highlight the main areas of our demands which are not about cell furniture or toilet facilities but about the right not to wear prison uniform (prison-issue clothing) in the H-Blocks, and in both the H-Blocks and Armagh prison the right not to do prison work and the right to free association with fellow political prisoners (which includes segregation from loyalists)."

"Despite ending the no wash protest and despite the public attention now being focussed on the prisons we do not expect the screws to react more humanely. Each time we ring the bell to go to the toilet it will be at the whim of screws whether we go, in which case we will have to run a gauntlet of insults and assaults or don't go, in which case the temptation out of frustration would be to return to the no wash protest and avoid all contact with the prison administration."

"Nevertheless, as from today, we are

prepared to run that gauntlet to highlight the hunger-strike and the issues behind our demand for political status. In the H-Blocks, the blanket protest, symbol of republican resistance, will continue, and in Armagh, where we the women can already wear our own clothes, the no work protest will also continue."

SURPRISE

So close a secret was this decision (despite the fact that over four hundred prisoners were involved) that it completely took the prison administration, the prison chaplains and the media, by surprise. Prison warders at first ignored the prisoners when they said they wanted to go to the toilet but, as it slowly dawned on them that the men were serious, senior warders checked for themselves before ringing Stormont Castle for a directive.

All the men were issued with two towels, were unconditionally allowed out to wash, and were then moved into clean (and some furnished) cells.

Up until March 1978 the men had been allowed to wash at sinks outside of their cells, draped with a towel and with a spare towel for drying themselves. A prison regime decision to limit each man to one towel (which he was not allowed to wear), coupled with an intensification of assaults on naked blanket men going to the showers and toilets resulted first in blanket men staying in their cells and then — when they were refused slop-out buckets, and were

prevented from throwing the contents of their chamber pots out of the blocked-up windows — in them going on the no wash/no slop-out protest.

HARD-LINE

In Westminster, on Tuesday, Atkins, with all-round party political backing, reiterated the extremely hard-line position of the British government. He said: "We shall not give way on the issue of political status under pressure of further protest action whatever form this takes, and whether it is inside or outside the prisons."

While it is correct to assume that the Brits would not be so cocky about boasting of their intransigence, if they did not intend to remain so, it is still the case that nothing short of tangible expressions of massive and concerned opinion, both in Ireland and internationally, will shift them. For what is it worth, Atkins has apparently left room for some manoeuvrability, if that can be read from his response to a question from loyalist MP William Ross, who wanted assurances that there would be no more prison reforms in the North ahead of reforms in British jails.

In reply, Atkins said: "I do not think it would be right just because of the actions of one or two individuals or even a group of individuals (an obvious reference to hunger-strikers), for the government to cease its efforts to provide the best possible regime in the prisons, wherever they are."

Political status now!

LAST SUNDAY, March 1st, republican prisoners announced the commencement of an H-Block hunger-strike, initially to be solely led by the blanket men's former O/C, Belfast republican Bobby Sands. The text of their statement is:

"We, the Republican POWs in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, and our comrades in Armagh prison, are entitled to and hereby demand political status, and we reject to day as we have consistently rejected every day since September 14th 1976, when the blanket protest began, the British government's attempted criminalisation of ourselves and our struggle."

"Five years ago this day, the British government declared that anyone arrested and convicted after March 1st 1976 was to be treated as a criminal and no longer as a political prisoner. Five years later we are still able to declare that that criminalisation policy, which we have resisted and suffered, has failed."

"If a British government experienced such a long and persistent resistance to a domestic policy in England

then that policy would almost certainly be changed. But not so in Ireland where its traditional racist attitude blinds its judgement to reason and persuasion."

"Only the loud voice of the Irish people and world opinion can bring them to their senses and only a hunger-strike, where lives are laid down as proof of the strength of our political convictions, can rally such opinion, and prevent the British with the problem that far from criminalising the cause of Ireland their intransigence is actually bringing popular attention to that cause."

"We have asserted that we are political prisoners and everything about our country, our arrests, interrogations, trials and prison conditions, show that we are politically motivated and not motivated by selfish reasons or for selfish ends. As further demonstration of our selflessness and the justice of our cause a number of our comrades, beginning today with Bobby Sands, will hunger-strike to the death unless the British government abandons its criminalisation policy and meets our demand for political status."



BOBBY SANDS

— on Monday, his twenty-seventh birthday, he will have been nine days on hunger-strike