

An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS



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**8-PAGE
PULL-OUT
SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENT**

**THE
DIARY
OF**
The first seventeen days of Bobby's
H-Block hunger-strike to the death
BOBBY SANDS

Armed IRA jail break



● Crumlin Road jail, Belfast, after eight republicans shot their way to freedom on Wednesday afternoon

EIGHT republican prisoners on remand in Belfast's Crumlin Road jail shot their way to freedom out of the heaviest guarded prison in Europe last Wednesday, in one of the most daring IRA escapes of the last ten years.

The escapees are: brothers Tony and Gerry Sloan, Gerard McKee, Joe Doherty, Angelo Fusco, Patrick Magee and Tony Campbell, all from Belfast and charged in connection either with M60 machine gun attacks in 1980 on an RUC patrol in Andersonstown in which an RUC man was killed and three wounded, or with the siege on the Antrim Road in May 1980, when a Captain in the SAS was killed; and Pete Ryan from Ardara, in County Tyrone, who was charged with killing an RUC Reservist and a UDR man.

All eight were also charged with IRA membership.

The men came out the way they went in last year — through the

front gate! The elaborate, spectacular escape began around 4p.m. when legal visits which they had all arranged for the same time had just ended and the prisoners were put in two cells.

When warders came to bring back one set of prisoners to their wing, one of the Volunteers produced a short-arm, forced the warders to release the other prisoners and then locked about ten warders in the cell.

They then made their way to 'B' wing's visiting area and arrested all the warders, visitors and solicitors who were there, before locking about thirty up in a room. One warder, named as Killen,

(continued on page 2)



● British troops, a prison officer and RUC men, in despair, at the insecure gates of Crumlin Road jail

24 pages - 25 pence

25 PENCE is the price of this week's special extended 24-page issue of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News', which includes an eight-page supplement 'The diary of Bobby Sands: the first seventeen days of Bobby's H-Block hunger-strike to the death'.

**HUNGER-STRIKE
MARCH & RALLY
Sunday 14th June
BELFAST
Assemble 2 p.m.
Dunville Park**

Armed IRA jail break

(continued from front page)

went for his baton, was disarmed and hit over the head.

FRACAS

It was during this fracas that the prisoners then dished out some punishment to another warder, named as Joe Kennedy, for his assault on republican prisoners in the jail in recent months.

One report states that at one stage a squad of between ten to fifteen warders wielding batons, who thought the fracas was a mere scuffle, attempted to overpower the men but retreated when shots were fired.

Two warders and a solicitor were ordered to strip, and three of the IRA men dressed in two uniforms and a suit, respectively, calmly walked to the main gate which was opened for them. They then pulled guns on the real warders in this key security area, and made them lie on the ground until their five comrades ran across a small courtyard to join them.

GUARDED

Directly opposite the jail is Crumlin Road courthouse which is heavily guarded and as soon as the first group of men broke through the front gate of the jail, RUC men and British soldiers fired across the road at them. The escapees then ran to one of two awaiting cars in the car-park behind the health centre and made their escape.

But the second group were involved in a shoot-out, and only escaped when an IRA active service unit (one of a number which was touring the Crumlin Road area as back up) provided cover fire for them.

The escapees commandeered a car and drove into a nationalist area of Belfast where they immediately went to ground.

Soon afterwards, the RUC and British army set up checkpoints on all main roads in Belfast as well as most border crossings.

CHEERS

As the men made their escape, clearly visible to republican prisoners in cells on the top landing of 'A' wing, loud cheers went up and makeshift flags were flown from the windows.

The main M60 trial, which had lasted five weeks, ended last Friday and the judge was due to give his judgement this Friday, only forty-eight hours after the escape. It is almost certain that by Friday night the seven men would have been in the H-Blocks and on the blanket.

The British government was humiliated by the escape, loyalists were furious, nationalist people overjoyed and one man, the chief prosecution witness and tout in one of the M60 trials, James Kennedy, must be extremely sick. His victims had fled! Out on their own bail!

It is reported that when one of the escapees arrived in a safe area, the first words of freedom he spoke were: 'Are any of the M60's available so we can show them that we are back in business?'

Campaign revitalised

Positive effects need to be quickly reinforced

BY KEVIN BURKE

THE intervention of the nine H-Block/Armagh prisoner candidates in the Free State general election has undoubtedly achieved its primary objective in revitalising the campaign in support of the hunger-strikers and remobilising support beyond all expectations after the numbing effect of the deaths and funerals of the first four hunger-strikers.

The enthusiasm of existing campaigners and of those spurred by the election campaign to become actively involved has been evident in all constituencies and it has been matched by the sympathetic and concerned response from all those thousands canvassed on the prisoners' behalf.

URGENCY

The urgency of the hunger-strike campaign, whatever the outcome of the election, continues to grow and all the positive effects of the election campaign have to be quickly reinforced.

Campaigners, seasoned by their experience both in organisation and in witnessing face to face on a massive scale the feelings of the people for the hunger-strikers, will have overcome any fears which may have made them hesitate in the campaign ahead.

The effect of the prisoners' intervention on the overall election campaign was particularly interesting and showed that the Free State politicians of all parties, whatever their public face, were finding the same concerned atmosphere as those campaigning on behalf of the prisoners.

Fianna Fail activists, in particular, as the days went by, were very anxious to let it be known that they were not publicly resenting the intervention of candidates who would first of all cut into their support. Around the constituencies Fianna Fail were saying that they understood the concern on the issue and were sure that any votes going to the prisoners would return on second preference to them.

SILENCE

The initial silence by the politicians after the H-Block/Armagh intervention was broken on Friday, June 5th, by Fine Gael leader Garret Fitzgerald who, having sensed Fianna Fail's growing unease, hit hard at Charlie Haughey's gullibility in relying on British premier Thatcher and his inability to affect the hunger-strike issue.

The same unease caused Haughey in the final days of the campaign, after a long silence, to repeat more and more regularly his



● Bernadette McAliskey canvasses at the AnCo training centre in Waterford, for hunger-striker candidate Kevin Lynch

claim—that he had been instrumental behind the scenes in achieving a 'settlement' of the pre-Christmas hunger-strike, and that he was still working behind the scenes to get Thatcher to move.

PRESS

The grave concern of Fianna Fail was nowhere better illustrated than by the attitude of the 'party newspaper', the 'Irish Press', to the prisoners' election campaign. After weeks of comparatively commendable coverage of the hunger-strike campaign, the 'Irish Press' dramatically changed its attitude and matched the other two Dublin newspapers in consistently playing down and discrediting the campaign.

Just a few of the constituency profiles which appeared in the 'Irish Press' illustrate the point. The profile in the 'Irish Press' on Louth only mentions the Agnew candidacy to mock at it.

The Dublin West profile in the 'Evening Press' does not even mention the candidacy of Tony O'Hara. The Cavan/Monaghan pro-

file in the 'Irish Press' briefly dismisses Kieran Doherty as perhaps grabbing a few extreme Fianna Fail votes but is generally not taken seriously. The Dublin North East profile in the 'Evening Press' does not mention the candidacy of H-Block campaigner Paddy Healey and so on.

But anyone visiting or living in the constituencies contested by prisoners could not but be impressed by the campaigns mounted. The masses of posters, the busy election headquarters, the hosts of election workers and the enthusiastic election meetings spoke for themselves. And where electoral campaigning experience was lacking it was certainly made up for by hard work and dedication particularly from the many youthful participants.

The undoubted gains of the campaign, proving that enough workers can be mobilised to inform the Irish people in detail about the hunger-strike issue at a very personal level without the aid of the establishment media, must be pushed forward and made to bear fruit in the saving of the hunger-strikers' lives.



● H-Block campaign caravan in Cavan, where hunger-striker Kieran Doherty was a candidate



● Joe McDonnell



● Kieran Doherty



● Kevin Lynch



● Martin Hurson



● Thomas McElwee

NO MORE FUNERALS!

THE exhausting and hectic campaign for a prisoner candidate in the Free State elections on Thursday had a dead line of polling day.

But exhausting though it may have been, as with the cost of the Bobby Sands victory for jubilant campaigners in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, there is no time to relax now that the election is over because there is a literal deadline on the life of H-Block hunger-striker Joe McDonnell measured in thirty days.

This Saturday, Joe McDonnell completes his fifth week on hunger-strike, followed by Kieran Doherty (twenty-three days), Kevin Lynch (twenty-two days), Martin Hurson (sixteen days) and Thomas McElwee (five days). And, on Monday, they are expected to be joined by a sixth hunger-striker.

The widespread support, North and South, for the prisoners if harnessed and concentrated like a laser beam into political pressure within Ireland will, in turn, melt the British government's inflexibility.

REINFORCED

The Free State election has reinforced the national dimension to the protest campaign, which has for so long been undermined and sabotaged by Fianna Fail leader, Charles Haughey, personating as a supporter of the prisoners' rights.

The determination of the republican political prisoners in the H-Blocks after the death of their four comrades, to not only continue, but to intensify the hunger-strikes should now be matched by an equal determination and commitment from supporters to break British intransigence and ensure that there are no more funerals from the H-Blocks.

And the key to breaking the British can be found in some of the arguments being put forward, in justification of their respective positions, by the leaderships of Fianna Fail and the SDLP, Brits, the RUC, and the Catholic hierarchy (the latter three having hitherto been relied upon to maintain, for the British, relative nationalist stability).

The Brits have said that hunger-strikers are



● Goretti McDonnell with her children Bernadette, aged ten, and Joseph, aged nine, — there is no time to relax if the life of their husband and father, Joe McDonnell, is to be saved

more useful to the IRA dead than alive.

This is a lie but it means in an inarticulate way that they are recognising the erosion of the hallowed middle ground which follows each hunger-striker's death. The RUC have been closely following each H-Block/Armagh march in the North for its composition and have expressed concern to the Brits that it is not just the old faces who are out.

MISTAKEN

During the last hunger-strike it was reported that RUC chief Jack Hermon favoured a compromise because the street movement was leading to increased nationalist consciousness and was damaging normalisation, of which the 're-formed' RUC was an integral part.

On this occasion, however, he has thrown his lot behind the Brits' position and believes that to give the five demands would be a major victory for the IRA. But the Brits' mistaken evaluation of the situation is blinding them to the fact that persisting in criminalisation (that is, a showdown with the hunger-strikers) is destroying normalisation and stability and is injecting mass energy into the IRA.

At the end of the day, and no matter how it appears phrased, this argument — that the policy of criminalisation is self-defeating — is the one being used by Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey, SDLP leader John Hume and the

Catholic hierarchy when they suggest prison reforms or compromise.

BREAKING-POINT

The British do listen to those whose services they rely upon, and although their stubbornness is at present stretching relations with Ireland's constitutional and moral leaders (who want a compromise), a strain of breaking-point proportions is needed if British intransigence is to be reversed.

There is, of course, the possibility that Britain would still refuse to budge, in which case she would be playing for total humiliation of the Irish people or total alienation of the Irish people into the IRA camp. The latter gamble is too big and that is why Britain can be broken when the Free State premier, the SDLP leader and the Catholic hierarchy are forced to apply their muscle instead of at present playing at it and even then being intimidated by Protestant complaints, British Catholic Tory politicians and the 'Sunday Express'!

So our target, as before, must be this trio and their supporters, of persuading and convincing where possible, or by force of the mobilised tens of thousands of potential IRA supporters, making them realise that they must speak out to Britain in threatening tones that are heard not only in the back rooms of Number Ten Downing Street, but across the world. That way there will be no more funerals.

..WAR NEWS..



Fermanagh UDR ambush

A UDR lance-corporal was shot dead by IRA Volunteers in South Fermanagh last Friday morning, June 5th.

The part-time reservist, who joined the UDR on the regiment's formation in 1970, was ambushed and shot dead after he called at a house — in Tully South, off the Derrylin road, in County Fermanagh, to deliver coal — a delivery round he did once a week, in addition to his full-time factory job and part-time UDR activities.

Three IRA Volunteers had taken over the house earlier in the morning, and waited until the UDR man arrived, some time after 11 a.m., before shooting him instantly dead.

The Volunteers then made their escape safely in the UDR man's delivery van which they abandoned a mile-and-a-half away. There was, however, a considerable delay before reluctant British army personnel approached the vehicle, for fear of booby-traps.

Single shot

THE IRA's Belfast Brigade mounted a gun attack on an RUC patrol in North Belfast last Saturday, June 6th. A single shot was fired by a Volunteer at the RUC in Duncrain Gardens, but no hit was claimed.

Informer

THE IRA's North Armagh command have confirmed that a local man, Sean Nash from Lurgan, currently in Long Kesh prison, is an RUC informer.

The IRA state: "It has come to our attention that a self-confessed RUC informer, Sean Nash, has written to local people, in a vain attempt to clear his name, and that he has told them that he was acting under IRA orders, while giving information."

"Nothing could be further from the truth and while Nash's allegations are ridiculous we feel that they should be formally denied. He was not acting under orders. He is a self-confessed RUC informer and his feeble attempts to clear himself should be treated with the derision they deserve."

Punishment shooting

THE IRA's Belfast Brigade carried out a punishment shooting of a well-known local 'hood' in the Andersonstown area of the city on Monday, June 8th. Eighteen-year-old Jim Devlin, known locally as 'gangster Devlin', was shot in the knees and elbows.

According to the IRA: "Devlin has been the instigator of numerous anti-social acts in the Andersonstown area which have included the stealing and destruction of cars, and physical abuse and threats to the people of the area."

Devlin and other 'hoods' involved in this type of activity have been well warned in the past by the Belfast Brigade, who pointed out that "the people of our areas are already hard pressed by the RUC and British army. Activities of this nature will not be tolerated."



● SONIA DELANDER
body-searched by male Brit

Unwarranted raids

AT 10.30 p.m. on Thursday 4th June, fifty British soldiers and two RUC men cordoned off two houses in Aspen Park in West Belfast's Twinbrook estate, proceeding to search them and to intimidate the inhabitants.

One of the houses was entered after Brits smashed down an unlocked back door with sledge hammers; neighbours who came out to see what was happening were forcibly prevented from approaching the houses (both of which are occupied by women living alone with their children), and people attempting to return to their homes further up the street were prevented from doing so.

A very aggressive attitude was taken to both householders from the outset by the raiding parties, and when one of them, Mrs. Delander, asked to see a search warrant, she was told by an RUC man: 'we can do what we like without a warrant'.

Mrs. Delander's thirteen-year-old daughter, Sonia, was body-searched by a male British soldier despite the mother's protests, Sonia becoming hysterical at the attack. Sonia has been told by the British army that she is to be the next schoolchild shot in the head by a plastic bullet.

This follows the death of twelve-year-old Twinbrook schoolgirl Carol Ann Kelly, also of Aspen Park, who died after being shot in the head by a Brit-fired plastic bullet on Tuesday May 19th as she walked home from a local shop.

These latest raids are seen by local people as part of the regular campaign of Brit harassment of those involved in H-Block protests in the area.



● BRIAN STEWART
killed by a plastic bullet

Political postponement

THE appeal by Belfast mother Mrs. Kathleen Stewart for civil damages arising out of the shooting death of her twelve-year-old son by a plastic bullet in October 1976, was postponed for the sixth time, in the Belfast High Court last week.

Brian Stewart, from Turf Lodge in West Belfast, was returning from a shop in Monagh Crescent, Turf Lodge, on October 4th 1976, when a British soldier fired a plastic bullet hitting him in the head. He died in hospital six days later.

The British army issued contradictory statements at the time of the shooting, saying that Brian was a ring-leader of rioting which was taking place, and later, that the soldier firing the plastic bullet had his aim interfered with, hitting Brian instead of his intended target. Local people have always emphatically denied that there was any rioting at the time.

Mrs. Stewart believes that the hearing of her appeal, against an earlier court decision refusing civil damages, has been postponed yet once more, under political pressure from the Northern Ireland Office, because of a fear that renewed attention will also be focussed on recent deaths and serious injuries inflicted by the British army's lethal plastic bullets.

Derry man shot dead

A BRITISH soldier shot dead a sixty-five-year-old pensioner in Derry on Wednesday week, June 3rd, after an IRA attack on a foot patrol.

The incident occurred in the Creggan estate at Central Drive when an IRA Volunteer fired a single shot at a British army patrol. A soldier standing in the grounds of the Holy Child school immediately opened fire with a number of rounds directed at the Creggan shops, fatally wounding Joseph 'Drummer' Lynn, of Creggan Heights.

DEAD

Joseph Lynn fell to the ground, wounded in the neck. Local people carried him into Ramsey's shop a few feet away and gave him first aid until an ambulance arrived only moments later to take him to Altnagelvin hospital, but he was dead on arrival.

The British army pursued a van, opened fire, and uncovered a rifle which had been used by the IRA Volunteers who escaped. It is significant that even the British army and RUC versions of the affair — of which there were several — all claimed that the IRA fired only one shot.

It is also worth noting that despite the Brits finding the weapon used by the IRA neither the Brits nor RUC issued any statement claiming that 'forensic evidence' linked the captured rifle to the ammunition which killed Joseph Lynn — an incriminating omission indicating that the weapon which

killed Joseph Lynn was a British army 7.62 millimetre SLR and not an IRA .303 rifle.

FACTS

The IRA's Derry Brigade stated: "At 4.45 p.m. a Volunteer from Derry Brigade fired a single aimed shot at a clearly identifiable military target approximately fifty yards away, namely a British soldier standing in the grounds of Holy Child school. Immediately after, the British army opened fire indiscriminately in the direction of Creggan shops and continued firing for several minutes.

"Mr. Joseph Lynn was hit in the neck and fell to the ground. Local people carried him into a nearby shop and called for an ambulance but he was dead on arrival at hospital. From the position and angle of the Volunteer's fire it would have been a physical impossibility for the Volunteer to have shot Mr. Lynn. Local people who saw the shooting knew this to be the case, and an angry crowd



● MR. JOSEPH LYNN

gathered to drive the Brits from the area. "Mr. Lynn is the eighth Derryman to die at the hands of British forces since Easter, and to his family and friends we express our deepest sympathy."

ACTS OF TERROR

ATTACKS by British army and RUC gunmen on Catholics in Belfast have continued over the past week, while acts of terror and harassment increased as British forces attempted to re-establish their presence in nationalist areas.

Over the week there was a noticeable increase in British army foot patrols on the streets and houses were searched and wrecked by raiding parties of British army and RUC men.

LINDEN

During the Brit invasion of Divis Flats on the morning of Thursday 4th June, a fifty-year-old man, Desmond Linden, a grandfather from the Flats, became another serious victim of a British army plastic bullet. As the Brits moved in to the Flats, local women greeted them with bin-lids and whistles.

Desmond Linden, standing outside his own flat, was abusively ordered off the balcony and back into his home by a Brit who then fired a plastic bullet into him at point-blank range before he could reply. He was struck on his left side just below his ribs, and fell to the ground.

The Brit then proceeded to kick him violently in the stomach. An ambulance was called, but as Desmond Linden was being escorted by a medical attendant he was stopped and questioned by British soldiers, and despite his obvious injury, and the protests of the ambulance man he was kept standing for five minutes before being allowed access to the ambulance.

As the ambulance left the area it was once again delayed when the RUC stopped it and again attempted to question the wounded man. Only after the ambulance attendant had complained on his radio to the hospital was the ambulance allowed to go on.

An official complaint was later made by the attendant through his union at the behaviour of the British army and RUC. Desmond Linden is still receiving

medical treatment for his injuries.

JOHNSTON

On Tuesday 2nd June, the home of Christopher Johnston, a married man from the Colin area, was raided and wrecked by the British army and RUC.

Christopher Johnston was arrested on a three-day detention order, but while he was in Castlebar his home was again raided, and furniture damaged, by the British army.

His wife and six-year-old child were staying with relatives at the time, and the Brits, finding the house empty, smashed in the doors, ripped up floorboards, pulled panelling off the walls, and tore the sink unit from the wall.

LOUGHLAN

At 3 p.m. on Monday 8th June, a house in the Lenadon estate was the target of a British army raiding party.

A patrol had come to the house to question people there, twenty-one-year-old Gerard Laughlan, his pregnant wife Eileen, aged nineteen; Eileen's pregnant sister, Mary McDonnell, aged twenty; and Mary's boyfriend, Charles Brown.

The Brits became abusive when the occupants refused to answer their questions, and shortly afterwards a large force of British soldiers arrived in seven vehicles and surrounded the house, refusing to let anyone in or out. When the RUC arrived at about 4p.m. the Brits burst into the house.

A female British soldier crashing into the house, struck Eileen Laughlan on the face, splitting her lip. The Brits, having gained entry, immediately attacked Charles Brown and Gerard Laughlan, later arresting both. Only the intervention of two local priests prevented more serious assaults on the



● DESMOND LINDEN
shot, and then kicked



● EILEEN LOUGHLAN
had to go to hospital

occupants. Eileen Laughlan was subsequently taken into hospital.

McKAY

Last Friday, 5th June, two hunger-strike activists from Turf Lodge were victims of assaults by both the British army and the RUC, as they took part in a 'white line' picket on the Falls Road.



● JOHN MCKAY
assaulted during H-Block protest

At about 5.15 p.m. the picket moved back towards Andersonstown barracks because of a suspect bomb outside the Falls Park. But following this, the Brits, who had the area saturated, started to man-handle twenty-four-year-old John McKay, trying to pull him off a roundabout in the centre of the road, where some of the protesters had assembled.

Gerard Kelly, aged forty-one, protested at the behaviour, whereupon an RUC man struck John across the head with the butt of his rifle, and then arrested both men.

John was again assaulted in the back of an RUC landrover as they were taken into Andersonstown barracks. Once inside, both men were assaulted by RUC men and charged with disorderly behaviour, the RUC sergeant commenting, 'who do you think will win this case?'

The frequent occurrence of these types of activity by the British army and the RUC is an indication of the frustration felt by British forces in the face of popular resistance in the nationalist areas. The attempted reversion to open military repression is yet another sign that the 'normalisation' policy of the British go-vernment is fast falling to pieces.

Hunger-striker No.10

THOMAS McELWEE

THE REPUBLICAN who joined the four men already on the H-Block hunger-strike is a twenty-three-year-old South Derry man, Thomas McElwee, from Bellaghy, who began to refuse food last Monday, 8th June.

Thomas is the sixth in a family of eight girls and four boys, one of whom — twenty-one-year-old Benedict — is also on the



blanket, having been captured on the same IRA operation as Thomas, in October 1976. An earlier hunger-striker, the late Francis Hughes, was a first cousin of Thomas and their respective family homes are less than a half-mile apart on the Scribe Road in

Bellaghy.

After leaving school at the age of seventeen, Thomas worked for a while as an apprentice motor mechanic.

He was part of a seven-man IRA active service unit, all of whom were arrested after a premature bomb explosion in a car four of them were in, in the Markethill area of Ballymena on October 9th 1976. Thomas lost an eye in the explosion, his comrade Sean McPeake lost a leg, and Colm Scullion lost several toes. Also on the operation were Thomas' brother, Benedict, and Thomas' girlfriend, Dolores O'Neill.

Thomas spent eleven months on remand and after a trial lasting three weeks, in October 1977, was sentenced to life imprisonment plus twenty years. He is on the blanket in H5-Block.

Benedict is serving a ten-year sentence in H4-Block and Thomas' girlfriend, Dolores O'Neill, is serving a life sentence in Armagh jail, on the protest.

Thomas McElwee joined Joe McDonnell, Kieran Doherty, Kevin Lynch and Martin Hurson on the hunger-strike, and this week completes his first week without food.

Ten Presbyterian ministers returned from a three week tour in the USA last week where they disappointedly reported the widespread support for the prisoners. That support will be consolidated (the raving Reverend Robert Bradford will be glad to hear!) by a US tour begun this weekend by relatives of the late hunger-strikers Bobby Sands, Raymond McCreech, and Patsy O'Hara, which was half-financed by the H-Block/Armagh Committee in the Royal Victoria Hospital!

'I'm the very, very proud



● GORETTI McDONNELL



● Crowd listen from the steps of St. Patrick's church, Ballinamore, last Sunday

THE PRISONER now at the forefront of the H-Block hunger-strike is thirty-year-old Belfast man Joe McDonnell, who received political recognition from the people of Sligo and Leitrim on Thursday when they cast their votes for him in their thousands.

Thursday was Joe's thirty-fourth day on his fast, to the death if necessary, for the political prisoners' five demands. Joe replaced his friend and comrade, the late Bobby Sands, on the hunger-strike, five weeks ago, on Saturday 9th May. A fortnight ago he was moved into the H-Block prison hospital, into the cell in which fellow hunger-striker Francis Hughes had died after fifty-nine days.

Joe McDonnell, an upholsterer by trade, is a staunch republican and is well-known for his great sense of humour and good spirits, qualities which he maintains even now.

Joe is a married man with two children. His wife Goretti, and his two children, Bernadette, aged 10, and Joseph, aged 9, live in Lenadoon in west Belfast; but all three have spent the last fortnight on the election campaign trail south of the border, in counties Sligo and Leitrim.

Last weekend, *'An Phoblacht/Republican News'* reporter Seamus Boyle interviewed Goretti in her husband's election campaign headquarters in Ballinamore, County Leitrim — in the pub and family home of veteran republican, and chairman of Leitrim county council, John Joe McGirl (who is Joe's election agent, and who himself was elected as a Sinn Féin TD in the constituency in 1957).

PROOF

Proof of the success of the prisoners' Leinster House election campaign as a platform for promoting the hunger-strikers' cause, not just in the twenty-six counties but even further afield, was provided by the anxious pursuit of

Goretti that same Sunday morning by television crews from both BBC (BBC2 *'Newsnight'*) and ITV (Thames *'TV Eye'*), who also both filmed her addressing an after-mass meeting at St. Patrick's church in Ballinamore.

Goretti, a lively and attractive Belfast woman, has undoubtedly been hardened by living in the centre of the war zone for the past twelve years, and faced for more than half of that time with the task of bringing up two children with their father in jail. (Joe has been interned twice, on remand for a year, and then imprisoned in the H-Blocks.) Goretti is extremely proud of her husband's republicanism, and of his determination to resist, to the death, criminalisation within the H-Blocks. Nevertheless, and although she is one hundred per cent behind her husband, the emotional strain of seeing her husband starve to death at intransigent British hands, is now obviously taking its toll.

WHIRLWIND

Nevertheless, in the last fortnight, Goretti has been sucked into a whirlwind of activity around the four-seater Sligo/Leitrim constituency, being rushed by car from one spot to another doing house-to-house canvassing; speaking at public rallies; greeting hundreds of well-wishers; addressing after-mass meetings; and giving newspaper, radio, and television interviews; but all this against a background of the tremendous hospitality and warmth of the people only too willing to show their support for the imprisoned soldiers of Ireland.

Goretti was well pleased with the reception given her and her two children by local people.

She says: "I found the people here very, very sincere. The first day I came down I did an interview for the local paper, *'The Leitrim Observer'*, and what I didn't realise then was how much publicity we'd be getting from the paper.

"It hit the front page. There was a photograph of myself and the two

children, and a run-down on why we were here, and when we did go door-to-door to the houses, there were actually women running down their paths to shake hands with Bernadette, Joseph, and myself, knowing us, and knowing all about us. I didn't even have to ask 'will you support us?' They said 'don't say a word'."

CHALLENGES

Goretti provides, like many other wives and mothers suddenly confronted with grave personal circumstances in this war, an excellent example of a woman who — even when thrust into a crisis not of her own making — is able to rise to the occasion, and to meet and overcome new challenges.

On Sunday afternoon, in Sligo town, faced — at a few moments' notice — with the task of recording for local Radio Sligo a one-minute election commercial, and a three-

minute election address, she recorded a faultless and heart-rending appeal to the county's electorate, on behalf of her husband and his fellow prisoners.

Only a couple of hours earlier, she had capably addressed an appreciative audience of several hundred gathered on the steps of St. Patrick's church in Ballinamore after 11.30 a.m. Mass; and had successfully recorded her first television interview, with BBC man Brian Walker, whose persistent line of questioning — stressing, in his view, the futility of the prisoners' cause and of their standing in the general election — had failed to unnerve her.

Her calmness and confidence was born of someone convinced of something in their own hearts, by their own direct experience, and whilst not especially articulate, well able to put that message over.

ADDRESSING

Addressing people after the 8.30 a.m. mass in Ballinamore, for example, she said briefly, but directly to the point:

"First of all I'd like to introduce

myself: I'm the very, very proud wife of Joe McDonnell, and these are our two children — Bernadette, aged ten, and Joseph, aged nine — and we're here begging for you, the people, to give us the 'number one' vote.

"We can't promise you new buildings, new factories, but what you could do is save Joe's life. You could end this hunger-strike. So I'm begging you, give us your support. I don't want my two kids to be without their daddy.

"A 'number one' vote from you, the people, can save his life. As Joe McDonnell, where he is now lying up in H-Blocks, it means nothing to anyone; but as Joe McDonnell, TD, Maggie Thatcher and Charles Haughey will have to stand up and take heed. They've murdered four of our men. I don't want them to murder any more.

"So I'm pleading with you, come out and give us your votes: 'number one' if you can. If you can't vote, you can give us your prayers. Come out and help us. That's all."

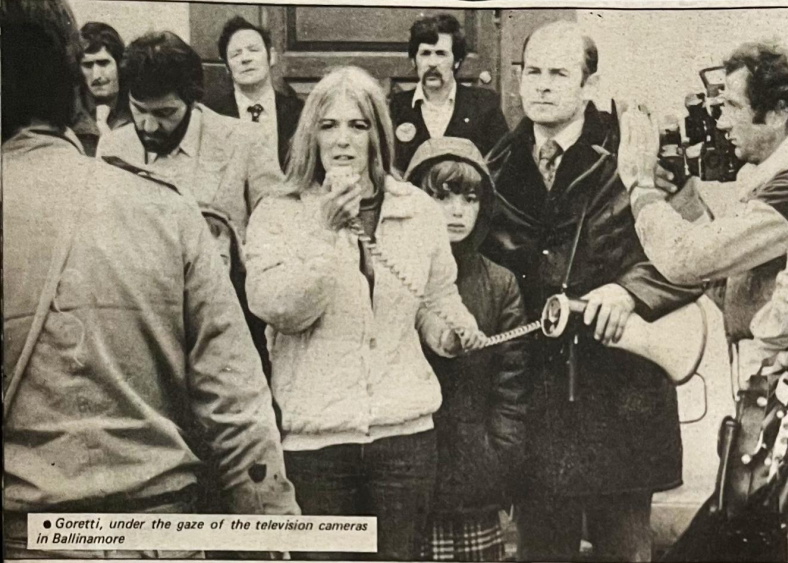
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● Goretti McDonnell, being interviewed last weekend by BBC man Brian Walker (right of picture)

wife of Joe McDonnell

BY SEAMUS BOYLE



● Goretti, under the gaze of the television cameras in Ballinamore

(continued from previous page)

For nearly four years Goretti had not seen her husband, and Bernadette and Joseph had not seen their father, since his conviction to fourteen years' imprisonment and subsequent joining of the blanket protest, in September 1977 — because he refused, with Goretti's approval, to don the prison garb to take visits (a decision which initially they obviously expected to only affect them, for a few months at most).

Goretti recalls: "Well the last day I saw Joe, when he was sentenced, we talked about visits, and he said he would have to wear a uniform if he did take a visit, and he would prefer not to. I said I would prefer not to see him as a criminal, I never married one; Bernadette and Joseph's daddy is not a criminal and I wouldn't like the children to see him as that."

"At that stage there were a lot of men who didn't take visits; and there are still quite a few men in H-Block who don't take visits and haven't seen their families in four years."

"As time went on I thought they'd get their just demands, that it would only be a matter of months before it came, but no, it went on year after year, and we did hold out."

"But Joseph wrote smuggled-out letters to me every day — he numbered them through the week 'one' to 'seven': Monday 'number one', Tuesday 'number two', and so on. And that was our only communication."

"To me it was life itself getting a letter. Sometimes I would get 'six' before 'five' because, for example, one might have been smuggled out via a Derry person and then I would have had to wait to get it posted to me."

"But I couldn't get so many in to him, although I got in as many as I could."

BLEED

Since Joe escalated his protest, and joined the hunger-strike, he has been taking weekly visits; and last Saturday morning, Goretti took a few hours off electioneering to travel up to Belfast and Long Kesh for a visit with Joe — her fourth since he joined the fast.

She recalls, of the visit to the H-Block prison hospital: "I went in to Joe's room, it's a very small room, and the screw was there with the door closed, and Joe was lying there in bed. He has a great sense of humour and he said to me 'I waited to have breakfast until you came'; and beside him was a big jug of water and he sipped it."

"As he did that I noticed that his lips were very cracked, and have already started to bleed. And at the other side of him was his cornflakes and milk, and a fry. Those apparently would sit there until the next meal, his lunch, his supper, all those meals are brought in to him in turn."

"As the visit went on, and as he can still walk, Joe thought he would have the visit in the adjoining big room. When he got out of bed and put on the dressing gown, which is a big towelling thing, I can't describe how I felt."

"At that minute I just wished that the ground would have opened up, and I would rather have fallen into it rather than see him that way. He used to be a big fifteen-stone man, and he had already taken on a skeleton-like frame underneath that dressing gown."

"So we walked to the visiting area, and we started a proper visit, as I call it. The screws were in the corner but it was that wee bit more private..."

"Joe's spirits are very high. He

knows where I am down here, and he knows where the children are, and he just said 'take care of yourself, and don't overdo it'. He understands the pressure on us, but we know why we're here, and he's there..."

"As I say, he took Bobby's place and he's very proud of that. He is very determined. Believe it or not his determination seems to get stronger each time I see him."

DIFFICULT

The hunger-strike is, of course, a very difficult time for the close relatives of the men involved, especially for a loving wife. Goretti agrees: "It is very difficult. And I could say it should never happen to me but I can't take that attitude."

"I have to see things as they really are, and there is a possibility of Joe dying. I know that and the children know it. I have to do what I can to keep him alive. People down here will be sick, sore and tired of looking at me, of seeing us, but they're going to see us everywhere they go, because I have to get it through to people what is happening to us, and I don't want to lose my husband. I'm young and so is he."

"The children need him. Joseph at the minute looks forward to a playing football in the green across the street with him. Bernadette, all

she wants is to show her friends that they still have a daddy. Obviously her friends are saying to her about getting young brothers and sisters in their families and she and Joseph want other brothers and sisters."

CAVALCADE

Last Saturday evening, a 'Joe McDonnell' car cavalcade blazed a campaign trail through the Sligo/Leitrim constituency, and was at least half as large again as a Fianna Fail one held that evening. Both culminated with open air midnight meetings in Ballinamore where again the 'Joe McDonnell' rally was noticeably larger and more enthusiastically supported than that of Fianna Fail.

Goretti states: "I thought the car cavalcade was very dramatic. The people I met there, you couldn't get away from them. Men and women cried to me. Kids cried to me. Well I felt that they were very, very sincere. People wanted to shake hands with us, just saying 'you've got my number one'. I'm very hopeful because I don't think people down here tell lies, they're too sincere."

"I don't tell them lies. I just say to them what I see and what's the truth. I tell them what I see as a wife and a mother."

"The British army shouldn't be

in the North, they haven't done us one bit of good. They treat us like pigs, and I tell the people that that is the way myself and my two kids are treated..."

"I couldn't turn round and stop Joseph throwing a bottle or a stone — he'd be away before I'd see him anyway. As soon as the Brits come into our street, in Lenadown, women come out with bin lids, or pot or pan or whistle, and we'll bang — even if we've to bang an hour — until they see that we know they're there and that we don't want them."

"The Brits shout plenty of abuse at us through the back of their scarves. They're sitting pretty, but we're taking a risk getting out, banging our bin lids, but I don't care, I'll do it to get them out."

KILLED

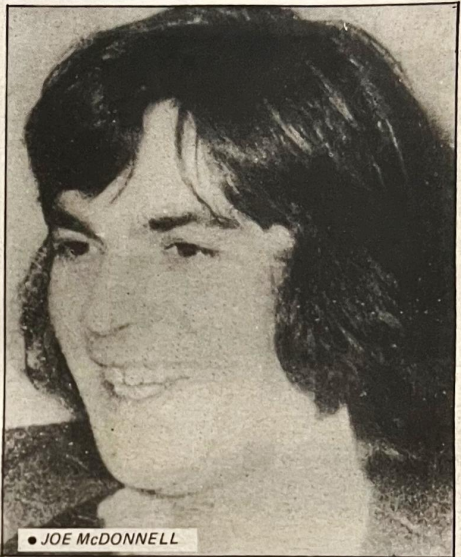
"That is what I'm getting through to people, and also I say to them 'look at the children standing there with their sweets', and then I tell them of the day, only last month, that young Julie Livingstone was killed. Her mother, a friend of mine, had thirteen children, and Julie was the youngest — a beautiful wee girl."

"She was coming out of a shop with sweets and her bottle of lemonade. There wasn't one bit of firing, there wasn't a stone thrown, but the Brits said to themselves 'there's one we'll get, and they didn't even aim for her feet, they aimed for her head, and they killed her dead with a plastic bullet. For people to see and know that it is traumatic."

"But as soon as anybody does anything back on the Brits, they're up on a charge, whereas the Brit that killed Julie is back in his barracks, no problem."

"The next week the same thing happened in Twinbrook. That wee girl Carol-Ann Kelly was only twelve, and she had been to the shop, and she was killed. Where's the Brit that killed her? None of us know what happened to him."

"So people can't turn round and talk to me about 'justice' and Margaret Thatcher can't say 'a crime is a crime is a crime'. Sure we all know what a crime is, we see it every day on our streets and so do our children."



● JOE McDONNELL



● Goretti, with children Joseph and Bernadette, at an after-mass meeting opposite St. Patrick's church in Ballinamore, County Leitrim, last Sunday morning

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

South

ACTIVITY by hunger-strike campaigners in the twenty-six counties has been dominated by the election campaigns of the nine prisoners and those candidates supporting the prisoners. Election workers have travelled to the constituencies being contested from both North and South.

The major rallies of the election campaign took place last weekend, and speakers around the country included relatives of the prisoners themselves.

A series of rallies in the Sligo/Leitrim constituency began in Sligo on Saturday night and a cavalcade of nearly one hundred cars toured through the constituency holding meetings in many towns and villages including a massive turnout in Ballinamore. The main speaker was Goretti McDonnell, wife of hunger-striker Joe McDonnell who is the candidate in the area.

On Saturday afternoon, rallies were held in the Longford/Westmeath constituency and were addressed by members of hunger-striker Martin Hurson's family and Bobby Sands' election agent Owen Carron. The rally in Longford town outnumbered that of any of the Free State political parties, attracting an enthusiastic audience of more than two thousand people.

In Louth, on Saturday, two thousand attended a rally in Dundalk and four hundred in Drogheda despite pouring rain. Speakers have included Bernadette Sands, sister of the late Bobby Sands, and Bernadette McAliskey, who continued a tour of the constituencies on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

On Sunday, Bernadette McAliskey and journalist Eamonn McCann were speakers at large meetings in Dublin West.

In Shannon, County Clare, later in the afternoon, one hundred and fifty election workers attended an indoor meeting when rallies became impossible because of torrential rain.

On Sunday night, two thousand people attended a major rally in the North Kerry town of Listowel and another rally was held in Ballybunion. Another large meeting took place in the North Kerry constituency in Tralee on Tuesday afternoon. Dymphna Higgins, sister of the H-Block prisoner candidate Sean McKenna, spoke at these meetings.

On Monday, meetings were held in the Waterford constituency, at factories in Waterford town and public meetings in Kilmacthomas and Dungarvan. Michael Lynch, brother of the hunger-striker and candidate Kevin Lynch, spoke at these meetings.

In Cork, on Tuesday, two thousand people attended a rally in Grand Parade which was addressed by Mrs. Farrell, the mother of prisoner candidate Mairead, as well as by Bernadette McAliskey and by prominent republicans Gerry Adams and Daithí O Connail.

At a press conference in Dublin, on Tuesday a statement from fifty-eight prominent trade unionists called on all youth, working people, and unemployed, to vote for the prisoner-candidates in the general election. Signatories, from Dublin, Drogheda, Navan, Dundalk, Waterford, Derry and Belfast, included Seamus de Paor, general secretary of the IPOEU; Kevin McDonnell, joint general secretary of the NEETU; and Phil Flynn, deputy general secretary of the LGPSU.

Outside of the election campaign the main event of this week in Dublin was a press conference on Monday 6th June at which the National H-Block/Armagh Committee introduced the well-known civil rights lawyer and former president of New York city council Paul O'Dwyer. He told the conference that he hoped to take the H-Block issue before the United

Nations Human Rights Commission. O'Dwyer was vigorous in his condemnation of British policy in Ireland.

The previous week a press conference at the EEC parliament's Socialist Group conference in Killarney, on Wednesday 3rd June, was enlivened by questions from Richard Behal of Sinn Féin's Foreign Affairs Bureau directed to former West German chancellor Willie Brandt who is leader of that state's Socialist Party.

In the presence of the enraged Free State Labour Party leader Frank Cluskey, Brandt affirmed that neither his party nor the European Socialist Group support Margaret Thatcher's conduct in the hunger-strike situation. Later members of the Socialist Group met a delegation from the local H-Block/Armagh action group.

North

A SMALL yet noticeable increase in protest activities occurred in the North over the past week, mainly as a result of the many emergency meetings called by local action groups to reorganise and intensify activity in nationalist areas.

In Belfast there were four local marches and many indoor meetings, while in South Derry marches were held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, with several more planned for the coming week.

On Wednesday night, June 3rd, the Downpatrick hunger-strike action committee organised a march from the Model Farm to the centre of Downpatrick. The march, attended by about a hundred local people, was followed by a short rally in the town.

During Thursday evening, two marches were held in West Belfast. One was in the St. James' area, and the other was in Lenadown where local people marched through the estate.

On Friday, a large march was held in Cappagh, County Tyrone, home of hunger-striker Martin Hurson. The town was decorated and painted green, white and orange before the rally which followed a march from Martin Hurson's home. A crowd of about two thousand attended the demonstration which was addressed by Bernadette McAliskey and a local councillor.

Also on Friday, a march was held for the first time in the Glenullin area of South Derry. The march, which ended with a rally in the chapel carpark, was attended by several hundred people, and the organisers considered it to be a major success.

Last Saturday, a march in Dungannon was banned, but despite this, a crowd of several hundred gathered in the White City area and marched towards the town centre, where the RUC — using dogs — blocked the road.

Some of the marchers who managed to pass the RUC cordon were man-handled by the RUC and forced into the nationalist Irish Street area. The RUC were once again clearly determined to confine nationalists to their own ghettos.

In the West Belfast estate of Twinbrook, last Saturday, the local action group mounted a picket on shops in the area who are continuing to sell British newspapers.

Belfast republican Jimmy Drummond addressed a rally of several hundred in Toome last Saturday. The rally followed a march to the centre of Toome from two starting points, on the Derry and Antrim sides of the bridge.

A token fast was held in North Street, Lurgan, on Saturday, organised by the local action committee.

Last Sunday, four demonstrations were held. The first was in Claudy in South Derry where over fifteen hundred people attended a rally in the centre of the village. The rally was preceded by a march from two separate points.

In Belfast, the Greater Andersonstown and Lenadown action groups, working successfully in closer co-ordination, organised an unusually large local march to demonstrate solidarity with the two hunger-strikers from the area.

The march left the home of Kieran Doherty in lower Andersonstown and made its way across the estate and into Lenadown, ending with a rally outside the home of Joe McDonnell. Almost two thousand took part in the march.

Another march was held in Lurgan on Sunday attended by a crowd of over six hundred. The march from Tegnhevan estate ended with a rally in the town.

In Derry, an hour-long sit-down outside Strand Road RUC barracks followed



● Ballinamore, County Leitrim



● Dublin trade unionists' press conference, June 9th: from left: Paddy Mooney; Seamus de Paor; John Crilly; Kevin Mc Connell; Vincent Dempsey; Brian Higgins; Andy Connolly and Paddy Healey



● Last Sunday's local H-Block march from (above) the Andersonstown home of hunger-striker Kieran Doherty, to (below) the Lenadown home of hunger-striker Joe McDonnell



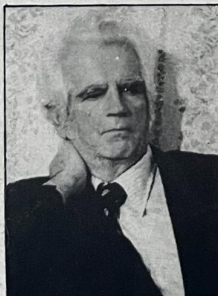
a march from the Bogside Inn.

On Monday the hunger-strike action group in Belfast's Twinbrook estate held a 'white line' road-way picket between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m., which stretched from Twinbrook to the new Poleglass

estate half a mile away. The committee intend this to become a weekly event.

While activity is increasing in support of the hunger-strike the rate of this increase is clearly too slow. With Joe McDonnell now in his sixth week without

food, an intensification of efforts by all activists is an urgent necessity, and no efforts should be spared to make this weekend's major march in Belfast a good demonstration of support for the prisoners.



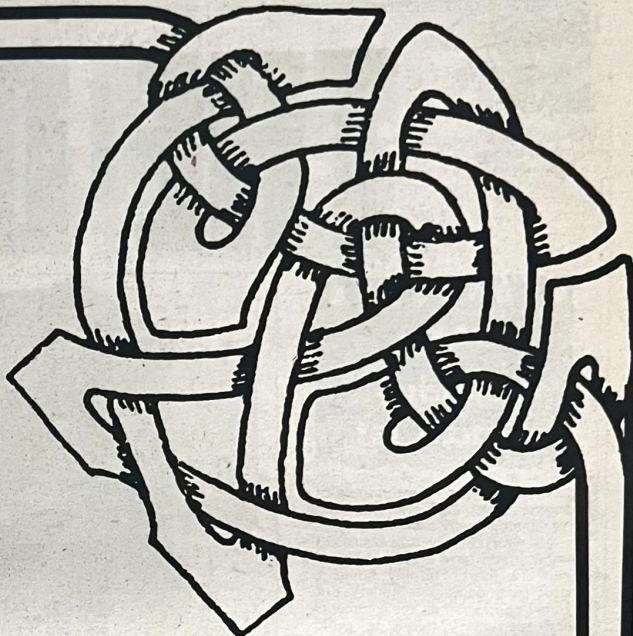
● PAUL O'DWYER
former New York council president

THE DIARY

OF

*The first seventeen days of Bobby's
H-Block hunger-strike to the death*

BOBBY SANDS



FOR the first seventeen days of his H-Block hunger-strike to the death, Bobby Sands kept a secret diary in which he wrote his thoughts and views, mostly in English, but occasionally breaking into Gaelic.

He had no fear of death and perceived the hunger-strike as something much larger than the five demands, and as having major repercussions for British rule in Ireland. (This was even before the watershed of his victory in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election on April 9th.)

It would be true to say that he believed the sacrifice of the hunger-strikers' lives in the absence of the five demands being won could perhaps draw from the Irish people the same response which followed the fatal 1916 Easter Rising — an arousal of nationalism which would seal the fate of British rule in Ireland.

Bobby was followed on hunger-strike by Francis Hughes on March 15th, and by Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara on March 22nd, the four men eventually dying in the space of sixteen days during May; but as each man died another Volunteer from among the blanket men stepped forward to take his dead comrade's place.

The diary was written on toilet paper in biro pen and had to be hidden, mostly carried inside Bobby's own body, where all contraband like tobacco, matches and pens are kept; the blanket men's cells being bare and without furniture and without any hiding-places to escape the regular cell-searches.

During those first seventeen days Bobby lost a total of 16 lbs. weight and on Monday, March 23rd, he was moved to the prison hospital where he died six weeks later on Tuesday, May 5th.

In each of the smuggled-out notes which comprise Bobby's diary, he signed himself 'Marcella', his sister's name which he had previously used as

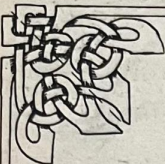
a pen-name for articles written in 'Republican News' and 'An Phoblacht/Republican News'.

In the diary he also refers to his other sister, Bernadette; his eight-year-old son Gerard; his two-year-old nephew, Marcella's son Kevin; his cell-mate Malachy Carey from Ballymena; and 'Tomboy' Loudon, a fellow blanket man with whom he was imprisoned and had political status in the early seventies.

He also refers to Fr. Toner, the prison chaplain (whom he suspected from the first hunger-strike of playing a damaging role of undermining the prisoners' struggle), to a statement from Bishop Daly on March 1st in which he described the hunger-strike as not being 'morally justified' (Atkins said the Bishop's remarks were 'undoubtedly helpful'); to a prison warder (named David Compton) who particularly harassed him; and Bobby comments on British premier Margaret Thatcher's proposal to US President Ronald Reagan for the setting up of a global 'task-force' to intervene in 'trouble spots', that is, spots where imperialism is in trouble.

Bobby had a great love and admiration for his women comrades. Several times he refers to Armagh prisoner Mary Doyle, who was on hunger-strike before Christmas, and who comes from his native north Belfast, and also to twenty-one-year-old Jennifer McCann from Belfast's Twinbrook estate, who defiantly addressed a Belfast court on March 6th when she was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for shooting at an RUC man. She declared from the dock: *"I am a republican prisoner-of-war, and at the moment my comrade Bobby Sands is on hunger-strike to defend my rights as a political prisoner."*

In this diary we can see the grit, humanity, humour and politics of a great Irishman.



THE DIARY OF

DAY 1

**Sunday
March 1st**

I AM standing on the threshold of another trembling world. May God have mercy on my soul.

My heart is very sore because I know that I have broken my poor mother's heart, and my home is struck with unbearable anxiety. But I have considered all the arguments and tried every means to avoid what has become the unavoidable: it has been forced upon me and my comrades by four-and-a-half years of stark inhumanity.

I am a political prisoner. I am a political prisoner because I am a casualty of a perennial war that is being fought between the oppressed Irish people and an alien, oppressive, unwanted regime that refuses to withdraw from our land.

I believe and stand by the God-given right of the Irish nation to sovereign independence, and the right of any Irishman or woman to assert this right in armed revolution. That is why I am incarcerated, naked and tortured.

Foremost in my tortured mind is the thought that there can never be peace in Ireland until the foreign, oppressive British presence is removed, leaving all the Irish people as a unit to control their own affairs and determine their own destinies as a sovereign people, free in mind and body, separate and distinct physically, culturally and economically.

I believe I am but another of those wretched Irishmen born of a risen generation with a deeply rooted and unquenchable desire for freedom. I am dying not just to attempt to end the barbarity of H-Block, or to gain the rightful recognition of a political prisoner, but primarily because what is lost in here is lost for the Republic and those wretched oppressed whom I am deeply proud to know as the 'risen people'.

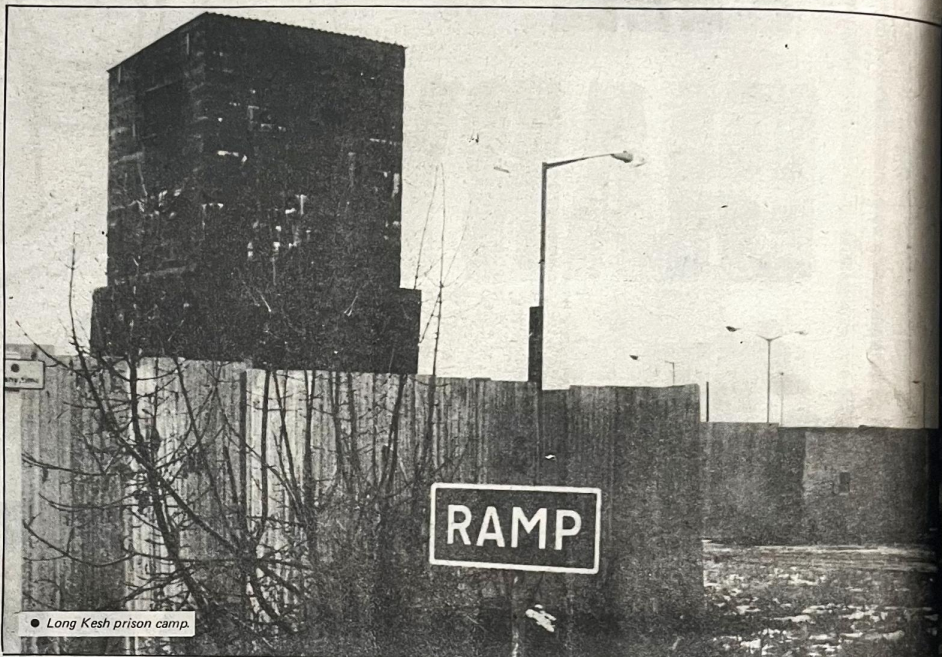
...

There was no sensation today, no novelty that October 27th brought. (The start date of the original seven man hunger-strike — Editor.) The usual screws were not working. The slobbers and would-be despots no doubt will be back again tomorrow bright and early.

I wrote some more notes to the girls in Armagh today. There is so much I would like to say about them, about their courage, determination and unquenchable spirit of resistance. They are to me what the Countess Markievicz, Ann Devlin, Mary Ann McCracken, Marie MacSwiney, Betsy Gray, and those other Irish heroines are to us all. And of course, I think of Ann Parker, Laura Crawford, Rosemary Bleakeley, and I'm ashamed to say I can not remember all their sacred names.

...

Mass was solemn, the lads as ever brilliant. I ate the statutory weekly bit of fruit last night. As fate had it, it was an



● Long Kesh prison camp.

orange, and the final irony, it was bitter. The food is being left at the door. My portions, as expected, are quite larger than usual, or those which my cell-mate Malachy is getting.

DAY 2

**Monday
March 2nd**

Much to the distaste of the screws we ended the no-wash protest this morning. We moved to 'B' wing, which was allegedly clean.

We have shown considerable tolerance today. Men are being searched coming back from the toilet. At one point men were waiting three hours to get out to the toilet, and only four or five got washed, which typifies the eagerness (sic) of the screws to have us off the no-wash. There is a lot of petty vindictiveness from them.

I saw the doctor and I'm 64 kgs. I've no problems.

The priest, Fr. John Murphy, was in tonight. We had a short talk. I heard that my mother spoke at a parade in Belfast yesterday and that Marcella cried. It gave me heart. I'm not worried about the numbers of the crowds.

I was very annoyed last night when I heard Bishop Daly's statement (issued on Sunday, condemning the hunger-strike — Editor). Again he is applying his double set of moral standards. He seems to forget that the people who murdered those innocent Irishmen on Derry's Bloody Sunday are still as ever among us; and he knows perhaps better than anyone what has and is taking place in H-Block.

He understands why men are being tortured here — the reason for criminalisation. What makes it so disgusting, I believe, is that he agrees with that under-



● Tomboy Loudon (left); Seanna Walsh

lying reason. Only once has he spoken out, of the beatings and inhumanity that are commonplace in H-Block.

I once read an editorial, in late '78, following the then Archbishop O'Fiaich's 'sewer pipes of Calcutta' statement. It said it was to the everlasting shame of the Irish people that the archbishop had to and, I paraphrase, stir the moral conscience of the people on the H-Block issue. A lot of time has passed since then, a lot of torture, in fact the following year was the worst we experienced.

Now I wonder who will stir the Cardinal's moral conscience....

Bear witness to both right and wrong, stand up and speak out. But don't we know that what has to be said is 'political', and it's not that these people don't want to become involved in politics, it's simply that their politics are different, that is, British.

...

My dear friend Tomboy's father died today. I was terribly annoyed, and it has upset me.

I received several notes from my family and friends. I have only read the one from my mother — it was what I needed. She has regained her fighting spirit — I am happy now.

My old friend Seanna (Walsh, a fellow

blanket man — Editor) has also written.

I have an idea for a poem, perhaps tomorrow I will try to put it together.

...

Every time I feel down I think of Armagh, and James Connolly. They can never take those thoughts away from me.

DAY 3

**Tuesday
March 3rd**

I'm feeling exceptionally well today. (It's only the third day, I know, but all the same I'm feeling great.) I had a visit this morning with two reporters, David Beresford of 'The Guardian' and Brendan O'Cathaoir of 'The Irish Times'. Couldn't quite get my flow of thoughts together, I could have said more in a better fashion.

63 kgs. today, so what?

Fr. Toner was in: Feel he's weighing me up psychologically for a later date. If I'm wrong I'm sorry — but I think he is. So I tried to defuse any notion of that tonight. I think he may have taken the point. But whether he accepts it, will be seen. He could not defend my onslaught on Bishop Daly — or at least he did not try.

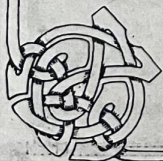
...

I wrote some notes to my mother and to Mary Doyle in Armagh; and will write more tomorrow. The boys are now all washed. But I didn't get washed today, they were still trying to get men their first wash.

I smoked some 'bog-rolled blows' today, the luxury of the Block!

They put a table in my cell and are now placing my food on it in front of my eyes. I honestly couldn't give a damn if

(continued on next page)



BOBBY SANDS



(continued from previous page)

they placed it on my knee. They still keep asking me silly questions like, 'are you still not eating?'

I never got started my poem today, but I'll maybe do it tomorrow. The trouble is I now have more ideas.

Got papers and a book today. The book was Kipling's 'Short Stories' with an introduction of some length from W. Somerset Maugham. I took an instant dislike to the latter on reading his comment on the Irish people during Kipling's prime as a writer: 'It is true that the Irish were making a nuisance of themselves'. Damned too bad, I thought, and bigger the pity it wasn't a bigger nuisance!! Kipling I know of, and his Ulster connection. I'll read his stories tomorrow.

Ag ra an phaidrin faoi dho acham la ata no buachaillí anois. Nil aon rud eile agam anocht. Sin sin.

(Translated this reads as follows — Editor):

The boys are now saying the rosary twice every day. I have nothing else tonight. That's all.

DAY 4 Wednesday March 4th

Fr. Murphy was in tonight. I have not felt too bad today, although I notice the energy beginning to drain. But it is quite early yet. I got showered today and had my hair cut, which made me feel quite good. Ten years younger the boys joke, but I feel twenty years older, the inevitable consequence of eight years of torture and imprisonment.

I am abreast with the news and view with utter disgust and anger the Reagan/

Thatcher plot. It seems quite clear that they intend to counteract Russian expansionism with imperialist expansionism, to protect their vital interests they say.

What they mean is they covet other nations' resources, they want to steal what they haven't got and to do so (as the future may unfortunately prove) they will murder oppressed people and deny them their sovereignty as nations. No doubt Mr. Haughey will toe the line in Ireland when Thatcher so demands.

Noticed a rarity today: jam with the tea, and by the way the screws are glaring at the food, they seem more in need of it than my goodness.

DAY 5 Thursday March 5th

The Welfare sent for me today to inform me of my father being taken ill to hospital. Tried to get me to crawl for a special visit with my family. I was distressed about my father's illness but relieved that he has been released from hospital. No matter what, I must continue.

I had a threatening toothache today which worried me, but it is gone now.

I've read Atkins' statement in the Commons. Mar dheal! (Atkins pledged that the British government would not budge an inch on its intransigent position — Editor.) It does not annoy me because my mind was prepared for such things and I know I can expect more of such, right to the bitter end.

I came across some verse in Kipling's short stories; the extracts of verses before the stories are quite good. The one that I thought very good went like this:

*'The earth gave up her dead that tide,
'Into our camp he came,
'And said his say, and went his way,
'And left our hearts aflame.*

*'Keep tally on the gun butt score,
'The vengeance we must take,
'When God shall bring full reckoning,
'For our dead comrade's sake.'*

'I hope not', said I to myself. But that hope was not even a hope, but a mere figure of speech. I have hope, indeed. All men must have hope and never lose heart. But my hope lies in the ultimate victory for my poor people. Is there any hope greater than that?

I'm saying prayers — crawler! (and a last minute one, some would say). But I believe in God, and I'll be presumptuous and say He and I are getting on well this weather.

I can ignore the presence of food staring me straight in the face all the time. But I have this desire for brown wholemeal bread, butter, Dutch cheese and honey. Ha!! It is not damaging me, because, I think, well human food can never keep a man alive for ever, and I console myself with the fact that I'll get a great feed up above (if I'm worthy).

But then I'm struck by this awful thought that they don't eat food up there. But if there's something better than brown wholemeal bread, cheese and honey, etcetera, then it can't be bad.

The March winds are getting angry tonight, which reminds me that I'm twenty-seven on Monday. I must go, the road is just beginning, and tomorrow

is another day. I am now 62 kgs. and, in general, mentally and physically, I feel very good.

DAY 6 Friday March 6th

There was no priest in last night or tonight. They stopped me from seeing my solicitor tonight, as another part of the isolation process, which, as time goes by, they will ruthlessly implement. I expect they may move me sooner than expected to an empty wing. I will be sorry to leave the boys, but I know the road is a hard one and everything must be conquered.

I have felt the loss of energy twice today, and am feeling slightly weak.

They (the screws) are unembarrassed by the enormous amount of food they are putting into the cell and I know they have every bean and chip counted or weighed. The damned fools don't realise that the doctor does tests for traces of any food eaten. Regardless, I have no intention of sampling their tempting morsels.

I am sleeping well at night so far, as I avoid sleeping during the day. I am even having pleasant dreams and so far no headaches. Is that a tribute to my psychological frame of mind or will I pay for that tomorrow or later! I wonder how long I will be able to keep these scribbles going?

My friend Jennifer got twenty years, I am greatly distressed. (Twenty-one-year-old Jennifer McCann, from Belfast's Twinbrook estate, was sentenced to



● Jennifer McCann

twenty years' imprisonment for shooting at an RUC man — Editor.)

I have no doubts or regrets about what I am doing for I know what I have faced for eight years, and in particular for the last four-and-a-half years, others will face, young lads and girls still at school, or young Gerard or Kevin (Bobby's son and nephew, respectively — Editor) and thousands of others.

They will not criminalise us, rob us of our true identity, steal our individualism, depoliticise us, churn us out as systemised, institutionalised, decent law-abiding robots. Never will they label our liberation struggle as criminal.

I am (even after all the torture) amazed at British logic. Never in eight centuries have they succeeded in breaking the spirit of one man who refused to be broken. They have not dispirited, conquered, nor demoralised my people, nor will they ever.

I may be a sinner, but I stand — and if it so be, will die — happy knowing that I do not have to answer for what these people have done to our ancient nation.

Thomas Clarke is in my thoughts, and MacSwiney, Stagg, Gaughan, Thomas Ashe, McCaughey.

Dear God, we have so many that another one to those knaves means nothing, or so they say, for some day they'll pay.

When I am thinking of Clarke, I thought of the time I spent in 'B' wing in Crumlin Road jail in September and October '77. I realised just what was facing me then. I've no need to record it all, some of my comrades experienced it too, so they know I have been thinking that some people (maybe many people) blame me for this hunger-strike, but I have tried everything possible to avert it short of surrender.

I pity those who say that, because they do not know the British and I feel more the pity for them because they don't even know their poor selves. But didn't we have people like that who sought to accuse Tone, Emmet, Pearse, Connolly, Mellowes: that unfortunate attitude is perennial also.

I can hear the curlews passing overhead. Such a lonely cell, such a lonely struggle. But, my friend, this road is well trod and he, whoever he was, who first passed this way, deserves the salute of the nation. I am but a mere follower and I must say Diche Mhaith.

DAY 7 Saturday March 7th

I received a most welcome note tonight from Bernie my sister, good old Bernie. I love her and I think she's the greatest.

I am now convinced that the authorities intend to implement strict isolation soon, as I am having trouble in seeing my solicitor. I hope I'm wrong about the isolation, but we'll see.

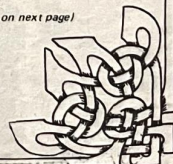
It's only that I'd like to remain with the boys for as long as possible for many reasons. If I'm isolated, I will simply conquer it.

Fr. Toner was in today, somewhat pleasant, and told me about Brendan O'Caithair's article in 'The Irish Times' during the week, which I saw. We had a bit of a discussion on certain points, which, of course, were to him contentious. He was cordial in his own practiced way, purely tactical, of course, and at the same time he was most likely boiling over inside, thinking of the reference in this week's 'AP/RN' (February 28th issue — Editor) calling him a collaborating middle-class nationalist, or appropriate words to that effect.

He is too, says I, and I sympathise with those unfortunate sons of God who find themselves battling against the poverty, disease, corruption, death and inhumanities of the missions. Off the man's back O Seachnasaigh, for now anyway!

I am 61 kgs. today, going down.

(continued on next page)



THE DIARY OF

(continued from previous page)

I'm got troubled by hunger pangs, not paranoic about anything pertaining to food, but by God the food has improved here. I thought I noticed that during the last hunger-strike. Well, there is a lot at stake here.

I got the 'Irish News' today, but there's nothing in it, that's why I got it.

I'm looking forward to seeing the comrades at Mass tomorrow, all the younger looking faces, minus the beards, moustaches, long rambling untamed hair matted in thick clumps.

One thing is sure, that awful state of the piercing or glazed eyes, the tell-tale sign of the rigours of torture, won't be gone - if it is ever removed. I wonder if it even conceivable that it could be erased from the mind?

We got a new comrade during the week. Isn't it inspiring the comrades who keep joining us?

I read what Jennifer said in court. (*On being sentenced, Jennifer McCann said: 'I am a republican prisoner of war and at the moment my comrade Bobby Sands is on hunger-strike to defend my rights as a political prisoner'.* - Editor.) I was touched and proud, she is my comrade.

I've been thinking of Mary Doyle and Ellen McGuigan and all the rest of the girls in Armagh. How can I forget them?

The screws are staring at me perplexed. Many of them hope (if their eyes tell the truth) that I will die. If need be, I'll oblige them, but my God they are fools. Oscar Wilde did not do justice to them for I believe they are lower than even he thought.

And I may add there is only one thing lower than a screw and that is a Governor. And in my experience the higher one goes up that disgusting ladder they call rank, or positions, the lower one gets.

A 'Chief' once bored me with the praises of 'our governor' Mr. Hilditch: 'Mr Hilditch is a practising Christian you know, never known him to even bear the semblance of a lie'.

Tell that to the four hundred men in these Blocks who have been beaten stupid for four-and-a-half years', I blazed at him. The man was but a pathetic fool, a yes-man, and what else can be said?

It's raining. I'm not cold, my spirits



● Mary Doyle



● Ellen McGuigan

are well, and I'm still getting some smokes - decadence, well sort of, but who's perfect? Bad for your health. Mar dheas anois, Oiche Mhaith.

DAY 8

Sunday March 8th

In a few hours time I shall be twenty-seven grand years of age. Paradoxically it will be a happy enough birthday; perhaps that's because I am free in spirit. I can offer no other reason.

I was at Mass today, and saw all the lads minus their beards, etc. An American priest said Mass and I went to Communion. One of the lads collapsed before Mass, but he's alright now. Another was taken out to Musgrave military hospital. These are regular occurrences.

I am 60.8 kgs. today, and have no medical complaints.

I received another note from my sister Bernie and her boyfriend, it does my heart good to hear from her. I got the 'Irish News' today, which carried some adverts in support of the hunger-strike.

There is a stand-by doctor who examined me at the weekend, a young man whose name I did not know up until now. Little friendly Dr. Ross has been the doctor. He was also the doctor during the last hunger-strike.

Dr. Emerson is, they say, down with the 'flu. We could expect his 'flu to last two months. Dr. Ross, although friendly, is in my opinion also the examiner of people's minds. Which reminds me, they haven't asked me to see a psychiatrist yet. No doubt they will yet, but I won't see him, for I am mentally stable, probably more so than he.

I read some wild-life articles in various papers, which indeed brought back memories of the once-upon-a-time budding ornithologist! It was a bright pleasant afternoon today and it is a calm evening. It is surprising what even the confined eyes and ears can discover.

I am awaiting the lark, for spring is all but upon us. How I listened to that lark when I was in H-5, and watched a pair of chaffinches which arrived in February. Now lying on what indeed is my death-bed, I still listen even to the black crows.

DAY 9

Monday March 9th

I have left this rather late tonight and it is cold. The priest Fr. Murphy was in. I had a discussion with him on the situation. He said he enjoyed our talk and was somewhat enlightened, when he was leaving.

On the subject of priests, I received a small note from a Fr. S.C. from Tralee, Kerry, and some holy pictures of Our Lady. The thought touched me. If it is the same man, I recall him giving a lecture to us in Cage 11 some years ago on the right to lift arms in defence of the freedom of one's occupied and oppressed

nation. Preaching to the converted he was, but it all helps.

It is my birthday and the boys are having a bit of a sing-song for me, bless their hearts. I braved it to the door, at their request, to make a bit of a speech, for 'what that was worth. I wrote to several friends today including Bernie and my mother. I feel alright and my weight is 60 kgs.

I always keep thinking of James Connolly, and the great calm and dignity that he showed right to his very end, his courage and resolve. Perhaps I am biased, because there have been thousands like him, but Connolly has always been the man that I look up to.

I always have had tremendous feeling for Liam Mellows as well; and for the present leadership of the Republican Movement, and a confidence in them that they will always remain undaunted and unchanged. And again, dare I forget the Irish people of today, and the risen people of the past, they too hold a special place in my heart.

Well, I have gotten by twenty-seven years, so that is something. I may die, but the Republic of 1916 will never die. Onward to that Republic and liberation of our people.

DAY 10

Tuesday March 10th

It has been a fairly normal day in my present circumstances. My weight is 59.3 kgs. and I have no medical problems. I have seen some birthday greetings from relatives and friends in yesterday's paper which I got today. Also I received a bag of toiletries today.

There was no priest in tonight, but the chief medical officer dropped in, took my pulse and left. I suppose that makes him feel pretty important.

From what I have read in the newspapers I am becoming increasingly worried and wary of the fact that there could quite well be an attempt at a later date to pull the carpet from under our feet and undermine us - if not defeat this hunger-strike - with the concession bid in the form of 'our own clothes as a right'.

This, of course, would solve nothing. But if allowed birth could, with the voice of the Catholic hierarchy, seriously damage our position. It is my opinion that under no circumstances do they wish to see the prisoners gain political status, or facilities that resemble, or afford us with the contents of, political status.

The reasons for this are many and varied, primarily motivated by the wish to see the revolutionary struggle of the people brought to an end. The criminalisation of republican prisoners would help to furnish this end.

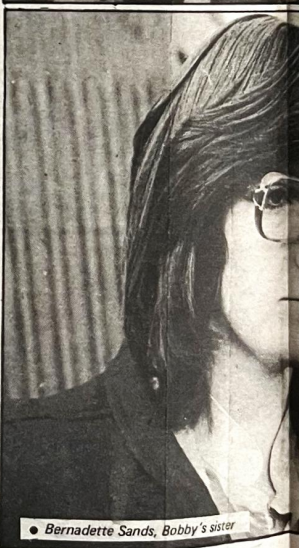
It is the declared wish of these people to see humane and better conditions in these Blocks. But the issue at stake is not 'humanitarian', nor about better or improved living conditions. It is purely political and only a political solution will solve it. This in no way makes us prisoners elite nor do we (nor have we at any-time) purported to be elite.

We wish to be treated 'not as ordinary prisoners' for we are not criminals. We admit no crime unless, that is, the love of one's people and country is a crime.

Would Englishmen allow Germans to occupy their nation or Frenchmen allow



● Mr. Sands (bespectacled) with Bobby's brother, John (far right) and son, Gerard, at Bobby's funeral



● Bernadette Sands, Bobby's sister

Dutchmen to do likewise? We republican prisoners understand better than anyone the plight of all prisoners who are deprived of their liberty. We do not deny ordinary prisoners the benefit of anything that we gain that may improve and make easier their plight. Indeed, in the past, all prisoners have gained from the resistance of republican jail struggles.

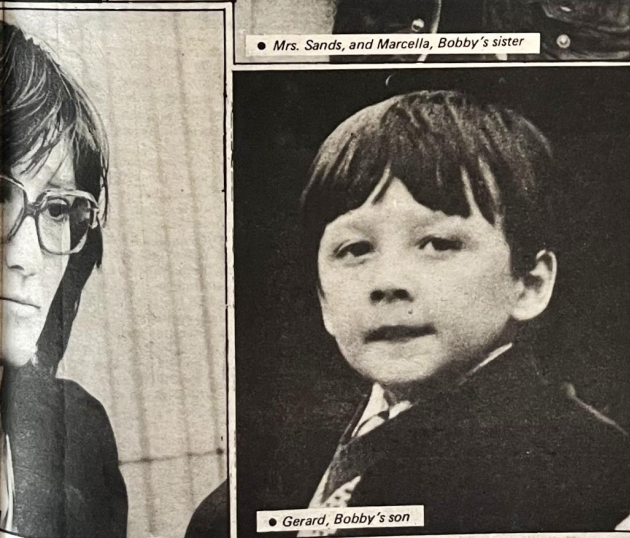
I recall the Fenians and Tom Clarke, who indeed were most instrumental in highlighting by their unflinching res-



BOBBY SANDS



• Mrs. Sands, and Marcella, Bobby's sister



• Gerard, Bobby's son

I've had a bath, perhaps longer. No matter.

Tomorrow is the eleventh day and there is a long way to go. Someone should write a poem of the tribulations of a hunger-striker. I would like to, but how could I finish it.

Caitfhidh me a dul mar ta tuirseach ag eiri ormsa.

(Translated, this reads as follows — Editor):

Must go as I'm getting tired.

DAY 11

**Wednesday
March 11th**

I received a large amount of birthday cards today. Some from people I do not know. In particular a Mass bouquet with fifty Masses on it from Mrs. Burns from Sevastopol Street. We all know of her, she never forgets us and we shan't forget her, bless her dear heart.

I also received a card from reporter Brendan O'Cathaoir, which indeed was thoughtful. I received a letter from a friend, and from a student in America whom I don't know, but again it's good to know that people are thinking of you. There were some smuggled letters as well from my friends and comrades.

I am the same weight today and have no complaints medically. Now and again I am struck by the natural desire to eat but the desire to see an end to my comrades' plight and the liberation of my people is overwhelmingly greater.

The doctor will be taking a blood test tomorrow. It seems that Dr. Ross has disappeared and Dr. Emerson is back. But they are all the system's hacks.

Again, there has been nothing outstanding today except that I took a bath this morning. I have also been thinking of my family and hoping that they are not suffering too much.

I was trying to piece together a quote from James Connolly today which I'm ashamed that I did not succeed in doing but I'll paraphrase the meagre few lines I can remember.

They go something like this: a man who is bubbling over with enthusiasm (or patriotism) for his country, who walks through the streets among his people, their degradation, poverty, and suffering, and who (for want of the right words) does nothing, is, in my mind, a fraud; for Ireland distinct from its people is but a mass of chemical elements.

Perhaps the stark poverty of Dublin in 1913 does not exist today, but then again, in modern day comparison to living standards in other places through the world, it could indeed be said to be the same if not worse both North and South. Indeed, one thing has not changed, that is the economic, cultural and physical oppression of the same Irish people.

There are still too, too many who walk among the people bubbling over with false enthusiasm, false patriotism and false concern. Political magpies and political opportunists and parasites, the Fitts, Devlins, Humes, Sticks, Haugheys, FitzGerald and the rest of those disgusting band of ambitious, unscrupulous wasters.

Even should there not be 100,000 unemployed in the North, their pittance of a wage would look shame in the company of those whose wage and profit is

enormous, the privileged and capitalist class who sleep upon the people's wounds, and sweat and toils.

Total equality and fraternity can't, and never will be, gained whilst these parasites dominate and rule the lives of a nation. There is no equality in a society that stands upon the economic and political bog of only the strongest make it good or survive. Compare the lives, comforts, habits, wealth of all those political comen (who allegedly are concerned for us, the people) with that of the wretchedly deprived and oppressed.

Compare it in any decade in history, compare it tomorrow, in the future, and it will mock you. Yet our perennial blindness continues. There are no luxuries in the H-Blocks. But there is true concern for the Irish people.

DAY 12

**Thursday
March 12th**

Fr. Toner was in tonight, and brought me in some religious magazines.

My weight is 58.75 kgs. They did not take a blood sample because they want to incorporate other tests with it. So the doctor says they'll do it next week.

Physically I have felt very tired today, between dinner time and later afternoon. I know I'm getting physically weaker, it is only to be expected. But I'm okay. I'm still getting the papers alright, but there's nothing heartening in them. But again I expect that also and therefore I must depend entirely upon my own heart and resolve, which I will do.

I received three notes from the comrades in Armagh, God bless them again.

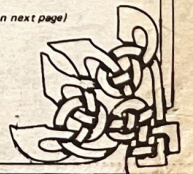
I heard of today's announcement that Frank Hughes will be joining me on hunger-strike on Sunday. I have the greatest respect, admiration and confidence in Frank and I know that I am not alone. How could I ever be with comrades like those around me, in Armagh and outside.

I've been thinking of the comrades in Portlaoise, the visiting facilities there are inhuman. No doubt that hell-hole will also eventually explode in due time. I hope not, but Haughey's compassion for the prisoners down there is no different from that of the Brits towards prisoners in the North and in English gaols.

I have come to understand, and with each passing day I understand increasingly more and in the most sad way, that awful fate and torture endured to the very bitter end by Frank Stagg and Michael Gaughan. Perhaps, — indeed yes! — I am more fortunate because those poor comrades were without comrades or a friendly face; they had not even the final consolation of dying in their own land. Irishmen alone and at the unmerciful ugly hands of a vindictive heartless enemy. Dear God, but I am so lucky in comparison.

I have poems in my mind, mediocre no doubt, poems of hunger-strike and MacSwiney, and everything that this hunger-strike has stirred up in my heart and in my mind, but the weariness is

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istance the 'terrible silent system' in the Victorian period in English prisons. In every decade there has been ample evidence of such gains to all prisoners due to republican prisoners' resistance.

Unfortunately, the years, the decades, and centuries, have not seen an end to republican resistance in English hell-holes, because the struggle in the prisons goes hand-in-hand with the continuous freedom struggle in Ireland. Many Irishmen have given their lives in pursuit of

this freedom and I know that more will, myself included, until such times as that freedom is achieved.

I am still awaiting some sort of move from my cell to an empty wing and total isolation. The last strikers were ten days in the wings with the boys, before they were moved. But then they were on the no-wash protest and in filthy cells. My cell is far from clean but tolerable. The water is always cold. I can't risk the chance of cold or 'flu. It is six days since



THE DIARY OF

(continued from previous page)

slowly creeping in, and my heart is willing but my body wants to be lazy, so I have decided to mass all my energy and thoughts into consolidating my resistance.

That is most important. Nothing else seems to matter except that lingering constant reminding thought 'Never give up'. No matter how bad, how black, how painful, how heart-breaking, 'Never give up', 'Never despair', 'Never lose hope'. Let them bastards laugh at you all they want, let them grin and jibe, allow them to persist in their humiliation, brutality, deprivations, vindictiveness, petty harassments, let them laugh now, because all of that is no longer important or worth a response.

I am making my last response to the whole vicious inhuman atrocity they call H-Block. But, unlike their laughs and jibes, our laughter will be the joy of victory and joy of the people, our revenge will be the liberation of all and the final defeat of the oppressors of our aged nation.

DAY 13

**Friday
March 13th**

I'm not superstitious, and it was an uneventful day today. I feel alright considering, and my weight is 58.5 kgs.

I was not so tired today, but my back gets sore now and again sitting in the bed. I didn't get the 'Irish News', which makes me think there is probably something in it that they don't wish me to see, but who cares. Fr. Murphy was in tonight for a few minutes.

The screws had a quick look around my cell today when I was out getting water. They are always snooping. I heard reports of men beaten up during a wing shift from H-6 to one of the other Blocks. Nothing changes here.

Sean McKenna (the former hunger-striker — Editor) is back in H-4, apparently still a bit shaky but alive and still recovering, and hopefully he will do so to the full.

Mhuscail me leis an gealbhain ar maidin agus an t-aon smaointe amhain i mo cheann — seo chugat la eile a Roibeard. Cuireann e sin amhran a scriobh me; bhíad o shin i nduill domsa.

Seo o cibe ar bith.

D'fheoil me ar maidin mar a thainig an cionnheird.

'Bhuail se mo dhoras go trom's gan labhairt.

'Dhearc me ar na ballaí, 'S shíl me nach raibh me beo.

'Tchítear nach n-imeoidh an t-iffrean seo go deo.

'D'oscail an doras 's níor druideadh e go gusain.

'Ach ba chuma ar bith mar nach raibh eamar inar suaim.

'Chuala me ean 's ní thasa me geal an lae.

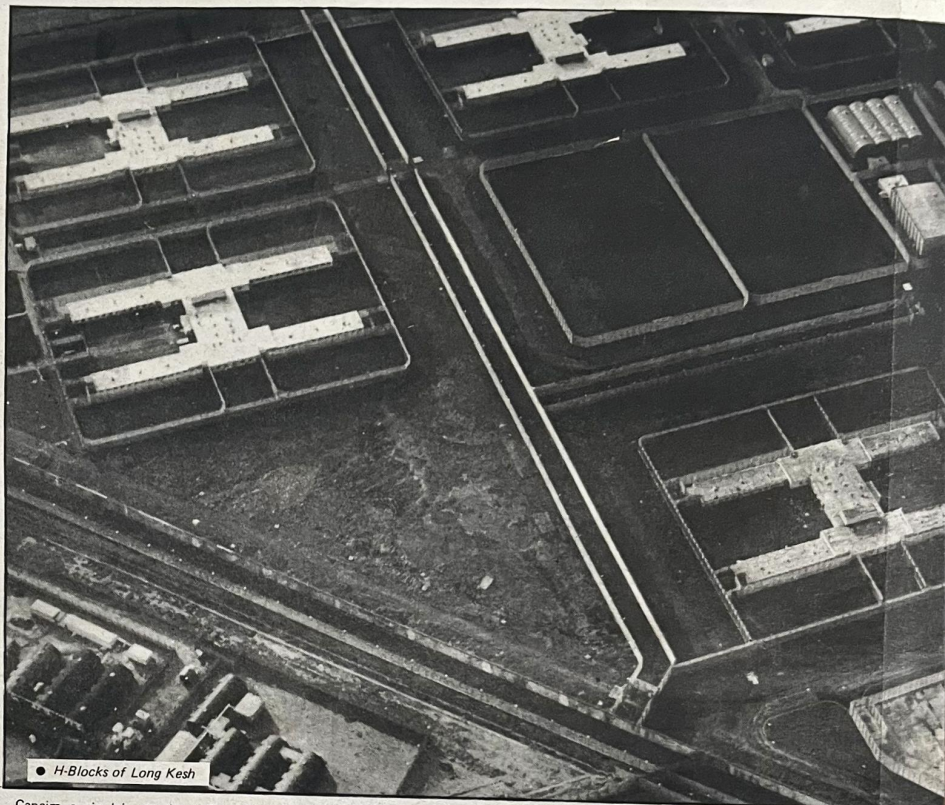
'Is main mor liom go raibh me go deimhin faoi.

'Ca bhfuil me smaointi ar laethe a chuaigh romhainn.

'S ca bhfuil an tsaoil a smaoin me abhi sa domhain.

'Ni chluintear mo bheic 's ní theictear mar a rith me dheor.

'Nuair a thigean ar la athioclaidh me iad go mor.'



● H-Blocks of Long Kesh

Canaim e sin leis an phort 'Suin Ni Dhuibhir'.

(Translated, this reads as follows — Editor):

I awoke with the sparrows this morning and the only thought in my head was: here comes another day, Bobby — reminding me of a song I once wrote a long time ago.

This is it anyway.

'I arose this morning as the screw came,

'He thumped my door heavily without speaking.

'I stared at the walls, and thought I was dead,

'It seems that this hell will never depart.

'The door opened and it wasn't closed gently,

'But it didn't really matter, we weren't asleep.

'I heard a bird and yet didn't see the dawn of day,

'Would that I were deep in the earth.

'Where are my thoughts of days gone by,

'And where is the life I once thought was in the world.

'My cry is unheard and my tears flowing unseen,

'When our day comes I shall welcome them back.'

I sing this to the tune 'Siun Ni Dhuibhir'.

...

Bhi na heinini ag ceiliuracht inniu.

Chait ceann de na buachailli aran amach as an fhuinneog, ar a laghad bhi dume eigin ag ithe. Uaigneach abhi me ar feadh tamaill ar thrathnona beag inniu ag eisteacht leis na prechain ag screadail agus ag teacht abhaile daobhtha. Da gcluinninn an fhuiseog alainn, brisfeadh si mo chroí.

Anois mar a scriobhaim ta an corrcrothar ag caoineadh mar a theann siad tharam. Is maith liom na heinini.

Bhuil caithfidh me a dul mar ma

scriobhaim mos mo ar na heinini seo beidh me dheora ag rith 's rachaidh mo smaointi ar ais chuig an t-am nuair abhi me i mo oganach, b'iad na laeannta agus iad imithe go deo anois, ach thaitin siad liom agus ar a laghad ní dearmad deanta agan orthu, ta siad i mo chroí — oiche mhaith anois.

(Translated, this reads as follows — Editor):

The birds were singing today. One of the boys threw bread out of the window. At least somebody was eating!

I was lonely for a while this evening, listening to the crows caw as they returned home. Should I hear the beautiful lark, she would rent my heart. Now, as I write, the odd curlew mournfully calls as they fly over. I like the birds.

Well, I must leave off, for if I write more about the birds my tears will fall and my thoughts return to the days of my youth.

They were the days, and gone forever now. But I enjoyed them, and at least I haven't forgotten them. They are in my heart — good night, now.

Tonight's tea was pie and beans, and although hunger may fuel my imagination (it looked a powerful sized meal), I don't exaggerate: the beans were nearly falling off the plate. If I said this all the time to the lads, they would worry about me, but I'm alright.

It was inviting (I'm human too) and I was glad to see it leave the cell, never would I have touched it, but it was a starving nuisance. Ha! My God, if it had have attacked, I'd have fled.

I was going to write about a few things I had in my head but they'll wait. I'm looking forward to the brief company of all the lads at Mass tomorrow. You never know when it could be the last time that you may ever see them again.

I smoked some cigarettes today. We still defeat them in this sphere. If the screws only knew the half of it; the ingenuity of the POW is something amazing. The worse the situation the greater the ingenuity. Someday it may all be revealed.

On a personal note, Liam Og, (the pseudonym for Bobby Sands' Republican Movement contact on the outside — Editor) I just thought I'd take this opportunity tonight of saying to your good hard-working self that I admire you all out there and the usefulness work that you all do and have done in the past, not just for the H-Blocks and Armagh, but for the struggle in general.

I have always taken a lesson from some thing that was told me by a sound man, that is that everyone, republican or otherwise, has his own particular part to play. No part is too great or too small, no one is too old or too young to do something.

There is that much to be done that no

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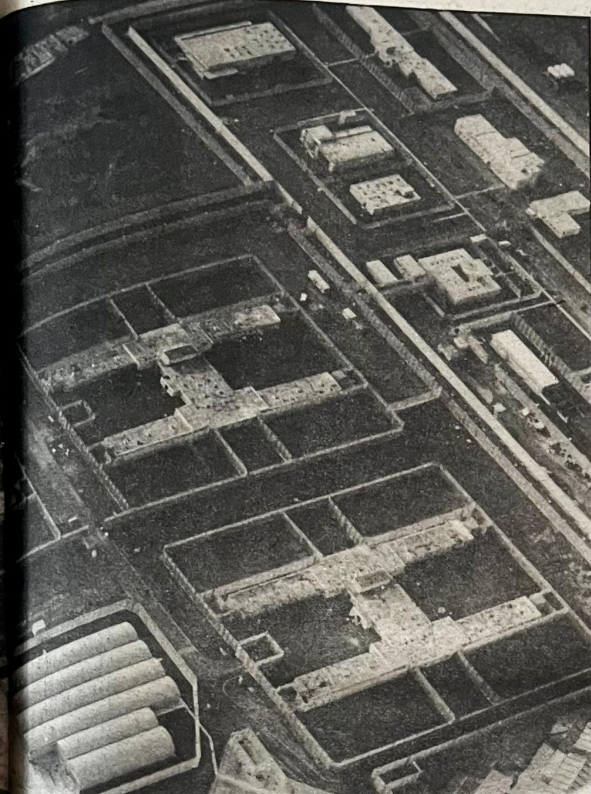
DAY 14

**Saturday
March 14th**

Again, another uneventful somewhat boring day. My weight is 58.25 kgs, and no medical complaints. I read the papers, which are full of trash.



BOBBY SANDS



(continued from previous page)

select or small portion of people can do, only the greater mass of the Irish nation will ensure the achievement of the socialist Republic, and that can only be done by hard work and sacrifice.

So, mo chara, for what it's worth, I would like to thank you all for what you have done and I hope many others follow your example, and I'm deeply proud to have known you all and prouder still to call you comrades and friends.

On a closing note, I've noticed the screws have been really slamming the cell doors today, in particular my own. Perhaps a good indication of the mentality of these people, always vindictive, always full of hate. I'm glad to say that I am not like that.

Well I must go to rest up as I found it tiring trying to comb my hair today after a bath.

So venceremos, beidh bua againn eigin la eigin. Sealad-igh abu.

(Translated this reads as follows — Editor):

So venceremos — we will be victorious someday. Up the Provos.

DAY 15
Sunday
March 15th

Frank has now joined me on the hunger-strike. I saw the boys at Mass

today which I enjoyed. Fr. Toner said Mass.

Again it was a pretty boring day. I had a bit of trouble to get slopped out tonight and to get water.

I have a visit tomorrow and it will be good to see my family. I am also looking forward to the walk in the fresh air, it will tire me out, but I hope the weather is good. I must go.

DAY 16
Monday
March 16th

I had a wonderful visit today with my mother, father and Marcella. Wonderful, considering the circumstances and the strain which indeed they are surely under.

As I expected, I received a lot of verbal flak from screws going and coming from the actual visits. Their warped sense of humour was evident in their childish taunts, etcetera.

I wrapped myself up well to keep me from the cold. My weight is 58.25 kgs. today, but I burnt up more energy today with the visit. I've no complaints of any nature.

I've noticed the orderlies are substituting slices of bread for bits of cake, etcetera — stealing the sweet things (which are rare anyway) for themselves. I don't know whether it's a case of 'How low can you get?' or 'Well, could you

blame them'. But they take their choice and fill of the food always, so it's the former.

They left my supper in tonight when the priest (Fr. Murphy) was in. There were two bites out of the small doughy bun. I ask you!

I got the 'Sunday World' newspaper; papers have been scarce for the past few days.

There is a certain screw here who has taken it upon himself to harass me to the very end in a very vindictive childish manner. It does not worry me, the harassment, but his attitude aggravates me occasionally. It is one thing to torture, but quite a different thing to exact enjoyment from it, that's his type.

There was no mirror search going out to visits today — a pleasant change. Apparently, with the ending of the no-wash protest, the mercenary screws have lost all their mercenary bonuses, etcetera, notwithstanding that they are also losing overtime and so on. So not to be outdone they aren't going to carry out the mirror search any more, and its accompanying brutality, degradation, humiliation, etcetera.

Why? Because they aren't being paid for it!

I'm continually wrapped up in the blankets, but find it hard to keep my feet warm. It doesn't help my body temperature, drinking pints of cold water. I'm still able to take the salt and five or six pints of water per day without too much discomfort.

The books that are available to me are trash. I'm going to ask for a dictionary tomorrow. I'd just sit and flick through that and learn, much more preferable to reading rubbish.

The English rag newspapers I barely read, perhaps flick through them and hope that no-one opens the door. A copy of last week's 'AP/RN' was smuggled in and was read out last night (ingenuity of POWs, again!). I enjoyed listening to its content (faultless — get off them! — good lad Danny (Morrison — Editor)).

I truly hope that people read, take in and understand at least some of the truths that are to be regularly found in it. I see Paddy Devlin is at his usual tricks, and won't come out and support the prisoners. He is not, nor ever has been, a trade unionist, more likely a Unionist!

Well that's it for tonight. I must go. Oiche Mhaith.

DAY 17
Tuesday
March 17th

La Padraig inniu 's mar is gnach nior tharla aon rud suntasach, bhi me ar aifreann agus mo chuid gnaige gearrtha agam nios gairde, agus e i bhfad nios fearr freisin. Sagart nach raibh ar mo aithne abhi ag ra an aifreann.

Bhi na giolla ag tabhairt an bhia amach do chach abhi ag teacht ar ais an aifreann. Rinneadh iarracht chun i tabhairt plata bith domhsa. Cuireadh os comhair m'aghaidh ach shiuil me ar mo shil mar is nach raibh aon duine ann.

Fuair me cupla nuachtan inniu agus mar shaghas malairt bhi an nuacht na hEireann ann Taim ag fail pe an seal ata le fail ona buachailli cibe ar bith.

Chonaic me ceann dona dochtuiri ar maidin, agus e gan beasail. Cuireann se tuirse ormsa. Bhi mo chuid meachain 57.50 kgs. Ni raibh aon ghearan agam.

Bhi an rialtoire isteach liom agus thug se baegan ide beil domhsa. Arsa se 'tchir go bhfuil tu ag leigheadh leabhar gairid.

Rud maith nach leabhar fada e mar ni chriochnoidh tu e'.

Sin an saghas daoine ata iocht. Ploid orthu. Is cuma liom. Le fadalach ab ea e. Bhi me ag smaoineamh inniu ar an chealacan seo. Deireann daoine a lan faoin chorp ach ni chuireann muinín sa chorp ar bith Measaim ceart go leor go bhfuil saghas troda.

Ar dtus ni ghlacann leis an chorp an easpaigh bith, is fulaingonn se on chathu bith, is greithe airithe eile a bhíonn ag siorchlipeadh an choirp. Troideann an corp ar ais ceart go leor, ach deireadh an lae, teann achan rud ar ais chuig an phriomhrud, is e sin an mheabhair.

Is e an mheabhair an rud is tabachtai. Mura bhfuil meabhair laidir agat chun cur in aghaidh le achan rud, ni mhairfidh. Ni bheadh aon sprid troda agat. Is ansin cen ait as a dtigeann an mheabhair cheart seo. B'fheidir as an fhonn saoirse.

Ni he cinnte gurb e an ait as a dtigeann se. Mura bhfuil siad in innhe an fonn saoirse a scriosadh, ni bheidh siad in innhe tu fein a bhriseadh. Ni bhrisfidh siad me mar ta an fonn saoirse, agus saoirse mhuinintir na hEireann i mo chroi.

Tiocfaidh la eigin nuair a bheidh an fonn saoirse seo le taispeaint ag daoine go leir na hEireann 's ansin tchifidh muid eiri na gealaí.

(Translated this reads as follows — Editor):

St. Patrick's Day today and, as usual, nothing noticeable. I was at Mass, my hair cut shorter, and much better also. I didn't know the priest who said Mass.

The orderlies were giving out food to all who were returning from Mass. They tried to give me a plate of food. It was put in front of my face but I continued on my way as though nobody was there.

I got a couple of papers today, and as a kind of change the 'Irish News' was there. I'm getting any news, from the boys anyway.

I saw one of the doctors this morning, an ill-mannered sort. It tries me. My weight was 57.50 kgs. I had no complaints.

The governor was in with me and gave me some lip. He said 'I see you're reading a short book. It's a good thing it isn't a long one for you won't finish it!'

That's the sort of people they are. Curse them! I don't care. It's been a long day.

I was thinking today about the hunger-strike. People say a lot about the body, but don't trust it.

I consider that there is a kind of fight indeed. Firstly the body doesn't accept the lack of food, and it suffers from the temptation of food, and from other aspects which gnaw at it perpetually.

The body fights back sure enough, but at the end of the day everything returns to the primary consideration, that is the mind. The mind is the most important.

If you don't have a strong mind to resist all, you won't last. You wouldn't have any fighting spirit.

But then where does this proper mentality stem from? Perhaps from one's desire for freedom. It isn't certain that that's where it comes from.

If they aren't able to destroy the desire for freedom, they won't break you. They won't break me because the desire for freedom, and the freedom of the Irish people, is in my heart. The day will dawn when all the people of Ireland will have the desire for freedom to show.

It is then we'll see the rising of the moon.

(THE END)





Bobby Sands, died Tuesday, May 5th

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

Abroad

THE extent and regularity of hunger-strike protest abroad, from small street pickets, to occupations of British offices, to major demonstrations, to bomb attacks on British property, accompanied by postering, leafletting, and wall painting, will inevitably mean that many British travellers abroad this summer will meet a cold reminder of current anti-British feeling aroused by the hunger-strike.

This militant activity abroad underlines the international media reaction, the extensive concerned reaction from international bodies in the trade union, cultural and human rights area, and the political backing for the hunger-strikers, the pressure of which continues to grow on British diplomatic missions.

The source of all this pressure varies in its initiation around the world. In the United States the powerful Irish-American lobby, and in particular Irish Northern Aid, is the catalyst for most of the protests, messages of support and expressions of concern. To a lesser extent Irish emigrants are also the main campaigners in Australia and New Zealand.

In Europe, however, the militant protests have been exclusively initiated by groups native to each country and gives an added powerful dimension to the general international pressure. Its encouraging extent is typified not only by reports received regularly from known areas of activity, but also by reports received from areas detailing activity in recent weeks which have otherwise been unknown here.

A recent report from Brittany for example identifies the port of Nantes as the scene of a number of demonstrations during the hunger-strike and particularly since the hunger-strike deaths.

This recent activity has included the picketing of Royal Navy vessels visiting the port.

An appearance last month by the British consul in connection with a war memorial ceremony was met with picketers and the local mayor during the ceremony paid tribute to Bobby Sands. The local British consulate was occupied following the hunger-strike deaths and recent rallies have attracted up to four hundred people.

Local teachers, farmers, overseas students, and trade unions, have all expressed support for the hunger-strikers as well as many left-wing political groups. There is also a campaign underway calling for a boycott of holidays in Britain.

Meanwhile the campaign in Australia in support of the hunger-strikers continued its momentum with a march in Sydney on Sunday 31st May attended by fifteen hundred people. On the same evening four hundred people turned up for a showing of two video films relating to the H-Block.

In the United States, the Spanish language television network, which services wide areas throughout North and South America, has called last week for a boycott of English goods to protest the British government's treatment of the Irish political prisoners. The appeal to viewers was made by Rene Anselmo, president of the network.

Maura McDonnell, a sister of hunger-striker Joe McDonnell, and ex-British army lieutenant Meurig Parri appeared on all three television stations in New Haven on Saturday 6th June in conjunction with a hunger-strike rally there organised by Irish Northern Aid.

They returned to New York for a demonstration in front of the British consulate before going on to Philadelphia, where they appeared in all the city's newspapers as well as on television and radio. They then moved to Washington where they met a number of United States congressmen. Mario Biaggi, Benjamin Gilman and Senator Dodd.

The State Assembly of Connecticut has passed a resolution memorialising the four deceased hunger-strikers. New York's Mayor Koch has announced on New York television that he will not have much time for Prince Charles who is visiting there next week because 'I am with the Irish'.

Demonstrations continue three times weekly in Kansas city and Detroit. The New York daily demonstrations in front of the British consulate have now passed fifty days.

Former blanket man Seamus Delaney has now completed his tour of the mid-



● March in Sydney, Australia, May 31st

west states and is in New England whilst the other former blanket man on tour in the United States, Noel Cassidy, has been most recently in Seattle and Oregon in the north-west.

Britain

THE SHIFT in opinion in the British Labour Party and trade unions caused by the hunger-strike deaths was further emphasised last week, and not only by the party's Home Policy Committee's call for a more flexible and humane attitude on the hunger-strike.

On Sunday 7th June, the annual conference of trades councils, meeting in Southport, passed a motion calling for the restoration of 'special category status', despite the vigorous opposition of TUC leader Len Murray.

The new current within the Labour Party was further illustrated on Thursday 28th May when Hackney Central constituency committee passed a resolution condemning the official party line of support for Thatcher on the hunger-strike, calling for the dismissal of Don Concannon as spokesman on the North and, referring to 'the overwhelming strength of feeling in support of the H-Block prisoners', went on to call for a 'serious examination of the possibilities for conceding the demands of the H-Block prisoners'.

This was the first statement on the North from the previously right-wing Hackney Central Labour Party. On Saturday 6th June, the Hackney Trades Council, which has a record of criticism of British policy in the North, held a one-day conference on Ireland.

Protests last weekend continued in London and included a picket on the constituency surgery of Labour MP John Fraser on Friday 5th June. The following day, a two-hundred-strong picket, specifically on the hunger-strike, was held by the Iranian Mojahadeen group in London at the Tory Party offices in Smith Square.

On the same day in Leeds, a dozen protestors picketed the constituency surgery of former Northern director, Labour MP Merlyn Rees.

Other indications of support for the hunger-strikers in Britain include a motion supporting the five demands and calling for British withdrawal from Ireland passed by an extraordinary general meeting of over five hundred students in Glasgow University. The passing of the motion was notified to the National H-Block/Armagh Committee by the president of the Students' Representative Council.

And the editorial of the latest edition of the 'Caribbean Times', the fortnightly paper of Britain's West Indian community, published in London — is also strong in its condemnation of what it calls 'Thatcher's bunker mentality' on the hunger-strike.



● March in Nantes, Brittany, May 14th



● Picket of Albany prison, Isle of Wight, June 7th



● Burning the Union Jack, Amsterdam



● Recent demonstration in Tokyo, Japan



● Picket of Conservative Central Office, Smith Square, London, June 6th, by Iranian Mojahadeen students

On the election

CROSSING the border at Killeen, the first election poster on the Dundalk road was clear cut in black and white: 'Support the Prisoners, Vote Paddy Agnew No 1.' From then until I left the constituency the following day, Paddy Agnew dominated the poster scene.

The length of the county, all along the Dublin road to left and right, through small villages and hamlets, Paddy's face smiled down at us from telegraph poles, hoardings, and tree trunks. As one election worker put it: "Before this, Paddy Agnew was known only in Dundalk. Now everyone in the county knows him."

The two-storey election office at Dundalk was a hive of activity when I arrived a few hours before a public meeting began.

The ground floor window of the office was dominated by a huge television set which attracted a steady group of viewers for the non-stop screening of the video film 'Ireland's Hunger-Strike'. Upstairs rooms had been allocated under the direction of Pat Duffy and election workers folded, pasted, posted, stapled, typed and drank tea with great gusto.

DUNDALK

Local Sinn Féin councillor Fra Browne described the campaign for me: "To date we have canvassed the whole constituency, Dundalk itself, Castlebellingham and Dunleer. The Drogheda people are similarly well advanced."

"There is a very enthusiastic election team; a one hundred-per cent turnout of young people; and a very active H-Block group throughout the constituency covering their own locality. Republicans from South Armagh and South Down are really sound, plus of course Paddy's own family. All are doing work."

Michael O'Donnail, independent councillor from Carlingford, interjected: "The interest of people in the H-Blocks and Armagh is really intense. In any canvassing I have done, Paddy's manifesto has been really well received. The prison issue has cut right across the board from farmers, business people, housewives and young people, the feeling is the same. I think Paddy will head the poll."

"Can I quote you?" said I. "You can," said he, "a rake of young Fianna Fáil people left their own candidate to support Paddy Agnew."

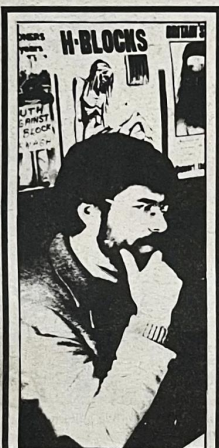
"And the Labour Party people," someone else remarked, "haven't they lost their best people? Resignations last week over Cluskey's disgraceful stand on the national question and total opposition to the demands of the H-Block prisoners."

Everyone is really working hard. All the groups who supported the demonstrations are putting in great work. There is big support from workers in Dundalk especially Paddy's own workplace with one hundred per cent support promised. "We'll top the poll," said Pat Duffy as he left for the Square.

"It is really only a three-seater," I cautioned. "How do you see things working out?" I asked Fra Browne.

"Well it is hard to know how people will behave on the day but it is the best campaign I've ever been involved in. We should get four-and-a-half thousand first preferences. That is based on standing republican votes in the county and excludes all the new young voters who are really sound on the prison issue."

"On top of that there if the two Labour Party people, the



By Gerry Adams

independent, and the Stick go to the wall, Paddy will pick up their second preferences. We will be well in there for a seat. Of course if the reception that we have got throughout the county translates into all the votes we have been promised then we will be home and dry. We will know on the twelfth anyway," he said with a grin.

As I left Dundalk, droves of young people, Paddy Agnew stickers on their lapels, headed for the meeting in the Square. The blanket men and the women in Armagh have definitely captured the support of their contemporaries in North Louth.

If that support extends to their parents then Paddy Agnew will have been elected for Louth on June 11th. But as Fra Browne says, 'we will know on the twelfth'!

MONAGHAN

From Dundalk, in heavy rain towards Monaghan, a borrowed car anxious for the open road and Carrickmacross, when Kieran Doherty first came into sight on the outskirts of the town.

In the town square an H-Block/Armagh caravan bore posters of Francis, Bobby, Patsy and Raymond as well as of the four present hunger-strikers. 'Vote Kieran Doherty No. 1' was the order of the day, with posters, an epidemic of them, much in evidence along the main road.

Our car, after its initial good



● Two thousand people at an election meeting for prisoner candidate Sean McKenna in Listowel, Co. Kerry

manners, was now taking water abroad, courtesy of a few well placed rust-holes. We stopped at Castleblayney to bale out.

On to Monaghan to meet a well-organised car cavalcade which was returning from an extensive tour of the lower part of the county. Mrs. Doherty, Kieran's mother, was heading back to Belfast well pleased with the reception she had received at every juncture.

Kieran's father had accompanied local workers on a well-received canvas of housing estates around Monaghan a few nights earlier. Another cavalcade was heading off for the border areas and with the rain still teaming down we stole a lift from Caoimhín O Caolain and Pádraig O Baoill, both gaelgoiris and hardworking campaigners.

When we stopped at Scots-town, I was surprised at the length of the cavalcade. Despite the heavy downpour, crowds gathered and cheered the speakers.

Morale among Kieran's election workers was sky-high as we headed off, loud hailer blaring 'The Boys of the Old Brigade' and victory signs from people peering from their doorways. Elections are contagious, and our entourage of young, not so young, and middle-aged were all infected.

Envyale was our last stop before returning to Monaghan. 'Doc' will not be surprised to know that I almost started a 'spoiled vote' campaign (old habits die hard) when I encouraged listeners to mark an 'X' by his name instead of the necessary No. 1.

As hell the rain quickly erased my faux pas, and the crowd, as always mindful of the foot-

ishness of city people, cheered encouragement just the same. Kieran Doherty was their man and they well understood the intricacies of PR.

CAVAN

On the road again, the following morning, heading for Cavan, the car, as rebellious as ever, threw caution to the wind and headed off down a concession road through Fermanagh.

I, mindful of the UDR and their cohorts, wasn't too pleased. With only a provisional licence for cover and an invalidated motor almost out of my control, who could blame me?

Eventually into Cavan town and the election headquarters. Again a buzz of activity even in the early morning. But a much more low-key campaign in Cavan, with locals backed up by Paddy Bolger, Brian McKeown, and other republican activists concentrating on the wide rural areas in their part of the constituency.

Canvassing was progressing well with the welcome build up of support in Cavan town itself. The west of the county, Ballyconnell, Swanlinbar and Belturbet were particularly promising. All churches throughout the county had been covered, plus cattle marts, dances and bingo sessions.

Tom McManus, down from the west of the county, was well pleased with the response and local election workers from Cavan town were 'quietly optimistic'. "Where we have organisation," I was told, "we are getting a good response."



● The platform party standing for the national anthem at last Saturday's election rally in Longford for hunger-striker candidate Martin Hurson

Mrs. Doherty was booked for a few days to cover the county and, as I left, news of the Monaghan H-Block/Armagh radio being received in Cavan provided another welcome boost, as did favourable reports from Shercock, Cootehill and Kingscourt.

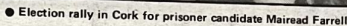
LONGFORD

The car and I were now set for Sligo/Leitrim, but a phone-call diverted us for Cork. The car, completely disoriented by the change of plan showed its displeasure as we limped towards Longford, the window wipers beat-

(continued on next page)

EAT MAGGIE
HURSON
IF YOU CARE

Sean O Bradaigh, explaining election strategy, described Martin Hurson's high profile in the area.



To Cork, delayed by torrential rain with the car now in a state of open rebellion, grumbling and complaining, as we inched our way southwards. Arriving at the tail-end of a highly enthusiastic public meeting in support of Mairead Farrell, progress since the election campaign started was out-

Outside, Branch men skulking around the election headquarters

● **ROBERT BEASLEY**
Sinn Féin councillor Robert Beasley
addressing an election meeting in Lis-
towel for prisoner candidate Sean Mc
Kenna

On the election campaign trail

(continued from previous page)

unusually large for a working day. Around the platform they listened to George Rice, Richard Behal and other local speakers backed up by Owen Carron, Mrs. McKenna, and Sean McKenna's sister Dymna.

Afterwards, Sean's election agent, Paddy Campbell, outlined the four thousand republican votes which Sean was assured of. "If enthusiasm can win an election then we've won," he said.

The shortness of the campaign perhaps mitigates against this as does the censorship and distance from the Northern war zone.

But republican Kerry was united in a well co-ordinated campaign which had enlisted, as in other areas, young people, some of Fianna Fail or Fine Gael political parentage, who through the trauma of the hunger-strike had come face to face with British imperialism and with neo-colonial Free Statism.

A tired Mrs. McKenna, speaking in the election office, told of the warm welcome she and her family had been given everywhere in Kerry, while Marie Moore spoke of the media interest in the North Kerry election.

A short visit to pay last respects to Michael Lynch, who had died tragically, and apologies for not being able to attend his funeral or the funerals of Ger Dowling and John Dillane, and we were off to Clare.

Kerry however was not finished yet, as from outside Listowel, four miles along the road into Listowel itself, and out again as far as the Shannon at Tarbert, every single telegraph pole was adorned in an unbroken line with Sean McKenna posters.

At Tarbert, despite strenuous objections from the car, we took the ferry, drawing attention to ourselves when the car stalled, much to my embarrassment and in no way attributable to my driving skill, as we approached the ramp. Much pleading and finally a push from sympathetic onlookers and we ventured across the Shannon towards the hills of Clare.

Behind us Sean McKenna posters faded gently out of view. No-one travelling the roads of Kerry could be unaware of the H-Block/Armagh crisis; and thus to Ennis.

CLARE

Here local disunity and some confusion prompted by a 'Sunday Independent' announcement that Tom McAllister had been withdrawn makes the campaign in Clare a difficult one.

The constituency takes up the whole of Clare county — the banner county — a four-seater with most of its support in the rural areas or along the coastline of West Clare, and the organisational needs are formidable.

One local told me that a split in Fianna Fail prompted by Charlie Haughey's sponsoring of Bernard McNamara against the slightly, very very slightly, mutinous Bill Loughnane would help the prisoners.

But division amongst H-Block activists had obviously damaged election hopes. For my part we spent the night, all night, trying to settle local differences, speeding into the small hours back and forth across the county.

One of the election organisers gave me some of his time to explain the campaign requirements and praised the election workers who were meeting with a very favourable response wherever canvassing was conducted. The car, unable to understand Irish parochialism was completely dejected by the time we left after a fairly depressing overnight stop and the tentative unit which was beginning to emerge was



● Dymna Higgins, sister of prisoner candidate and former hunger-striker Sean McKenna, outside Tralee election campaign headquarters



● Canvassing for prisoner candidate Tony O'Hara in Ballyfermot, Dublin, last weekend

probably just a little too little, and just a little too late. Nonetheless a local activist told me, "Tom McAllister won't be disgraced in Clare."

LEITRIM

North Leitrim on the night before polling dispelled any lingering feelings of gloom and although 'An Phoblacht's' deadline prevented a visit to Sligo, a few telephone conversations with John Joe McGill, canvassing in Sligo, and Michael Kilvarry, chairperson of Sligo H-Block/Armagh action committee, gave a clear picture of an effective and united campaign throughout Sligo/Leitrim.

John Joe predicted Joe McDonnell might get the first seat, but Joe McDonnell will be elected. "A chat with Joe Gilhooly endorsed John Joe's prediction and the reason, not least John Joe's own untiring work on behalf of the prisoners, became obvious."

"Of course," said he, "McSharry might get the first seat, but Joe McDonnell will be elected." A chat with Joe Gilhooly endorsed John Joe's prediction and the reason, not least John Joe's own untiring work on behalf of the prisoners, became obvious.

Every house in Sligo and Leitrim has been canvassed. The mind boggles at the amount of work entailed in such an exercise. A Joe McDonnell cavalcade, the biggest of any candidate in the election, right round the whole sprawling electoral area and sterling work, praised at every turn by Joe's wife Goretti, his mother and family, all pointed to-

wards Joe's election.

Every church had been covered and factories, and postering, obvious throughout my short travel along the constituency, showed the sound organisational approach and work in every locality.

A folk memory of Fine Gael's hijacking of Frank Stagg's remains and the local Fine Gael split all augur well for the H-Block/Armagh prisoners.

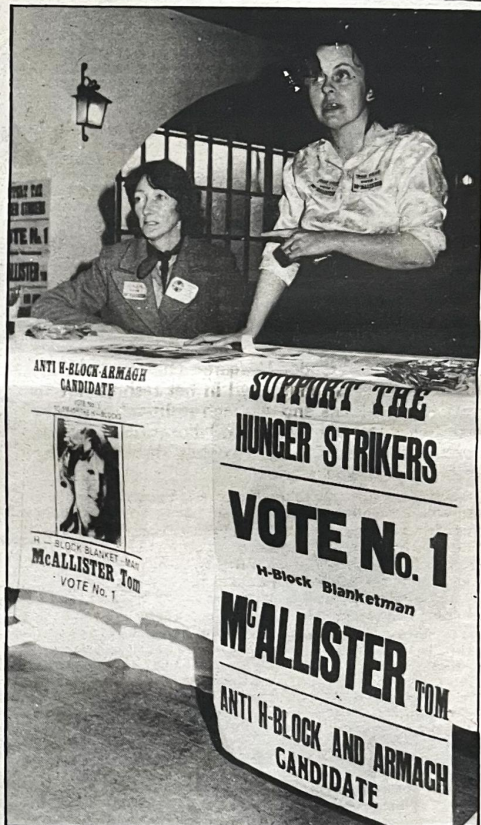
One Fine Gael canvasser told me of canvassing one hundred and twenty-five houses which voted Fine Gael at the last twenty-six county general election and forty of these houses told him yesterday that their 'number one' vote was going to Joe McDonnell. Others committed to the big parties were promising their 'number two's' to the political prisoners.

As Patrick Gallagher, chairperson of the Leitrim H-Block/Armagh Committee declared: "When we get Joe elected it won't be a victory, it will be the least we can do. We will be merely doing our duty on behalf of the prisoners."

HOME

And so with only two constituencies omitted and no time to cover them, myself and the car were ready for home.

Since we had left on Friday last, Joe McDonnell, Kieran Doherty, Kevin Lynch and Martin Hurson had been joined by Tom McElwee



● Bernadette McAliskey, addressing an election meeting on behalf of prisoner candidate Tom McAllister in Shannon last Sunday

and each of them had died little by little with every mile we covered.

How many of them will be elected?

You will know that by the time you read this piece.

At this stage it is sufficient to state that the intervention of political prisoners in the twenty-six county elections brought to life a staged, stale and contrived contest between Tweedledee Haughey and Tweedledum Fitzgerald.

Young people, and this was obvious everywhere I travelled, have no faith in any of the constitutional parties and the first anti-establishment challenge to the powers that be in almost twenty-five years has brought the youth, the small farmers, the housewives and unemployed face to face with that establishment and in solidarity with

those who represent the real republicans — the political prisoners of Long Kesh and Armagh.

Wednesday's escape from Belfast prison can only increase the feeling of enthusiasm. For ourselves, the car, eager for bed, has despite its protestations, built up an admiration for all those working on behalf of the prisoners and most of them, even those I spoke to, are not mentioned here. And so I am off to phone this story to 'An Phoblacht'.

If the car expires in the next day or two, and that is not altogether unlikely, I will be somewhere between Ballinamore and home.

If you're on that road you can't miss me, I will probably be towing a vintage republican vehicle which gave its all, an unwilling conscript in the interests of 'An Phoblacht'.
Beir Bua agus slan go deo.



• Heckling Haughey in Drogheda, May 29th

The despicable role of Charles Haughey

BY PETER DOWLING

BRITISH TORY leader Margaret Thatcher has undoubtedly been strengthened in her resolve not to grant the H-Blocks and Armagh political prisoners their five demands by the collaborationist role of Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey throughout the present hunger-strike crisis.

Haughey has not only refused to back the prisoners' just and reasonable demands, or even to call upon the intransigent British to resolve the issue, but has cynically engaged in a series of manoeuvres, around the question of an intervention by the European Commission on Human Rights, deliberately designed to undermine the hunger-strikers and the H-Block campaign, whilst simultaneously he has sought to boost his standing by pretending to pull important strings behind the scenes.

As the first four hunger-strikers' deteriorating health reached a critical stage, Haughey continually suggested, by a variety of nods and winks, (for example, through conveniently misleading stories floated in the obedient *Irish Press*), that he was getting the European Commission involved in order to solve the impasse — a totally false suggestion. And he continually attempted to mislead, and to cruelly raise the hopes of, the distraught relatives of dying hunger-strikers, — in particular, Bobby Sands' sister Marcella, and Patsy O'Hara's sister Elizabeth — by wrongly suggesting to each in turn that the British were seriously waiting to resolve the issue on their brothers' death-beds, through the 'back door' of the commission.

NEGATIVE

Haughey's ill-motivated practice of introducing the diversionary commission into the public mind has had the important adverse effect of partially alleviating public pressure on the Brits at crucial stages of the hunger-strike, and must have helped Thatcher to defend her indefensible inflexibility, internationally, through creating the illusion of movement on the issue where there has been none.

Haughey's negative role and his refusal to condemn Britain's death policy in the H-Blocks, has been a source of some confusion and unnecessary frustration and demoralisation, with consequent failure to

see the way forward, amongst some hunger-strike campaigners, especially amongst those who regard him as anything other than the unprincipled self-seeking millionaire, well-practised opportunist, and conscious collaborator that he is.

Far from Haughey's H-Block stance stemming from stupidity, blindness to British evil, or other personal defects, his despicable role in the hunger-strike crisis, as with all his political positions and actions, has been dictated solely by his coldly calculated assessment of how best to further promote his own egotistical ambitions.

As Free State collaborator number one in Dublin, hand-in-glove with the British, this sharp operator has been trying not to upset Dublin/London collaboration and has been seeking to maintain the 'status quo' of political stability in Ireland, North and South; whilst simultaneously cynically using the national question and, in particular, faking moves on the H-Blocks, to satisfy and exploit the republican aspirations of his base within Fianna Fail and the basically sound nationalist electorate in the South.

SURVIVE

To survive politically the ever-ambitious Haughey has needed to crawl along an increasingly perilous tight-rope, to perform an increasingly difficult balancing act.

On the one hand, to maintain his

so-called 'special relationship' with Thatcher (established at the December Dublin summit), so that he can claim to be making progress on resolving the national question, has necessitated him not challenging her H-Block death policy. To have done so and to have consequently risked being publicly rebuked by her, could have destroyed the credibility of their 'relationship'.

On the other hand, in order to satisfy his 'republican image' and nationalist base, Haughey has had to appear to have some sympathy with the prisoners' fight and to be making moves towards a resolution of the crisis. And also he has certainly not been able to condemn outright the republican prisoners and their hunger-strike, as he would obviously wish to, as part of his stepped-up cross-border collaboration.

APPEALS

Appeals to Haughey's supposed nationalist sentiments, on humanitarianism, are, of course, useless, as his words and actions are — like those of Thatcher — purely dictated by political expediency.

However, genuine appeals along those same lines, directed towards his base of support, both inside and outside of Fianna Fail party structures, will undoubtedly find strong echoes of sympathy; and, if such sentiments are consistently built upon, will eventually force a corresponding response from him as party leader, and as a populist politician.

Even in the wake of the general election, pressure in support of the hunger-strikers, particularly on the greenest of Fianna Fail grass-roots, could therefore have the decisively important political impact of pushing Haughey off balance, and forcing him into a more favourable public stance in support of the prisoners and against the British.

Whatever the outcome of the election, pushing Haughey over the edge of H-Block support remains a vital task for hunger-strike campaigners.



• Haughey, electioneering in Rathmines, Dublin, comes under pressure from H-Block supporters; that pressure must be kept up after the election.

WHAT'S ON

BALLAD SESSION

Saturday 13th June
5, Blessington Street
DUBLIN

Proceeds to Sinn Féin POW dept.

COMHAIRLE ATHA CLIAITH

SINN FEIN GENERAL MEETING

2 p.m. Sunday 14th June

West County Hotel

Chapelizod

DUBLIN

Buses 25 & 26 from Aston Quay

HUNGER-STRIKE

MARCH & RALLY

2 p.m. Sunday 14th June

Dunville Park

BELFAST

BODENSTOWN

COMMEMORATION

Sunday 21st June

Buses from all areas

LURGAN BUS

TO BODENSTOWN

Sunday 21st June

Leaves North St. 9 a.m.

LURGAN

Tickets £4

Available from Sinn Féin centre

NATIONAL HUNGER-STRIKE

MARCH & RALLY

Sunday 28th June

BELFAST

AN CUMANN CABHRACH

ANNUAL TESTIMONIAL

DINNER

THE An Cumann Cabhrach annual testimonial dinner in Dublin, due to have taken place on Friday 26th June has been cancelled owing to the continuing hunger-strike crisis.

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Sinn Féin should contact their
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I am interested in becoming a
member of Sinn Féin.

NAME

ADDRESS

MÁLAPOIST

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

Solidarity

Dear Friends,
I have been moved by events in Ireland to write you this letter of support and express my sympathy to all those good people making sacrifices in the cause of a free Ireland.

Up until about six months ago the issues were not understood by myself nor many others in Australia. But due to the great contribution by the likes of Bobby Sands, his friends, and the Irish people, the message is coming across loud and clear here in Australia — it is said that the British have made it so costly.

There have been many demonstrations around Australia in support of your cause. Friday 8th May saw 2,000 people attend a requiem mass for Bobby Sands in Sydney. May Day marches, earlier, also expressed support.

Here in this industrialised city of Newcastle we have much support and understanding of your cause.

With best wishes for your success.

Neville Cunningham,
Newcastle,
New South Wales,
Australia.



Blocking Francis Hughes' funeral

Bellaghy

A Chars,
As a resident of the 80% Catholic village of Bellaghy, I feel very bitter at the recent provocation of the so-called 'security forces', under the direction of the gutter-empire bigot known locally as 'Black Bob' Overend, who made certain that the funeral of Volunteer Francis Hughes, O/C South Derry Brigade IRA, would not pass through his home town.

During the three days of official mourning, 'Black Bob' drove practically non-stop up and down the street in his land-rover, wearing a bullet-proof jacket and smiling from ear to ear, and rejoicing in, as he put it, 'the relief to the law-abiding community' (of Hughes' death).

It was also spotted by mourners on the street that a certain little 'Uncle' was spying and taking photographs from the upstairs window of the supermarket.

So Bellaghy people 'waken up'. Remember this when spending your money, and remember also 'total boycott' of any shopkeeper or anyone attending or helping

in any way the RUC, UDR or British army.

We have the majority in Bellaghy and stand united.

Victory to the hunger-strike and to the Irish Republican Army.

Thee Unity,
Bellaghy,
Co. Derry.

Bandwagon

Dear Sir,

The so-called leaders of Church and State have begun to wake up and put forward their solutions with such words as 'sensitivity' and 'flexibility', which translated into common-day language simply mean 'do as you are told' and 'don't oppose British torture'.

The days of such slavery are gone forever, and as victory is in sight the Church and State begin to climb on the band wagon. Their patch-cries carry no weight now, for they have shown no sensitivity or flexibility over the years towards those Irishmen who have been tortured in British prisons in Ireland and on the British mainland.

If violence continues in Ireland the Church and State must be held responsible, because instead of leadership we had those who stand idly by. The initiative is now out of their reach, and the victims of British torture have embarked on the only road open to them. Bobby Sands had reopened that road which Terence McSwiney trod sixty years ago.

Let us hope that truth and justice will prevail with the final exit of the scourge of British rule in Ireland.

Edward King,
Galway.

Harassment

Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on the recent disturbances that have taken place on the streets of Dublin and elsewhere in the twenty-six counties, in connection with the H-Block hunger-strikes.

Let me make my position quite clear. I do not agree with or condone these activities, also I believe that no good can come of them. Such behaviour will only succeed in frightening people from coming out in support of the prisoners in their struggle for humane prison conditions.

May I suggest that the attitude of the Garda authorities might be responsible for some of these happenings due to the fact that they failed to put a stop to the illegal activities of not a few of their members.

Since the inception of the H-Block/Armagh committees, they have harassed, intimidated, ill-treated and caused extreme embarrassment to a large number of people, who became actively concerned about the protest being engaged in by the blanket men in Long Kesh. Young girls were stripped-searched and Section 30 of the Offences Against the State Act was used to intimidate and frighten.

Many young people were detained under the same act for periods from 24 to 48 hours without being given any reason, and in many instances put into

Dear Sir,

In view of the tragic deaths of our comrades in pursuit of their five just demands, I wish to inform republicans of an extremely ironic twist of fate relating to Francis Hughes.

Francis was charged and sentenced under British law with killing David Jones, a paratrooper on secondment to the SAS. The same David Jones was involved recently in a tax case before the British courts. As he lay fatally wounded he said to an officer: 'If I don't make it make sure Ann (his fiancée) gets all my stuff.' The court had to decide whether or not this was an effective 'soldier's will'.

This legal topic is covered by Section 11 of the Wills Act 1837 and successive cases. The general principle derived was that only soldiers who were on 'expedition' or in actual service of wars could make effective soldiers' wills; i.e. no written documents or witness signatures were necessary.

However the most recent relevant case was that of an Australian soldier killed in action against Malayan guerrillas in the

cells and left there for the period stated without even any suggestion of charges being preferred against them.

What worries me is that senior Garda must have been aware of what was going on.

The foregoing has been taking place over the last two years, not just since the street rioting started in Dublin.

A chief superintendent of the Garda has been quoted as saying that they were prepared to tolerate peaceful protest. My understanding of the function of the Garda is that it is not for them to decide whether they will or will not tolerate peaceful protests, but rather it is their duty to protect peaceful protesters even if it brings them into confrontation with some of their own members.

All of these breaches of people's rights can be substantiated and proved to be true. I have endeavoured to discover some explanation for the activities of these Garda but so far I have been unsuccessful.

Robert Smith,
Churchtown,
Dublin 14.



Garda harassment

Clones

A Chars,

The Clones H-Block/Armagh Committee wishes to strongly condemn the harassment of its members by the Garda. Over the past number of weeks houses have been raided by the Task Force, accompanied by local uniformed Garda, young members have been harassed and arrested in the street.

We call for an immediate end to this intimidation of our members.

We would also like to thank the people of Clones for their continuous support, and urge their renewed efforts in the future.

Peter McAttee,
PRO,
Clones H-Block/Armagh
Committee,
County Monaghan.

IRONY

The judge decided that the situation of counter-insurgency forces was no different from that of a military force in war and held that the will was an effective soldier's will.

The important point of this letter is that the British judge, Sir John Arnold, used the above points in arriving at this decision that the last will of David Jones was an effective soldier's will.

The implications of this ruling by a senior member of Britain's judiciary are evident:

Firstly, British soldiers (or in their own words, counter-insurgency forces) occupying the six counties do so in 'actual service of war'.

Secondly, such deployment of troops is of a strategic political nature.

Thirdly, any combatants captured, such as IRA and INLA Volunteers, are therefore prisoners of war and should be recognised as such.

It is tragic that Francis Hughes and his comrades should have fought and died to prove the



Francis Hughes, on his capture in 1978

above points when simultaneously the British concede them in (deliberately?) low publicity circumstances.

This is yet another example of the willingness of the British est-

ablishment to contradict themselves whenever it is politically expedient to do so.

Gerry McConnell,
Cabinteely,
Dublin 18.

Criticism

A Chars,

In recent editions of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' much valuable space has been taken up with pictures of Maggie Thatcher, her Free State sparring partner Charlie Haughey, and others such as John Hume, Ian Paisley and Garret FitzGerald.

The people of Ireland hear enough and see too much of these imperial slaves and their English goddess, on radio and television, without having to look at them in our only republican paper. The people would be served better if 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' published each week a short account of the works and sacrifices of some of our illustrious dead. Indeed, many young people would learn in this way something they never heard at school.

We have a glorious list to choose from: Wolfe Tone; Robert Emmet; Rossa; Pearse; Rory, Liam, Dick and Joe; D'Arcy; MacNeela; to mention but a few.

The organ of Irish republicanism would then be doing a great service to a noble cause.

Peadar Mac Samhradháin,
Mulleinn Iarainn,
Cabhán.

reposing on a silver tray.

This magnificent spectacle of honest, inspired journalism took my breath away. A most mad moment in Irish history (the funeral of Bobby Sands) beautifully portrayed in vibrant pictures of gigantic proportions, and amply supported by sincere heart-felt words. Truly a wonderful tribute to a wonderful Irishman.

I just could not let such an achievement go unacknowledged. I enclose ten pounds to provide suitable liquid refreshment for members of the staff of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' who must get very thirsty indeed working so hard. I do this in the sure knowledge that by quenching their thirst they will forge ahead to even greater efforts.

Keep up the marvellous work.

M. Dunphy,
Belmullet,
County Mayo.

Voice

A Chars,

This newly formed organisation would like to add its voice to that of all those who are demanding a settlement of the H-Block issue by calling on Mrs. Thatcher to accede immediately to the five just demands of the political prisoners.

Mrs. Thatcher is a classic example of the English bluffer on the Irish question, because she knows that neither Irish politicians nor the media have the guts to make a stand.

She would change her tune in five minutes if the British ambassador in Dublin were declared persona non grata, and a threat were made to withdraw the Army and the Garda from the southern side of the border. In this way our politicians could save the further loss of life in the H-Block dispute.

Eamonn Mac Murchú,
Cathaoirleach, Cultural and Ethnic Identity Movement,
Rinn Ó Guanach,
Co. Phortláiige.

Tynan Abbey

A Chars,

May I bring to your attention some interesting facts about the recently much-publicised Tynan Abbey, and its unionist owners — the Stronges — passed on to me by veteran republican Maire Crawford, concerning the role played by the Stronges and their ancestral home during the civil war in Ireland.

These details are contained in a book entitled 'Ireland — A Catapaw', whose authors, one Elizabeth Lazenby, was an admirer of the 'sticism' of the

Stronge family during a visit with 'them' in 1922. Nevertheless, despite the book's obsession with IRA 'atrocities' of that time in the border region, it provides a graphic if naive account of Ireland in the midst of civil war.

At that time the estate was the seat of Sir James Stronge, the fifth baronet and presumably a cousin of the late Sir Norman, as Sir James' only son was killed in the first World War. Elizabeth Lazenby, on commencing her stay at Tynan, is moved to say: 'As for the landowners in their own districts, they are little monarchs; so had I heard, so indeed I found.'

With untiring IRA active service units throughout Armagh and the border region, the Tynan stronghold was virtually under a state of siege and proved a great inconvenience to social outings. Despite 'their refusal to be harried', the Stronges never travelled further than to Armagh, and even then the precautions necessary must have brought a nervous tic to their British stiff upper lip — 'our method of travel was quite unique. The Ford in which we rode was preceded by an armoured car manned by a dozen police. Behind that, directly in front of us, was a second Ford containing an additional bodyguard of seven armed men. In our own car the two men in front had revolvers while each of us in the back had been given a pistol. A second, thoroughly-equipped, armoured car brought up the rear.'

It was not only because of the Stronges' social status that such an army of police was available to them, but also because Tynan Abbey itself was used with the blessing of Sir James as the HQ for a large contingent of 'B' for 'Specials'.

To make way for these, the Catholic farmers on the estate were evicted and their homes given over to the 'B' Specials. A description of these evictions is provided, as Sir James apparently thought it would be good sport to show his visitor. The authors is forced to claim her disgust at the poverty of the Catholic tenants, the total lack of sanitation in the cottages, the families barefoot and in rags; but incredibly she discovered 'every corner of their homes stuffed with republican literature.' After the day's sport, the party then go off for a picnic in the grounds of the Abbey.

Yet another revealing insight, into the unionist ascendancy comes when the commanding officer of the RUC in Armagh, speaking with the authors about the attitudes of the estate owners confides that there is 'frantic insanity among the landowners.' P. McGuire,
Dublin.

Ouchas
LE DEASUN BREATHACH

The Druid and the poet

ONE OF the strangest things to happen to the Irish language as a result of the introduction of Christianity was the emergence of perhaps the best known Irish word today - bainne (milk). It came from the Welsh word bainne, meaning a drop.

Anyone who ever has heard a person say he is about to go out for his 'drop' will understand how it happened. The word began, like so many others, as a slang word and then took root.

Students of languages would expect to find a rather different Irish word for milk - lucht, perhaps. In fact, this once had this meaning but now means 'liquid' and has its cousins in all of the Latin languages, such as lait, leche, lacte - the word appears in English in, for example, lactic acid, the very useful product of buttermilk and from which a County Cork firm is making alcohol (a base for vodka, gin and other clear spirits).

When Christianity came here it came in peace. Elsewhere throughout Europe it came on the point of a spear, a lance or a sword.

The introduction made little difference to the Irish state and its laws. About the only institution to disappear was that of the druid, the representative and interpreter of pagan spirituality.

FUNCTION

Many people today think of the druid as an evil person because of ill-divided propaganda made by the Christian Church probably only over the past two centuries.

We know little about the druids but they appear to have been very good people, dedicated to learning and to keeping peace between Celtic nations or to ensuring that as few people as possible would be hurt in the event of war.

Some indication of how they were regarded in early Christian Ireland may be gauged from an endorsement used by Colm Clé, addressing Christ: 'Mo dhroí' (my druid).

However, it was inevitable that they should go and that some of their func-



O'Hara and McCreeh, as in a recent Irish poem in this paper.

tions should pass on to the poet. One of those functions was to maintain the Irish identity and to guard the tradition which backed that identity. The poet was the voice and memory of the people.

That function continues down to the present day, when we observe people writing of Claran Nugent (as did Michael O'Siadhail in his latest work, *Runga*) or praising the valour of Sands, Hughes,

PERSECUTED

Over the past eight hundred years the poets have belonged to the most persecuted class in Ireland because the English realised only too well, as did the Romans before them, the power of the poet to rally the people and maintain their morale.

Many thousands of years ago the poet began as a sort of high-priest. His job was psychological and if he did it well he was honoured well. All primitive peoples realised that a good knowledge of their past was essential for their progress in the future. He was their collective memory.

There were other functions, of course - foretelling the future, cursing, blessing, mocking, making people cry or laugh. This was the very root of literature.

In historic times in Ireland we see the poet in various of these roles. He praised a leader. He reminded a people of its victories. He wrote a satire to end evil. Always he guarded the holy past of his people and made sure that this truth was passed on, unaltered.

MUSIC

At first the poem was chanted to the assembled people for the leader's favour (ites). Later, while still chanted, it was accompanied by music. Later still, the music took a more important place and, I read of music, as in the past, being a light or solemn accompaniment, it went to the very centre, music being composed especially to fit certain poems, or certain poems being written to fit music already existing.

This later development began to be noticed in Ireland in the sixteenth century and in Scotland, which shared a common language and culture in general with us up to about 1750.

From this later development came a certain kind of poetry, known as the amhrán. Later, for obvious reasons, this came to mean more than just a new kind of poetry. It came to mean 'songs' and has this meaning in Irish today (abair amhrán - sing a song).

Up to the time of the amhrán, Irish poetry largely was aristocratic. The amhrán marks the proletarianisation of song and poetry in Irish. It also marks the beginning of the powerful national song, one no longer confined to one class, family or province, but one which covers the entire Irish people, one which is Irish.



● Bobby Sands



● Francis Hughes



● Raymond McCreeh



● Patsy O'Hara

Four heroes died

MANY poems and tributes to the four dead H-Block hunger-strikers continue to be received by 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' from around the country, and from abroad. The one selected this week for printing is from a supporter in Coalisland, County Tyrone.

The lowly streets of Belfast saw you born,
Brave Bobby Sands, who never shirked the fray;
Nor could we see, that sad and fateful morn,
When we were told your life had ebbed away.

South Derry bore a man we'll ne'er forget,
Ireland's soldier son who knew no fear;
But Francis Hughes is not defeated yet,
His living spirit fights on, year to year.

The gentle smiling face of noble Ray,
Still haunts the rugged hills of South Armagh,
Unconquered still; he gave his life away,
Unshaken, now free from English prison bars.

Derry boasts no nobler son than he,
O'Hara's name will live when most's forgot;
A freedom fighter's will that we be free,
Will give us life when British minions rot.

No - not an Iron Maiden as they say,
A maiden's image makes us think of youth,
But hard-faced smirking harrier of clay,
Devoid of pity, humanity, or truth.

In Derry, Camlough, Bellaghy, Twinbrook,
Images that will never leave our thought;
Gaunt coffin'd faces, yet with a look
Of victory - they did not die for naught.

Four heroes died, their loved ones at their side,
Who would not yield to England's cruel sword;
We, who are left, remember them with pride,
And strive the more to cut the British cord.

Some Irishmen grow fat on British pounds,
While others eat, their bodies wracked with pain;
Our anger, Mother England, knows no bounds,
And we'll ensure you'll never win again.

IN MEMORIAM

CAMPBELL, Joseph. (9th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Flan Joseph Campbell, Na Fianna Éireann, who was killed while on active service duty on June 11th 1972. Thug se shaoil os an troid ar son saoirse. Always remembered by his friends and comrades in Na Fianna Éireann.

HEANEY, Denis. (3rd Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Denis Heaney, Derry Brigade, Ogligh na hÉireann, who was shot dead by British forces of occupation on June 10th 1978, while on active service duty. I measc Laochra na nGael go raibh a nam. Never forgotten by his friends and comrades in the Derry Brigade.

HEANEY, Denis Michael. (3rd Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Denis M. Heaney, 1st Battalion, Derry Brigade, Ogligh na hÉireann, who was killed by the SAS on June 10th 1978. Mary Queen of Peace pray for him. Lovingly remembered and missed by his mother, father, brother Bernard, sisters Nora, Gabrielle, Paula and Jean. "The fools, the fools, the fools they have left us our Fenian dead and white Ireland." These graves Ireland unfree shall never be at peace."

HEANEY, Denis Michael. (3rd Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Denis M. Heaney, 1st Battalion, Derry Brigade, Ogligh na hÉireann, who was killed by the SAS on June 10th 1978. Mary Queen of Peace pray for him. Lovingly remembered with pride by his sister Clara, brother-in-law Eoin and children, Florida, USA; sister Kay and brother-in-law Danny and clan, Shannon; sister Stella, brother-in-law Liam and dan, Derry; sister Pat, brother-in-law Frank and clan, London; sister Terry, brother-in-law Terry and Aolfe, Dublin;

brother Seamus, sister-in-law Seabel and dan, Derry, brother-in-law and sister-in-law Margaret, and Louise, Derry. "Lay him away on the hillside along with the brave and the bold, inscribe his name on the roll of fame in letters of purest gold."

HEANEY, Henry. (3rd Anniversary). In memory of Vol. Henry Heaney, who died in Musgrave Park Hospital on June 4th 1978. Remembered always by Mrs. McStay and family, Lurgan.

HEANEY, Henry (3rd Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Henry Heaney, Ogligh na hÉireann, who died in the military wing of Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast, on June 4th 1978. "Lay him away on the hillside along with the brave and the bold, inscribe his name on the roll of fame in letters of purest gold." Remembered always by his comrade Bic (H-Block).

HEANEY, Henry. (3rd Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Henry Heaney, who whilst imprisoned in the military wing of Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast, on June 4th 1978. Your body they may have broken but your spirit still lives on. Always remembered by the Henry Heaney Sinn Féin cumann, Crumlin, Dublin.

MCLENNAN, Peadar. (2nd Anniversary). In loving memory of Vol. Peadar McLennan, who was killed while on active service duty on June 9th 1979. "A smile for all, a heart of gold, one of the best Ireland could hold. Never selfish, always kind, these are the memories left behind." Always remembered by Noel (H-Block).

MCLENNAN, Peadar (2nd Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Volunteer Peadar McLennan, who was killed for Ireland on June 9th 1979. "Life springs from death and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living friends and comrades. Irene and Malachy Leonard.

Sympathy

DOWLING, The Rice/Sheehy Sinn Féin cumann, Tralee, extends deepest sympathy to the family of the late George Dowling.

DILLANE, The Rice/Sheehy Sinn Féin cumann, Tralee, extends deepest sympathy to the family of the late John Dillane.

LYNCH, Deepest sympathy to the family of Michael Lynch, Soa, Co. Kerry, from the Rice/Sheehy Sinn Féin cumann, Tralee.

LYNCH, Deepest sympathy to the family of Michael Lynch, Spa, on their recent bereavement, from Tralee H-Block/Armagh Action Group.

MAGUIRE, MCBEARTY. We tender our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of our gallant comrades Volunteers George McBearty and Patsy Maguire who died while on active service, May 28th 1981. "Soft be the country that mantles their graves, proud be the soil that bore them." We treasure the memory of their souls that fled, to join the great

HUGHES. The father, mother, brothers, and sisters of the late Francis Hughes (RIP), Ogligh na hÉireann, wish to express their gratitude for the help and support given to us during his long fast and subsequent return to the thousands who marched and worked so hard that he and his comrades might achieve their just demands and to all those who were such a great help to us at home; to his friends and comrades in the Republican Movement for their support and the final fitting tribute paid to him; to the thousands who called at our home to pay their respects; those who sent floral tributes, Mass cards, telegrams and letters of sympathy and who attended the funeral in such vast numbers, despite the har-

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

assment of the RUC and British Army. We thank you all, and whilst we are in receipt of the help of our nephew, must pay a special word of thanks to the McCusker brothers, undertakers, to whom we entrusted the remains of our loved one who acted with dignity and restraint in the face of such provocation.

We ask that you continue to support Francis' comrades who at present are prepared to pay the supreme sacrifice for their principles. The last tribute that could be paid to Francis would be the attainment of all he has fought for. May God speed the day! God bless you all.

The Hughes Family, Bellaghy, Co. Derry.

Solidarity Greetings

COREY, Joey. (H6-Block). Congratulations Joey, on completing four years on the blanket. From mum, dad, Sean, Bernie, Peggy, and Mary.

COREY, Joey; McVEIGH, M. (H-Block). The Sean Larkin Sinn Féin cumann, the Loup, send solidarity greetings to you both and congratulations on completing four years on the blanket.

KELLY, Tom. (H-Block). The Turf Lodge H-Block/Armagh committee salutes Tom Kelly on completing four years on the blanket. Protest for political status. "It is not those who can inflict the most, but those who can endure the most who will be the victors." Victory to the blanket men!

KERR, Robert. (H3-Block). Congratulations, son, on completing two years on the blanket on June 1st. Victory to the blanket men. From your mother and father.

KERR, Robert. (H3-Block). Congratulations, big brother, on completing two years on the blanket on June 1st. God bless you and all your comrades. All the best.

CLARKE, Danny. (H-Block). Happy birthday, Danny. We salute you in the courage and determination. We are behind you all the way. From daddy, Robin, Moya and Paddy.

MCERRIGAN, Sean. (H4-Block). Birthday greetings to our son, Sean, on his 21st birthday. God bless you and all your comrades. From mum, dad, brothers and sisters, Armagh.

MCERRIGAN, Sean. (H4-Block). Birthday greetings to my brother, Sean, on his 21st birthday. We salute you in your courage and determination. From

best from Catherine and Patrick, and Martin.

KERR, Robert. (H3-Block). Solidarity greetings on completing two years on the blanket. "If we had a wish, that wish would be for the keys of Long Kesh to set you free." Always thinking of you and all your comrades. God bless you all. From Aunt Kathleen and Uncle Joe.

FITZSIMONS, Sean. (H4-Block). Congratulations, Sean, on completing three years on the blanket protest. Never will we see their like again, not in a thousand years, for their courage is our guiding light. Always thinking of you and all your comrades. God bless you and your sister Marie.

MCDONNELL, Joe. (H-Block). Solidarity greetings to my comrade Joe McDonnell, on hunger-strike for political status. Your struggle is our struggle and what greater inspiration could comrades need than the courage and dedication shown by you and your comrades in this struggle with the real criminals, for the right to be treated in practice as we are in fact - political prisoners. Yourself and Kieran, Kevin, Martin, Tom and our comrades are always in my thoughts. "It is not they who can inflict the most but they who can endure the most who will win." Victory to the hunger-strikers! From Ronnie McCartney, POW, Albany.

MCMAHON, Leonard. (Cage 10, Long Kesh). Happy birthday, Leonard. Long Kesh. We salute you and all your comrades. From mum, dad and sister Catherine.

MCMAHON, Leonard. (Cage 10, Long Kesh). Best wishes on your birthday, Leonard. From your sister Rosalio and brother-in-law Tony.

MCMAHON, Leonard. (Cage 10, Long Kesh). All the best on your birthday, Leonard. From O'Neills, the family, Australia, and from big Mobe, Tasmania.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

H BLOCK

A GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS

OR
HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE BRITISH OPPRESSION IN IRELAND

BY CORMAC

MANY FINE YOUNG HACKS FROM THE VARIOUS MEDIA MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY IN BEING TRULY OBJECTIVE* ABOUT THE SITUATION IN H.M. PRISONS IN THE COMING WEEKS...

...THE FOLLOWING NOTES ARE FOR THEIR BENEFIT.

* "TRULY OBJECTIVE" - THIS MEANS JUSTIFYING ANYTHING THE BRITISH GOVT. DOES OR SAYS

1 WHO ARE THESE PRISONERS IN THE H BLOCKS?

THEY ARE, OF COURSE, NO DIFFERENT FROM COMMON CRIMINALS!

PRACTICE SAYING THIS WITH A STRAIGHT FACE IN FRONT OF A MIRROR!

2 OTHER USEFUL CONCEPTS

GODFATHER
MARXIST BANDIT

HAVING USED THESE PHRASES IN A NEWS ITEM YOU MAY LATER FIND YOURSELF DESCRIBED BY YOUR FRIENDS AS A BUFFOON OR A MORON... HOWEVER THESE FRIENDS DO NOT PAY YOUR WAGES!

3 REMEMBER THAT THESE PEOPLE WERE CONVICTED BY THE DUE PROCESS OF THE LAW

CROWN COURT

...THE JURY IN "CROWN COURT" WAS COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC...

WHAT'S A JURY?

4 CONFESSIONS EXTRACTED BY TORTURE???

THERE MAY BE A FEW ISOLATED CASES WHERE INTERROGATORS WERE EXCESSIVE IN THEIR ZEAL BUT LET'S NOT EXAGGERATE... AND ANYWAY THE ISSUE IS PRISONS NOT COURTS...

5 HOW TO COUNT THE PEOPLE AT A DEMONSTRATION

TO THE INEXPERIENCED EYE THIS MAY APPEAR TO BE TWENTY PEOPLE - IN FACT IT IS ONLY ONE PERSON CUNNINGLY DISGUISED! A TYPICAL PROVO TRICK!

IF YOU SEE WHAT APPEARS TO BE 20,000 PEOPLE MARCHING AT A DEMO JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY DEMANDS THAT YOU REPORT THIS AS "ABOUT ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE TODAY..." ETC.

6 IF AT ALL POSSIBLE YOU SHOULD IGNORE THE SUBJECT COMPLETELY!!

I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN BREAD AND BUTTER ISSUES!

WHAT KIND OF CALLOUS CRETN COULD MAKE SUCH A COMMENT DURING A HUNGER STRIKE!??

7 IF THE SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS LOOKS LIKE A COMPROMISE HAVE YOUR STORY PREPARED

THE TENACITY OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN THEM THE MUCH EXPECTED VICTORY AND THE UTTERLY DEMORALISED PROVO...

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8 AND IF THE SOLUTION IS TOTAL AND BLATANT CAPITULATION BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT...

IN A BRILLIANT DIPLOMATIC COUP THE GOVERNMENT HAVE REMOVED A MAJOR WEAPON FROM THE PROPAGANDA ARSENAL OF THE TERRORISTS...

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Annual
Bodenstown
Commemoration
Sunday 21st June

