

An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS



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**National H-Block/
Armagh Committee
OPEN CONFERENCE**

Belfast

to build support for the five demands
11 a.m. Sunday 10th May
Lake Glen, Andersonstown

**HUNGER-
STRIKE
MARCH
& RALLY
Dublin**

Saturday 9th May
Assemble 2 p.m.
Stephen's Green
March to GPO

FINAL SALUTE



ands, IRA Volunteer, H-Block hunger-striker and Westminster MP

THE FUNERAL OF BOBBY SANDS



● Republican Volunteers fire a final salute. Among those present around the coffin are Jim Gibney, National H-Block/Armagh Committee member — who played a major role in Bobby's election campaign; Gerry Adams — who presided over the funeral; and Owen Carron, Bobby's election agent — who gave the oration



● Twinbrook estate, last Thursday

The unchanging desire for freedom

THE biggest IRA funeral since the burial of hunger-striker Terence MacSwiney, MP, was that of Bobby Sands, MP, last Thursday.

In 1920 it was expedient for local authorities, for unions, for people in high places, for cardinals and bishops, to come out and march behind the man who hungered after justice and who supported the use of arms in the struggle to overthrow British rule and establish Irish democracy. That most of those people have retreated from the struggle is an indication that they have been purchased by partition rather than been intimidated by the 'defenders' of this realm.

What has not changed in sixty-one years is the desire of the Irish people to be free and of a new generation of freedom fighters to fight.

STORY

The story of Bobby Sands is a sad one,

of northern nationalist youth and people left without moral or political direction from those who claim leadership. And with ridicule poured upon malignment and scorn from the same hypocrites whose moral and physical cowardice perpetuates the evils which Bobby Sands, like MacSwiney before him, fought against.

British rule destroyed Bobby Sands' life just as it destroys peace in Ireland and threatens to destroy the lives of Francis Hughes, Patsy O'Hara and Raymond McCreesh.

STRENGTH

Though saddened at the tremendous loss, republicans draw strength from Bobby Sands' death which like his life on the blanket testifies to the fact that English rule cannot work when there is Irish resistance. It is a terrible price to prove a point but such is the cost of resistance, and the point when proven draws in greater numbers of hitherto uncommitted people who recognize that

this is the only way, and that the course of resistance and armed struggle has already forged a leadership in the Irish Republican Movement.

British attempts to criminalise the Irish freedom fighters have foundered to the extent that ironically the prison hunger-strikers have inspired and politicised thousands of otherwise relatively docile Irish people and internationalised the struggle to unbelievable proportions.

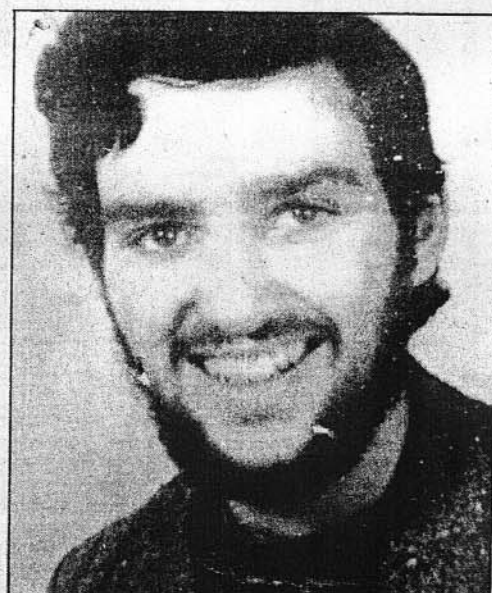
Irish people do not watch such funerals as Thursday's without being moved, emotionally as well as to action. The world has also seen an extract from the political struggle of the jail spilling on to the streets — and its recognition of the struggle for Irish national liberation will have its effect, will take a heavy toll on British rule, and may well be a watershed in British demoralisation. And all because of the hunger-strikers and Bobby Sands.



• FRANCIS HUGHES



• RAYMOND McCREESH



• PATSY O'HARA

Hughes — days to live with Sands dead

AT 1.17 a.m. on Tuesday morning, having completed sixty-five days on hunger-strike, Bobby Sands died in the H-Block prison hospital at Long Kesh. His condition had been deteriorating steadily until finally he fell into a coma on Sunday morning from which he never regained consciousness.

Lying in a different cell in the prison hospital, South Derry hunger-striker Francis Hughes has been reported to be periodically slipping into unconsciousness also, and there is increasing fear that he is now close to death.

Bobby Sands had, for over a week, been in a critical condition with death a possibility at any moment. Several times he had reported that he had felt himself slipping into unconsciousness but had managed to pull himself back.

His skin had become so thin that he was placed on a water bed to prevent his bones breaking through

and by last Tuesday he was so weak that his conversation with the Pope's envoy, Father Magee, left him completely exhausted.

DEATH

By Thursday, he had lost all feeling in his mouth and gums and was having great difficulty in talking. He was also suffering great pain and medical staff indicated that he was on the point of death. By Saturday, Bobby had lost his eyesight completely and had no feeling in one side of his face, and then in the early hours of Sunday morning even his powerful determination could no longer keep him conscious and he slipped into a coma.

From this point on Bobby's death could have come at any moment and his family remained constantly at his bedside. His breathing became more laboured as his body struggled to stay alive but finally at 1.17 a.m. on Tuesday 5th May, Bobby Sands died.

He had endured sixty-five days without food, and had lain for his last two days in a coma. His terribly gaunt body lying in state at his home in Belfast's Twinbrook estate told the story of the torment and suffering which Bobby Sands had endured over the past weeks, and which the remaining three hunger-strikers continue to endure.

HUGHES

Francis Hughes himself is now reported to be close to death also. Medical staff have reported that health-wise he is only a few days behind Bobby Sands, although after a visit on Thursday the family report that his spirits remain high.

His wounded leg is giving him great pain. He continues to vomit and finds it difficult to speak. He is reported to be suffering from blurred vision and vertigo and on Thursday week, he was given the last rites.

This week his eyesight has continued to seriously worsen with one eye permanently covered by a patch and the other eye being in fixed focus, because of damage to the nerve which controls the eye's movement (presumably owing to vitamin deficiency). On Thursday he did not recognise his youngest sister Dolours.

This Saturday Francis Hughes will have been on hunger-strike fifty-six days.

Only days behind Francis Hughes are hunger-strikers Patsy O'Hara and Raymond McCreesh. Both men are now suffering the symptoms of an advanced hunger-strike.

Latest reports state that Ray-

mond McCreesh weighs only 7 st. 7 lbs., having lost 2 st. 6 lbs. since the beginning of the hunger-strike; and Patsy O'Hara weighs only 8 st. 11 lbs., having lost 3 st. 3 lbs.

Both men are now having trouble with their eyesight and are reported to be feeling very weak.

Ray McCreesh has started being sick with some rejection of water. And Patsy O'Hara, who was expected to receive an eye-patch on Friday, told his brother Sean Seamus to get ready for another funeral.

With Bobby Sands already dead at the hands of the British government, unless that government is forced to grant the prisoners' five demands, Francis Hughes has only a matter of days to live, with Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara following shortly behind him.



AT THE TOOMEBRIDGE RALLY, last Sunday, were many relatives of the three hunger-strikers. In addition to members of the Hughes family, the brother of Raymond McCreesh, Fr. Malachy (left) was present, as were both parents of hunger-striker Patsy O'Hara (above)

Shock and outrage

HOWEVER prepared people may have thought they were for Bobby Sands' death, the news came as a profound and sickening shock to Irish people, and to judge by the reactions which poured in from around the world, his death at the hands of the British outraged international opinion.

Most of the statements emanating from Irish nationalist leaders, such as Free State premier Charles Haughey and SDLP leader John Hume were defensive, although Hume could not resist the temptation to indulge in a bit of self-righteousness and attack the IRA.

In Britain, the press closed ranks with parliament as the British people's leaders, with comfort and succour from their Catholic and Protestant hierarchies, who absolved them from any guilt, batoned down the hatches and prepared to ride out the long storm.

It appears that the international flak has so far only flushed out a few Labour backbenchers concerned about their country's reputation and represents no serious threat to the bi-partisan policy of Labour and Tories.

NORTH

On the streets of the occupied North, crowds gathered, prayed the rosary, or built barricades and fought fierce running battles with the Brits and the RUC. The street violence was, owing to republicans' and H-Block committees' appeals for calm and peaceful protests, at a much lower level than predicted, but nevertheless the frustration of the youth was too much at times and found its head in the petrol bombing of armoured landrovers and the stoning of Brits.

The loyalists took the most comfort out of Sands' death since it was evidence of Thatcher's firmness. At every available opportunity Thatcher repeated her government's inflexible stance and on Thursday reassured the loyalists that there would be no change in the status of the six counties unless they so decided.

The international pressure on the British government may perhaps have most effect on them and conceivably could put a bit of marrow into the hollow backbones of Fianna Fail and the SDLP.

AMERICA

In America, up to ten thousand people marched to the British consulate in New York.

There have been similar protests in San Francisco, Boston, and Chicago, and the hunger-strike has dominated television screens across the United States. The state of Rhode Island proclaimed a day of mourning and the New York state passed a resolution memorialising Bobby Sands and condemning the British for his murder. American dockers belonging to the longshoremen's union blacked British ships on the day of the funeral.

On Friday, the so-called 'four Irish-American horsemen', Senators Daniel Moynihan and Edward Kennedy, New York governor Hugh Carey and Speaker Tip O'Neill sent a letter to Thatcher urging an urgent settlement to the Long Kesh hunger-strike.

They questioned Britain's "inflexible posture which must lead inevitably to more senseless violence and death." They urged prison reform as a way out of the impasse. "Surely the leaders of Great Britain have an urgent responsibility to end this tragic and unnecessary conflict?" they said.

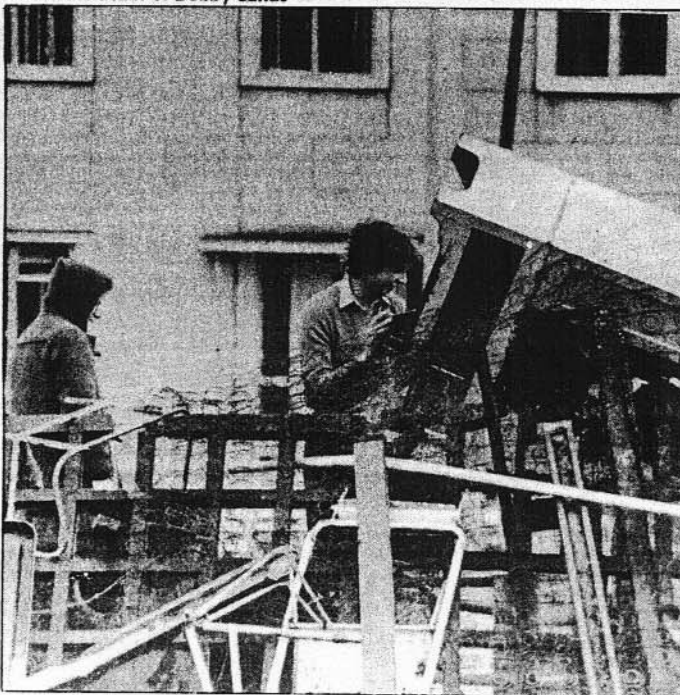
IRAN

In Iran, the Tehran municipality has renamed the street on the western block of the British embassy building, 'Bobby Sands Street'. The charge d'affaires of the Iranian embassy in London came to Belfast for the republican funeral and a telegram from the 'Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran' declared:

"With the spread of the news on the decease of Bobby Sands, the Irish guerrilla hero, there has arisen a wave of indignation among the revolutionary people of Iran,



● Throughout the six counties, as here in the Falls district of Belfast, the nationalist people have fought fierce running battles with the Brits, ever since the death of Bobby Sands



● Make-shift barricades have been erected in most areas, to slow up the Brits' advance and provide cover for rioters

and of the Iranian Islamic fatherland's support for the struggle of the Irish people."

Messages of support were received from the president of the Islamic republic, the prime minister, the foreign affairs minister, as well as factories and enterprises. Also present at Bobby Sands' funeral were five

Euro-MPs, including Neil Blaney, and a member of the Basque parliament.

A motion debated in the European parliament on Thursday night criticising British intransigence was defeated. During the debate the leader of Fianna Fail members Paddy Lalor, said: "The death of

Bobby Sands was not an act of terrorism, nor was it suicide. It was again the supreme sacrifice by an Irishman in an effort to achieve simple humanitarian prison conditions being denied by the United Kingdom."

In Europe there have been widespread protests, including bomb attacks by foreign sympathisers on British property in France, Italy, Switzerland and Portugal. There were protests in Oslo, Norway; members of the Portuguese parliament observed a minute's silence; French communists demonstrated outside the British embassy in Paris; a thousand left-wingers marched on the British embassy in Athens, Greece, shouting republican slogans; and there were protests in Belgium, Milan, and Lisbon. In Brisbane, Australia, demonstrators poured mock blood on a British flag and took it to the local office of the British High Commission.

LEGISLATION

Such is the fear of the whim of the Irish people that the British government has announced that it will introduce legislation (as a direct result of Bobby Sands' victory in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election) barring prisoners from going forward as candidates in elections.

Whitelaw told parliament on Thursday of the decision despite the fact that, last week, Official Unionist leader James Molyneux had already moved the first reading of a private member's bill suitably amending the Criminal Justice Act of 1967.

The reaction of two leading Catholic clerics, Cardinal O'Fiach and Bishop Edward Daly, to the news of Bobby Sands' death was extremely disappointing. Cardinal O'Fiach is so engrossed in ecumenism that it has influenced his political/moral pronouncements.

He had resisted last minute appeals to once again call upon Thatcher to resolve the crisis but instead, last Tuesday, called upon the three men to abandon their fast and for both sides (sic!) to show 'a change in heart'.

Bishop Daly called for the hunger-strike to end but also criticised British inflexibility. On the other hand there was no reticence from the Church of Ireland primate, Dr. John Armstrong, in attacking the 'moral blackmail' of the hunger-strike and blaming the prisoners and their supporters for influencing passions and dividing communities!

REPERCUSSIONS

SDLP leader John Hume attacked the IRA and accused them of wanting Bobby Sands to have a victory or to die. He did his best to deprive Bobby Sands of the Fermanagh and South Tyrone seat by urging a boycott, and, like Haughey, carefully avoided falling out with his friends in the British administration throughout the entire crisis.

The death of Bobby Sands has had repercussions for Free State premier Charles Haughey. He originally planned a May election, which has now been postponed, and hoped to use the somewhat tattered London/Dublin summit talks as the main plank of his election manifesto.

His long silence, apart from a muted criticism of Thatcher after Bobby Sands' death, was more dictated by the certainty that Thatcher would have rebuffed any request and humiliated him publicly, exposing this 'sovereign head' as being impotent, and ignominiously taking the London/Dublin talks down all their pegs.

The continuation of the hunger-strike by Francis Hughes, Patsy O'Hara and Raymond McCreesh, after the trauma of Bobby Sands' death, and them being joined on hunger-strike by, it is believed, Joe McDonnell from Andersonstown, Belfast, this Saturday, is bound to hold world attention, intensify political pressure on the British, and threaten stability North and South of Ireland.

Bobby Sands has died but he has left the prisoners in their strongest position and with their best prospects of success. Britain can be broken! And a demoralising defeat inflicted by the prisoners will have major repercussions for her stay in Ireland.

BRIT AND RUC GUNMEN IN ACTION



● A British soldier fires plastic bullet after plastic bullet, while the murderous RUC look on, with their rifles

IMMEDIATELY following the death of Bobby Sands, heavily-armed and riot-clad British soldiers and RUC gunmen launched a saturation presence in nationalist areas of Belfast attacking groups of protesting youths with volleys of plastic bullets and, on several occasions, with live rounds. Their orgy of violence continued on succeeding nights as they unsuccessfully attempted to drive angry protestors off the streets.

Most seriously injured in the early hours of Tuesday morning was fifteen-year-old Martin Hamill from the Turf Lodge area. He was accompanied by a friend and was returning home along the Monagh Road, when a plastic bullet fired by a British army patrol hit him on the leg causing him to stumble.

As he got to his feet another plastic bullet, fired from close range, hit him in the face. He was taken to hospital where he underwent surgery to save his sight, it is not known yet if this has been successful.

Around the same time, three other young people were injured by plastic bullets in the Turf Lodge area as British soldiers and RUC fired at random into the estate.

A twenty-year old youth from the Grosvenor Road area was seriously injured at Dunville Park on the Falls Road when British soldiers fired live rounds into a crowd of people who were throwing stones. The injured youth was hit twice in the leg and was taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Further along the Falls Road RUC landrovers were

driven into crowds of youths in a repeat of the action which claimed the lives of two youths in Derry only two weeks previously. On this occasion the RUC knocked down and injured one boy who was then thrown into the back of a land-rover.

In the Clonard area of Belfast, British soldiers deliberately aimed plastic bullets at people's faces. A local twenty-eight-year-old man was badly hurt when a plastic bullet smashed into

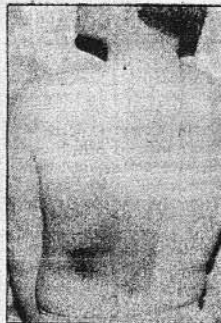


● MARTIN HAMILL
a photograph taken some years ago

his forehead.

On Wednesday afternoon RUC men launched an attack on a peaceful rosary vigil in Andersonstown.

About ten plastic bullets were fired into the crowd, which mostly consisted of women, at the Kennedy Way roundabout. Mother of six, Mrs. Bridget McGuire from Lenadoon was hit on the side of the face and knocked unconscious. She received twenty-six stitches at the City hospital.



● PLASTIC BULLET WOUND
can be lethal

BRITISH MISTREATMENT

AS TENSION mounted in Belfast last weekend, with people fearing that hunger-striker Bobby Sands' death was close at hand, a heavy presence of British soldiers and RUC men in the Falls area engaged in their more than usual routine harassment of nationalist ghetto people.

Just one example of the treatment meted out is that endured by two youths on their way to a social club last Friday night who ended up bruised, badly shaken, and charged with disorderly behaviour and assault.

Arthur Quinn, a twenty-year-old unemployed youth from Beechmount and his nineteen-year-old companion, Christopher Hughes, a labourer from the Springfield area, had had a few drinks and were heading for a Beechmount social club when they were stopped by British soldiers at the junction of Dunmore Street and Springfield Road. The Brits had the road sealed off and would not allow the youths to pass.

Christopher Hughes takes up the story: "They said we couldn't go any further because of a bomb scare. They started to shove us about and we pushed back. Next thing a fight broke out and I was put on my back on the ground."

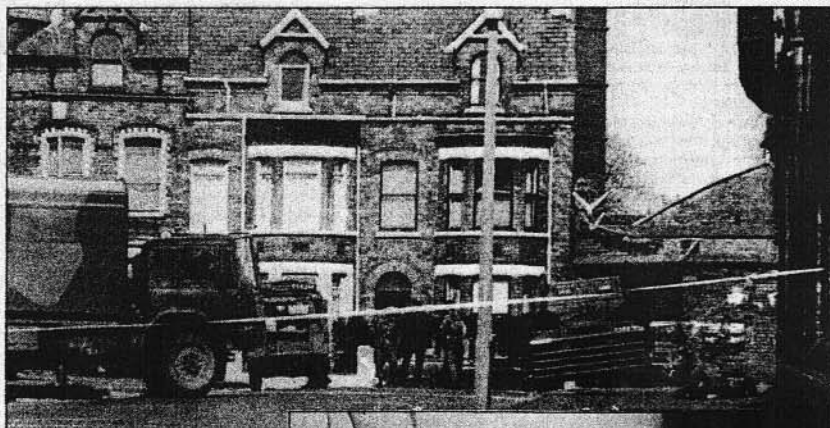
Arthur Quinn said: "I saw Christy on the ground with a Brit on top of him. I told the Brit to take it easy as Christy had a few drinks in him. He turned round and told me to 'fuck off', and then came at me. A scuffle broke out

and within seconds we were surrounded by soldiers who began beating us. The RUC then arrived on the scene and a peeler grabbed me by the throat and pinned me to the wall. They forced my hands behind my back and put on handcuffs and then threw me into the back of the landrover.

"Christy and I were brought to Springfield Road barracks in separate jeeps. There I was trailed out with my hands still handcuffed behind my back. They pulled my shoes off and left them in the yard. I was then put in the cell."

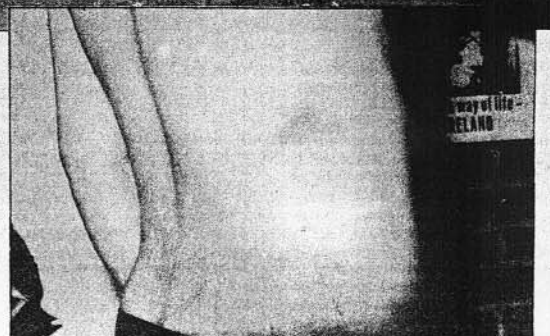
When Christopher Hughes was in his cell four or five RUC men entered it and started to kick and punch him for about half a minute. It was mainly from this beating that he sustained the bruises, including dark bruising to his forehead.

At about 1 a.m. Saturday morning the two youths were taken to



● Above: Brits and RUC cordon off Lower Springfield Road, where Christopher Hughes was assaulted and arrested; right: Christopher Hughes, back bruised after the attack

Townhall Street RUC barracks. Arthur Quinn was charged with disorderly behaviour and assaulting four RUC men and Christopher Hughes was charged with disorderly behaviour and assaulting three other RUC men.



Sporadic but intense rioting

SPORADIC but intense bouts of rioting broke out across the six counties following the death on Tuesday morning of republican hunger-striker Bobby Sands.

The frustration and anger which is clearly evident in all nationalist areas erupted onto the streets in the form of violent confrontation with the British army and the RUC. The provocative attitude adopted by the British forces towards peaceful vigils and pickets was in many cases the direct cause of rioting, heightened by Brit and RUC gunmen firing volleys of plastic bullets indiscriminately into crowds of youths.

The intensity of the rioting, spearheaded by angry youths, and with the approval of the bulk of the nationalist community, has provided a welcome sign of the revived spirit of republican resistance amongst a saddened people. It is a clear signal to the British government of the mounting bitterness being caused by its foolishly intransigent stance on the H-Block crisis.

Years of carefully projected British propaganda, domestically and internationally, of the creeping 'normalisation' of the occupied six counties, is being dramatically destroyed overnight before the eyes of the world's media.

CROWDS

Following directly on the announcement that Bobby Sands had died, crowds of people took to the streets in nationalist areas to bang bin-lids, so that by 2 a.m. on Tuesday morning almost everyone had heard the tragic news. Fierce fighting broke out along the Falls Road in Belfast, from Divis Flats up to Beechmount Avenue, with burning barricades being used to hinder the movement of British patrols.

In Ballymurphy, hundreds of youths launched a full-scale assault on the Henry Taggart British army post, which was almost over-run. Only the arrival of reinforcements saved the post from total destruction.

In Twinbrook an administration office at the De Lorean car plant was set alight causing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage. And not all those in action were so young. One gleeful middle-aged fire-raiser was well satisfied with his night's work, but was concerned — his best running days over — that in the event of a British army snatch squad sneaking across the De Lorean plant that he might not be able to make good his escape in time.

BARRICADES

In the Beechmount area lorries and vans were used to block roads and the Northern Bank was burnt to the ground. Young nationalists used hundreds of petrol bombs to drive the British army back. Rioting also broke out in Ardoyne, Short Strand, the Antrim Road, Andersonstown and the Ormeau Road area. There was rioting too in the Clonard area where a glazing firm, Campbell Brothers, was burnt out.

Throughout Tuesday resistance continued with barricades being erected in Derry's Bogside and Creggan and the village of Camlough in South Armagh was completely sealed off by barricades.

In Crossmaglen a crowd of several hundred youths used petrol bombs to attack British army vehicles. In Coalisland petrol bombs were used again against RUC patrols who were firing plastic bullets at a protesting crowd, and in

Dungannon commandeered vehicles were used to block roads as crowds fought battles with RUC and British army patrols.

OUTBREAKS

By Wednesday morning, much of the rioting had come to a halt as all areas prepared for the national day of mourning on Thursday. But again blatant provocation and over-reaction by the British army and RUC caused new confrontations during the day. Rioting began in Castlewells, County Down, and in Cookstown, County Tyrone, and there were fresh outbreaks in Dungannon and Coalisland with petrol bombs again in use.

In Derry vehicles were again used to stop British army patrols entering the nationalist areas.

On Wednesday night large crowds were again on the Belfast streets; in Ardoyne, the British army were under heavy attack, and, in the New Lodge, the Brits were driven out of the area by the ferocity of the rioting.

On the Falls Road, at St. James, there was heavy stoning and petrol bomb attacks on the British army, and patrols were also attacked in Leeson Street. The Divis Flats area remained an effective no-go area for the British army and RUC after three days of constant rioting which began on Monday after a British army and RUC raiding party was driven out of the area.

On Wednesday night the British government announced the arrival of six hundred soldiers — the Spearhead battalion — an indication of the pressure they are now under and a major setback for their Ulsterisation policy.

On Thursday night, after the unprecedented and peaceful turnout of tens of thousands for Bobby Sands' funeral, reports were coming in — as we went to press, late — of heavy rioting, including petrol bombing, of British army barracks in west Belfast.



● A petrol bomber in Belfast



● Young rioters in Belfast



● Youngsters keep a look-out for Brits from behind make-shift barricades in Broadway, West Belfast



● British army saturation of the Falls Road could not prevent the burning of the Northern bank (right of picture) at the Beechmount Drive/Falls Road junction



IRA ATTACKS

AN RUC MAN was shot dead in Duncairn Gardens, North Belfast, late on Wednesday 6th April in an IRA gun attack, which also injured two other members of the force, who were on guard at a security gate.

Also on Wednesday night, IRA Volunteers in Crossmaglen wounded two British soldiers in a rifle attack.

And in Derry city an RUC man was hit in the chest by a burst of automatic gun-fire in an IRA attack in the Shantallow area. The wounded RUC man had been firing plastic bullets, from the cover of a landrover, at a crowd of youths.

The previous night, there was an IRA gun attack on an RUC patrol on Belfast's Glen Road, in which one man was wounded. In Derry, a nail bomb attack on a British army patrol, which injured one soldier, was also claimed by the IRA.

Then on Thursday afternoon, in South Armagh when a British army helicopter inadvertently flew over a routine IRA road check-point on the Dublin to Derry road near Crossmaglen, Volunteers opened fire on it and claim to have hit it. The helicopter, without returning fire, flew rapidly back to the heavily-fortified Crossmaglen barracks.

Premature explosion

A PREMATURE bomb explosion is believed to have been responsible for the death early on Thursday morning, May 7th, of a twenty-one-year-old man, James Power, in the Markets area of Belfast. He is said not to be a member of the IRA.

His body was found at the rear of houses in Friendly Street where he lived. The blast, which occurred shortly before 2 a.m., smashed windows in nearby houses and a number of people were treated for shock at Belfast city hospital.

Letter bomb denial

THE IRA has pointed out that it is not responsible for the recent spate of letter bombs sent to prominent British figures.

Among those reported to have had such letter-bombs either intercepted or defused are Prince Charles, Conservative MPs Jill Knight and Barry Porter, Unionist MP James Kilfedder and Labour Party MP Roy Hattersley. Some other MPs in recent weeks have received hoax letter bombs or have caused false alarms by reporting innocent packets as suspected bombs. None of the letter bombs so far have exploded.

Robbery denial

THE IRA in Belfast has denied responsibility for the recent robbery at the post office in Tullymore Gardens. They say that such actions run counter to their policy of non-interference with essential services.

Fleet street hysterical

(continued from previous page)

of what he was doing, and determined to reject all initiatives designed to save his life. He was not in prison for his beliefs but for proven serious criminal offences. He was not being oppressed or ill-treated. Indeed, the opposite was true."

Changing its line somewhat on the significance of the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election, 'The Times' states: "It was to some extent, a vote expressing sympathy for Sands and concern over conditions at the Maze, but it was above all a rejection of Mr. Harry West. Any Catholic candidate would have won. The myth of Fermanagh must not be allowed to gain credibility."

It is a 'myth' partly propagated, ironically, by 'The Times' itself, which admitted on April 11th that: "It can no longer be assumed that the Provisional prisoners' demand for political status, and the means they choose for enforcing it, do not engage the emotions of the greater part of the nationalist community in Ulster."

Daily Mail

The 'Daily Mail' finds comfort in what it considers, for some reason, to be the unusual fact that Labour and Tory party bi-partisanship on the North has survived the death of Bobby Sands, with vocal dissension from only one MP, Patrick Duffy, the Labour MP for Attercliffe.

Against that MP, the 'Daily Mail' reserved its outrage, not for its editorial, but for its 'Parliament' column, written by Andrew Alexander. With a revealing insight into the racial and religious bigotry that taints Fleet Street at such times, Alexander described Duffy as 'a man given occasionally to excited outbursts, often about trivialities', and further described him as: "a Catholic (of Irish origins); and it is one of the alarming characteristics of all too many Catholics these days that they seem ready to excuse terrorism or terrorists where those involved are fellow Catholics."

"Which suggests that the moral and religious instincts in their faith have suffered a sort of dyslexia. A nasty business, a nasty business." Yes, indeed.

Daily Mirror

Unquestionably the most interesting of the British newspaper editorials, from the political point of view, is the Wednesday editorial 'Death in the Maze', in the 'Daily Mirror'.

Although it contains no direct criticism of present or past British governments, nor comments directly on the rightness or otherwise of the prisoners' right to political status, the editorial states:

"Mr. Sands demanded political status. But he had won the political status which matters when he topped the poll in the Fermanagh by-election."

Concluding, it repeats its welcome call on the British to withdraw from the North:

"Sands died in the Maze in more senses than one. It is not only the name of a prison. It is a description of Irish politics. Britain has been trapped in that maze for too long. Its task now is to find the way which will lead it out altogether."

The Sun

Predictably perhaps, but no less sickeningly for that, 'The Sun' and

the 'Daily Express' contain the most hysterically anti-Irish, anti-nationalist and hate-filled sentiments of all the mass of British journalistic commentary on the hunger-striker's death.

Under the title, 'Sands' legacy of evil', Wednesday's 'Sun' editorial spews out:

"It was Bobby Sands who stood for tyranny — the dark tyranny of terror by the bomb cruelly placed to maim and kill unsuspecting innocents ... His hope was that, from the grave, his twisted sacrifice would impel other men into twisted acts of bloody revenge."

That diatribe, however, is outstripped, hands down, by a piece of 'Sun' journalism from Peter Bond, who describes Bobby Sands as 'the pitiful young fanatic', and goes on:

"He was prisoner 1066. When 'wee Bobby' declared he was going on hunger-strike on March 1st, nobody took much notice — not even the IRA."

"Too often Republican prisoners announced a stand for 'political rights' and nothing ever came of it. Why should Bobby, who had done so little for The Cause, be any different?"

"Weeks passed before terror bosses realised the enormous propaganda value of Prisoner 1066. The idea was hatched in Dublin: Let's make him an MP."

The lengthy article continues on, similarly devoid throughout of press information. Such is the way 'The Sun' likes its news. Sweet and simple.

Daily Express

But the supreme accolade for gutter journalism goes, as before ('Blanket of press silence shredded', AP/RN, April 18th), to the 'Express' newspapers, who, in Wednesday's edition of the 'Daily Express' devote an entire page to its editorial, 'Propaganda of death', along with a cartoon by 'Cummings' which ludicrously lays the blame for the two thousand and ninety-four fatalities over the last twelve years, up till Bobby Sands' death, with the IRA.

The 'Daily Express' editorial goes on to say that Bobby Sands, too, was killed by the IRA, and continues:

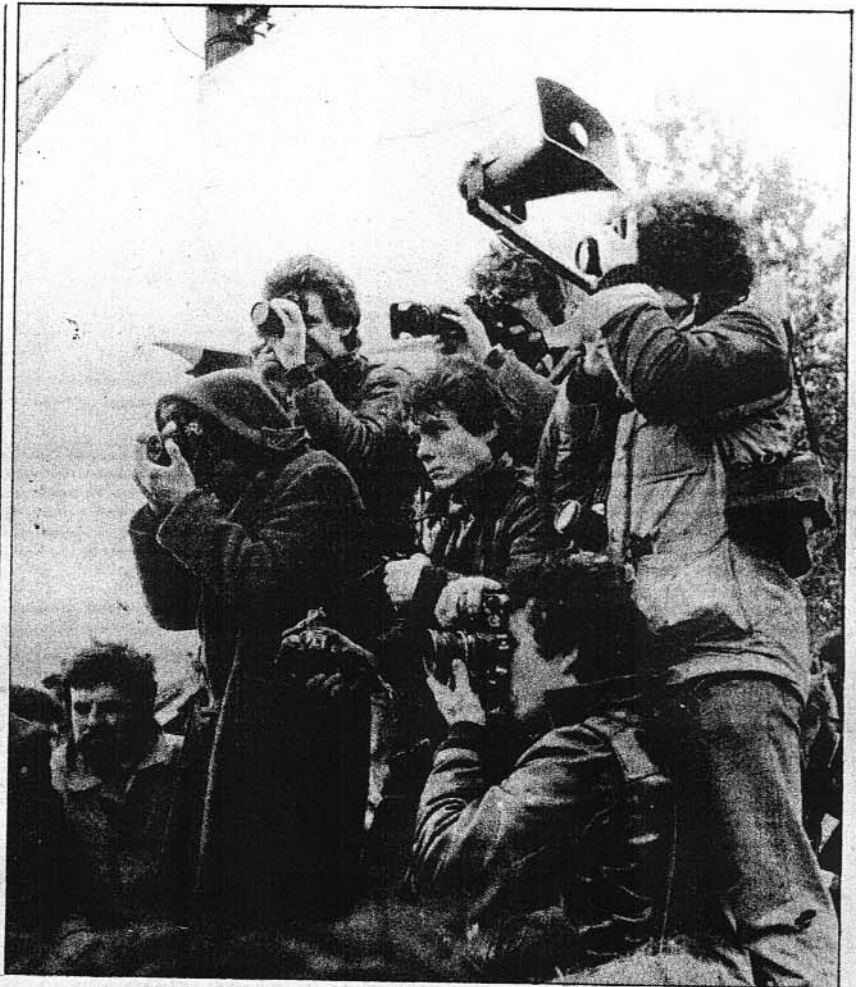
"Why then do young men like Robert Sands commit suicide for such a cause? Because they follow darkness, believing it to be a romantic dream. Hatred is their guide. Falsehood is their goal."

And then: "The Catholic community in Ulster had real grievances — over housing, employment, political representation — but these have been remedied and they never justified the use of force."

Going on to compare Bobby Sands to the Nazi martyr Horst Wessel, and the IRA to Hitler's propagandist Goebbels, the 'Daily Express' then says:

"In fact, Britain has acted with a degree of restraint, unimaginable elsewhere ... Those taking part in the Sands propaganda extravaganza ... will remain immune from arrest or harassment unless they commit a crime."

It is small wonder that the nationalist people of the occupied North so roundly reject that British 'restraint', as well as their 'highest political altruism', portrayed in such crooked views of British repression, by a hysterical, gutter, Fleet Street press.



World-wide coverage

THE death of Bobby Sands dominated the international press on Tuesday and Wednesday with the majority blaming the British government for his death.

The United States papers gave massive coverage in print and in photographs on Tuesday, but editorial comment was scarce. In the mass circulation 'New York Daily News', columnist Jimmy Breslin wrote: "He was a rare one, a young man who thought enough of the place where he lives to want to die for it."

Wednesday's 'New York Times' urged Britain to break with its past policies on Ireland and look for a Zimbabwe-type settlement. But the 'Washington Post' called for support from the United States government for Britain although it said "such support neither excuses historic English injustices... nor sanctions any particular British scheme."

In Moscow, the Soviet newspaper 'Izvestia' directly blamed the British government for the death and for "increasing terror and repression" in the North. The news agency 'Tass' also blamed British imperialism.

The British government received some support for its intransigent stand from newspapers in some

European countries. Significantly it was from countries where the right-wing press reflects those countries' fascist past — 'Die Welt' in West Germany, some of the Italian press, the Spanish daily 'ABC'.

But other papers in those countries differed. Italy's 'La Repubblica' called for Irish reunification, Spain's 'El Pais' condemned Britain's 'implacable toughness'. West Germany's 'Allgemeine Zeitung' — a conservative paper — said that the death turned attention "back to this weak point of British democracy."

In France, the newspapers relegated the presidential electoral race to second place. 'Le Monde' said: "His memory and recognition of the meaning of his sacrifice are heavy with an emotion that several times this century has aroused the passions of the world against Britain."

'L'Humanite' carried a front-page headline, "They have murdered Bobby Sands." The Belgian newspaper 'Le Soir' also condemned Thatcher.

Arab newspapers carried coverage criticising Britain. In Mozambique, 'Noticias' said: "The simple and indisputable fact is that he was a political fighter."

In India, the 'Indian Express' blamed British rigidity for the

death. The 'Hindustan Times' said that Thatcher "had allowed a member of the House of Commons, a colleague in fact, to die of starvation. Never had such an incident occurred in a civilised country."

In Hong Kong the Chinese language daily 'Sing Tao Jih Pao' described Bobby Sands as the "latest martyr of the resistance movement, arousing the fighting will of the young IRA." The 'Hong Kong Standard' also condemned Britain's 'continued inflexibility'.

There was major coverage too in South Africa where the English language papers, anti-apartheid or not, supported the British government strongly. Afrikaans papers, which support the ruling Nationalist party, took the opposite view.

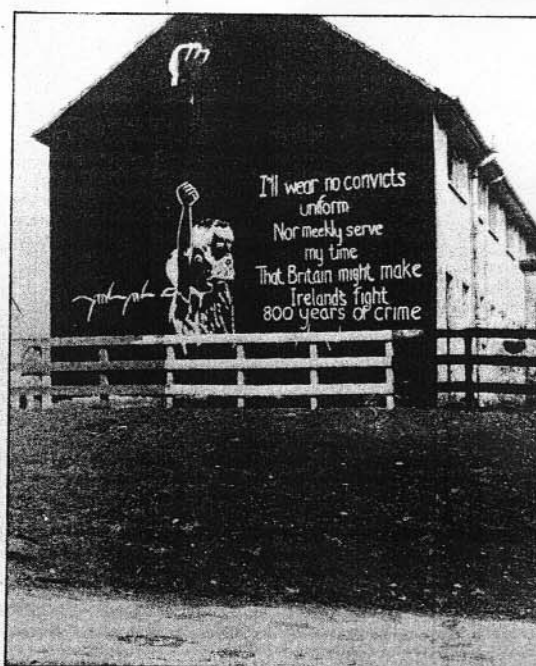
'Die Transvaler' referred to 'over four hundred years of oppression' in Ireland. 'Beeld' criticised British policies historically in South Africa and in the six counties "where the British succeeded in damming up the tide of Irish nationalism longest." 'Die Vaderland' compared Bobby Sands to Mahatma Gandhi.

The country's main black-controlled paper, 'Sowetan' carried headlines like 'Belfast pay tribute to martyr Bobby Sands' and a background piece entitled 'The making of a hero'.

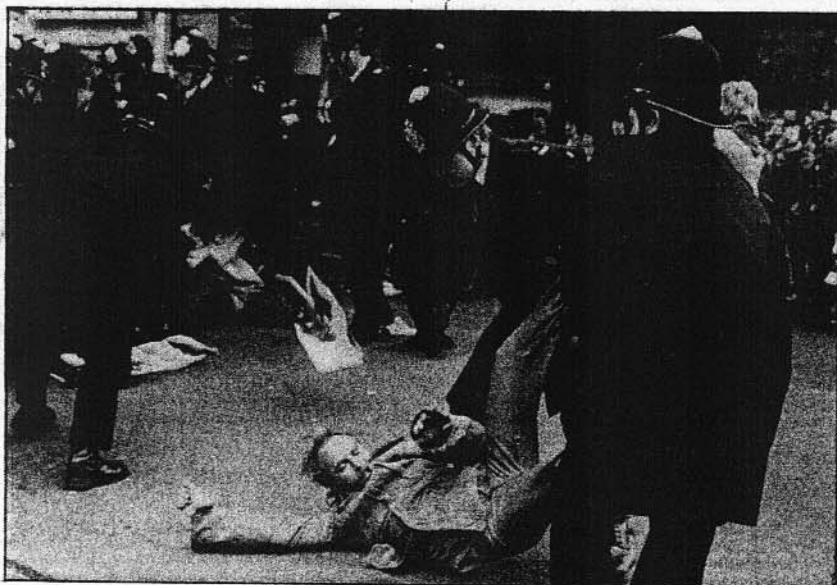
hunger-strike....hunger-strike....hunger-strike....hunger-strike



● Oliver Hughes, the brother of South Derry hunger-striker Francis Hughes, was one of those who addressed the several-thousand-strong Toomebridge rally last Sunday



● Graffiti with style in Belfast's Ballymurphy estate



● London police attacked hunger-strike marchers in Kilburn on Saturday 26th April after the marchers defied the British Home Secretary William Whitelaw's ban on demonstrations in the London area



● A sombre and impressive rally was held at the GPO in Dublin on Thursday to coincide with Bobby Sands' funeral in Belfast



As one of a series of recent 'guerrilla' actions by hunger-strike campaigners in Dublin, British Home Stores was occupied last Saturday

hunger-strike...hunger-strike... hunger-strike...hunger-strike

South

THE National Day of Mourning called for Thursday 7th May, the day of the funeral of Bobby Sands in Belfast, met with a major response from around the twenty-six counties, displays on the streets negating media attempts to play down the extent of activity.

Dublin saw its biggest 'Dublin-only' republican march in years as thousands marched from a meeting at the GPO through the city centre to Leinster House and back to the Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square in torrential rain. Media estimates put a figure of over five thousand on those taking part but the march was clearly bigger than the very recent May Day rally, which conservative media estimates put at twelve thousand.

All shops on the route of the march were closed for the afternoon, many shops in the Dublin suburbs closed for at least one hour, all building sites stopped work for the afternoon, Dublin Corporation maintenance depots came out and several small factories stopped work.

All factories and most shops in Limerick closed for at least part of the day. The Alcan construction site's two and a half thousand workers did not report for work. A special mass was said in St Michael's church in Limerick city and in the afternoon over five thousand people marched through the city centre.

In Waterford, the town completely closed down in response to a call from the trades council and thousands attended a rally. Dungarvan was almost totally shut down for the day.

In Cork, where four thousand marched on Tuesday, no rally was held but several shops and factories closed. In Cobh there was an almost total closure.

In County Kerry, Tralee closed down for a rally attended by thousands from around the county. Several hundreds attended a memorial service in Killarney.

Wexford town was shut down almost completely, as was Bray in County Wicklow. In Meath hundreds responded to a call from the local trades council and marched in Navan. Many work places closed for the whole day including Tara Mines.

Sligo town had a complete shut down for the day and several thousands marched through the town.

In Donegal, a mass for Bobby Sands was said in Letterkenny cathedral and thousands marched to the Market Square afterwards. Prayer meetings were held in Ballyshannon, Buncrana, Pettigo, Belleek, Carrdonagh, Gweedore and Moville. Close-downs were reported from all over the county.

In Leitrim, stoppages took place all over the county including county council workers, ESB and Post Office workers and Arigna miners.

In Dundalk, where the town shut down in response to a call from the trades council, four thousand attended a parade. In Drogheda a similar number of people responded to a trades council call for a stoppage. Traders in the town replaced bunting, which was out for a trades promotion, with black flags.

In County Monaghan all the towns shut for the day except Castleblayney which had a half-day stoppage. In Monaghan town, thousands attended a parade in which a symbolic tricoloured coffin was carried. At the O'Hanlon monument IRA Volunteers fired a volley of shots.

Thousands of people in the twenty-six counties reacted immediately to the death of Bobby Sands with widespread marches and vigils.

In Dublin, thousands had signed books of condolences outside the GPO by lunch time on Tuesday. The books stayed open for three days.

O'Connell Street was closed as hundreds gathered in a silent vigil during the morning. At lunch time a silent protest march to Leinster House attracted two thousand people.

In the evening, several thousand attended a torchlight vigil, with tributes in song and verse, as well as speeches, outside the GPO. About a hundred youths broke shop and car windows some distance away after the march.

A number of cars were overturned, including a Special Branch car, and one was set on fire. Damage was estimated at a quarter of a million pounds. Missiles were thrown at gardai who had all day been provocatively dressed in riot gear. A black flag vigil continued outside the British Embassy.

In County Monaghan, crowds gathered during the night following the news of Bobby Sands' death and meetings were held in Clones, Carrickmacross, Castle-



● Dublin rally outside GPO last Thursday, to coincide with the funeral in Belfast of Bobby Sands

blayney and Monaghan town. Later in the day an Ulsterbus was commandeered and burnt and there were several incidents of stone-throwing and petrol-bombing aimed at the gardai. Black flags flew throughout the county.

In Cork, between three and four thousand people marched through the city centre on Tuesday afternoon. A picket was held later at City Hall.

In Sligo, a vigil was held for two hours in the town centre on Tuesday evening. Most towns in County Donegal held processions and vigils with large parades in Bundoran and Letterkenny on Tuesday and in Ballyshannon on Wednesday.

In Tralee, where many black flags are flying in the main street, several hundreds attended prayer vigils on Tuesday and Wednesday. In Navan, County Meath, books of condolence were opened in the town centre and at the ITGWU offices.

In Ballinamore, County Leitrim, one thousand people attended a vigil on Wednesday evening. The same evening a prayer vigil was held in Castlebar, County Mayo, with a silent procession through the town.

In Dungarvan, County Waterford, four hundred workers stopped work on Tuesday afternoon with local trade union backing. In Wexford town a silent vigil was held in the town centre.

In Drogheda there was an all-night vigil on Wednesday night, and a picket has been maintained on the town's main bridge. A book of condolences was opened. Drogheda corporation adjourned its monthly meeting as a mark of respect.

The days immediately preceding the death of Bobby Sands had seen the continuation of the high level of activity around the twenty-six counties which had been reached the previous week.

On Wednesday 29th April, at Dublin airport ten students occupied a British Airways plane which was about to leave for London. In the evening three hundred people marched to Leinster House.

Two thousand workers at the Alcan site in Limerick stopped work for two hours to hold a meeting in support of the hunger-strikers. Later in the afternoon one thousand of them marched to Askeaton where another meeting was held.

In Cork, protestors held a picket outside the City Hall.

On Thursday, two hundred and fifty workers at the new county hospital construction site in Tralee, County Kerry, stopped work and marched through the town. In Ballyshannon, County Donegal, a torchlight procession was held.

In Dublin, the Fine Gael headquarters were occupied and the Fianna Fail offices picketed. In the evening several hundred people marched to a meeting in St. Stephen's Green.

On Friday 1st May, protestors occupied the Dublin Stock Exchange, the Labour Party headquarters in Gardiner Place, and Eason's shop in Dun-



● Monaghan protest during GAA match at Castleblayney, Sunday 26th April

Laoghair. Protestors sat on the engine of the Belfast train in the evening preventing it leaving Connolly station for half-an-hour.

At the May Day rally in Dublin, a letter handed into the offices of premier Charles Haughey by Dublin Council of Trades Unions protesting about taxation and unemployment included a demand for government action on the hunger-strike. After the rally several hundred of the marchers returned to Leinster House for a hunger-strike meeting.

A torchlight procession was held in Bundoran, County Donegal, and, in Limerick, protestors picketed the opening of a museum of Lough Gur by Free State Minister for Industry Des O'Malley.

On Saturday, there were marches and meetings all over the twenty-six counties.

In Dublin, British Home Stores in O'Connell Street was occupied. A march from Parnell Square around the city centre was attacked by baton-wielding gardai in riot gear and a number of marchers were taken to hospital.

In Drogheda, a cavalcade of cars was held through the town. Later, several hundred people attended a public meeting in the town centre. In Tralee, a meeting was held outside the house of Fianna Fail Minister for State, Tom

McEllistrim.

In Clonmel, County Tipperary, an information centre was set up in the town and a meeting was held in the afternoon. In Cobh, a meeting was held following a march through the town. In County Mayo, a cavalcade of cars was held in Westport and in Castlebar twenty people took part in a token fast.

In Cork, twenty protestors took over the Fianna Fail offices in the city and confronted Fianna Fail's Minister for Finance, Gene Fitzgerald. Two thousand people took part in a march and rally in the city centre.

In Wexford, five hundred people attended a public meeting. In Waterford four hundred people attended a meeting in the town where pickets have been held everyday.

In Ballinamore, County Leitrim, several thousand people attended a mass rally, and in County Donegal large crowds attended a meeting in Letterkenny. In Galway, students held a 'blanket' picket.

On Sunday, in Sligo, where meetings have been held in the town centre each evening, demonstrators took over the holiday home, at Betra, of the British Tory MP, Lieutenant-Colonel Farr.

In Dublin, protestors took over Radio Dublin for more than an hour. In the afternoon several hundred people

joined the non-stop picket outside the British Embassy and, in the evening, a rally was held outside the GPO. In Monaghan the GAA gave permission for a protest march on the pitch at Castleblayney during the Kerry versus Monaghan match.

On Monday, a march was held from the daily picket on O'Connell Bridge to the meeting of the Dublin Corporation.

In Donegal, a meeting was held in the border town of Belleek, following which the British customs post was stoned and set on fire. Also in the country, protestors took over the holiday home of District Justice Gibson.

In Sligo, gardai broke in the doors of the Royal Liver Insurance building in the town centre to end an occupation by demonstrators. Sligo County Council passed a motion unanimously calling for the end of Free State diplomatic relations with Britain.

In Waterford, the corporation meeting was picketed. In Tralee, seventy people marched to Connolly Hall to call for a statement from the ITGWU in support of the hunger-strikers.

hunger-strike...hunger-strike...hunger-strike...hunger-strike



● Toomebridge rally, last Sunday

North

IN the early hours of Tuesday morning the harsh sound of bin-lid banging carried the grim news throughout nationalist ghetto areas of the six counties that Bobby Sands was dead.

From the very moment the news broke, at about half-past one, protests took place in every nationalist area breaking an eerie stillness which had pervaded the streets that evening.

Vigils and rosaries were held in the early hours of the morning, and in Derry, within hours, an impressive march made its way from Free Derry Corner to the Guildhall.

Throughout the previous days, protest activities and local demonstrations had been noticeably muted as everyone watched painfully the slow death of Bobby Sands.

On Thursday week, April 30th, in Belfast, the Falls Road picket line was again in place both in the morning and in the late afternoon and in the evening a silent picket, several hundred strong, blocked the road.

On Friday, the Falls Road was again lined by hunger-strike activists and in the evening a mass rosary was held in Dunville Park.

On Saturday two demonstrations were held in County Armagh.

The first was held in Armagh City despite attempts by the RUC to intimidate the people off the streets. A massive presence of RUC men at the intended rallying point in Market Square did not however deter the protesters and the rally went ahead at the Shambles Corner. In Lurgan several hundred people attended a picket in Church Place during Saturday afternoon.

On Saturday morning the Northern trade union movement was exposed in its pro-imperialist colours when nationalist workers tried to raise the H-Block issue at the trade union May Day march. Despite its peaceful nature their presence at the march was deeply resented and the RUC moved in to arrest eight nationalist workers, all of whom were later charged.

On Sunday, the focus for activity was a demonstration in Toomebridge on the Derry/Antrim border. The RUC sealed off the entire village stopping and searching everyone heading for the march, but despite this, and despite pouring rain, a crowd of several thousand gathered at



● Reciting the rosary for Bobby Sands, Belfast

the assembly points, one on the county Antrim side, the other in County Down, and marched into the village. Speaker after speaker emphasised that the death of Bobby Sands would not be the end of the campaign. The hunger-strike would only end when political status was restored.

During Monday evening a march was held in Craigavon to the RUC barracks following which a rally was held at Tullygawley attended by several hundred people. Meanwhile in Belfast a mass Rosary was again being held at the Dunville Park.

Following the death of Bobby Sands, rosaries, vigils and pickets too numerous to name were held throughout the six counties.

After the large march in Derry, vigils were held in every area of the city. In



● One-hour work stoppage in Belfast on Wednesday

Coalisland a vigil was held throughout the day while prayers were said outside the RUC barracks in the town. A book of condolences was also opened.

In South Armagh the entire area came to a standstill with the news of Bobby Sands' death. In Crossmaglen, Belleeks, Cullyhanna, Whitecross, Mullaghbawn, Camlough and Cullville, shops and businesses closed throughout the day, and the protest was to be repeated on Thursday, the day of the funeral. In Camlough, home of hunger-striker Raymond McCreesh, barricades were erected across roads in a popular rejection of the British forces and a vigil was held in the town.

In Lurgan on Tuesday evening a black flag parade headed by a mock

coffin, was attended by about three thousand people. The march left the Tighnahan estate and ended with a short rally in North Street. A youth march and another black flag parade were held in Lurgan on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, in Newry many shops closed and workers from two factories downed tools. In Omagh a vigil was held outside the courthouse and in Belfast fifty students from Queen's University occupied the students' union building during the afternoon. A second rally was held in Derry at Free Derry Corner attended by several thousand people.

On Wednesday, in Belfast a one-hour work stoppage closed shops and

businesses in nationalist areas of Belfast and pickets were held at 3 p.m. outside barracks. In Andersonstown, Brit an RUC vehicles were driven through the peaceful crowd and a volley of plastic bullets was also fired.

Not surprisingly, the death of Bobby Sands sparked deep emotions in all nationalist areas, but despite intense provocation by the Brits and RUC protests in general remained disciplined and dignified. There was clearly a feeling of deep grief at the death of Bobby Sands but this was mixed with a recognition that the lives of the remaining three hunger-strikers must be saved, and that the struggle for the prisoners demands must now quickly be won.

hunger-strike...hunger-strike... hunger-strike...hunger-strike

Abroad

AGAINST a background of widespread political and media reaction internationally to the death of Bobby Sands, there were anti-British protests around the world on Tuesday.

Demonstrations were held in the United States and Australia. There was a march of one thousand people against the British embassy in the Greek capital of Athens, and a silent protest in Antwerp in Holland, where pickets had been going on for several days.

Two thousand people marched on the British embassy at The Hague in Holland, several hundred attended a meeting outside the British embassy in Copenhagen.

Opposition members in the Danish parliament stood in silence in honour of Bobby Sands. Opposition members in the Portuguese parliament did likewise. Five thousand people marched on the British embassy in Paris.

In Norway, demonstrators barracked the British queen, Elizabeth, on a visit to Oslo, and a balloon filled with tomato sauce narrowly missed her.

There were bomb attacks on the British Chamber of Commerce in Milan and in Toulouse in France a British tyre factory was bombed. Messages were left associating the bombings with the hunger-strike. In Zurich, Switzerland, a British car showroom was fire-bombed.

In India, all opposition members of the parliament stood for one minute's silence in honour of Bobby Sands.

In Australia, dockers at Wollongong began a boycott of British ships. In the United States workers in Detroit boycotted British Airways planes and East Coast longshoremen decided to take strike action against British ships on Thursday.

All the prominent Irish-American politicians issued statements condemning, to various degrees, British intransigence as the cause of Sands' death. Senator Edward Kennedy spoke of Britain's 'posture of inflexibility'. President Reagan expressed his 'deep regret' at the death, Speaker Tip O'Neill, Governor Hugh Carey, and Senator Patrick Moynihan all criticised Britain. Mayor Edward Koch of New York called for British withdrawal.

Messages of sympathy came from the revolutionary governments of Nicaragua and Iran. A statement issued by Ayatollah Khomeini reads: "We are bound to support all the uprisings and struggles against all types of imperialism and oppression throughout the world. If Bobby Sands' life did not fulfill that struggle, we hope his death will contribute towards its fulfillment."

On Wednesday, attacks on British property abroad continued with two British car showrooms in Florence, Italy, fire-bombed, and the Royal British Club in the Portuguese capital, Lisbon, was shattered by a rocket attack.

In Ghent, Flemish students invaded the British consulate. In Antwerp protesters threw a plastic bag of red liquid into the International Westminster Bank.

In the second march in two days, thousands of demonstrators marched through Paris behind George Marchais, president of the French Communist Party, to the British embassy.

In Italy, several thousand youths and students marched to the British consulate in Milan. And a couple of thousand people marched on the British embassy in Athens, the third night of such a demonstration in the Greek capital.

In Belgium, riot police prevented hundreds of demonstrators from reaching the British embassy in Brussels.

Boycott campaigns against British goods got underway in France and Italy.

In the United States, demonstrations, prayer vigils and masses continued to be held throughout Wednesday. Several thousand demonstrators in New York burned an effigy of Margaret Thatcher outside the British consulate.

The European parliament, reversing a previous decision before Bobby Sands' death, agreed to debate the hunger-strike on Thursday evening. Against vehement British Conservative opposition the debate was approved by Socialists, Fianna Fail, Independents and British Labour party members.

Even before the death of Bobby Sands on Tuesday, international attention was focussed on the hunger-strike and massive media coverage given.

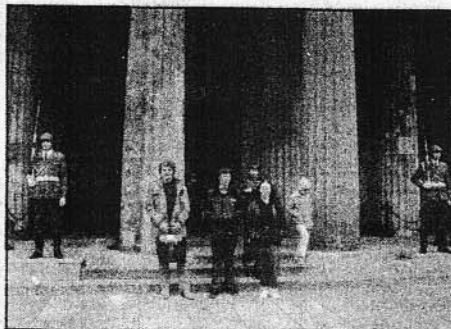
Even in France, where the presi-



● Protest in the British Airways office, Amsterdam



● Picket outside the White House in Washington, 25th April



● Former prisoners Ciaran O'Hagan and Maureen Gibson, with Frank Gallagher of the West German H-Block Committee (left of group) outside the tomb of the unknown anti-fascist fighter, in East Berlin



● Demonstrators outside the International Westminster Bank in Antwerp, on a token twenty-four hour fast

of the Portuguese parliament signed a petition which was delivered to the British embassy.

The one-hundred-and-twenty-strong Socialist Group in the European parliament called on Margaret Thatcher to intervene in the hunger-strike.

The student's council at the University of Zimbabwe sent a letter to the British High Commissioner in Salisbury deploring British intransigence and demanding political status. And in Holland, the British Airways office in Amsterdam was occupied by demonstrators.

On Thursday 30th April, a former blanket man, Seamus Delaney, who is conducting an 'illegal' tour of the United States, received a standing ovation when he addressed the New York State Assembly.

In France the leader of the Communist Party, George Marchais, called for political status for republican prisoners.

Several hundred people demonstrated outside the British embassy in Paris. The pickets at the embassy had been taking place all week.

In Oporto, three members of a Portuguese left-wing guerrilla group raided the British Airways office armed with sub-machine guns. They painted slogans in support of the hunger-strikers on the walls.

The East German ambassador in London delivered the text of a resolution of the Communist Party Congress to the British Foreign Office. The resolution pledged solidarity with the Irish struggle and for the prisoners.

During their German tour republican former prisoners Maureen Gibson and Ciaran O'Hagan were invited into East Berlin where they were interviewed by the East German media.

On Friday, US senator Daniel Moynihan (one of the 'four horsemen') repeated his appeal for the British government to find a solution to the hunger-strike. The Episcopal Bishop of New York, Rev. Paul Moore, sent a telegram to Margaret Thatcher urging that the hunger-strike demands be granted.

The three Euro-MPs who had visited Bobby Sands: Neil Blaney, Sile de Valera and Dr. John O'Connell, asked the International Red Cross to intervene in the hunger-strike. They also asked the European Commission of Human Rights to reverse its decision not to intervene.

Fianna Fail Euro-MP Paddy Lalor and Dr. John O'Connell put down separate motions for an urgent debate in the European parliament on the hunger-strike.

At a May Day rally in Hamburg, West Germany former prisoners Maureen Gibson and Ciaran O'Hagan were invited on to the platform and a statement of solidarity with the prisoners was read out.

A message of support for the prisoners from the three Italian trade union federations was read out at May Day rallies throughout Italy.

On Saturday 2nd May, forty demonstrators occupied the British Airways office in Paris.

In New York, the National Lawyers' Guild issued a lengthy statement in which they pledged support for the prisoners and their demands.

Elsewhere in the United States, Prince Charles was picketed on a visit to Williamsburg, Virginia. Among letters addressed to Prince Charles delivered to the British Embassy was one signed by three US congressmen and another by fifty-one congressmen demanding that Mrs. Thatcher concede the prisoners' demands.

On Saturday and Sunday, thousands attended rallies in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

On Monday, all Irish bars in New York closed for two hours to show support for the hunger-strikers. Telegrams were sent to Haughey and Thatcher from US Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro and from the national president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians John P. Connolly.

Following the International Red Cross offer to act as mediator, Sean McBride in Dublin condemned the British government for its silence on the offer. He suggested that Amnesty International would also be prepared to intervene and make recommendations for a settlement.

On Monday 4th May, the Soviet newspaper 'Pravda' condemned the British government's role in the North. The Paris section of the trade union CGT issued a statement strongly condemning the British government.

dential election is at its height, space on the front pages was devoted to the hunger-strike latest. And protests continued to mount as the death approached.

On Wednesday 29th April the Indian premier, Indira Gandhi, appealed

to Margaret Thatcher to intervene to save the lives of the hunger-strikers.

In Lisbon, more than sixty members

hunger-strike....hunger-strike.... hunger-strike....hunger-strike

Britain

FOLLOWING the news of the death of Bobby Sands on Tuesday, more than one thousand people gathered in Kilburn Square, in north-west London in the evening for a silent vigil around a symbolic coffin draped in a tricolour.

The nightly picket on Downing Street swelled to six hundred people. Police forced all but one hundred back towards Trafalgar Square. An all-night vigil was maintained there.

In Leeds, two hundred and fifty people held a silent protest on the town hall steps for two hours. Police prevented a march.

A split was revealed in the British Labour Party when eleven MPs along with the Welsh Nationalist put down a motion opposing the united stand of party leaders Margaret Thatcher and Michael Foot on the hunger-strike.

The week prior to Bobby Sands' death saw the continuance of protests from a variety of sources around Britain.

On Wednesday 29th April a new grouping of ex-British army soldiers — 'Northern Ireland Veterans against the War' — was announced to campaign for British withdrawal and called for the granting of political status.

The following day a meeting was held in Cardiff attended by one hundred people. And demonstrators in London hung a thirty foot banner supporting the hunger-strikers on scaffolding above Tower Bridge pier.

On Friday, May 1st, the Labour

Party headquarters in London were occupied in the morning for over an hour. It was reported on the same day that Labour MP Tony Benn, presently campaigning for the deputy leadership of the party, had argued in the shadow cabinet for a campaign to be launched to demand that Bobby Sands be allowed to take his seat.

In London protestors in the May Day parade were attacked by police.

On Saturday 2nd May, a street rally was held in Kilburn Square. The following day five republican prisoners in Long Lartin prison, Worcestershire, climbed onto the roof with a banner in support of the hunger-strikers. They remained there until after the funeral of Bobby Sands. The prisoners involved were Andrew and Patrick Mulryan of Dublin, Martin Brady and Paul Holmes of Belfast, and Gerry Cunningham of Tyrone.

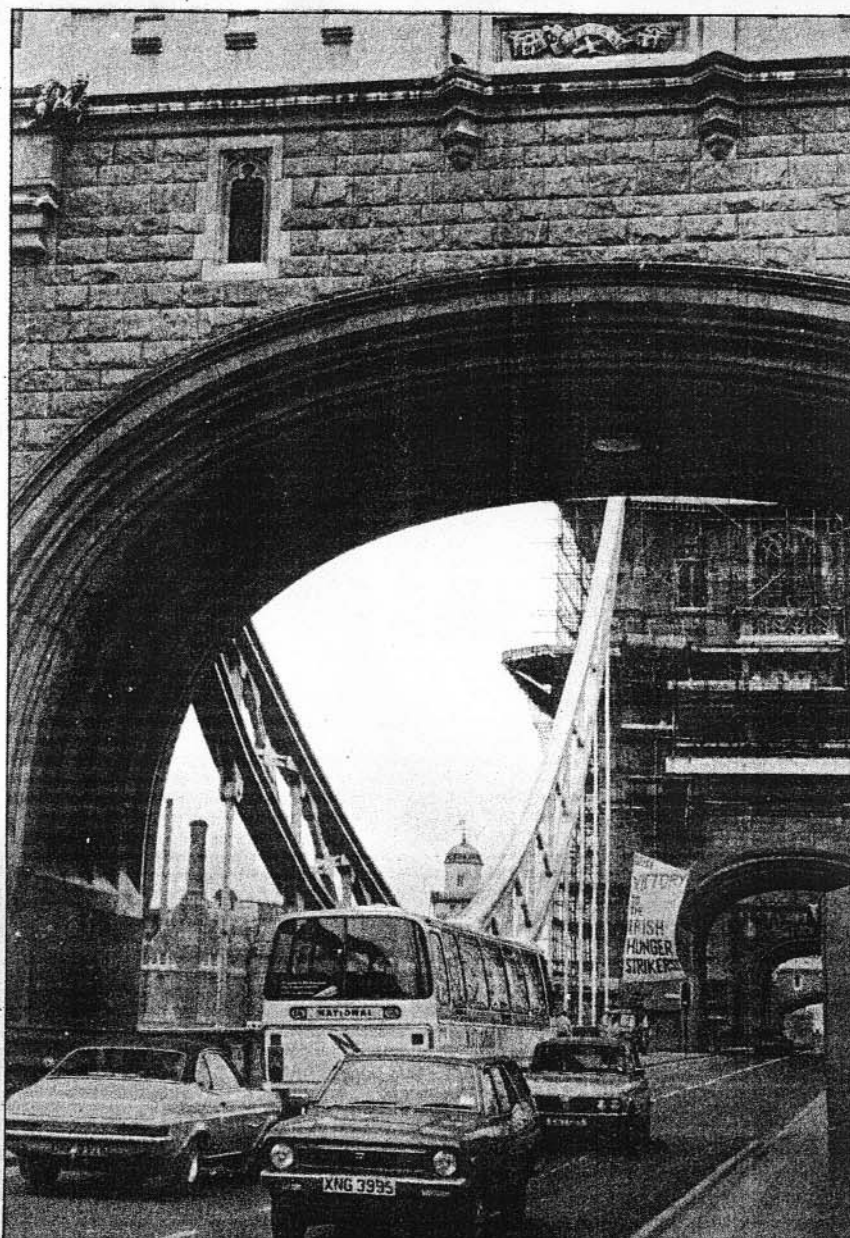
Also on Sunday 3rd May a Labour backbencher MP, Martin Flannery, vice-chairman of the party's parliamentary group in the North, publicly condemned the visit of Don Concannon (the party's spokesman on the North) to Bobby Sands as 'unimaginative and totally insensitive'. He called for the party to demand concessions.

On the same day, at a Labour Party rally in London, hunger-strike protestors invaded the platform whilst party leader Michael Foot was speaking, and seized the microphone to condemn his support of Tory policies in the North.

On Monday 5th May, Armagh protest prisoner, Mairead Farrell, who took part in the pre-Christmas hunger-strike, was put forward by students at Stirling University as a candidate for the position of honorary president of the university.



● Leeds solidarity march, 22nd April



● Protestors drape thirty-foot solidarity banner from London's Tower Bridge

A voice in the wilderness?

THE British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, has, for most Irish people in her cold-heartedness, intransigence, and inhumanity, reminded them of Cromwell. Last Tuesday, in the British parliament, after the death of Bobby Sands, she repeated: "The government will never grant political status no matter how much hunger-striking there may be."

She was attacked by a Labour former junior minister, Pat Duffy, who accused the British government of 'moral bankruptcy' and declared that the Tory government had shown 'colossal criminal incompetence' at all times on Irish affairs. In making this criticism Pat Duffy had broken ranks with his party's bi-partisan approach to Ireland as a few minutes previously Labour opposition leader, Michael Foot, had expressed his party's support for the Tory government.

Pat Duffy subsequently claimed that he was supported by a sizeable number of Labour back-benchers and front-benchers who had written to him and congratulated him. Already twenty-seven Labour back-benchers have called upon Thatcher's government to negotiate with the prisoners over the issues of prison clothing and work.

Last Wednesday, BBC radio interviewed Pat Duffy about his

parliamentary intervention and he replied:

"I was only reflecting international opinion... what was flowing in hourly from responsible bodies overseas, in neighbouring countries and allied countries... The New York Times last week criticised Margaret Thatcher and said that if Bobby Sands died it would be due to her intransigence. That's the New York Times. That's the pillar of the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) establishment in North America..."

"The House of Commons has always lapsed into a cosy, consensus mood when crises have developed in Ireland. I was concerned to shatter that consensus, to let people know, that if we are prepared to allow a relatively simple problem such as the one that emerged at the Maze to defeat us, by heavens it bodes ill for future problems that are going to



● May Day occupation of Labour Party headquarters, London, in protest at the bi-partisan policy on Ireland, and in solidarity with the prisoners

come along that are really going to tax our powers, especially our capacity for compromise..."

Pat Duffy said he deplored the decision to send the British

army's six-hundred-strong Spearhead battalion into the North on Wednesday and went on: "The hunger-strikers no more than trade unionists in this country are not

going to desist from their present posture unless they have some prospect of a settlement that to some degree is acceptable to them."

THE FUNERAL OF BOBBY SANDS



● Thousands upon thousands of mourners pour out of Twinbrook estate in West Belfast, last Thursday



● Wreaths are carried by hundreds, including Bobby's sister Marcella, and his seven-year-old son Gerald



● The funeral cortege is led by a lone piper and the hearse is flanked by republican Volunteers

THE FUNERAL

THE BODY of IRA Volunteer Bobby Sands was brought to his Twinbrook home in Belfast on Tuesday evening when a steady stream of thousands of mourners filed past his open coffin which was alternatively flanked by guards of honour from Oglagh na hEireann, Na Fianna Eireann and Cumman na mBan.

Bobby's seven-year-old son, Gerald, was brought to the Sands family for a sad reunion with his grandparents. It had been over two years since they or Bobby had last seen him.

On Wednesday night Bobby's remains were flanked by six uniformed IRA Volunteers and an officer who marched alongside the coffin on the short journey to St. Luke's chapel. On Thursday, the day of the funeral, over fifty thousand people marched in pouring rain from St. Luke's chapel, after requiem mass, to the republican plot in Milltown cemetery.

St. Luke's was thronged and the congregation were uneasy when the parish priest, Fr. Mullan, delivered a sermon on violence despite a consensus that the politics of the IRA had stopped at the church door with the removal of the tricolour from the coffin and the dismissing of the guard of honour, so the politics of the church could, for the sake of harmony, have been foregone.

But not so. Everytime Fr. Mullan spoke about peace an old man in a front pew echoed emphasis on 'a just peace'.

FUNERAL

Around two o'clock the funeral set out for the four mile journey to the cemetery and most of the time the sea of people resembled Tehran scenes from the Iranian revolution.

The Iranian charge d'affaires in London, Abdolrahim Gavahi, had been assigned by his government to attend the funeral but because of flight difficulties he arrived in Belfast two hours late. A telegram to the Republican press centre from Tehran's municipality announced that "a street on the western side of the British Embassy building in Tehran was renamed after Bobby Sands" to "honour the heroic death of the IRA freedom fighter."

Men, women and youths wept as the funeral went by. People blessed themselves with the sign of the cross and some old men gave a military salute to the republican martyr.

At Suffolk the procession turned up and round into Lenadown to avoid the small Protestant enclave opposite Woodburn barracks.

A piper played one of the H-Block songs, the words of which are:

*"But I'll wear no convict's uniform,
'Nor meekly serve my time,
'That Britain might call Ireland's fight,
'Eight hundred years of crime."*

The funeral stopped close to the Busy Bee shopping centre and Bobby's coffin was removed from the hearse and placed on tressles.

Then, from among the people emerged three IRA Volunteers armed with rifles who were called to attention in Gaelic by a fourth uniformed man. They delivered three sharp volleys over the coffin, removed their berets and bowed their heads in silence for a full minute. The impressive tribute captured the hearts of the huge numbers of people on the road and was eagerly filmed by the world media.

CEMETERY

At the gates of Milltown



● Young Gerald was accompanied at the funeral by Bobby's sister, Marcella

cemetery those assembled on the pavement spontaneously burst out into a recitation of the rosary as the hearse, the guard of honour and the funeral cars carrying Mr. and Mrs. Sands, their daughter Marcella and son John and others of the family, slowly passed through.

Gerry Adams officiated at the graveside ceremony which began with the playing of the Last Post. The tricolour was then removed from the coffin and along with beret and gloves presented to Mrs. Sands.

The coffin was finally carried to the grave by the uniformed Volunteers who had been the guard of honour. It was lowered into the grave and a number of priests then led the prayers. Mr. Sands and Bobby's younger brother John spaded some soil on to the coffin and then little Gerald was brought forward and given a hand with the heavy spade so that he too could help bury his murdered father.

Among the hundreds of

wreaths were ones from the GHQ Staff IRA, Belfast Brigade IRA, Cumman na mBan, Na Fianna Eireann, Sinn Féin, the Republican POWs in the H-Blocks and Armagh, and the families of the remaining three hunger-strikers.

ORATION

The oration was given by Fermanagh republican Owen Carron, who was Bobby Sands' election agent. He was given roaring applause when he said that armed struggle was the only way forward.

The full text of his oration reads:

"A chairde, a mhuintir na hEireann, is mor an bhron ata orainn go lear an la inniu is muid inor seasamh ag an uaigh seo. Maraíodh Bobby Sands ag na Sasanagh.

"Irishmen and women, it is hard to describe the sadness and sorrow in our hearts today as we stand at the grave of Volunteer Bobby Sands, cruelly murdered by the British government in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh.

"Four weeks ago to this very day, the people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone, on behalf of the whole Irish nation, elected Bobby Sands as their MP, and I was very happy to accept victory on his behalf. Many people had high hopes of saving Bobby's life and little did I think then that in one short month we would all be standing at his graveside.

"Bobby has gone to join the ranks of Ireland's patriotic dead. I have no doubt that the name of Bobby Sands will mark a watershed in Irish history and will be a turning point in the struggle for Irish freedom. Bobby Sands was the bravest man I ever met. He faced death calmly and with confidence.

"Indeed Bobby is a hero and I would like first of all to express on behalf of the Republican Movement our sincere sympathy to his family and to pay tribute to them for standing by him courageously to the end. Someone once said it is hard to be a hero's mother and nobody knows that better than Mrs. Sands who watched her son being daily crucified and tortured for sixty-six long days and eventually killed. Mrs. Sands epitomises the Irish mothers who in every generation watched their children go out to fight and die for freedom.

"Despite the vilifications and slanders of some guttersnipe media and despite the hypocrisy of scribes and pharisees of high churchmen and establishment politicians who condemned him, Bobby Sands will be remembered by freedom loving people throughout the world as a freedom fighter and a political prisoner hungering for justice. As he wrote himself: 'Of course I can be murdered, but I remain what I am, a political POW and no-one (not even the

British) can change that'.

VISITS

"I never knew Bobby Sands until March 31st 1981, which was also the thirty-first day of his hunger-strike. Added together all my visits were but a few short hours, but still I believe that I got to know his heart and mind. Bobby was just my own age with many hopes and ambitions to fulfill.

"Although he left school at an early age, it was obvious that he was an intelligent person who through a process of self-education had advanced his learning. He became fluent in the Gaelic language and was enthusiastic about his native culture. His determination and resolve were remarkable and his commitment and dedication total and without compromise. Always evident was his sincerity and compassion despite his own situation. Even his enemies would agree there was no hatred in him.

"Bobby Sands was a very ordinary young man from this city who, through a process of events, became politically educated and at eighteen decided he no longer would accept the injustice of a partitioned Ireland with all its inherent evils. No longer could he accept second class citizenship in his own country.

"So he joined the IRA and embarked on a life of hardship and suffering and in the end made the supreme sacrifice of his life for the cause he believed in.

DIED

"Bobby Sands, as representative of the blanket men and women in Armagh, died rather than be branded a criminal. The hunger-strike was embarked on for five just and reasonable demands, (to give testimony to the world that Irish republican prisoners will never wear British prison uniform or do prison work and must have the right to associate with each other and communicate with their families and have remission restored).

"The callous intransigence of the British government has made the hunger-strike a symbol of the struggle for freedom and Bobby Sands and his comrades are symbols of Irish resistance to British rule in Ireland.

"Bobby Sands is a symbol of hope for the unemployed, for the poor and oppressed, for the homeless, for those divided by partition, for those trying to unite our people. He symbolises a new beginning and I recall the words of his manifesto to the Protestant people: 'The Protestant people have nothing to fear from me.' They too have their part to play in building a new future, a new Ireland.

"We have the moral right to struggle for freedom and self-determination. Britain has no right in our country and has no faith in her pretence because the moral right she pretends to have has to be backed up by a monstrous war machine of guns and tanks and the torture chambers of Castlereagh and the H-Blocks and by creation of division within the Irish people.

SYMBOLISES

"Bobby Sands has not died in



● Hundreds of wreaths were laid at Sands, IRA Volunteer, H-Block hunger MP, in Belfast's Milltown cemetery on T

vain. His hunger-strike and the sacrifice of his life is a cameo of the entire resistance movement. He symbolises the true Irish nation which never has surrendered and never will. Let us picture him lying all alone in his cell, his body tortured and twisted in pain, surrounded by his enemies and isolated from his comrades and nothing to fight with but his will and determination.

"The big British murder machine assisted by those in high places in church and state tried to break his spirit. There were those in power in Dublin who could have saved him but as Liam Mellows said in 1922: 'Men will get into positions and hold power and will desire to remain undisturbed.'

"They tried to compromise Bobby Sands, they tried to compromise his supporters, but they failed. Around the world Bobby Sands has humiliated the British government. In Bobby Sands' death they have sown the seeds of their own destruction. Bobby once wrote about Britain that 'her actions will eventually seal the fate of her rule in Ireland for they may hold our bodies, but while our minds are free, victory is assured.'

"The people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone stood by the prisoners and gave them a mandate for political status. This has been rejected by the arrogant British government. We, the people who

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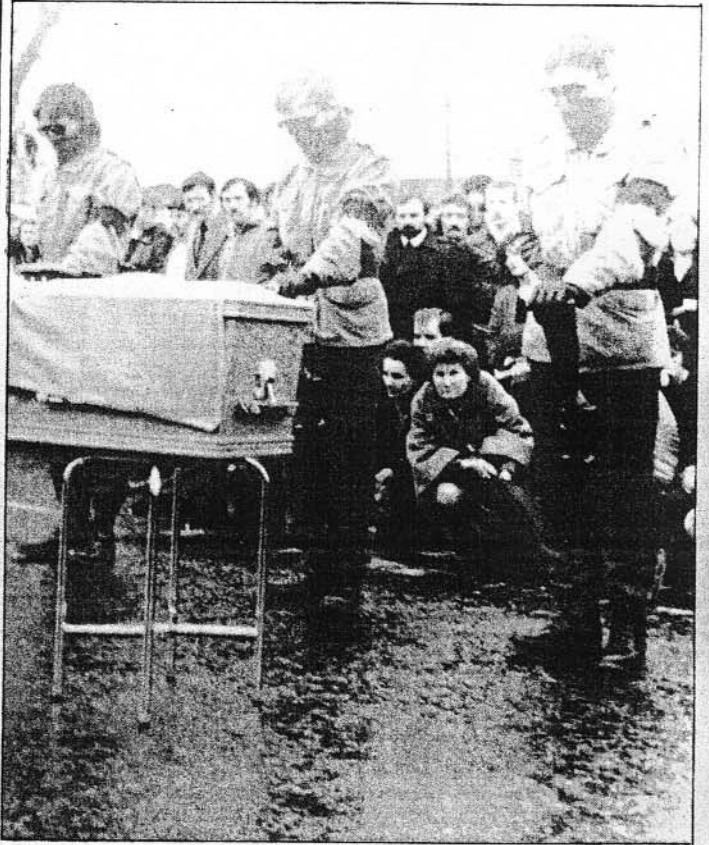
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BOBBY SANDS



● IRA Volunteers and mourners paid their last respects to Bobby Sands

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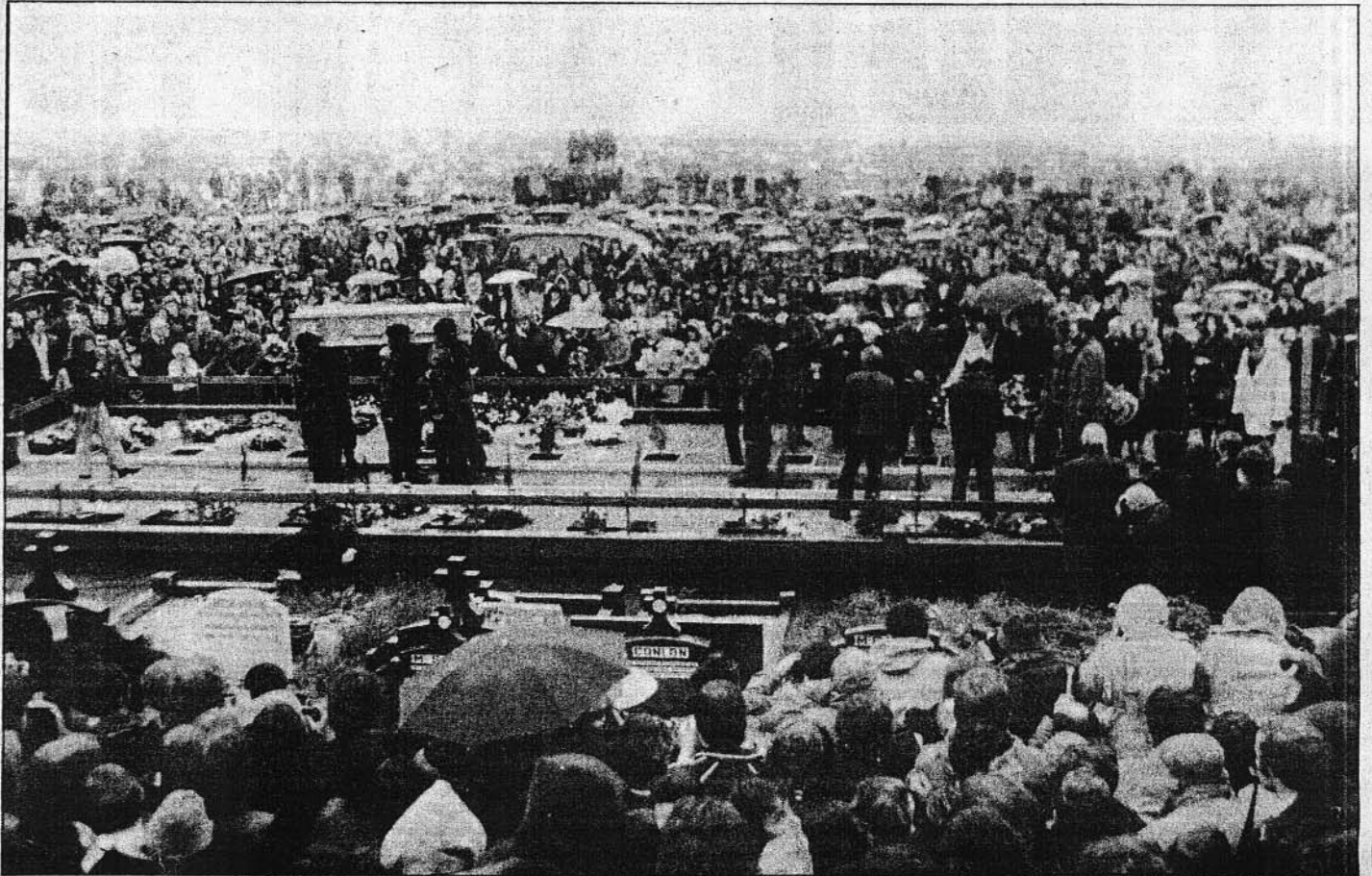
Arm

Irish



● AN IRA guard of honour accompanied the coffin of their comrade Bobby Sands in Twinbrook. The coffin is borne by the Westminster MP's election agent Owen Carron, who delivered the graveside oration, and by Bobby's father and brother John.

THE FUNERAL OF BOBBY SANDS



• Six IRA Volunteers carry the body of their comrade, Bobby Sands, to its resting place in the republican plot at Milltown cemetery



• The sectarian RUC block off the Stewartstown Road, alongside the loyalist Suffolk estate (right of picture) forcing the cortege to detour through the nationalist Lenadoon estate, en route to Milltown cemetery



• Mrs. Sands, and Marcella, plunged in grief

My brother Bobby

by Bernadette Sands



• BOBBY SANDS



• BERNADETTE SANDS

AS THE HEALTH of twenty-seven-year-old H-Block hunger-striker Bobby Sands steadily deteriorated through the last days of his life, the distraught features of his mother, Rosaleen, aged 57, and his twenty-six-year-old sister, Marcella, appeared increasingly regularly on television screens and newspaper front pages, North and South.

Meanwhile, away from the spotlight of publicity, Bobby's father, John, aged 57, his twenty-two-year-old sister, Bernadette, and his eighteen-year-old brother, John, also very much felt the strain of Bobby's deteriorating condition.

Last weekend, with Bobby entering a coma on the verge of his death on Monday night, *An Phoblacht/Republican News* reporter Peter Hayes spoke to his sister Bernadette about her tremendous respect for Bobby and about their childhood and youth, especially the trauma of loyalist intimidation twice leading to the Sands family being forced to move home in Belfast.

Twenty-two-year-old Bernadette Sands, who both looks like her brother Bobby and displays similar characteristics of personal strength and determination, fully supported his decision to go on hunger-strike in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh.

She stated last weekend: "I have been behind him all the way. I don't think it was a decision that he just made off the top of his head. I think he weighed everything up, and he knew the consequences. Also I feel that after four-and-a-half years on the blanket protest, and the prisoners having tried every other possible way, that the only alternative was the hunger-strike."

Bobby Sands, whose twenty-seventh birthday fell on the ninth day of his sixty-six day hunger-strike to the death, was born in March 1954. His sisters, Marcella, one year younger, and Bernadette, were born in April 1955 and November 1958, respectively. All three lived their early years at Abbots Cross in the predominantly Protestant Newtownabbey district of north Belfast.

A second son, John, now aged 18, was born to their parents, John and Rosaleen, now both aged 57, in June 1962. That was the year after the Catholic family had been forced to move home owing to loyalist intimidation during the dying embers of the IRA's ill-fated border campaign.

Bernie Sands recalls: "Most of the people who lived in the row of houses we lived in, in Abbots Cross, seemed to be in the police or 'B' Specials.

"It would be around 1961, I was just a baby at the time, but I can often remember my mother telling me about it. Every-one took my mother to be a Protestant because she was so quiet, she didn't bother with the neighbours.

"But when they found out that we were Catholics, one of the neighbours started hammering on the walls. And, when my mother went out to hang out the washing on the line, that neighbour went out and put exactly similar clothes on her line. If my mother cleaned her windows this woman did exactly the same, and she would be sneering down at my mother. It got so bad that my mother took Bobby, Marcella, and myself out for walks during the day to try to get away from the strain.

"She would tell my father about the banging, and the carry-on, but when he came in from work (he worked as a baker) the banging would stop. Well, eventually my mother took sick, and went into hospital, and the doctor told my father either to take the neighbours to court or to give up the house, because my mother was going through torture.

"So my parents being so quiet, and not wanting to bother anybody, they gave up the house. So for about

six months we had to live with different aunts, until we got a house in Doonbeg Drive in Rathcoole, to which we moved in December '61."

MISCHIEF

Bobby was seven then. As he grew older he was always up to some mischief.

Bernie recalls: "We were on holiday in Waterford, and he was mad on fishing. He must have been only about nine or ten at the time. We were down at the quay, where all these fishermen were with their tackle, and he was standing with only a wee hand-reel and a bit of Dairylea cheese at the bottom of it. But he kept pulling in the fish, and all these men were looking at him.

"So, when he came home that evening, my mother put him to bed. But he got up, with Marcella, and the two of them sneaked out and down to the quay. My mother found them there, the two of them, in the darkness, standing there with the Dairylea cheese, still trying to catch the fish, and she nearly killed the two of them.

"Bobby hid all the fish he caught under our caravan and never told my mother. We got this awful smell, and the next morning there were all these fish lying rotten underneath the caravan and he had to go and throw them away....

"He was always mischievous.

"When we were kids we used to be in a kind of wee gang, and we used to go way up the hill near us, the Cammonee Hill, and build a hut. And Bobby would light a fire, making chips and things like that. He took my mother's pots and her food, and we'd all be sitting round toasting bread, imagining we were camping out. Then my mother would catch us, and she would half-kill us.

"One day we were up the hill and a dog bit me. Before Bobby would let my mother know, he took me down to the hospital. He would always avoid my mother knowing things that would worry her — if we, or he, fell and hurt ourselves, for example — she never even knew half the things that happened."

Similarly, in later years, when Bobby was imprisoned, he would never tell the family about any

beatings by warders, any spells in the punishment block, or any sickness. He always made light of everything and never complained to his visitors, even when he was suffering agonising pains on hunger-strike.

PROTECTIVE

Bernie remembers how protective he was towards his sisters: "When we were kids he was always protecting us, myself and Marcella. If anyone went to hit us he would jump in. He was always small for his age and he used to get murdered by different fellows in the street, bigger fellows, and still he would go out and beat them back. Bobby wouldn't let anyone touch us.

"Also, I remember how stubborn he was. If we had done something wrong in the house, my mother would put us outside to play and then when she called us in Bobby wouldn't come in. He would wait until she asked him. There was always this stubborn attitude the whole time.

"Or if he got hit he wouldn't let anyone see him crying. He just went about as if nothing had happened. When he got beatings from other kids he would get up and either hit back or walk away. Even if he collapsed around the corner after the beating, he wouldn't let others see it. He just wouldn't give in to people."

An attitude that, later in life, when he was imprisoned, he was to reproduce time and time again, until his dying breath.

TROUBLES

Even when the four Sands children were young their mother told them about 'the troubles' during the twenties and the thirties, and she told them about what her grandmother, a staunch republican, had told her.

Bernie recalls: "Once 'the troubles' started it wasn't as if it came out of the blue, or that we suddenly became aware... When we saw the riots on television my mother would say: look that's what we went through, exactly the same thing. She used to always say to us: I hope you will never have to go through what we went through. But then the same thing did happen all over again."

Bernie recalls how Bobby decided to become an active republican: "I was young at the time, still at school, but he saw that many things happening around him. 'The troubles' were getting underway, the rioting was on television, and different people were getting shot and terrible things like that. He was just at the age when he was beginning to become aware of these things

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My brother Bobby

(continued from previous page)

happening around him. He more or less just said 'right, this is where I'm going to take up'. He was about sixteen or seventeen when he became involved.

"There were a couple of our cousins arrested and interned, and Bobby felt that he should get involved and start doing something because it was starting to hit home now."

APPRENTICESHIP

Bobby had gone to the Stella Maris primary school, and then secondary school, in Rathcoole. (As did Mary Doyle, of nearby Greencastle, two years his junior, one of the three republican women prisoners in Armagh jail on hunger-strike for political status during the first eighteen days of last December.)

After leaving school, Bobby went to a local technical college and also got an apprenticeship to a coach-building firm in an industrial estate beside Rathcoole. Bernie recalls: "Bobby went to work one morning and these fellows were standing there cleaning guns. One fellow said to him: do you see these here, well if you don't go, you'll get this. Then he also found a note in his lunch box telling him to get out."

Bobby had served two years of his apprenticeship when he was intimidated out of his only job ever.

INTIMIDATED

Doonbeg Drive, in Rathcoole, where the Sands family had moved to in 1961 was also predominantly Protestant and in June 1972 the family was finally intimidated out of north Belfast into the then newly-built Twinbrook estate on the fringe of nationalist west Belfast.

Bernie states: "Even before we were actually put out, we had suffered intimidation for about a year-and-a-half."

"We had always been used to having Protestant friends, we had



● John Sands helps carry the coffin of his brother Bobby

always been used to going about with them. But then you started to see the likes of the tartan gangs coming on the scene and Catholics started going about together, and Protestants started going about together.

"One day the loyalists sealed off the whole estate. The UDA marched down the street. We thought for sure that we were going to lose the house this time. I remember them coming up the street, all in full uniform, all marching. It was frightening."

"That night we were just sitting in the house with the lights out. Bobby sat on the stairs with a carving knife and Marcella sat beside him with the pepper. The two were going to take the loyalists on if they came in the house. (Bobby would often sit up all night and watch the house.)

"Well, my mother tried to get us out. But Bobby and Marcella wouldn't move, because they said they didn't think it was right to be put out of the house, having to leave, to run. Anyway we wouldn't have been able to get out even if we

had wanted to because the end of the road was sealed off. The loyalists had buses and other vehicles across the road, and were marching around, and so the best thing was to sit tight until the next day."

STABBED

Bobby was not only embittered by being intimidated out of his job, and by his family's home being under threat, but he also suffered personal attacks from loyalists.

According to Bernie: "On one occasion, when Bobby was sixteen, he was coming up the side entry by the house when two fellows asked him for a light. He stopped and one of them stabbed him. But he was able to jump across the wall into the garden. He came in the house, but never told my mother that he had been stabbed."

"He came upstairs to Marcella and I, and we washed his clothes, and then he went down to the youth leader, who had medical experience, who patched him up. My mother didn't know that he was stabbed until much later when he was in Long Kesh and he

happened to drop it to her one day.

"Bobby only suffered more or less a flesh wound," Bernie recalls, "but if he hadn't been so near to his own house, God knows what way he would have been left."

"He got numerous beatings. Every time he went down the street past the shops where the tartan gangs were standing about, he risked getting a beating."

"He was a cross-country runner, he played football, he was in the youth club, he was in everything, and he won an awful lot of medals, especially for the running. Half the time he only got away from the gangs because he was such a good runner."

NEIGHBOURS

"Our estate was a massive estate, our street was the biggest street in Rathcoole, and our street supposedly had the most Catholic families in one street. That was six, and that was classed as plenty."

"Bobby had gone about with Catholics and Protestants but it ended up, when everything erupted, that

the friends he went about with for years were the same ones that joined tartan gangs, pointed him out, and got him beaten. When we were put out of Rathcoole we found out afterwards that it was our own neighbours who helped to put us out.

"Leading up to when we were put out there were these mobs of young fellows hanging around the door chanting 'taigs out', which at that time they were doing to nearly every Catholic family in the estate."

"There was a woman around the corner who was supposed to be involved in the UDA and she used to go round in a car with young couples, and show them Catholic houses to ask if they were suitable. If they were, that was it, the house was 'done'."

"I even saw them myself. Her standing outside our door and showing a young couple our house, pointing over. Then about a week later we were put out. A rubbish bin was put through the living room window, stones were thrown, and there was a couple of shots fired."

"My mother went down to the Housing Executive the next morning and told them that we'd have to get out, there and then. They told her to head up to the Twinbrook office. The girl there just told her to take whatever house she could find free, put her curtains up, put some furniture in, and go back and tell the Executive the number. So that is how we got our house."

"We were promised that a lorry would come to take the furniture away from the house in Rathcoole, and we had the cooker, the fridge, and everything put into the front hall, ready for a quick move, but the lorry didn't turn up for days."

"Bobby was minding the house at this stage and this neighbour came over and said to him: get your furniture out, I've a young couple to go into that house. It ended up that it was the Protestant neighbours who had cried and fainted, saying it was terrible that we were being forced to leave, who were telling us to get out. So we got out."

TWINBROOK

"When we moved to Twinbrook in June 1972 it was to be like moving to the Free State, as we were so used to having Protestant

(continued on next page)



● MRS. ROSALEEN SANDS



● BERNADETTE, Bobby's sister



● MARCELLA, Bobby's sister

by Bernadette Sands



● Twinbrook estate, West Belfast — close by the Sands family home, local youths have erected this monument

(continued from previous page)

friends. For the first time in our lives we were going to school, to mass, and to youth clubs, with the same friends — Catholics — who we went about with.

"Nearly every family that was in Twinbrook at that stage had been put out. There were families that were put out that maybe had no furniture, and so everyone was helping everyone. There were families who had moved into houses that weren't even built. I remember us going up the estate with flasks of tea and hot water, and milk for babies. We saw a family of ten in a one-bedroomed flat, with it not even finished being built."

In October 1972 Bobby was arrested in Twinbrook and in early 1973 he was sentenced to five years imprisonment for his republican involvement. He spent the next three years as a political prisoner with 'special category status' in the cages of Long Kesh, where he taught himself Irish which he was later to teach other blanket men in the H-Blocks.

Released in April 1976, Bobby returned to Twinbrook and continued as an active republican until he was re-arrested in October of that year, leading to the fourteen year sentence, in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, which he never completed.

INVOLVED

Bernie recalls: "During the six months that he was out, in Twinbrook, his only time out of jail in

the last eight-and-a-half years, he always seemed to be so far advanced in his thinking.

"I always noticed when I was with him, no matter who he spoke to, people listened, no matter what their age. Everyone listened to him intently when he spoke, even older people. He was a striking person. No matter whom he was among, he seemed to impress people.

"When he got out of jail that first time our estate had no Green Cross, no Sinn Féin, nor anything like that. He got out and he set up the Green Cross and Sinn Féin... He was involved in the tenants' association.... He got the black taxis to run to Twinbrook from Barrack Street on the Falls, because the bus service was ridiculous at the time. It got to the stage where people were coming to the door looking for Bobby to put up ramps on the roads in case cars were going too fast and would knock the children down.

"He set up the newsletter that was going round our estate, a Sinn Féin newsletter called 'Liberty'. He used to write this, and I tried to type it. But I used to type it all wrong because my spelling is not great and he used to make a laugh out of me for this... He used to make these poems up and they were printed in the newsletter.

"He always believed that the best thing was to keep in contact with the people. For after all it was the people who supplied republicans with houses, billets, dumps, cars, and whatever. It was the people who were backing them all

the time.

ORGANISING

"No matter what it was, should it be kids in the estate committing acts of vandalism or being harassed by the Brits, the people came to him and he tried to sort it out. He used to get on great with the kids round the area. He had all these hopes of organising youth clubs and so on. The six months he was out he worked continuously in that estate amongst the people, getting things going, organising things.

"He organised a weekly social night in a parochial hall, it was a hut really, and got a cultural night going every Sunday. He used to get up and sing himself. He was a great singer.

"At home he would just lift up a guitar and he would be singing away, winking down at me and laughing. He used to say that he, John and I would set up a group. We used to play in the kitchen. He would get a tape recorder and would try to tape him, John and I playing and singing. But John was only learning the mandolin and I couldn't sing. The three of us would be battering away and he would lose his temper and shout at us in the middle of it for not doing it right.

"Then he would have turned round and apologised to us and said he was sorry and didn't mean to shout at us. And, of course, I would have been all nervous by that stage because he had got me that much worked up that I wouldn't have

been able to sing at all. Then, in the middle of it all, maybe the dog would have walked in and started howling, and we would have ended up throwing the whole lot in the air. Or someone would have come to the door and then Bobby would have been away again.

"He never sat down. He never knew what it was to be in the house and sit down, for the door never stopped. People were always looking for him to do something, to get something done."

DETERMINATION

Bernie recalls his determination:

"One morning, he was arrested out of the house, him and Marcella, and they were taken to Fort Monagh. But he wouldn't give his name or address or anything. He just stood there silent.

"My mother went into the fort, right by the sentry, and was looking for Marcella and Bobby, giving out, saying that this was a terrible thing and shouldn't happen. And the Brits said: 'Okay, you can have Marcella, but you're not having him because he won't co-operate.' So my mother and Marcella sat down and wouldn't leave without him.

"It had been pouring all that morning and when they let him out it turned out that he had been left for the whole four hours standing outside in the rain because he wouldn't even give his name or address to them. When he came back home he took pneumonia out of it and was laid up in front of the fire, lying on the settee, when

someone came to the door looking for something. And so he got up, put on his coat, and away he went. He just kept on going."

RESPECT

The respect with which Bobby was regarded by the rest of the family is recalled by Bernie.

"In our family he was really looked up to by all of us, especially by me. I was always able to go to him all the time, no matter what was wrong.

"I was always the one in our family who carried on, that is, laughed and joked, and talked an awful lot. But at the back of it all I was odd in my own way in that I couldn't talk to my mother or sister about boyfriends or about personal things, but the one person I would always turn to was Bobby.

"He was always trying to fix me up with stupid dates and so on. No matter what trouble or problem I had I went to him. I would tell him things more readily that I would tell anybody else and whatever advice he gave me I always stuck to. He'd never try to force any particular point of view. He'd always work it out with me, and then leave any decision to me."

Bobby's concern for other people always showed through, Bernie recalls.

"Since he was arrested the first time all he ever knew was beatings, kickings and imprisonment. But even through the years on the blanket he never told us the tortures he went through. He said to my mother only last week that if he survived the hunger-strike he would tell her a few stories about the tortures he went through.

"Anytime he wrote to me he was always so cheerful that you wouldn't have thought he was inside at all, you would have thought he was away on holiday. This was so typical of him."

Bernie states: "If anything was going to happen, he would rather it happened to him than to others." An attitude which unselfishly, bravely and finally fatally, led him to lead the second H-Block hunger-strike by a two-week gap in an effort to win political status for his comrades through risking his life.

STRENGTH

Talking about Bobby's hunger-strike, last weekend, before he died, Bernie said: "Whatever feelings I have about the hunger-strike, I don't think that they can be considered compared to what feelings he must have. I would only feel guilty if I were to say I feel terrible, although naturally I do.

"When I see the courage and strength that he has shown, it gives me more strength to go on. When I see that he is lying there dying, and still determined, still showing courage, and still trying to keep the family's spirits up, it gives me the strength to keep going.

"How could I have time for my own feelings? Because, after all, it's him that's gone through all the suffering. It's incredible. And his determination has spilled over into the family. It's that which has kept us all going. Even the way he has been able to joke when the family go in to see him, it's been amazing. And then there's been the messages that he's sent out, that he's alright. And you know that he's not alright, and that he could die any time.

"I think to myself: what way will I react if he dies? I don't know, myself. For the time being, while he's still living, I'm still hoping. I've kind of half-prepared myself for his death. It's awful hard to think that someone like that could die, such a 'live' person. It seems an awful thing to see him go."

Life in the cages of the Kesh

A TRIBUTE BY DANNY DEVENNY, A FORMER PRISON COMRADE

I WASN'T ABLE to attend Bobby's funeral but nothing, not Brits firing baton rounds along the Falls Road, nor the sectarian RUC, who had completely cordoned off our small area of Short Strand, could have prevented me from travelling across Belfast, up to the Twinbrook estate and the Sands' home where Bobby's remains lay, to leave in a mass card and say a final farewell to one of Belfast's most courageous young Irishmen.

His face looked peaceful, not horrifying nor full of agony as I had expected, and except for the purple marks around his eyes and the obvious thinness of his cheeks that were once so full and coloured, Bobby was easily recognisable as the lad I had spent three years with as a sentenced prisoner in the cages of Long Kesh.

As I looked upon his open coffin, two IRA Volunteers standing guard at both ends and his courageous sister Marcella facing me on the other side, memories of Bobby flooded through my mind.

His hair was short now. That is how it had been when I first met him in 1973. He was nicknamed 'Sas' then, not as an abbreviation of his surname, but as a jibe at the fact that just months earlier SAS soldiers had been executed in his Twinbrook estate while working under the cover of the Four Square Laundry.

We were in 'A' wing, Crumlin Road jail, as remand prisoners. Bobby's cell was on the bottom landing. I can't remember who it was that Bob, as we also called him, shared a cell with in those days, but I recall that he and 'Dossier' Danny Lennon were very close. That friendship lasted throughout their period as sentenced prisoners and Bob was one of the many who were stricken with sadness when Danny was killed on active service shortly after his release in 1976.

BUNCH

It was with Dossier, Stu Rooney, Paddy Molloy, 'Big Duce' Mc Mullen, 'Egor' Carson and the crowd from west Belfast that Bobby knocked around with when, after sentencing, we were all moved, via short spells in various cages, to cage 17, one of the newly-built cages at the top end of the Kesh.

If they'd had a nickname at the time it would have been 'the Wild Bunch', for they were always up to something, trying to suffocate Eddie Brophy with smoke bombs or organising mock versions of 'This is your life', with the aid of quiz master 'Cleaky' Clarke, who would call Bobby, Dossier, Duce, and so on to bear witness to some slanderous life story of a fellow prisoner. All in good crack of course.

The screws allowed us one game of soccer per week in those days and it was then that I first got to appreciate Bobby's athletic talents.

He was a fantastic footballer, not of the George Best dribbling mould, but a thinker, a planner, a tactician. This approach to the game, coupled with his always untiring energy, made Bob one of the best footballers I have ever played against in jail, not only at soccer but gaelic as well. That was probably the most remarkable thing about Bobby, his energy, he breathed it.

GAELIC

There were many lads in the

cage who wanted to begin using their time usefully to learn the gaelic language. Bobby was one of these. But for him, it wasn't enough to spend half-an-hour a day attending one of the classes that were organised.

Bobby, along with 'Dee' Delaney (another close friend of Bobby's who like Danny Lennon was sadly killed on active service duty following his release from Long Kesh) and a few others, canvassed for support in the cage and succeeded in establishing a special hut to which all those who wished to learn gaelic could move, and where it was compulsory to speak as much of the Irish language as possible during normal conversation.

Within weeks, Bob had learned all his irregular verbs by heart and within a couple of months he was already fluent enough to set himself up as a 'muintir' (teacher) teaching beginners the rudiments of the language at 'bun rang' (beginners' class), while simultaneously making even more progress himself by attending an 'ard rang' (advanced class) as a pupil.

Within a year Bobby had passed his 'fainne' or examination which in lay language meant he was a recognised fluent gaelic speaker. A remarkable achievement which — even though tutored by Cyril McCurtain from Limerick, an excellent speaker in the language, who had himself at one time lived in a gaeltacht region — reflected once again Bobby's characteristic determination to always accomplish what he set out to do in as short a time as was possible.

GUITAR

Likewise in learning to play the guitar. There are very few of us ex-prisoners who can honestly say that we have never attempted to master the guitar while in jail. Some of us might even boast of having picked up how to play the odd chord while in the Kesh. Not Bobby. He wanted to know how to play a guitar. He learnt how to play it and not just competently either, expertly!

'The Mandolin Wind' is the song I remember him by. Coincidentally, it is off a Rod Stewart LP and Bob in those days, with his



● Imprisoned comrades in the cages of Long Kesh, in the summer of 1975: back row, from left: Seanna Walsh (now on the blanket); Gerald Rooney (now in Portlaoise); Jim Gibney; Brendan Hughes (former hunger-striker, now on the blanket); 'Tomboy' Loudon (now on the blanket); Bobby Sands; front row, from left: Tom Cahill; Tommy Tolan (shot dead by the Sticks, July 1977); and Gerry Adams

long shaggy-dog fair hair and aquiline nose, resembled that singer so much that it warranted him yet another nickname: 'Rod'.

I hadn't heard that song before hearing Bobby and another prisoner playing it at one of our Christmas concerts. Their rendering of it was so superb that I made a point of buying the LP when I was released from jail.

Bobby was always up to something. If it wasn't football, it was gaelic; if it wasn't gaelic, it was playing the guitar; and if not that then he had his nose stuck in a book.

He read intensely: Irish history, Mellows, Connolly, Pearse; international struggles, Camillo Torres, Che Guevara, Amílcar Cabral, George Jackson, Frantz Fanon, to name but a few of his admired authors. Like all of us the intensity of the armed struggle against Britain in the early days had prevented us from developing a comprehensive understanding of Ireland's problems and this period in jail afforded us the opportunity to examine the past, to read, to learn, and to educate ourselves about our country's history. Bobby did this with a fever.

DEBATES

While reading, Bobby would always make notes and I can recall that it was about this time in 1974 that he first began to

develop the literary talents for which, apart from his death on hunger-strike, most will remember him by.

He began writing for the cage news-sheet 'An Giolla', and except for a break owing to the burning of Long Kesh in October 1974 he continued to contribute small pieces up until his release in 1976.

His closest friends at this time were two other Belfast republicans, Gerald Rooney, from Short Strand, and 'Tomboy' Loudon, from Unity Flats (both now serving lengthy prison terms in Portlaoise and H-Block, respectively). They, like the majority of the prisoners, were intensely interested in the political developments outside the wire, mainly, but not only, in Ireland.

Many the night, when they continued their political debates into the early hours, I remember wanting to burn down their neighbouring cell to shut them up.

Bobby was always involved in discussions. He would read almost all the daily newspapers and would discuss each important event with whoever would listen. We were all in cage 11 then and this suited Bob for the cage was constantly involved in lectures and debates.

He involved himself in many projects, especially the concept of people's councils, arguing the case for more republican involvement in the social problems of the people living in the ghettos across the occupied North.

One other project was the writing of a pamphlet on life in a Long Kesh cage and it was here that Bobby first had his writings published when he contributed a chapter on how prisoners organised their own recreation facilities.

RELEASED

In early 1976 he was released from jail, after serving with the then 75% remission, a five year sentence for possessing arms. Released also at that time was another of Bobby's close friends, Seanna Walsh, originally from Short Strand but whose family had also moved to Twinbrook.

Outside, they continued their friendship and were both involved in trying to implement the ideas which they had discussed in the cages.

Unfortunately, Twinbrook wasn't

able to feel the full benefits of their capabilities for only days after the death of their mutual comrade, Danny Lennon, in August 1976, Seanna was arrested for possession of an armalite rifle and within another month Bobby too was back in Crumlin Road jail having been captured while on a commercial bombing mission.

H-BLOCKS

About eighteen months after his release from the cages of Long Kesh, after a year on remand, Bobby entered the notorious H-Blocks of the same prison camp.

Although this period of Bobby's life was affected by severe domestic problems he managed to keep his spirits high. He threw himself into organising lectures and debates and along with Seanna Walsh and some other blanket men he started the 'ranganna' (classes).

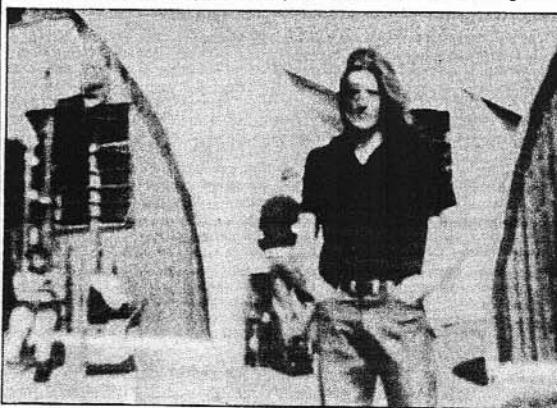
Today these have produced a remarkable fluency in the language amongst the men in the H-Blocks, without any help from text books or dictionaries, which like all reading or writing material, and just about everything bar their blankets and mattresses, they were deprived of by the prison regime.

Gerry Rooney, or 'Roon' as Bobby called him, had by this time been released from Long Kesh and it was to him that Bobby first sent out his prison writings which were first printed in 'Republican News' as being from 'a young west Belfast republican', and later in the same paper and in the fused 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' under the pen name 'Marcella' (his sister's name).

Bobby never gave himself a moment to spare. He lived his life energetically, dedicated to his people and to the republican cause, eventually offering up his life in a conscious effort to further that cause and the cause of those with whom he had shared almost eight years of his adult life — the prisoners of war.

An intense young man, when I looked at him lying there, last Wednesday morning, so silent, so immobile in his coffin, I thought, God, what talent has Britain robbed us of, with her arrogance, injustice and brutality!

Sian leat a chomraid, beidh ann bua againn. Ni dheanfar dearmad ort.



● Bobby Sands, pictured in the summer of 1975, as a sentenced prisoner in the Long Kesh cages. Also pictured are, Cyril McCurtain from Limerick, who taught Bobby gaelic (extreme left); and 'Dee' Delaney, who died on active service, January 1980 (walking away)

H-Block O/C

A TRIBUTE BY DANNY MORRISON

I REMEMBER well the first time I met Bobby Sands. It was in May 1976 during that short six months of freedom he enjoyed during the last nine years of imprisonment in Long Kesh, the cages, and in Long Kesh, the H-Block.

He walked into the offices of the Belfast republican press centre, which I had just recently joined, and was looking for duplicating paper and stencils so that he could get leaflets out in the Twinbrook estate for a tenants association and to kindle interest in the idea of a youth club for the area.

His short hair was fair to ginger and he had the fresh face of youth and made a sharp contrast with the next time I was to meet him in January 1980 when his hair was long, greasy and matted, his face sporting an eight-inch beard.

But the young man that stood behind our counter in 1976 was every bit as intense and dedicated as the blanket leader of 1981. Fellow press centre worker Tom Hartley and I spotted him right away and attempted to lure him into the centre, which was then in its comparative infancy; but he wanted to work in his own area which was, as we suspected, his base as an IRA freedom fighter.

He disappeared from sight and it was with disappointment that we heard of his capture on active service the following October.

WRITING

About two years later, a few months after he went on the blanket protest in September 1977, he became H-Block PRO, and then he began writing a series of articles under the pen-name 'Marcella', after his younger sister. Most of these were published in 'Republican News'.

I remember being moved to tears when I read 'I am Sir, you are 10661' off the tiny scrap of toilet paper which had made its way from his mind and experience through the searches by evil screws to us on the outside. It had been written when the no-wash protest was two months old, when we couldn't see the men surviving the dirt and maggots for three months, and which no-one could have visualised lasting for three years.

From 1979 onwards, I maintained

contact with him through writing and visited him throughout 1980 and the first hunger-strike. Regrettably these unavoidable visits meant Mr. and Mrs. Sands sacrificing most of their monthly visits with their son.

Bobby canvassed hard to be on the first hunger-strike, but instead he stepped into the position of Officer Commanding the Republican political prisoners in the H-Blocks when Brendan Hughes, up until then O/C, went on hunger-strike.

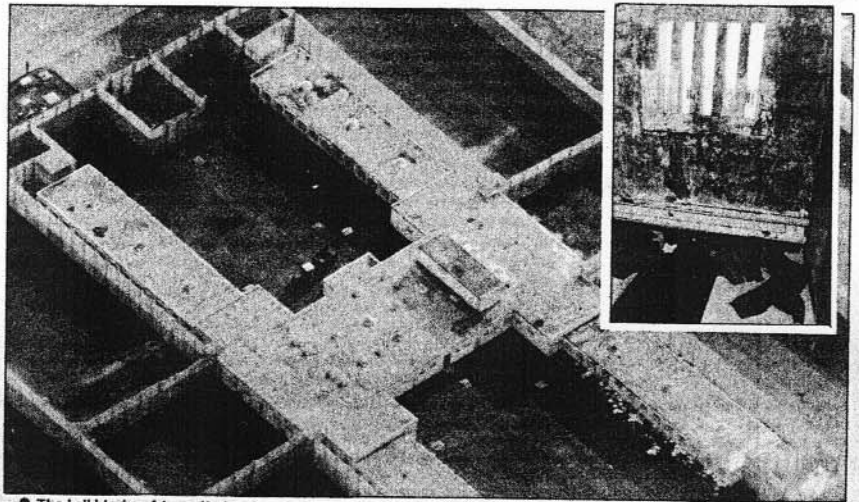
When the decision to hunger-strike was first announced, Mr. and Mrs. Sands must have been frantic because Bobby had told them of his decision to go forward. When I learnt he was to become O/C instead, I went up to give them the 'good' news, knowing the relief it would bring them.

No-one was at home so I dropped a hastily written note through the door and the next time I was to meet these gentle people was when British intransigence created the show-down of the second hunger-strike, when this time there was no stopping Bobby.

VISITS

I always looked forward to the visits with Bobby. I think I drew strength from his figure — of which his brother John reminds me — as soon as he turned through the door. He had a self-respecting stride and held up his proud head as he walked.

Despite verbal constraints from screws I stood up and waved until he found the visiting box, grasped hands comradely and sat down to draw upon cigarette after cigarette which 'the most modern prison in Europe' had denied to the blanket



● The hell-blocks of Long Kesh, where Bobby Sands spent over three-and-a-half years on the blanket protest; three of those years in a no-wash protest call like the one inset

men for over four-and-a-half years. He would ask about everybody, then for 'scales' (news), then into the business of the prison protest. Screws who gave him abuse he just stared through, and when he got up to go back to hell, other blanket men, when they saw him, would shout over greetings.

He was the first to broach the second hunger-strike, realising almost immediately that the Brits would not allow the prisoners to de-escalate the protest in an honourable and satisfactory fashion after the ending of the hunger-strike in December. But he was prepared to try, and entered into discussions with Hilditch, the prison governor, in attempts to take the H-Block burden out of its drag on the war.

FOUGHT

In the H-Blocks the Brits saw the opportunity to defeat the IRA by criminalising the Irish freedom fighters. But the blanket men, perhaps even more than those on

the outside, appreciated before anyone else the grave repercussions of a defeat and so they fought. They fought with a determination, courage and political dedication which came to be symbolised in Bobby and the other hunger-strikers.

Bobby, in particular, insisted on going out two weeks in front of the others so that perhaps his death could secure the five demands and save their lives.

There will be tales to tell from H-Block 3 when the men are released. On the run up to March 1st when Bobby went on hunger-strike he kept the blanket men entertained for nights on end with stories and songs, and near that Sunday moved everyone to tears with an epic poem of over ninety verses, entitled 'Castlereagh' (yet to be published) which he wrote, and which was the story of how most of them ended up in the H-Blocks and on the blanket. There was a river of tears in H-Block 3, 4, 5, and 6, again

last Tuesday morning when the blanket men learned of the death of Bobby. The Irish patriot in jail is really a history which distinguishes us from the British and the loyalists.

Bobby Sands was truly a unique person whose loss is great and immeasurable. He had so much life in him but it was repressed and murdered by the English hands of imperial Britain which still scars our land.

● ● ● ● ●

"My dear friend and comrade, although it has happened I still cannot believe it. I would have liked to have said goodbye and shook that sure strong hand once more, but that was denied us. You are at peace now, out of the hell blocks that murdered you, out of the clutches of the screws and British rule, like the lark free and at peace. Now we need your prayers, your courage, and your determination, that beautiful unvanquished spirit that brought you through those tribulations. Watch over us."

The use of the hunger-strike by Irish republicans has only been a weapon in the prison struggle during the twentieth century. The first republican hunger-strike was undertaken by James Connolly in 1913.

The first death claimed by a hunger-strike was that of Tomas Ashe in Mountjoy jail in 1917 after five days of forced feeding when food was pumped into his lungs. Tomas Ashe had fought at Ashbourne in County Meath in 1916 and had been arrested in August 1917, when with others he went on hunger-strike for treatment as a prisoner-of-war.

In August 1920, eleven IRA Volunteers in Cork jail went on hunger-strike.

The first to die on October 17th was Michael Fitzgerald; on October 25th Terence MacSwiney, O/C of the IRA's Cork Brigade, Lord Mayor of the city and Republican TD, died in Brixton prison, London, to where he had been transferred from Cork. A few days later a third Cork prisoner, Joseph Murphy, died.

The next to die on hunger-strike were in Free State jails. On September 2nd 1923, Wexford man Joseph Whitty died in the Curragh concentration camp. On November 20th of the same year IRA commandant Denis Barry died on hunger-strike in Newbridge camp and he was followed two days later by IRA captain Andrew Sullivan.

Sixteen years later, IRA prisoners were still prepared to hunger-strike to the death for their demand for political status. On April 16th 1940 Tony D'Arcy died on hunger-strike in Arbour Hill, and three days

Ever-lasting refusal to accept criminalisation



■ Some of the Irish republican Volunteers who have died on hunger-strike are, from left: Tomas Ashe, Terence MacSwiney, Tony D'Arcy, Jack MacNeela, Michael Gaughan, Frank Stagg, and, now, Bobby Sands

later Jack MacNeela died in the same jail. Fianna Fail were in power by this time, and following the two deaths they promised political status.

It was not to be. In May 1946, Sean McCaughey, until his arrest Chief of Staff of the IRA, died on hunger-and-thirst strike in Portlaoise jail. Fianna Fail were still in power. At his inquest, the full horror of his last four-and-a-half years — imprisoned,

naked except for a blanket — was revealed. Conditions in which the jail governor was forced to admit he would not keep a dog.

In June 1974, IRA Volunteer Michael Gaughan died on hunger-strike in Parkhurst prison on the Isle of Wight. Like Tomas Ashe he was murdered by brutal force-feeding methods.

In February 1976, another IRA Volunteer, Frank Stagg died on hunger-strike in

Wakefield prison in Yorkshire.

In addition to those who have died whilst on hunger-strike, there are many republican ex-prisoners who have gone to a premature grave as a result of the damage done to their health by the countless hunger-strikes undertaken over the years.

Their memorial, with that of Bobby Sands, is the everlasting refusal to accept the criminalisation of the Irish freedom struggle.

LAST VISIT

FOLLOWING the final visit to Bobby Sands of his election agent, Owen Carron, last Friday, An Phoblacht/Republican News reporter Seamus Boyle spoke to Owen Carron about Bobby, particularly about that final visit.

ONE of those most deeply affected by the death of H-Block hunger-striker Bobby Sands, outside of his immediate family circle, is his election agent in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election campaign, Owen Carron, who last Friday had his last prison visit with Bobby — an emotional death-bed parting.

Owen Carron is a chirpy and likeable County Fermanagh man who has become an immensely popular figure with hunger-strike campaigners, as was particularly made evident by the tremendous reception he received at the massive Belfast rally a fortnight ago.

Owen is from a hamlet called Macken near Enniskillen, where he lives with his widowed seventy-five-year-old father on a small ten-acre farm.

He is a trained teacher having completed a degree at a teacher training college in Manchester in England between 1973 and 1976. But, after teaching in Keady, County Armagh, for three years, he has been unemployed this last two. His fiancée, twenty-three-year-old Mary O'Rourke from Derrylin in County Fermanagh, is also a teacher.

Owen does not come from a republican family but, after internment in 1971, he became connected with the Republican Movement in County Fermanagh and has remained so ever since.

Being election agent for the campaign which got Bobby Sands elected to Westminster, with the candidate being imprisoned, meant that not only did Owen have the organising work of an election agent to do, but he, in effect, became a candidate on the ground, whilst also visiting Bobby three times a week in jail.

FIRST

The morning after Bobby was nominated — day thirty-one of his hunger-strike, Tuesday 31st March — was the first time Owen visited

and met Bobby.

When he initially went inside to meet Bobby he had an image in his mind of someone like the posters of Bobby, 'a long-haired guy with a chubby face'. But, Owen remembers, "even at that time, when Bobby wasn't too bad, he was radically changed. He was very thin and bony, and his hair was cut short."

Owen also recalls that he didn't expect someone in prison to be so politically aware of the situation outside. And Bobby seemed to him to be well educated and very intelligent.

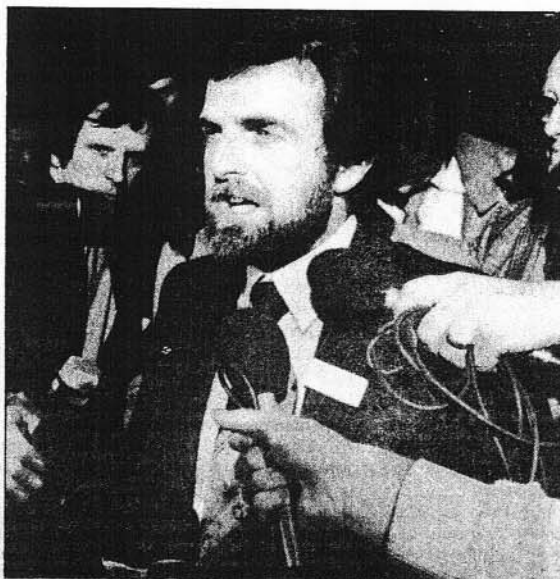
Owen got to know Bobby very well, and became extremely fond of him during the three visits a week, of an hour each, which he took over four weeks.

Owen states that Bobby was 'a very dedicated fellow, very courageous', and he found it 'unbelievable' that Bobby could be so committed to what he was doing. Bobby, he says, "was also a very reasonable bloke, not full of political dogma, or jargon or anything like that, and a very compassionate person. He was just a great guy really. He didn't like to cause other people trouble."

CONCERNED

Bobby was very concerned about Owen standing in for him in the election campaign, outside the jail, and thus openly taking up the cause of the IRA. He was extremely thankful to Owen and considered what he was doing to be a big personal risk.

Bobby's lack of self-concern was such, Owen states, that on his final visit "one of the things Bobby said was for me to watch myself, and him dying!"



● Owen Carron, Bobby Sands' election agent, speaking in Enniskillen on April 10th, moments after the announcement of Bobby's Fermanagh and South Tyrone election victory

"He didn't seem to be concerned about himself but only about others. Even with regard to the whole hunger-strike and election, he never viewed his election as something for himself. It was to get the other prisoners something."

Bobby's reaction to his election victory was not one of over-optimism. After the poll result was announced Owen visited Bobby: "He'd already heard the result on the radio. He was in good form alright but he always used to keep saying 'In my position you can't afford to be optimistic. In other words he didn't take it that because he'd won an election that his life would be saved."

"He thought that the Brits would need their pound of flesh. I think he was always working on the premise that he would have to die."

For a week before his final visit Owen Carron was barred from Long Kesh. He views that ban as part of a British effort to isolate Bobby Sands whilst the European Human

Rights Commission and the papal envoy, Fr. Magee, were promoted as means of getting Bobby to come off hunger-strike without the prisoners' demands being met.

After Owen was barred he rang the Northern Ireland Office every day requesting a prison visit, but it was only when both the commissioners and the envoy had failed in their mission of undermining the hunger-strike that he was allowed in for a final fifteen-minute visit on the condition that he discussed election business only.

"Not that I had any election business to discuss," says Owen, "I just wanted to see him."

PAIN

Owen recalls: "Bobby was in tremendous pain and obviously close to death. I found him awfully changed from the week before. There was a massive physical change in him. In fact, had he been asleep you would have sworn that he was dead. One eye was completely closed and he could not

see from the other. He only recognised me by my voice.

"His mouth was twisted as if he'd had a stroke. His voice was distorted and he spoke very slowly and with great effort. His teeth and gums were protruding and he'd got a skeleton-like look. You could have spanned his whole chest with your hand, it had all closed in on him. His hands weren't cold nor warm either, and he'd hardly any grip. He was awfully bad."

"He said to me he thought he only had about twenty-four hours to live." In fact it was forty-eight hours after Owen's visit that Bobby went in to a coma, and died another thirty-six hours later.

GOOD-BYE

Owen recalls that Bobby talked about the earlier visit last Friday morning of British Labour Party spokesman, and cynical opportunist, Don Concannon, who had walked in on him unannounced. Concannon had admitted — in a bizarre exchange — that Bobby was involved in a political struggle, but that he, Concannon, could not support the prisoners' five demands as they are equal to political status.

Owen also recalls that, referring to a previous visit of three Free State Euro-MPs Bobby asked him if there was any word from premier Charlie Haughey, and made another request that Haughey speak out in favour of the prisoners' demands. "As he was talking," Owen recalls, "Bobby had to spit out and vomit."

As the sad and brief visit moved to a close, Bobby mentioned all his family to Owen by name and said 'keep my ma in mind'. "I think he meant," says Owen, "that his mother's not strong and that the hunger-strike has had an awful effect on her, and to look after her."

"He mentioned all his friends by name. He said everyone should keep their hearts up, and that if the Brits didn't give in then we all had to accept his death, for the hunger-strike was going on."

"It didn't matter what happened to him, he said, the other boys were sound. Frankie Hughes would not have the benefit of an election but the support was there."

"The Brits have no sense, he said, tell everyone I'll see them somewhere sometime. He was waving as he said good-bye to me. I kissed him good-bye on the cheek and the one eye that was open was crying, the other eye was shut, completely shut, as if he had got a punch on it."

Inspioraid duinn go leir

LE TOMÁS Ó SÉ

FUAIR ROIBEARD MAC SANDAIR bás ar stailc ocras an Mháirt seo caite. Bhí deireadh lena phianta is d'éalaigh sé saor ós na coimeádóirí. Mharaigh borb-fhocla Maggie Thatcher agus Michael Foot é. Bhí a shábháil ina dhéana san, ach níor speis leo sin a dhéanamh.

Bhí lámh ina bhás ag Charlie Haughey chomh maith. D'fhan sé ina thost nuair ba cheart dó labhairt amach. Lean an chuid is mó de pholaiteoirí an Deiscirt a shampla. Tá brón orthu anois ach níor dhéan siad iarracht ionraic brú a chur ar Thatcher a gcearta a thabhairt do na príosúnaigh.

I rith leathéana fadja an stailc ocras chuireas, agus chuir morán daoine eile aithe ar Roibeard Mac Sandair. Bhí a aghaidh romhainn agus aoiab ar a bheola. Bhí a smaointe le léamh againn sa leabhrán beag "The Writings of Bobby Sands". Ba dhóigh le cara é.

SMAOINTE

Ar ndóigh thug sé a shaoirse ar son pobal uile na hÉireann. Thug sé a shaoirse faoi dhó do chúis na hÉireann. An Mháirt seo caite leag sé síos a shaoil ar son a chearta, ar son a chomrádaithe agus ar son na

hÉireann. Níorbh fhéidir leis níos mó a dhéanamh.

Léirigh sé a smaointe faoi chás na H Blocanna sa leabhrán thuas luaite. Bhí sé faoi dhian-bhrú ó choimeádóirí an t-am ar fad a bhí se sna H Blocanna. Ionsaíodh agus buailleadh é agus ní raibh suaimhneas le fáil aige. Sheas sé go dian i gcoinne an chórais. Léirigh sé a smaointe sa dán, An bhoir Inar gboinne ata thíos.

Suíonn na buachaillí ó mhaidin go hoíche,
Ag fulaingt íde ar nach ndéantar daormadh
choíche.

Tosaíonn an tsuair a chluintear an smachtán,
Bheadh ifreann níl thearr is is ann cinnte
a rachainn.

Tá an brachán do-ite is an tae gan tras,
Is cosúil lena bhfuil anseo ní faic atá deas.
Tá mo thoicht luigh báite leis an uisce orthu,
A chaith na coimeádóirí is deirtear drochrud.

Stáin ar na ballaí n-deachas nach tío,
Is go gceirneofar an bhriogáid ag scaoiladh
má saor.

Tá an bríscríofa is an bheath gránna,
Ní chreidtear an radharc ach gan sos triptaíonn
an lánne.

Scríob thar an bhruth, cuimítear an
bruthchraiceann.



● Thug na ceardtha míle duine tacaíocht do Roibeard Mac Sandair. Togadh an ghriangraf thuas ar nraideanna Londain

Is mothéar an scoradh atá ann nach bhfeicim.
Ní luífid faoi easaí, ní coirpigh sinne!
Éireannaigh sinne! Sin an choir inár gcoinne.

ÍOBAIRT

D'fhoghlaim Roibeard an Ghaeilge sa Cheis Fhada agus mhúin sé i dá chomrádaithe sna H Blocanna.

Lena íobairt thaispeáin sé don domhan uilig narbh coirpeach é agus sháigh sé na focla 'a crime is a crime is a crime' síos scórnach Thatcher. Feictear anois gurab íse an coirpeach agus an 'crime' a bhí i gceist aici na gabháil na hÉireann.

Sheas muintir na hÉireann le Roibeard Ó

Sandair agus a chomrádaithe. Mháirseáil Éireannaigh ina mílte. Vótáil breis is 30,000 duine i bhfábhar Roibeard sa toghchán. Toghadh mar theisire Párlaiminte é.

Ach níor thug Rialtas Shasana aon aird ar Éireannaigh. B'fhearr leo na borb fhocla "no surrender". Ach tá siad ag seasamh nocht ós comhair an domhain. Tá an bréag-riocht inar maith leo iad féin a thaispeáint stróiche díobh. Tá an aghaidh-fidil imithe agus tá aghaidh gránna an impiúilachais ag drannadh linn.

Tá Roibeard Ó Sandair marbh ach tá cúis na hÉireann beo. Inspioraid dúinn go léir is ea a íobairt.

Final manoeuvres fail

BY PETER ARNLIS

AFTER the failure of the intervention of the commissioners from the European Commission on Human Rights, which was prompted by Free State premier Charles Haughey as his way of side-stepping and channelling the political pressures upon him to act to save Bobby Sands' life, there were two other attempts or pressures — one clerical, the other political — on the late Bobby Sands and the other three hunger-strikers to abandon their fast and entrust their fate to the Johnny-come-latelys.

Ten days ago, on Wednesday 29th April and Thursday 30th April, Fr. John Magee, Pope John Paul II's private secretary, urged the men to unconditionally end their hunger-strike. Bobby Sands resisted the strong moral arguments to end his fast, since they were not as strong as his moral convictions to continue.

Fr. Magee's appeals to the British government to compromise were rejected out of hand by the British administration as he travelled to Stormont Castle for a meeting with direct-ruler Atkins. He went back into the prison on Wednesday afternoon but Patsy O'Hara, Raymond McCreesh and Francis Hughes remained determined to continue.

Before returning to Rome, Fr. Magee read a statement from the steps of the home of Cardinal O'Fiaich in Armagh city. He said: "I visited the Maze prison on two occasions and spoke to the four prisoners who are on hunger-strike, conveying to them the appeal of the Holy Father to put an end to their hunger-strike... The appeal of the Holy Father was accepted with respect and gratitude..."

REPORTS

Fr. Magee's visit coincided with 'Irish Times' reports that the H-Blocks prison governor, Stanley Hilditch, was to be removed, to be succeeded by Harold Cunningham, governor of Crumlin Road jail, who "would then be in a position to give assurances to Mr. Sands that the settlement reached to avert the deaths of hunger-strikers last year would be interpreted in a liberal fashion."

By last Tuesday, the potential scapegoat, Stanley Hilditch, was still in office in the H-Blocks and besides, the promotion of Cunningham probably would not have resulted in a resolution of this crisis which requires iron-clad guarantees to the prisoners that their demands have been met.

In the middle of this drama, direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins launched, probably on the direction of his advisers, a rather stupid attack on the IRA which he accused of 'fomenting sectarian conflict', and being prepared to burn down Catholic houses and blame it on others, presumably he meant loyalists.

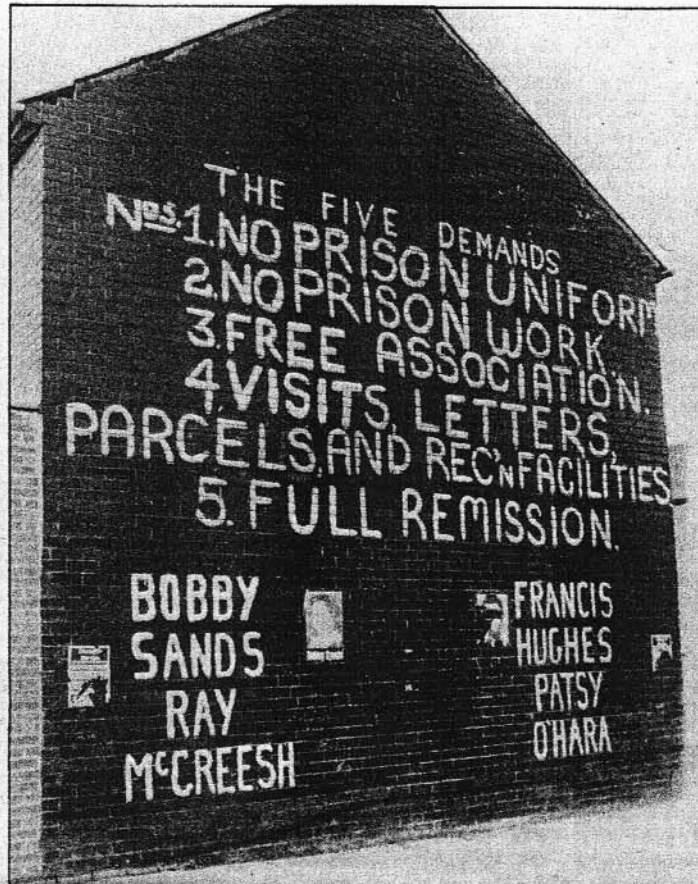
The British correspondent of the American magazine 'Newsweek' ridiculed Atkins' comments — the British government had been claiming that the IRA was a small band of isolated 'terrorists' divorced from the local community yet now it was supposedly poised to move part of the nationalist population in Belfast and set up 'no-go' areas!

The Irish Republican Army, the people of the Short Strand (named by renegade Gerry Fitt as being an area which the IRA was going to burn down!) and most international commentators saw Atkins' statement as an attempt to divert attention away from the hunger-strike.

Also on Thursday, the three Euro-MPs, Sile de Valera, Neil Blaney and Dr. John O'Connell, who had visited Bobby Sands, and who supported the intervention of the commissioners, called upon the International Red Cross to intervene and attacked the European Commission's decision not to act on Bobby Sands' sister Marcella's application as 'illogical'.

ILLUSION

On Sunday, two days before Bobby died, Charles Haughey, again attempting to give the illusion of 'doing all in his power' (but always refraining from doing what he was actually being urged to do — publicly



● Expertly painted Belfast wall slogan spells out a clear message to the British government



● CONCANNON despicably intervention

condemn Thatcher) resurrected the commissioners acting in a private capacity. The Sands family rejected Haughey's hypocritical politicking and he attempted back-door approaches to other hunger-strikers' families which were rejected.

The hunger-strike, Thatcher's attitude to it, and Haughey's importance in the face of British intransigence has driven a coach and horses through the London/Dublin pact of last December and could well jeopardise Haughey's election prospects this year.

There were attempts to throw the responsibility for the continuation of Bobby's life should he fall into a coma, onto the shoulders of his parents. The British administration, doctors close to

'he is prepared for the end'.

She revealed that she had promised Bobby not to ask the prison doctors to revive him should he go into a coma: "He told me not to. It is a sad thing to say... I love my son like any other mother does, but I wouldn't, I can't. He asked me not to and I promised him not to."

The moral attitude of the Catholic Church to the hunger-strike, which has been mainly raised by the British media and English clerics, continues to be divided. The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, exposed his political prejudices when he said on Thursday week that he believed Bobby Sands' death would be suicide.

Two Catholic priests associated with the prison, Fr. Denis Faul and Fr. Raymond Murray, roundly criticised him and said that for many years Cardinal Hume had "replied to pleas from prisoners with a statement that he did not interfere in the affairs of another country," and they stated that the hunger-strike was a passive form of protest.

CONCANNON

Of all the interventions in the hunger-strike, the most despicable came from the British Labour opposition spokesperson on the North, Don Concannon.

He served in the North for a number of years with direct-ruler Roy Mason when Castlereagh was going at full steam and filling the H-Blocks with nationalist youths. He also made the unprecedented intervention from the sanctuary of the floor of the House of Commons on polling day directing nationalist people in Fermanagh and South Tyrone not to vote for Bobby Sands.

He arrived in Belfast last Friday, May 1st, and went to the H-Block prison hospital where, surprisingly, the four hunger-strikers actually spoke to him. He carried a message from the parliamentary Labour Party, from Labour leader Michael Foot, and from himself, stating that they supported Thatcher's intransigence and that the men should abandon their fast.

Concannon said later that Bobby Sands "had quite a political argument with me for about a minute this morning". He then said that Bobby had wrung from him the admission that "he was engaged in a political struggle".

"I had to admit that," said Concannon, who in the next breath said his party did not support political status and neither did he. He also visited Francis Hughes who asked him about the five demands. When Concannon said he did not support them Francis told him to leave and to close the door after him. The other two hunger-strikers had similar experiences.

Concannon's ghoulish visit — to tell a dying man that he did not support him — has, it is reliably learnt, caused great consternation among many Labour Party members, twenty-eight of whom had, on the day of his visit, signed a parliamentary motion calling on the British government to negotiate with the prisoners on the issue of prison clothing and prison work.

FATALISTIC

After Concannon's visit on Friday and Haughey's short-lived resurrection of the commissioners on Sunday afternoon, the political manoeuvring publicly ended. The nationalist people who had protested peacefully for four-and-a-half years, who had recently come out in their tens of thousands, and who had voted Bobby Sands as a Westminster MP, were suddenly realising that Thatcher was not for shifting.

There was an almost fatalistic resignation to this fact on Sunday and Monday, which was made even more heart-rendering by the words of Mrs. Sands to reporters at Long Kesh, "My son is dying. My son is offering his life for better conditions in prison." And she appealed for an end to the trouble on the streets and for restraint.

The family remained at Bobby's bedside constantly after he lapsed into a coma in the early hours of Sunday morning, the British administration describing him as just 'asleep'. The family were at his bedside when at 1.17 a.m. in the early hours of last Tuesday morning, May 5th, he breathed his last, at last at peace.



● MRS. SANDS emotive interview



● FR. MAGEE arguments resisted



● BLANEY, DE VALERA AND O'CONNELL called for Red Cross intervention



● ATKINS stupid as ever



● HAUGHEY sly as ever

them, and newspapers, stated that the family could give permission for him to be drip-fed. But Mrs. Rosaleen Sands, in an emotive interview outside the gates of Long Kesh, told reporters on Tuesday 30th April

HAUGHEY STANDS IDLY BY

BY KEVIN BURKE

ANY CREDIBILITY which may have remained in the Free State premier Charles Haughey's claims of a 'unique relationship' with Britain's Margaret Thatcher has been totally wiped out by the death on hunger-strike of Bobby Sands.

Haughey's total servility at the feet of Margaret Thatcher is matched only by her contempt for him as just another Irishman.

At no stage has Thatcher shown that she considers Haughey a factor in the hunger-strike issue and he has confirmed her view of him by, even after the death, still not being able to find the courage to make any direct public criticism of the British government's murderous hatred for the Irish people.

ABUSE

Even as Bobby Sands lay in a coma, hours away from death, Haughey, ignoring all appeals for public action directed against Britain, compounded his unforgivable abuse of the Sands family (in misleading them into appealing to the European Commissioners on Human Rights, which was shown to be a British-welcomed diversion) by once again appealing to the European Commission to intervene.

Knowing full well that the Commission had already finally washed its hypocritical hands of the affair and that his appeal was directed to deaf ears, Haughey continued his cynical attempt to appear to be doing something. At the same time he meekly hoped that Margaret Thatcher might

respond to his humble remarks to the Commission about flexibility. It is probable that she did not even bother to read his statement let alone consider it.

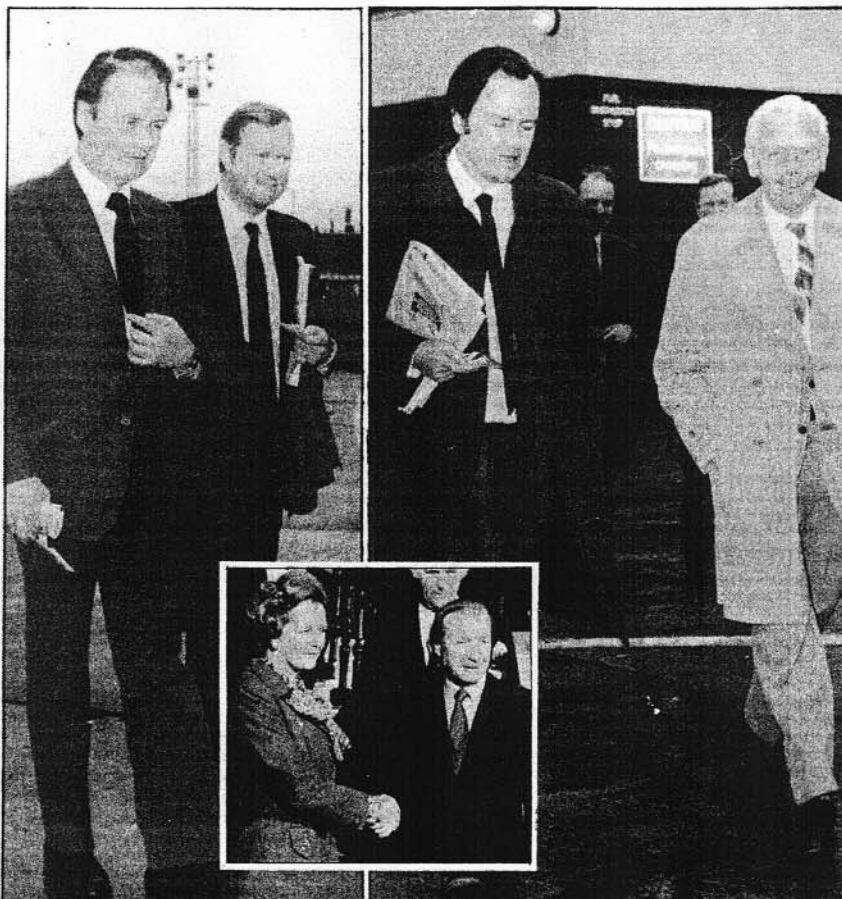
And still, with the lives of three more hunger-strikers in increasing peril, Haughey has yet to raise his face from the British feet, let alone get up off his knees.

REMOVED

The major plank of Haughey's election platform has thus been indisputably removed, and no Fianna Fail 'ifing' or 'buting' can replace it. Nevertheless, Haughey appears to have burnt his boats on electoral option and is almost irrevocably committed to a general election in June, without this vital claim that he is the nationalist messiah.

All the election machinery has been set in motion, economic bribes, publicity stunts, even the advertising billboards are booked, and it would appear even worse from Haughey's point of view to stop and go into reverse gear than to carry on and try to connive and contort his way through an election.

But, however flushed with electoral zeal and considerations of party unity Haughey's Fianna Fail supporters are, they must be made



● In a false attempt to seem to be trying to resolve the hunger-strike issue, Haughey deliberately misled the Sands family into calling in two European Commissioners — Professor Torkel Opsahl (extreme left) and Professor Carlage Norgaard (extreme right), seen here with their secretary, Dr. Hans Christian Kruger (second from left) and lawyer, Michael O'Boyle (second from right) — thus letting Margaret Thatcher off the hook as Bobby Sands lay dying. In doing so, Haughey continued the collaboration he symbolically began at the Dublin Summit last December (inset)

to face up to the reality of Haughey, now so openly revealed. Those 'republicans' in the party who promised so much at his accession to office must be forced to face up to the hypocritical focus of their own Fianna Fail 'republicanism'.

Every Fianna Fail candidate must be harried and hounded from election pillar to polling post and taunted with the shame of their leader.

INTACT

The eleven-year-old shadow of the Arms Trial which has meant so much to Charles Haughey and conned so many within his party, has been finally removed. Haughey

has at last proved his innocence. Whoever could have thought him guilty of planning to aid the nationalist people of the North? What suspicion can now remain?

Charles Haughey's record remains intact. The minister for justice who introduced military tribunals in 1961 to try and to sentence republicans is indeed unchanged as the Free State premier of 1981. A man who has stepped up collaboration with Britain to unprecedented levels, who has created the Special Garda Task Force along the border to work in conjunction with the RUC, who has opened up computerised intelligence links with the RUC Special Branch,

sanctioned direct radio links between the Free State and British armies, provided surveillance aircraft for the border, allowed British army incursions by land and air, used for the first and second times ever the coalition's Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act, and, whilst spending £200 million of Irish money in one year to this end, has throughout toadied to Margaret Thatcher whilst cynically attempting to deceive his fellow countrymen, both North and South, that he is actually doing the opposite.

Now he has stood idly by whilst Bobby Sands has died. Who would dare say 'Vote Fianna Fail'?

Dedicated revolutionary

A TRIBUTE BY RUAIRI O BRADAIGH, PRESIDENT OF SINN FEIN

IN THE RECORD of struggle of peoples and small nationalities for identity and liberation, the place of Ireland is well to the fore. But in that chronicle of events one of the highest points and proudest achievements must be the experience of the hunger-strike.

Within the sixty-six days and nights of fasting to the death of our comrade Bobby Sands, the Irish people bestowed on him the highest honour that lay within their power in that period of time — they elected him their parliamentary representative for the constituency of Fermanagh and South Tyrone in the British-occupied six counties.

SERVICE

Before the achievement of that signal honour and recognition the gifted, humane and totally dedicated Irish revolutionary who was Bobby Sands had given years of service to his people. Nine of his twenty-seven years on this earth were spent in prison, the last four being in Gaoispeakable conditions endured by Irish republican prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh.

Whether in active service Vol-

unteer, political prisoner, officer commanding the protestors in Long Kesh or writer interpreting the excruciating prison struggle, Bobby Sands gave of himself for others to the full. Now he has laid down his last great burden, his final responsibility among humankind he has discharged in the fullest painful measure.

For human dignity at its greatest stature he has died on the slow agony of the hunger-strike. Surrounded by his political enemies he has resisted all blandishments and has triumphed before his people and the watching eyes of the world.

Nationally and internationally he followed the progress of his sacrifice with closer attention than did the downtrodden and the oppressed everywhere. For them there was no need to interpret, to explain;

they observed and they knew; his struggle and his suffering were theirs in common cause.

SYMPATHY

Now he has breathed his last, supported by the unflinching courage of his family, to whom flows the heartfelt sympathy of his comrades in struggle and of all who respect integrity and self-sacrifice.

His death is not a defeat but a triumph for the human spirit over material considerations. His martyrdom was bravely undertaken, heroically endured, and has now been consummated. Bobby Sands' life and death make Irish people everywhere prouder of their heritage and nationality.

He has left this world on May 5th, sixty-fifth anniversary of the execution of that courageous soldier and 1916 leader, John MacBride. As he goes to join the great company of Irish heroes and martyrs, his actions speak out for his generation in the struggle against oppression; and the words placed on record at the death of his great predecessor, Terence Mac



● TERENCE MacSWINEY, MP died on hunger-strike



● BOBBY SANDS, MP died on hunger-strike

Swiney in 1920 bear repetition today.

"At the shrine of his bier and the death-bed of his comrades we pledge that, while an Irish heart

beats, we shall resist till the hands of those who would rob our country of its independence shall fall nerveless, or a just Judge has taken His vengeance."



● Evening vigil outside Dublin's GPO, last Tuesday

What is stirring in Dublin city?

BY KEVIN BURKE

RUSH-HOUR on a Tuesday morning. Dublin's main thoroughfare, O'Connell Street, is strangely silent, not a car or bus to be seen. Outside the historic GPO several hundred people stand in the mizzly rain closing the street.

A few men with black flags line the traffic island in the centre of the road. In their middle is a symbolic black coffin lid, the inscription in white letters reads 'Bobby Sands — RIP'.

Further down the street, five men with black flags stand on the pavement outside the British Home Stores — symbol of neo-colonialism. Under the GPO's massive portico eight books lie on tables, lines of several hundred more people stretching down the street wait to sign their name and record their condolences to the bereaved family. By noon, six thousand have signed, the books will stay open for three days.

MORNING

All morning the lines remain, factory workers, shopworkers, office workers on their way to work, shiftworkers on their way home, schoolchildren with satchels, women with prams, early morning shoppers, unemployed youths in denims, faces unusually serious beneath shorn scalps, busworkers and postmen pausing in their duties.

All take black armbands to wear, many join the informal vigil in the road. Over all an eerie, almost total, silence prevails. Friends meet and begin to talk, but quickly fall silent not finding the words.

When a large middle-class lady clutching an umbrella demands to be let through the crush, declaring in stentorian tones that she has business to do — lest anyone think she is a mourner, the crowd parts without noticing her and she is gone. There is no anger visible.

Even the lines of blue-helmeted gardai provocatively gathering nearby are ignored. Every building along O'Connell Street bears a picture of Bobby Sands. No one dares to tear them down today.

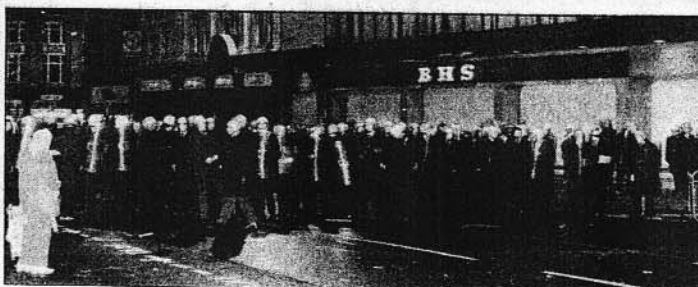
LUNCHTIME

As lunchtime approaches, the rain gets heavier, but the crowd outside the GPO continues to grow. There are almost one hundred black flags in evidence now. Elsewhere in the city a picket of black flags is maintained at the British embassy.

At two o'clock the crowd at the GPO, now some two thousand people, form up three abreast. A tricolour furled and tied with three black ribbons leads the procession, those with black flags follow immediately behind. Again there is total silence.



● Black flag vigil outside Dublin's GPO, last Tuesday



● Riot-clad gardai stand provocatively across O'Connell Street outside British Home Stores, Tuesday

A young woman steward passes down the lines instructing 'no smoking — hands out of pockets', but most prefer to ignore her, hunching their shoulders, their thoughts turned inwards as the rain dripping from eyebrows and running down cheeks provides the tears for those too numb to shed them.

PROCESSION

Onlookers stand silently in the rain as the procession passes on its way to Leinster House and the Department of the Taoiseach to mutely accuse Charles Haughey. Some of the marchers carry pictures of Margaret Thatcher above the words 'Wanted for Murder'. Many join the march as it makes its way through the city.

The striking feature of the procession is the youth of those taking part. The days when only old men marched in memory of martyrs gone-by seem over at last. These

youths discover at last a hero of their times, and, in discovering Bobby Sands, for the first time have begun to learn something of those who went before him in Ireland's history.

Youths deprived of their heritage by the re-written history taught in overcrowded classrooms, where they are detained for a while only to be spewed into the dole queues. Youths from the working-class areas of Dublin, who unconsciously know well, and identify with, similar areas of Belfast.

In a doorway three businessmen replete from expense account luncheons, laugh loudly as the procession passes in silence. Are they mocking those who mourn or are they so blind that they do not notice the lines of working-class marchers moving past them, deep in thought of all the wrongs that are heaped on Ireland's people?

VIGIL

The day goes on, the books at the GPO continue to fill up, the black flag bearers

maintain their vigil.

A man, tongue and feelings loosened by more than enough to drink, marches on his own up O'Connell Street, arms flying high, his voice can be heard clearly in the still trafficless street as he repeats his cry 'Bobby Sands MP, Terence MacSwiney MP, Fianna Fail republican traitors'. His protest too is valid.

Two women talk as they walk up the street: 'They'll pick their target. Remember what happened to the British ambassador when Frank Stagg died.' Her tone conveys that unique, sometimes conflicting, position which the IRA has always held in the hearts of Irish people.

NIGHT

As night falls, the crowds gather again outside the GPO, torches are lit and held high. This time there are speeches, sad songs are sung, poems recited, a formalised tribute. As the vigil ends the line of riot-clad police move forward again.

This time they secure their objective as youths meet them with a hail of stones, cans and sticks. Stewards move in and restore order. From the platform appeals are made for calm, dignified and peaceful protests only.

But it is well for those who have analysed, met, planned, and discussed how things must go from here. On them rests the task of harnessing and guiding the new and vital awareness of youth. It is an urgent task. Meanwhile some one hundred youths have broken away, unseen until too late by heavy gardai who are left far behind.

SYMBOLS

As they cross O'Connell Bridge and up into Dawson Street the youths begin to mirror their youthful counterparts in the North. The symbols of oppression must be attacked — a basic solidarity arising from frustrated non-political souls.

In Belfast, the British army and RUC who daily taunt and stamp on nationalist working-class youth are stoned and petrol bombed. In Dublin, a new unity is formed. The Mercedes cars, the high-class fashion shops, the five-star hotel, the banks and insurance companies, which with all their wealth daily taunt and stamp on working-class youth have windows smashed. A car is burned, two more are overturned, and one glorious target contains two members of the brutal Special Branch unceremoniously tipped on their ears, car and all.

Outside the Mansion House in Dawson Street, Dublin's Lord Mayor is saying good-night to guests on the step. Next day in sanctimonious rage he admits to have trembled with fear. What is stirring in the city?

Tuesday 5th May 1981 in Dublin, a day forever one with Bobby Sands and Irish freedom, is over.

FRANCIS HUGHES

BY SEAN DELANEY

THE SECOND REPUBLICAN to join the H-Block hunger-strike for political status — a fortnight after Bobby Sands — was twenty-five-year-old Francis Hughes, from Bellaghy in South Derry: a determined, committed and totally fearless IRA Volunteer, who organised a spectacularly successful series of military operations before his capture, and was once described by the RUC as their 'most wanted man' in the North.

Eluding for several years the relentless efforts of the British army, UDR and RUC to track him down, Francis operated boldly throughout parts of Tyrone and north and south Antrim, but particularly in his native South Derry, with a combination of brilliant organisation and extreme daring — until his capture after a shoot-out with the SAS — which earned him widespread popular renown, and won general support for the republican cause, as well as giving him an undisputed reputation as a natural-born soldier and leader.

Now completing his eighth week on hunger-strike, his physical condition drastically deteriorating, Francis lies on the verge of a coma, close to death, and ready if necessary to bring tragically true the words of one of his former comrades-in-arms:

"He loved this old country and was prepared to die for it anytime. There'll never be another man like Frank again."

ROOTED

Francis Hughes was born on February 28th 1956, the youngest son amongst ten children, into a staunchly republican family which has been solidly rooted, for most of this century, in the townland of Tamlaghtduff, or Scribe Road as it is otherwise called.

His parents, who married in 1938, are Patrick Joseph Hughes, aged 72, a retired small cattle farmer born in the neighbouring townland of Balfymacpeake, and Margaret, aged 68, whose maiden name is McIlwee, and who was born in Tamlaghtduff.

A quarter of a mile away from the Hughes' bungalow, on the other side of the Scribe Road, live the McIlwees, who have two sons — Thomas and Benedict — on the H-Block blanket protest: they are first cousins of Francis. Elsewhere along the two miles of the Scribe Road, almost every small farm or dwelling is owned by some relative of the Hughes family.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that prior to Francis' capture the Brits and RUC should have regarded Tamlaghtduff as 'bandit country' and a virtual 'no-go' area, from where a well-executed ambush on enemy forces by Francis and his comrades was a strong possibility, and where a checkpoint on the Scribe Road was far more likely to be manned by republican Volunteers than by Brits or RUC.

In Tamlaghtduff, as throughout the rest of Bellaghy, sympathy as well as active support for the republican cause runs at a very high level, a fact testified to by the approximately twenty prisoners-of-war from around Bellaghy alone.

POPULAR

Francis is an extremely popular person, both to his family and to his republican colleagues and sup-

porters. Since childhood he has been noted for his perpetual good humour and easy-going nature, his complete generosity, and his inability, or refusal, to become angry or depressed.

His father recalls that as a boy he was always whistling, joking and singing: a trait which he carried over into his arduous and perilous days as a republican, when he was able to transmit his enthusiasm and optimism both to Volunteers under his command and to sympathisers who offered them — at great personal risk — food and shelter.

Arriving through the door of a 'safe house', armed (as he always was), and dressed in the military combat uniform which he almost invariably wore while 'on the run', and at the end of a tiring day's march across country, one of his typical, laughing, catchphrases to his solicitous hosts was: 'We've never had it so good.'

It is qualities like these, of un-

complaining tirelessness, of consideration for the morale of those around him, and his ruling wish — to lead by example, that have made Francis Hughes one of the most outstanding Irish revolutionary soldiers this war has produced, and a man enormously respected in his native countryside.

BOY

As a boy, Francis went first to St. Mary's primary school in Bellaghy, and from there to Clady intermediate school three miles away.

He enjoyed school (though he was glad to leave too!) and was a fairly good student whose favourite subjects were history and woodwork. He was not particularly interested in sport, but was very much a lively, outdoor person, who enjoyed messing around on bikes, and later on, in cars.

He enjoyed dancing, and regularly went to *ceili* as a young man, even while 'on the run',

although after 'wanted' posters of him appeared his opportunities became less frequent. From a young age, he also had a keen interest in antique objects, collecting bottles and old clocks in particular.

His parents recall that Francis was always extremely helpful around the house and farm, and that he was 'a good tractor man'. On one occasion, however, Francis refused his father's request to shoot an injured dog: he could not bring himself to harm an innocent life.

DECORATOR

Leaving school at sixteen, Francis got a job, with his sister Vera's husband, as an apprentice painter and decorator, completing his apprenticeship shortly before going 'on the run'. Vera recalls that he enjoyed the work and that he was good at his trade.

In later days, Francis would often do a spot of decorating for the people whose house he was staying in.

On one occasion, shortly after the 'wanted' posters of him had been posted up all over South Derry, Francis was painting window frames at the front of the house he was staying in, when two jeep-loads of British soldiers drove past. While the other occupants of the house froze in apprehension, Francis calmly waved and smiled at the curious Brits as they passed by, and continued painting.

It was such utter fearlessness, and the ability to brazen his way through, that saved him time and time again from capture, during his relatively long career as an active service Volunteer.

On one such occasion, Francis was paying a rare, brief visit home, when a British army helicopter descended on a field outside the Hughes' farmhouse, about a hundred yards away. Francis, watching the patrol jump out and run over to the Scribe Road to mount a road-block, coolly remarked, 'that's alright', and went back into the kitchen to finish his tea.

Another time, when stopped along with two other Volunteers as they crossed a field, Francis told the Brit patrol that they didn't feel safe walking the roads, as the IRA were so active in the area. The Brits allowed the trio to walk on, but after a few yards Francis ran back to the enemy patrol to scrounge a cigarette and a light from one of the British soldiers!

TROUBLES

Although at the start of 'the troubles', the Hughes family — in common with most nationalist families — would frequently discuss the civil rights campaign, Francis' father recalls that the young lad never appeared to show an active interest at that time, and certainly never went on any of the early

(continued on next page)



■ THE HUGHES FAMILY: top, left: Oliver, aged 31, who still lives in Bellaghy; top, centre: from left: Josephine, aged 40, who lives in England; Dolours, aged 21, who lives at home in Bellaghy; Maria, aged 27, who lives in Scotland; Philomena, aged 41, who lives in Scotland; and Noreen, aged 29, who lives in Belfast — the picture was taken at Maria's wedding, two years ago; top, right: Vera, aged 37, who lives in Magherafelt; bottom, left: Francis, pictured at Clady school, aged then about 14; bottom, centre: from left: Meagher, aged 36, who lives in Dublin; Mrs. Hughes; and Roger, aged 26, who lives in England — this picture was also taken at Maria's wedding; bottom, right: Mr. Hughes

A determined and totally fearless soldier

Portrait
of a
hunger
striker

(continued from previous page)

marches or protests.

The significance of the civil rights campaign, however, permeated the countryside around Bellaghy very early on — with the march from Belfast to Derry in January 1969 being barred from the village, and detoured over bogland to Gulladuff, despite the 70% nationalist population in Bellaghy and the surrounding area. (Twelve years on, during this present hunger-strike campaign, marches are still forcibly prevented by hundreds of riot-clad RUC men from reaching the village.)

A turning point for Francis, in terms of his personal involvement in the struggle, occurred at the age of seventeen, when he and a friend were stopped by British soldiers at Ardboe in County Tyrone, as they returned from a dance one night.

The pair were taken out of the car and so badly kicked that Francis was bed-ridden for several days. Rejecting advice to make a complaint to the RUC, Francis said it would be a waste of time, but pledged instead to get even with those who had done it, 'or with their friends'.

Notwithstanding such a bitter personal experience of British thuggery, and the mental and physical scars it left — he still occasionally has pains in his leg from the kicking — Francis' subsequent involvement in the Irish Republican Army was not based on a motive of revenge, but on a clear and abiding belief in his country's right to national freedom.

INVOLVEMENT

During the early part of 'the troubles', the 'Officials' were relatively strong in the South Derry area, and Francis' first involvement was with them.

However, disillusioned, as were many others, with the Sticks' unilateral ceasefire in 1972, he left to set up and command an 'independent' military unit in the Bellaghy area. This was largely concerned with defensive vigilante patrols against a widely-feared loyalist assassination campaign; at a time when such attacks in many areas of the North were at a peak, but the unit also carried out a number of ambushes on enemy forces, and round about the end of 1973 the entire unit — including Francis — was formally recruited into the IRA.

Speaking of his feelings when he eventually learned of his son's involvement, Mr. Hughes states: "At that time everyone was wrought up, and it was part of the game to get involved. We were all in danger of being murdered at one time. The police and the Orangies were hand in hand. We remembered Burntollet and Bloody Sunday. That was enough to support them."

Francis' involvement brought him increasingly to the attention of the British army and RUC, and he was regularly held for a few hours in Magherafelt barracks and stopped on the road by British patrols; and on one occasion he was held for two days at Ballykelly camp.

As the 1975 IRA/British army truce came to an end, Francis, fearing his imminent arrest, went 'on the run'. From that time on, he led a life perpetually on the move, often moving on foot up to twenty miles during one night, then sleep-

ing during the day — either in fields and ditches, or in 'safe houses'; a soldierly sight in his black beret and combat uniform, and openly carrying his rifle, a handgun and several grenades as well as food rations.

RAIDS

The enemy reacted with up to fifty early morning raids on Francis' home, and raids on the homes of those suspected of harbouring him. Often, houses would be staked out for days on end in the vain hope of capturing Francis. Often, it was only his sheer nerve and courage that saved him.

One night, Francis was followed to a 'safe house' and looked out to see the Brits surrounding the place, and closing in. Without hesitating, the uniformed Francis stepped outside the house, clutching his rifle, and in the darkness crept gradually through their lines, occasionally mumbling a few short words to British soldiers he passed, who, seeing the shadowy uniformed figure, mistook him for one of themselves.

On another occasion, Francis borrowed a tractor and trailer from an unsuspecting local man, then loaded 300 lbs. of explosives on to the trailer, covered with bales of hay. As he drove to his destination he came across a Brit checkpoint, and pulled up short. Calmly climbing down off the tractor he picked up one of the bales and threw it to cattle in an adjoining field, before slowly strolling away across the field, returning only when the Brits had moved on.

On numerous occasions, Francis and his comrades were stopped at checkpoints along the country roads, while moving weapons from one locality to another, but always calmly talked their way through. Once, a UDR soldier actually recognised Francis and his fellow Volunteers in a car, but, fully aware that Francis would not be taken without a shoot-out, he waved their car on!

ACTIVE

The years before Francis' capture were extremely active ones in the South Derry and surrounding areas, with towns and villages like Bellaghy, Maghera, Toome, Magherafelt and Castledawson being blitzed by car bombs on several occasions, and numerous shooting attacks being carried out as well.

Among the Volunteers under his command, Francis had a reputation of being a strict disciplinarian and perfectionist, who could not tolerate people taking their republican duties less seriously, and selflessly, than was necessary. He also, however, inspired fellow Volunteers by his example and by always himself being in the thick of things, and he thrived on pressure.

Operations were carefully and meticulously planned and discussed with the Volunteers involved, but a decision once taken was strongly adhered to. His boyhood trait of generosity manifested itself during his republican life and Francis would give away his last shilling or his last cigarette.

During one night-time operation a weapon was missing, and Francis gave away his own gun to another Volunteer, taking only a torch himself, which he used to its maximum effect by shining it at an oncoming enemy vehicle, which had its headlights off, to enable the other



● Mrs. Margaret Hughes, and her youngest daughter, twenty-one-year-old Dolours, fully support Francis on his hunger-strike

Volunteers to direct their fire.

Francis' good-humoured audacity showed itself, too, in his republican activity. At the height of his 'notoriety' he would set up road-blocks, hoping to lure the Brits into an ambush (which by hard experience they learned to avoid!), or he would ring up the Brits and give them his whereabouts!

Such joking, however, did not extend only to the enemy. One day, lying out in the fields, he spied one of his 'uncles' cycling down the country road. Taking aim with his rifle he shot away the bike's rear wheel. His uncle ran, alarmed, into a nearby house shouting that loyalists had just tried to assassinate him!

BATTLE

The determination of the British army and RUC to capture Francis Hughes came to a head in April 1977. In that month, on Good Friday, a car containing three IRA Volunteers was overtaken and flagged down on the Moneymore Road, at Dunroan in County Derry, by a carload of RUC men.

The Volunteers attempted to make a U-turn, but their car got

stuck in a ditch as the armed RUC men approached. Jumping from the car, the Volunteers opened fire, killing two RUC men and injuring another before driving off. A hundred yards further up the road a second gun battle ensued, but the Volunteers escaped safely.

Subsequently the RUC issued a 'wanted' poster of Francis Hughes, and two fellow republicans, Dominic McGlinchey and Ian Milne, in which Francis was named as the 'most wanted man' in the North.

At his trial in February 1980, however, charges against Francis, of being involved in this shooting attack, were dropped. As was the case with many operations in the South Derry area, the elusive Francis Hughes became the RUC's general scapegoat for IRA actions even when they had no proof of his involvement.

Not that Francis Hughes was alarmed. Shortly after the Moneymore Road attack, Francis lay resting on the settee in a 'safe house', in full military uniform, a revolver strapped to his waist, while UDR patrols drove past the house scour-

ing the countryside for him, casually watching a picture of himself on the television news.

He had no fear of capture or of death, having sacrificed everything for the republican cause unselfishly, and this attitude of ever-present confidence and self-reliance inspired local people who, if they learned of his presence in the vicinity, felt reassured, knowing that they had the guns and determination of Francis and his comrades to protect them.

When his eventual capture came, it was just as he had always said it would be: 'I'll get a few of them before they get me.'

STAKE-OUT

At 8 p.m. on March 16th 1978 two SAS soldiers took up a stake-out position opposite a farm, on the south side of the Ranaghan road, about two miles west of Maghera, in the townland of Ballyknock.

At 9.15 p.m. they saw two men in military uniform, and carrying rifles, walking in single file along

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FRANCIS HUGHES

A determined and totally fearless soldier

(continued from previous page)

the hedgerow of the field towards them. Using their 'night sights' in the darkness, the SAS men observed the military behaviour of the two oncomers and having challenged them, and heard the men mumble a few words to each other in Irish accents, they assumed that the pair were UDR soldiers.

One of the pair, in fact, was Francis Hughes, the other a fellow Volunteer, and with only a second's hesitation both Volunteers cocked their rifles and opened fire. One SAS man fell fatally wounded, but the other — though shot in the stomach — managed to fire a long burst from his sterling sub-machine gun at the retreating figures, and to make radio contact with his base.

Within three minutes nearby Brit patrols were on the scene and the area was entirely sealed off. The following morning hundreds of Brits took part in a massive search operation. In the field where the shooting took place the Brits found an M14 American service rifle, a Smith and Wesson .38 Special revolver, black beret, gloves and holster.

Fifteen hours after the shooting, at around 12.15 p.m. the next day, they also found Francis Hughes, sitting in the middle of a gorse bush in a field three hundred yards away, bleeding profusely from a bullet wound which had shattered his left thigh. As he was taken away on a stretcher, he yelled defiantly, through his considerable pain: 'Up the Proxies.' His comrade, though also wounded, slightly, managed to evade the dragnet and to escape.

SURVIVED

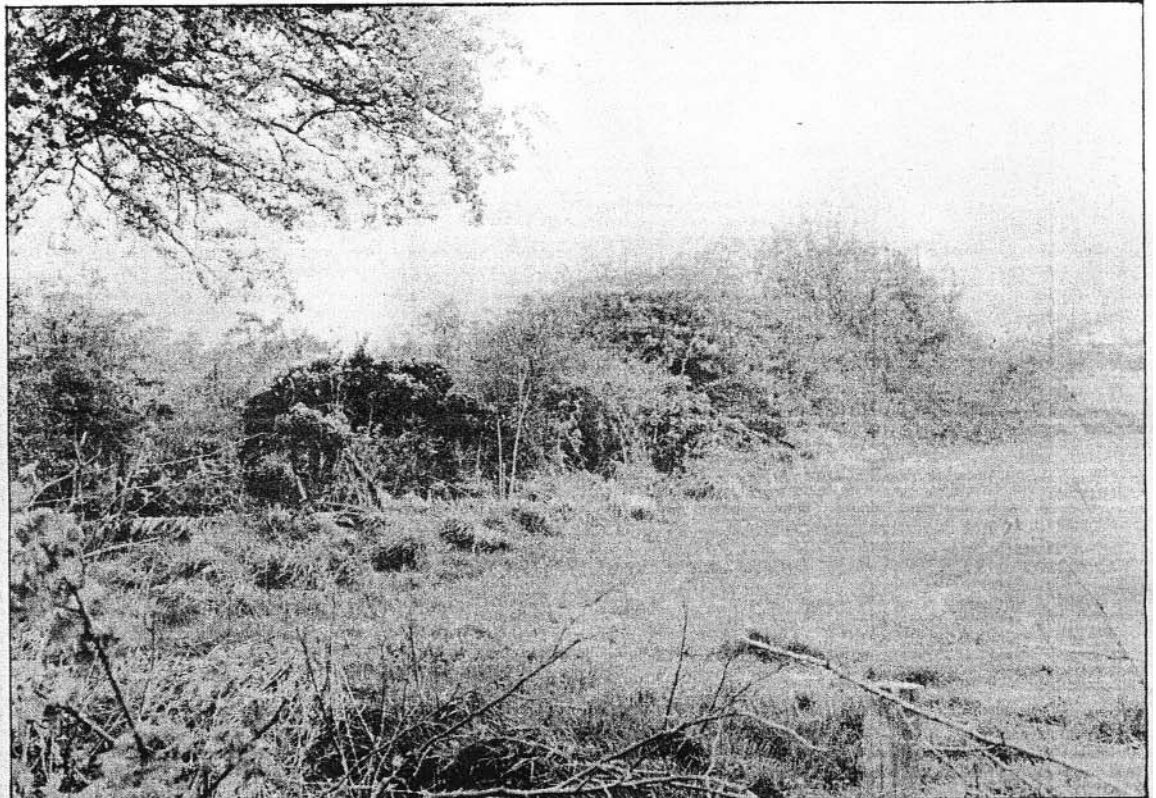
How he survived the night of the shooting, possibly the coldest night of that year, bears eloquent testimony to Francis' grim determination to avoid capture. After being shot, he dragged himself — unable — to walk — across the Ranaghan road and across two fields, without a sound, before burying himself in a thick clump of gorse bushes.

At one point, en route, Francis fell down a sharp drop between fields, and his left leg — the muscle and bone completely disintegrated — came up over his shoulder; but Francis worked it carefully down before continuing to crawl on his way. In his hiding place, he lay through the night, motionless and soundless, till his capture.

When he was found, unable to move through cold, pain and stiffness, Francis, knowing that both Brits and RUC were on instructions to shoot him on sight, gave his name as Eamonn Lavery, and gave his address as Letterkenny, County Donegal.

Francis was taken to Magherafelt hospital, and from there to Musgrave Park military hospital in Belfast, and it was only then that his true identity was revealed. He spent ten months in Musgrave Park, where his leg was operated on, reducing his thigh bone by an inch and a half, and leaving him dependent on a crutch to walk.

There, he kept his spirits up, never complaining, and used to tell yarns to gullible British army guards. For instance, he used to say



● In the heavy clump of gorse bushes along the edge of this field, a massive Brit/RUC search operation discovered IRA Volunteer Francis Hughes, bleeding profusely from gunshot wounds which had shattered his left leg. Despite being unable to walk, he crawled three hundred yards to this hiding place



● The Hughes farmhouse where Francis was born and grew up, before going 'on the run'. The Hughes now live in an adjoining bungalow, occupied for just six months, which Francis has never seen — the farmhouse is unoccupied

he was a farmer before his capture, and when he was asked whether he had a big farm, he would look up and say nonchalantly: 'Oh, about a thousand acres.'

CASTLEREAGH

On Wednesday 24th January 1979, Francis was taken from Musgrave Park hospital to Castle-reagh interrogation centre, where he spent six days before being charged on January 29th. For more than four days, Francis refused food and drink, fearing that it might have been drugged to make him talk.

His behaviour in Castlereagh was typical of the fiercely determined

and courageous republican Volunteer that he is. Throughout innumerable lengthy interviews Francis continually repeated the phrase, 'I'll have to see my solicitor before I answer that', laughed and smiled, and occasionally made fun of his interrogators with phrases like 'You're some smart outfit if you don't know the answer to that one'. His frustrated interrogators described him as 'totally unco-operative'.

Nevertheless, at his trial in Belfast in February 1980, after a year on remand in Crumlin Road jail, Francis was found 'guilty' on all charges.

He received a life sentence for

killings the SAS soldier, and fourteen years for attempting to kill the other SAS man; twenty years for attempting to kill the occupants of an RUC man's house during a booby-trap bomb attack at Coagh, County Tyrone, on January 25th 1977, and twenty years for causing the explosion; with a further fifteen years for possessing arms and ammunition.

H-BLOCK

In the H-Blocks, Francis immediately went on the protest for political status, and despite the severe disability of his wounded leg, displayed the same courage and determination that had been his hallmark before his capture.

During visits, he would never complain to his family about the harsh conditions or about beatings, just as when he was 'on the run' he would never have troubled his family with any of his problems. Instead, he continued to joke and laugh, as before, and to enquire about friends and relatives, and all the local 'seal' from around Bellaghy.

And just as always, wanting to be in the thick of things, and wanting to shoulder responsibility for other political prisoners as he had earlier looked after the morale of fellow Volunteers, Francis was one of those to volunteer for the hunger-strike which began on October 27th last year. He was not one of the first seven hunger-strikers selected, but was among the thirty men who joined the hunger-strike in its clos-

ing stages as Sean McKenna's condition became critical.

Regarding this hunger-strike, Francis' father states that he asked his son not to take part in it, but when Francis assured him that the blanket men had given it careful thought and that his mind was made up, both Mr. Hughes and the whole family threw their full support behind Francis.

Exactly ten miles from the Hughes' home is the County Derry village of Swatragh, the birthplace of Free State premier Charlie Haughey. Mr. Hughes feels very bitter towards Haughey, asserting that he has 'done nothing' and that the hunger-strike could have been resolved a long time ago if Haughey had withdrawn Free State troops from the border, and ended collaboration.

Meanwhile, as Haughey looks idly on, this young and courageous South Derry republican lies close to death. Francis Hughes has already loaned his life, through years of active struggle and imprisonment, to the cause of Irish freedom. He may shortly make the ultimate sacrifice, of life itself, as his comrade and fellow hunger-striker Bobby Sands has already done.

Now, only the immediate and resounding, unequivocal and insistent protest by the Irish people can force Haughey off the fence, smash Thatcher's intransigence, and save the life of Francis Hughes.

It is not much for him to ask, but time is swiftly running out.

Sympathy

SANDS. The staff of An Phoblacht/Republican News extend our deepest and most heartfelt sympathy to the family of our comrade Vol. Bobby Sands who died on hunger-strike in H-Block, Long Kesh. "I have fought for my country and her liberation, for the people to decide their own determination, to break the shackles that invaders have enforced, to destroy the monster that kills without remorse." (Taken from 'Bright Star', a poem written by Bobby Sands.)

SANDS. Deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Vol. Bobby Sands who died on May 5th 1981 in H-Block, Long Kesh, as a result of a hunger-strike enforced on him through British brutality. Mary Queen of Ireland pray for him. Always remembered by his comrade and friend Paddy Loughran (H5) and all the Loughran family.

SANDS. Deepest sympathy to the family, comrades and friends of our friend Vol. Bobby Sands. Your death lies at the door of your murderers. May we continue your fight with the strength of your courage and the memory of your sacrifice. From Dickie Glenholmes (Bristol prison), wife Lily, and family.

SANDS. Deepest sympathy to the Sands family on the death of Vol. Bobby Sands. From the Quinlan family, Dublin.

SANDS. For our friend and comrade Bobby. "Although I would not like to leave my bones on the hill, if it is a choice between that and surrendering the things that make me a man, the things that allow me to hold my head erect and unbowed, then the hill can have my bones. Many times in the history of our past, we were presented with this choice, too many times, too many of us chose to live the life of the near man, the half man. Well, I don't care how long I live, over that I've no control, but I do care what kind of life I live and I can control that. I may not live but another five minutes but it will be five minutes definitely on my terms!" From his comrades Seanna (H5) and Elblin.

SANDS. The Sinn Féin POW Department offers condolences to the Sands family on the death of their son and brother, Vol. Bobby Sands, who died in the hospital wing of the H-Blocks, Long Kesh on May 5th 1981. "Of course I can be murdered, but I remain what I am — a political prisoner of war." (Bobby Sands.)

SANDS. Deepest sympathy to the family and friends of our comrade Bobby who died on hunger-strike on



IRA Volunteers escort the body of their comrade, Bobby Sands, from his home to St. Luke's chapel, Twinbrook

SANDS. The Republican Movement, comprising Ogligh na hEireann, Cumann na mBan, Cumann na gCailiní, Na Fianna Eireann, Sinn Féin and Cumann na hUachtaráin, deeply regrets the death of Vol. Bobby Sands, MP, and extends condolences to the bereaved Sands family.

We have lost a true leader and a brave Irishman who by his tortuous sacrifice of sixty-six days on hunger-strike captured the imagination and devotion of peace-loving people throughout the world, from America to Iran, from Mozambique to Portugal, from Australia to Europe and even a few consciences in England. The name of Bobby Sands will go down in history as signifying freedom against tyranny, courage against hypocrisy and duplicity, oppressed youth against decaying imperialism.

"Life springs from death and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations... The 'defenders' of this realm have worked well in secret and the open. They think they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools, they have left us our Fenian dead and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace." PADRAIC H. PEARSE.

May 5th 1981. "Life springs from death and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations." From his former mates in cage 11, Gerald Rooney, Tomboy Loudan, Paddy Molloy, Paddy, Denis, Johnner, Martin, Micko, Dickie, Sid, Terry, Teddy, Trampas, Dan, Jim, and all his friends and comrades from the Short Strand, Belfast.

SANDS. The Martin McKenna Sinn Féin cumann, Dublin, wish to express our deepest sympathy with the relatives and friends of the late Bobby Sands, IRA Volunteer, political prisoner and West-

minster MP.

SANDS. The Casement/Nolan Sinn Féin cumann, Dun Laoghaire, extends deepest sympathy to the relatives of the late Bobby Sands, IRA Volunteer, political prisoner and Westminster MP.

SANDS. Sinn Féin POW Department, Dublin, extends deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of Volunteer Bobby Sands.

SANDS. Deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of Volunteer Bobby Sands from his comrade Ricky (Free State).

COMHBHRÓN

I raiteas ó Chonradh na Gaeilge cáineann siad Rialtas Shasana agus iarrann siad ar Haughey seasamh láidir poiblí a ghlacadh. Sheas an Conradh leis na fir phluid ó thúis agus iarrann siad ar a mbail a bheith gníomhach sa bhfeachtas.

"Is mór an náire é do Rialtas na Breataine bás tragóideach Bobby Sands. Is ag rialtas na Breataine a bhí, agus atá

réiteach na stailce ocras. Níor ghéill ach a gcearta a dhéanadh do na prósúnaigh i mBloc H agus in Ard Mhaca. Ina áit sin ghlac siad seasamh stuacanta do bhogtha. Is iadsan atá freagrach as bás an Fheisire Sands. "Anois agus baol ann go bhfaighidh cuid do na stailceoirí ocras eile bás ar i bhfad, iarraimid arís ar an Taoiseach

seasamh láidir agus poiblí a ghlacadh ar an gceist. Iarraimid air a rá le Príomh-Aire na Breataine gur chóir na cearta atá cheana féin, ag prósúnaigh áirithe sna sé chontae a thabhairt do phrósúnaigh Bhloc H agus Ard Mhaca. Na dhíultuinn Príomh-Aire na Breataine sin a dhéanamh ba chóir don Taoiseach a Ambasadóir a ghlaobhadhailé Londain.

SANDS. Deepest sympathy to the family of my friend Bobby on the death of their son and brother. Mary Queen of Ireland pray for him. Deeply regretted by his comrade Bríge.

SANDS. The Republican Prisoners of War in the H-Block, Long Kesh, express deepest sympathy to the family of our friend and comrade Vol. Bobby Sands. "They have nothing in their whole imperial arsenal that can break the spirit of one who doesn't want to be broken". I measc bhFáltheas na nGael go Raibh a anam. Buailimid.

SANDS. A personal tribute to a gallant comrade who died for his principles. My deepest sympathy to his father, mother and to all his family. I measc Laochra na hEireann sa Fháltheas go Raibh se. From Raymond McCreesh, prison hospital, the H-Blocks, Long Kesh.

SANDS. I extend my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of my comrade Vol. Bobby Sands who died on hunger-strike on May 5th 1981. "Bids to be faithful still and to make no peace with England until Ireland is ours." (P. H. Pearse.) From his comrade Patsy O'Hara, prison hospital, the H-Blocks, Long Kesh.

SANDS. To the family, friends, and comrades of my gallant comrade Vol. Bobby Sands, Ogligh na hEireann, who died on the sixty-sixth day of his hunger-strike for political status, I extend my most deep sympathy. Thug se a shaoil go mbeimid saor. From his comrade Francis Hughes, prison hospital, the H-Blocks, Long Kesh.

SANDS. The Irish Republican Prisoners in Crumlin Road jail express deepest sympathy to the family of our comrade Bobby Sands who gave his life for the five demands of the Irish Republican Prisoners of War. Go ndeana Dia trocraí ar a anam.

SANDS. The Irish Republican Prisoners of War in Armagh jail express their deepest sympathy to the family of our comrade Bobby Sands. "It is not they who can inflict the most but those who can endure the most who will ultimately triumph."

DEATHS

JAMES COADY

THE DEATH has taken place of James Coady of Gambassfield, Kilsheelan, County Tipperary.

Born in 1901 into a republican family he joined the IRA in his teens and never wavered in his principles until his death. He was interned on three occasions because of his activities: firstly in 1921-22 during which time he spent nineteen days on hunger-strike, again in the 1940s and finally in 1957.

For a number of years he was honorary vice-president of Carrick-on-Suir Sinn Féin and local members formed a guard of honour for his flag-draped coffin on its removal to Gambassfield church and burial. Sincere sympathy was extended by the Republican Movement to his wife Bridget, relatives and friends. Ar dheis De go raibh a anam.

TOMAS MALONE



● TOMAS MALONE
life-long republican

THE death took place on Easter Monday in Nenagh, County Tipperary, of Tomas Malone, a native of Needin, Tyrrellspass, County Westmeath.

At his funeral the oration was given by Ruairi O'Bradaigh, president of Sinn Féin. The sympathy of the Republican Movement was extended to the Malone family, Tomas' nephew Joe Malone in Portlaoise jail, to his sister Maire O'Sullivan and the O'Hegarty family.

A life-long republican, along with his two brothers Seamus and Joseph, Tomas Malone was also known under the pseudonym of Sean Forde. In 1916 the Malones, with others, engaged the British forces in Westmeath and Tomas remained prominent in the IRA as Commander of the East Limerick Brigade during the Tan and Civil Wars.

He remained active in the GHQ of the IRA for many years afterwards and underwent a number of periods of imprisonment. In recent years he expressed his view that the fight today is the continuation of the one which he fought for so many years.

JAMES O'HAGAN

JAMES O'HAGAN of Raheny, Dublin, who died last week came from a staunch republican family, which has given much service to the Republican Movement down the years.

A native of Killeel, County Down, he was interned in Derry jail in the 1940s.

He was one of a group of twenty-one prisoners who tunneled out of the prison in 1943 and escaped across the border into County Donegal in a furniture van. The majority of the escapees were, however, re-arrested by the Free State authorities almost immediately and interned in even worse conditions in the Curragh concentration camp.

The Republican Movement has extended sympathy to his bereaved widow and family, to his brother Patrick in Killeel (who was interned in the seventies) and to all his relatives and friends.

IN MEMORIAM

AHEARNE, Tony (8th Anniversary) In proud and loving memory of Volunteer Tony Ahearne who died in action on May 10th 1973 at Roslea, County Fermanagh. Always remembered by his friends in the Tony Ahearne Sinn Féin cumann Carrigaline, Co. Cork.

AHEARNE, Tony (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Tony Ahearne (Cork). Ogligh na hEireann, Co. Tyrone, who died while on active service duty on May 10th 1973. Fuair se bas sa Bhearna Bhaill as troid ar son saoirse. Always remembered fondly by the Republican Movement, Belfast.

CAMPBELL, Teddy (7th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Teddy Campbell, Ogligh na hEireann, who died on May 3rd 1974. Mary Queen of Ireland pray for him. Always

remembered by the Lower Falls Commemoration Committee, Belfast.

LEONARD, Frederick (7th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Frederick Leonard (Big Freddie), Belfast Brigade, Ogligh na hEireann, who was brutally murdered by loyalist assassins on May 7th 1974. In death your spirit still lives — we cherish your memory forever. Never forgotten by his old comrades and friends in the Short Strand and Markets area of Belfast, and by all his comrades who now struggle in British and Free State jails. Venceremos!

LEONARD, Frederick (7th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Frederick Leonard, Belfast Brigade, Ogligh na hEireann, who was murdered in cold blood by loyalist sectarian assassins on May 7th 1974. His cause was a thirty-two county socialist republic, a cause we must make a reality. Never forgotten by his friends and comrades in the Belfast Brigade.

Solidarity Greetings

COLEMAN, John Patrick (H5-Block). Congratulations, son, on completing four years on the blanket. Victory to the blanket men. From your mother, father and family.

COLEMAN, Martin (H3-Block). Solidarity greetings to Martin and his comrades on completing four years on the blanket. Thinking of you always. God bless. From dad, brothers and sisters.

MCDADE, Gerald (H-Block). Congratulations, Gerald, on completing four years on the blanket. Victory to the blanket men. Thinking of you always. God bless you and all your comrades. From your granny, aunt Bell, John, Pat and wee Patrick.

MCDADE, Gerald (H-Block). Congratulations, Gerald, on completing four

years on the blanket. Greetings also to Paul Daly. Your fight is our fight. God bless you all. From all your brothers, especially Paul (H4), his wife Ann, and Dominic.

MCDADE, Gerald (H-Block). Congratulations big brother on completing four years on the blanket on May 8th. Greetings also to Paul Daly. God bless you and all your comrades. All the best from Marty and Alice. UTP.

MCDADE, Gerald (H-Block). Congratulations on completing four years on the blanket on May 6th and a special wish also for your birthday on May 3rd. Greetings also to Paul Daly. God bless you and all your comrades. From your granny, aunt Bell, John, Pat and wee Patrick.

Hunger-Strikers

THE following poem, 'Hunger-Strikers', was written by twelve-year-old Vaureen nic Rorai, of St. Louise's comprehensive school, Belfast, last weekend, shortly before Bobby Sands died in H-Block.

Behind those big bald iron gates,
There's four brave people lying in wait.
The bravest one is Bobby Sands,
Who deteriorates from his home land.

Francis Hughes who's now as bad,
This will make the people sad.
His family they all sit in pain,
But all the crying is in vain.

Bobby Sands who's now MP,
For his people he must be free.
We have four martyrs in our hands,
And they will fight for their homeland.
Help them Lord through all their pain,
And soothe the crying that is in vain.

And if they should die for five demands,
The blood will flow through English hands.
Maggie Thatcher will hide in shame,
For she's the one who holds the blame.
She bore a son much, much the same,
And I wonder would he be brave to do the same.

WHAT'S ON

HUNGER-STRIKE YOUTH MEETING
7.30 p.m. Friday 8th May
Gaelic League Hall
Thomas Street
LIMERICK

HUNGER-STRIKE FUND-RAISING SOCIAL
Saturday 9th May
Kevin Barry Club
44, Parnell Square
DUBLIN
Admission £1

HUNGER-STRIKE MARCH & RALLY
2 p.m. Saturday 9th May
Assemble St. Stephen's Green
March to GPO
DUBLIN

THANKS

THE H-BLOCK/ARMAGH APPEAL FUND acknowledges with thanks the receipt of £100 from the republican prisoners in Portlaoise jail, via Mary O'Keefe, Portlaoise.

GORTAGLANNA COMMEMORATION
Sixtieth Anniversary
2.30 p.m. Sunday 10th May
Knockanure Village
CO. KERRY
Organised by Listowel Sinn Féin

HUNGER-STRIKE MEETINGS
8.30 p.m. every evening
Workmen's Hall
Fair Street
DROGHEDA

SINN FEIN MEETING
Comhairle Cuige Mumhan
2.30 p.m. Sunday 17th May
Queen's Hotel
ENNIS
Co. Clare
All delegates to attend

DRAW RESULTS

AN CUMANN CABHRACH, DUBLIN
APRIL RESULTS
£100: 183; £50: 124; £25: 117; £10: 188 and £29: £5: 217, 184, 358, 156, 262 and 246.

BOBBY SANDS

THE



The final salute, at Andersonstown, Belfast, on Thursday, for Bob