

An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS



24 PAGES
25 PENCE

25 PENCE is the price of this week's special extended twenty-four page issue of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' which includes a full report on the funeral of H-Block hunger-striker Thomas McElwee.

Thomas McElwee H-Block martyr

Sraith Nua Im! 3 uimhir 31 de Sathairn Lúna 15

Saturday August 15th 1981

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■ The face of a hunger-striker: Thomas McElwee, who died last Saturday, August 8th

THE FINAL SALUTE

Thomas McElwee



■ IRA Volunteers prepare to fire a volley of shots over the remains of their fallen comrade

Chain reaction can halt mounting toll

YET another week has passed in which there has been more death in the H-Blocks and more death on the nationalist streets, raising higher still the toll of Britain's death policy in the North.

But even as the supporters of the hunger-strikers stand aghast at British premier Margaret Thatcher's refusal to move, even after nine hunger-strike deaths, how much more dismaying is the lack of positive action from the three cornerstones of the Irish establishment — the Catholic hierarchy, the SDLP and the Free State government.

Those three have still to be pushed into a position of public support for the prisoners which will bring the chain reaction, nationally and internationally, which will result in the breaking of Thatcher.

THOUSANDS

Undoubtedly, the massive support for the prisoners remains, as the thousands upon thousands who attended Thomas McElwee's funeral last Monday clearly shows.

Undoubtedly too, there is, just below the surface of Irish society, massive informed concern on the issue, as displayed when it breaks out in such a genuine and significant manner as Wexford county council's special meeting on Monday, or as displayed by the refusal of large sections of the media to swallow the Free State's diversionary ploys.

Undoubtedly too, there is much pressure available internationally as exemplified last Saturday when it was revealed that the French president is most anxious to show publicly his displeasure with Britain, just as are so many other foreign politicians, churchmen and trade unionists, if only the Dublin government would lift its restraints.

Once again this week, the hunger-strikers and protesting prisoners have spelled out in clear and reasonable fashion the changes necessary to satisfy their demands.

They have received publicly, following last Friday's Belfast meeting, the wholehearted and unanimous support of their relatives.

SCOTCHING

The week has also seen the scotching of the lie that the IRA leadership had initiated and was controlling the hunger-strike. And the voluntary nature of the hunger-strike has been clearly illustrated by the ending of his fast by our comrade Paddy Quinn, and the real sincere good wishes expressed for his recovery by all concerned.

Yet once again the prisoners have given us their chilling assessment of the situation.

In a statement, last Saturday, they said: "The British have decided on a semi-genocide policy on the H-Blocks. Their sick vanity has made them oblivious to reason and as human beings they are immune to sensitivity and compassion."

"Very much prominent in their thinking is the belief that sooner or later we are going to pack up and give in. They have a rude awakening awaiting them."

That determination of the prisoners was emphasised last Monday as Pat Sheehan replaced Kieran Doherty on the hunger-strike, and in the near future another



● Only a clear-sighted hard-worked-at plan of action can stem the bloody tide of hunger-strikers' deaths

prisoner will replace Thomas McElwee.

BOOST

Next week also brings the new by-election in Fermanagh and South Tyrone in which Owen Carron stands as the proxy political prisoner candidate. A victory here will bring with it renewed widespread attention and boost the campaign nationally and internationally.

But the thousands of supporters of the hunger-strikers cannot rely on such a boost alone, nor rely on the momentum generated by the sacrifices of the hunger-strikers themselves. The key to real progress, which is the saving of the hunger-strikers' lives, remains, whether palatable or not, the ability of the prisoners' supporters to move the Catholic hierarchy, the SDLP, and the Free State government.

There is no room for despair or panic in the face of more deaths; there is no room for displays of uncontrolled anger. Only well-thought-out hard work will bring results.

RECALL

The Cavan/Monaghan constituency H-Blocks co-ordinating committee — the election workers of the late Kieran Doherty, TD — announced on Tuesday the start of a campaign demanding an immediate recall of the Leinster House parliament in an effort to force the Free State government to act.

All Leinster House members are to be

lobbied at their homes or at holiday resorts for this purpose.

Here is massive work to be done in the twenty-six counties and to be done in a calm fashion. The Leinster House members themselves can be visited, and visited again and again, to see what they are doing.

The same applies to local councillors, who can be urged to take similar action to their Wexford colleagues. There is a new batch of senators too who will be anxious to start extending their bases for an assault on a parliament seat.

All these people have close colleagues in the local party structure who can strongly influence them and they too can be visited and re-visited.

WITHDRAW

In the same way in the North there is a definite plan of action to be followed in getting the SDLP, and any nationalist independents who remain, to withdraw from the local councils until the hunger-strike is settled. The campaign for pressuring them to do so follows the same lines.

In the same way pressure can be applied and kept up locally, throughout the country, on bishops and church leaders and they too must be made aware that lobbyists will return to find out what has been done.

Outside of this, the activity so many times outlined, must also continue and be repeated and built on.

Where local media are obviously ill-informed it should be ensured at least that they are getting full information. Where understanding is shown it should be kept informed and encouraged.

PRACTICALITIES

Anyone belonging to associations or trade unions should continue to raise resolutions at their meetings. And practicalities are important; such resolutions should be always transmitted to the Dublin government, to the central council of the association, to other branches of trade unions, and so on.

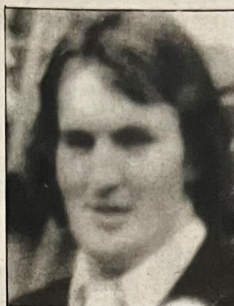
The continued presence on the streets is vital in order to keep the hunger-strike always at the forefront of people's minds.

Meetings, pickets, vigils, posterings, leaflettings, cavalcades and so on are necessary, but everything done should be well-planned and aimed at maximum effect. The danger of falling into a rut can apply to militant protest.

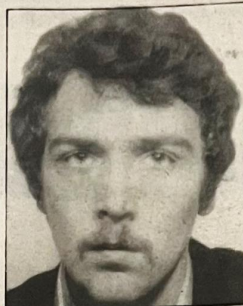
Emotionalism and tears are not going to be enough to move the Irish establishment or break Thatcher. The prisoners have throughout shown their determination, courage and, perhaps above all, their clear-sightedness in what they are doing. By following their example we can speed their victory.



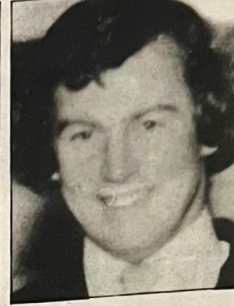
● MICKY DEVINE



● LAURENCE McKEOWN



● PAT McGEOWN



● MATT DEVLIN



● LIAM McCLOSKEY

H-block death policy claims ninth victim



● THOMAS McELWEE

THE sudden death last Saturday, August 8th, of Thomas McElwee, on the sixty-second day of his hunger-strike, brought to nine the number of political prisoners who have lost their lives in the H-Blocks as a result of the callous intransigence of the British government.

Thomas McElwee died at about half-past-eleven on Saturday morning, following an unusually quick deterioration in his health over the previous two days.

Up until Wednesday week, August 5th, Thomas had been surprisingly strong considering his length of time fasting. But from Wednesday onwards he experienced increasing weakness, needing a wheelchair to move about the H-Block hospital.

On Friday night, Thomas' fiancée, protest prisoner Dolours O'Neill, was brought from Armagh jail to see him, but a room had still not been made available for his family in the H-Block hospital.

At about ten o'clock on Saturday morning, Thomas' hunger-striking comrades saw him sitting up in bed smoking a cigarette. About ninety minutes later he died, alone, with none of his family beside him.

DETERIORATE

The condition of Micky Devine also started to deteriorate rapidly this week.

From last Monday, his family have been permitted to visit him daily. On Tuesday they reported that his mouth was beginning to ulcerate and his eye-sight was fading.

By Wednesday, when Micky Devine was fifty-two days on

hunger-strike, his condition was increasingly giving grave cause for concern, although he was reported to have stabilised slightly. He was keeping down the spring water (a hopeful sign), which of late he had been vomiting.

On Wednesday, when visited by members of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, Micky despite his poor condition and obvious difficulty with his eyes — was in good spirits, still retaining his sense of humour.

He also urged all hunger-strike campaigners to keep going and not to be disheartened by continuing British intransigence.

Moved

Laurence McKeown, who on Wednesday was forty-five days on hunger-strike, is continuing to feel cold and weak, and has lost more than 25 lbs. weight.

Pat McGeown, who on Wednesday was thirty-four days on hunger-strike, was moved the previous Wednesday, August 5th, to the H-Block hospital.

Matt Devlin, five days behind Pat McGeown, was moved on Tuesday to the H-Block prison hospital. By last Sunday he had lost 24 lbs. weight and was suffering a constant feeling of cold.

He was also vomiting small traces of blood.

Liam McCloskey, who on Wednesday was ten days on hunger-strike, is losing weight at a fast



■ HUNGER-STRIKERS' RELATIVES VISIT GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, ON THURSDAY WEEK, AUGUST 6TH from left to right: Hugh Cushman, cousin of Matt Devlin; Dominic Devlin, brother of Matt Devlin; Sean Sands brother of the late Bobby Sands; Theresa McCreesh, sister of the late Raymond McCreesh; Margaret McCauley, sister of Micky Devine; (hidden) Frank McCauley, brother-in-law of Micky Devine; Dave Farrell, National H-Block/Armagh Committee; (hidden) Collette Murray, sister of Pat McGeown; Geraldine Short, sister-in-law of Pat McGeown; Mary McElwee, sister of Thomas McElwee (then with two days to live); Martin Mullin, brother-in-law of Thomas McElwee; Nora McElwee, sister of Thomas McElwee; and Theresa Moore, aunt of Micky Devine.

rate: by last Sunday, after only seven days, he had already lost over 7 lbs. weight.

The condition of Paddy Quinn, in the military wing of Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast, continues to improve following medical treatment authorised by his family after he had lost consciousness on Friday 31st July.

Paddy had gone forty-seven days without food and was experiencing more terrible than usual effects from the hunger-strike

including severe epileptic fits and agonising pains.

Paddy, now definitely off the hunger-strike, appears to be on the road to full recovery.

Meanwhile the blanket men continue to show their characteristic determination to continue the hunger-strike.

Last Monday, Pat Sheehan replaced the late Kieran Doherty, and a new hunger-striker is expected to replace the late Thomas Mc

Elwee in the near future.

The prisoners have not yet announced (at the time of writing) if and when they intend to replace Paddy Quinn on the hunger-strike.

In any event they have previously stated that replacement hunger-strikers will join the fast at intervals of no shorter than one week, in order to ensure that the maximum pressure is maintained on the British government by the constant threat of deaths at regular intervals.

Hunger-striker No.17

Pat Sheehan

PAT SHEEHAN, aged 23, is the replacement hunger-striker for the late Kieran Doherty, TD, who died on Sunday week, August 2nd.

Pat Sheehan, like Kieran, is a Belfast republican. He is currently incarcerated in H3-Block of Long Kesh prison camp, where he is serving a fifteen year sentence. He became the seventeenth

blanket man to join the hunger-strike last Monday morning, August 10th.

Pat Sheehan is the second eldest in a family of four. He has an elder sister, Louise; a younger sister, Anne; and a brother, Kevin, who is twenty, and is also in the H-Blocks, where he is serving a ten-year sentence.

Pat went to St. Malachy's college in Belfast after passing the 'eleven plus'. There he passed four GCE 'O' levels before going

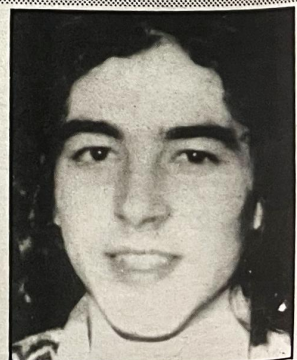
to De La Salle school and then to the College of Business Studies where he got another three 'O' levels.

Pat was a keen hurler and football player, and a member of St. Galls GAC.

In the early seventies the Sheehan home in Isadore Avenue in the Springfield Road area was the target for a loyalist assassination attempt, and the family was forced to move up the Falls Road to seek a safer location in the vicinity of St. James'.

Pat was arrested at home in January 1978, and spent thirteen months on remand in Crumlin Road prison. He was charged with taking part in an IRA bombing of a warehouse in the Grosvenor Road area of Belfast.

In March 1979, Pat was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment solely on the perjured evidence of one witness whose account was hotly disputed. Pat immediately joined the H-Block blanket protest. He has now almost completed his first week on hunger-strike, to the death if necessary.



WAR NEWS... WAR NEWS... WAR NEWS... WAR NEWS



● Coulter's garage on Belfast's Antrim road: successfully firebombed by an IRA unit last Sunday

Warnings

THE IRA in Belfast has issued three warnings this week.

The first, in the light of the upsurge in sectarian attacks by loyalists, reminds people in nationalist areas to stay alert and take all possible precautions against such attacks.

The second warning relates to the hijacking of vehicles belonging to small businesses and to several recent cases of looting. The IRA condemns such activities and warns those responsible that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

The Belfast Brigade has repeated their position of support for any local residents who might believe it desirable to organise themselves against such anti-social elements. And they promise to do all they can to facilitate such groups.

Lastly, the Belfast IRA has warned of an attempt to form a bogus 'people's council' in Divis Flats by a number of people who have in the past been involved in acts of grossly anti-social behaviour. They say that they in no way support this group and that they are extremely concerned about reports that some of its members have attempted to intimidate residents.

The Belfast Brigade also says that an attempt by this group to give its members status by issuing identity cards is worthless and that the IRA remains committed to the defence of the people of Divis and will oppose strongly anyone who attempts to make the already intolerable conditions there any worse.

Punishment shooting

THE IRA's Belfast Brigade carried out a punishment shooting of three men in west Belfast on Thursday evening, August 6th.

The three men, from the New Lodge area of north Belfast, were shot at the junction of Bingham Drive and St. Agnes' Drive in Andersonstown.

A thirty-eight-year-old man was shot in the arm and leg; a twenty-seven-year-old in both arms and legs; and a twenty-four-year-old in both legs and an arm.

The IRA pointed out that the three were shot "because of their involvement in anti-social activities. In the course of their actions they abused the name of the Irish Republican Army, and brought the Republican Movement into disrepute."

The IRA warned that such activities will not be tolerated and said that 'given the severity of their crimes' the three men were 'treated in a lenient fashion'. "However, two of the three," said the IRA, "have been informed by us that upon leaving hospital they must leave the six-county area or suffer the consequences."

IRA attacks

IN the days following the spectacular bomb blitz across the North on Wednesday week, August 5th, the IRA has continued with gun and bomb attacks on the British army and RUC, mostly in Belfast, in which a number of non-fatal injuries were inflicted.

On Friday 7th August, an IRA sniper operating in the Divis Flats area of Belfast hit a British soldier in the shoulder with a single shot. The soldier was part of a foot patrol in North Howard Street.

An RUC mobile patrol came under fire from IRA Volunteers in Derry in the early hours of last Saturday morning, August 8th. Two RUC men were wounded in the attack, which took place in Galliagh in the Shantallow area of

the city.

On Saturday afternoon, RUC men narrowly escaped serious injury in the New Lodge Road area of north Belfast when they were caught in the blast of a booby-trap bomb in a derelict house in Upper Meadow Street.

The RUC men, who had been lured to the house, and who had found the bomb, had called a British army bomb disposal unit.

Initially the bomb must have

been cleared, because it was lifted by the RUC to remove it from the house. But they realised it was a booby-trap, dropped it and fled.

A five second delay permitted the RUC men to get partially clear, but nevertheless they were reportedly thrown from the house by the blast which then engulfed the house in flames.

Later on Saturday evening, also in Belfast, an IRA active service unit opened fire on a British army patrol on the Springfield Road. Fifteen rounds were fired and it is believed one soldier may have been hit.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, August 9th, there were two further IRA attacks in Belfast

when a hand grenade was thrown at the Henry Taggart British army fort on the Springfield road and another grenade was thrown at an RUC mobile patrol in the Ardoyne area.

These attacks were part of the popular street resistance commemorating the tenth anniversary of internment.

On Sunday evening, an IRA active service unit was responsible for the successful fire-bombing of the Coulter business premises on the Antrim Road, in Belfast.

And, in Andersonstown, on Monday afternoon, August 10th, Belfast Brigade IRA Volunteers ambushed a British army patrol injuring one soldier with gunfire.

LOYALIST ASSASSINATION CAMPAIGN RENEWED

One dead, two wounded, and a near miss

THE apparent renewal over the past week of a loyalist assassination campaign in Belfast has resulted in the death of a young Glengormley man, the wounding of two New Lodge Road teenagers, and a near miss in a gun attack on a 'black taxi' at the bottom of the Falls Road.

Liam Canning aged nineteen, from Elmfield Road in Glengormley was walking with friends, around midnight last Saturday, along Alliance Avenue in Ardoyne where he had spent the evening, when he was struck by several shots fired from the direction of an adjoining loyalist neighbourhood.

Liam died instantly after being struck in the head and spine. He was a random victim.

HIT

Not far away, at about 10.30 p.m.

TAXI

The third attack took place at

about 10.20 a.m. last Tuesday as a 'black taxi' heading from the city centre up the Falls Road was fired on as it crossed the junction at Millfield.

The gunman had been standing at the edge of waste ground until he saw the taxi driving by.

Then he stepped on to the road firing several shots at the driver, which all fortunately missed due to the extreme nervousness of the would-be assassin, who then made off on foot to a waiting motor-bike which was driven up along Millfield to the nearby Shankill Road.

The front-seat passenger in the taxi recalls: "I noticed a man stepping to the side of the road, wearing a duffel coat. I noticed him particularly because he was wearing a duffel and it was a warm morning. He stepped on to the road and raised a revolver in both hands. He fired four or five shots and then ran to a waiting motor-bike."



● FRANCIS MURDOCH hit twice in side



● ISSAC McILHOMS grazed on the thigh



● PETER MAGENNIS
seventh plastic bullet fatality

Plastic Killers

MURDEROUS plastic bullets claimed another life, early last Sunday morning, in the tiny Bawnmore nationalist ghetto of north Belfast, when Peter Magennis, a forty-one-year-old father of five, was struck in the chest, dying in his home shortly afterwards.

The killing happened shortly after midnight, when Peter Magennis and his wife, Isabel came out of their Shore Road home to protest to young rioters who had just

inaccurately, but highly dangerously, thrown a petrol bomb into their front garden. (Petrol bombs were at the time being thrown at British army and RUC patrols on the

Shore Road by rioting youths in Dandy Street.)

Peter Magennis and his wife were joined by a friend, Bernard Girvan, at the bottom of Dandy Street.

He recalls what happened: "I had just gone up to Peter when two RUC landrovers appeared. At this, all the rioters disappeared up Dandy Street, leaving Peter,

Isabel and myself at the bottom of the street.

"We were trying to get away as I knew the RUC would fire plastic bullets. I had just got round the corner with Isabel when I heard a bang and Peter cried out, 'I'm hit'.

"Peter was not involved in the rioting but in spite of this the RUC landrover drew alongside and he was shot at point-blank range."

Peter Magennis was carried to his own home, bleeding heavily from the wound. An ambulance was called but he died before it arrived.

He is the seventh plastic bullet fatal victim this year alone. So far,

Victims

SOME of the fiercest rioting in Belfast last Sunday morning, as Brits and RUC provocatively flooded nationalist areas during anniversary of internment commemorations, took place in the New Lodge district in the north of the city, where at least nine people — including one from Scotland and one from Denmark — needed hospital treatment as a result of British army and RUC violence.

Following minor rioting in the area shortly after midnight, Brits moved in, in force, and attacked a crowd of people gathered round a bonfire in Annadale Street.

Wounded in this incident were a twenty-six-year-old Dane, Niel-Henrik Nielsen, who was taking photographs, and who was struck by a plastic bullet in the groin; and eighteen-year-old Joe Gormley, who was shot in the right elbow by a plastic bullet.

At around the same time, at another bonfire in Bruslee Way, fourteen-year-old Peter McAllister was struck in the back by RUC men firing from the back of a landrover.

Later, at 4 a.m., when people took to the streets with bin-lids to commemorate the dawn raids on internment

morning in August 1971, plastic bullets were again used to try and drive people from the streets.

James Neeson, a forty-year-old local man, was struck by a plastic bullet on the base of the spine as he banged a bin-lid in Upper Meadow Street. He was taken to the intensive care unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Wounded at the same time, while banging a bin-lid, was sixteen-year-old local girl Caroline McWilliams, wounded in the thigh.

Frank Johnston, one of a group of Scottish supporters in Belfast for Sunday's march, was hit in the face by a plastic bullet as he stood in the doorway of the house he was staying in; his jaw was broken in six places.

In addition to plastic bullet injuries, three New Lodge women were beaten by British soldiers after they refused to stop banging bin-lids. Forty-year-old Agnes Ouligley was kicked and punched after picking up a bin-lid that Brits had pulled off her.

Thirty-eight-year-old Jean Macken, and a friend, Belinda Sewell, aged twenty-one, were banging on corrugated iron fences in Upper Meadow Street, when British soldiers began first to threaten Belinda and then to push her about. When Jean tried to intervene, both women were beaten by frenzied Brits, and a previously fractured bone in Jean's arm which had almost healed was broken again.

In another incident, Brits broke windows and doors of five houses in Arlington Street, outside which people were banging bin-lids in the early hours of Sunday morning.



● Jean Macken (left), and Belinda Sewell, both of New Lodge, Belfast, were beaten by frenzied Brits

Beechmount assault

BRITISH Marine Commandos in the Beechmount area of west Belfast, on Thursday 6th August, attacked and injured three members of a local nationalist family, before arresting the forty-seven-year-old father and his nineteen-year-old son.

British soldiers had made several attempts to arrest nineteen-year-old Eddie Hamilton, in a series of raids on the family home, but at 11.00 a.m. a week last Thursday they spotted him standing at the bottom of his street and immediately placed him against the wall with a plastic bullet gun pressed into his neck. While in this position he was kicked and punched.

Seeing his son being attacked, Edward Hamilton ran towards him down the street but was set on by members of the Brit patrol, knocked to the ground and badly kicked.

Learning from neighbours what was going on, Mrs. Kathleen Hamilton ran out to stop the assaults on her husband and son. Mrs. Hamilton — who wears a

heart pace-maker — was then knocked unconscious with a rifle butt and continually struck until neighbours intervened.

Edward and Eddie Hamilton were then flung into a landrover and taken to Springfield Road barracks, where Edward was charged with assaulting a Brit before being released. His son, Eddie, was taken to Castlereagh.

Following the assault, Mr. Hamilton was badly cut and bruised, while Mrs. Hamilton suffered two black eyes and a badly cut and bruised nose.



● KATHLEEN & EDWARD HAMILTON
attacked and injured by Marine Commandos

A highly publicised 'swamp and search' operation, lasting thirty hours, by UDR and RUC bigots in the tiny east Belfast nationalist enclave of Short Strand, during Monday and Tuesday of this week, was transformed from the intended punitive exercise in harassment into an embarrassing flop, by the mass disruptive action of militant and sickened local residents.

The mini-curffew was imposed at about 11.25 a.m. last Monday, moments after a member of a UDR patrol was shot in the shoulder, on the edge of Short Strand, in an operation later claimed by the INLA.

Initially concentrated on the houses around the source of the shooting attack, in Anderson Street, swarming UDR and RUC men soon extended the search to include the whole of the nationalist ghetto, progressively sealing off streets and stopping, searching and questioning everyone entering or leaving the cordons.

MONDAY

East Belfast Paisleyite MP Peter Robinson, apparently 'wired off' by sources within the UDR and RUC that such a search operation was under way and likely to continue, craftily issued a statement early on Monday evening demanding that in fact such a search operation take place, and thus earned political credit among

unionists supporters for seeming (wrongly) to have instigated the search in the first place.

Throughout Monday, searches of individual houses continued, and dramatic success claims of 'arms finds' reached a high pitch with the arrival of a bomb disposal team in the area and re-

sidents in Moira Street being (unsuccessfully) urged to leave their homes for fear a bomb was about to explode.

In fact, it appears that the publicised 'haul' of 'bomb-making equipment' amounted to little more than petrol bombs and may be

a battery or two!

The search continued through much of the night, with the ghetto being illuminated by a helicopter searchlight.

TUESDAY

As a full-scale search resumed on Tuesday, however, local people

Short Strand mini-curfew



● The people of Short Strand took to the streets to defy the sectarian UDR and RUC

became increasingly militant and resentful of the sectarian abusive nature of the UDR and UDR, and many young people began to refuse to account for their movements or answer questions as they passed through cordons, resulting in several arrests.

A protest rally was held at 2.30 p.m. on the Mountpottinger Road, following which, scuffles broke out between UDR and RUC men and local people, as locals refused to be searched or questioned any more, and were consequently refused to be let back into their homes.

With local people planning a further protest meeting at 7.00 p.m., the discovery of a rifle and ammunition by the UDR in Arran Street at around 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, allowed them and the RUC to withdraw, 'honour' intact, within half an hour of the find.

It was painfully clear however, that given Short Strand's public billing as a republican 'den' by outraged loyalists, the discovery of a single rifle, some ammunition and a few petrol bombs scarcely constituted a successful operation, and it seems likely that once the nationalist people of Short Strand began to organise themselves in opposition to the search, the UDR and RUC pulled swiftly out rather than run the risk of public embarrassment at the hands of nationalist popular resistance.

PRISONERS' SACRIFICES CONTINUE AND UNITY MAINTAINED

Reluctant action forced from FitzGerald

BY PETER ARNLIS

THE continuing sacrifices of the H-Block blanket men, and particularly the hunger-strikers, the death of Thomas McElwee last Saturday and the deteriorating condition of Micky Devine this week, and the solidarity of their families with them in a unique, united front, has combined with the accompanying de-stabilisation in Ireland to finally press the Free State government into some as yet ungaugeable open action in this the sixth month of the hunger-strike.

The Dublin government has mishandled its own predicament and even continues to misjudge — to the detriment of its own credibility — the broad nature of public outrage at British intransigence.

However, the unity of the hunger-strikers and the blanket men, the ineffectualness of clerical and political offensives to undermine their long, heroic protest, and the snub from the British government to an appeal from the Free State administration to introduce immediately the prison reforms it has supposedly contemplated, have forced the Free State administration to mount what they have allowed the Dublin media to describe as a significant international, diplomatic offensive and public information service on the hunger-strike.

HOPED

On Wednesday week, August 5th, John Kelly, acting Free State minister of Foreign Affairs, called on the British authorities to implement without delay to all conforming prisoners in Northern jails the benefit of intended reforms so that the hunger-strikers could see exactly what sort of regime was on offer if they ended their fasts.

He had suggested the move to a senior British embassy official, and he 'hoped' the reforms would correspond to the reforms the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace had claimed to have elicited from prison minister Michael Alison before these talks broke up in recriminations and counter-claims at the time of Joe McDonnell's death in early July.

Up until last week the Free State government's total efforts at pressing the British to settle the issue had amounted to no more than private appeals — usually by telephone or through Dublin's ambassador in London, Eamonn Kennedy — since the meeting between Kelly and his British counterpart, Lord Carrington, in mid-July.

As H-Block/Armagh activists have consistently pointed out, the British government can take private pleas in their stride and it is open governmental or hierarchical criticism they fear since that will remove the barrier holding back criticism from international bodies and foreign politicians, who to date have felt constrained, if not confused, by the Dublin government's inactivity.

ACTION

But last week's events forced the Free State to take some action. On the evening of Thursday week, August 6th, relatives of the hunger-strikers, after a disastrous meeting with Free State premier Garret FitzGerald and John Kelly, staged a sit-in at government buildings in Dublin before being physically ejected.

On Friday morning, the British government delivered a humiliating snub to the Dublin government's request for clarification on the prison reforms contemplated, and



● Bin-lid banging on Belfast's Falls Road after Thomas McElwee's death: there has been a continuing unity of purpose displayed by the hunger-strikers and the blanket men, their families, and their supporters, which has helped turn the tide once more against the British

then on Friday night the unity of the relatives in support of the hunger-strikers was evident at a meeting in Belfast.

The meeting was a major set-back for these figures and bodies who for one good reason or another malicious one, wanted the hunger-strike abandoned. Also on Thursday the prisoners had issued a further lengthy statement on how their demands could be met. (See overleaf for full text of statement.)

It was on Friday, August 7th, that the British ambassador in Dublin, Leonard Figg, met John Kelly and told him that London was not prepared to implement changes in the prison regime before the hunger-strike ends, as called upon by the Free State government forty-eight hours earlier.

Later that evening hundreds of relatives of blanket men and hunger-strikers had a private meeting in Clonard Hall, Belfast, organised by two prison chaplains, one of whom, Fr. Denis Faul, has made a number of interventions to have the hunger-strike called off and has attempted to use his influence to that end. (His latest call, last Tuesday, for an end to the hunger-strike is apparently not on moral grounds but as a result of the defeatist attitude that the British are too intransigent to concede.)

ATTACK

It was against this background of republican unity and determination, and a British snub which placed the Free State government's domestic credibility in jeopardy, that Michael O'Leary launched a personal attack on Thatcher.

Interviewed on RTE radio last Sunday, O'Leary attacked Thatcher as being responsible for British intransigence but declared

his opposition to breaking off diplomatic relations with Britain.

He said that the Free State's lobbying campaign in the US (which had proved a failure with President Reagan) would be intensified. He said that the British viewed the hunger-strike campaign from a security point of view and ignored the political element.

This has led to political instability North and South, a nationalist disenchantment in the North with the SDLP and in the South an explosion of interest, particularly from the youth, in the nationalist struggle with the further possibility that blanket man Paddy Agnew's resignation could subsequently topple the coalition government.

UNANIMOUSLY

The relatives unanimously came out in full support of the hunger-strike protest and accused the British government of 'the most callous cruelty and lack of responsibility'.

Their statement, read by Mrs. Eilish McDonnell, mother of dead hunger-striker Joe McDonnell, said: "It is unknown in Irish history for eight young men to die on hunger-strike for the principle of human dignity. We, the prisoners' wives, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters welcome the statements from the protesting prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh of July 4th and August 6th.

"We find them clear responsible statements. We find the British government guilty of the most callous cruelty and lack of responsibility, care and compassion in the present hunger-strike crisis. We, the relatives, stand in full support of the protesting prisoners and the hunger-strike."

Before the relatives' meeting, Northern direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins had said there

was 'no justification' for giving the H-Block prisoners conditions of work and association different from those in jails in Britain.

He also replied to Thursday night's lengthy statement from the prisoners and alleged that to accede to their demands would mean the prison authorities abandoning control within the prison. This has been denied by the blanket men. For once the 'Irish Times', in analysing these developments, concluded that 'the British authorities now have as their priority a complete surrender by the hunger-strikers'.

The prisoners answered Atkins in a statement issued on Saturday, only hours after Thomas McElwee died. They described Atkins' claim that they were seeking control over the jail as 'ludicrous' and accused the British government of being 'oblivious to reason'. The prisoners stated that the British 'have decided on semi-genocide policy in the H-Blocks. Very prominent in their thinking is the belief that sooner or later we are going to pack up and give in. They have a rude awakening awaiting them.'

O'Leary's attack on Thatcher was strongly rebuffed in an editorial in last Tuesday's London 'Times', which accused the Dublin government of setting its 'deputy prime minister baying after Mrs. Thatcher with hackneyed abuse'. The editorial threw back in the Dublin government's face FitzGerald's confused and contradictory analysis of the hunger-strike a fortnight ago, the newspaper favourably concentrating on that section of FitzGerald's speech which held the IRA responsible for the hunger-strike.

FEEDS

Its comments should also be a lesson to those waverers in the nationalist community as it shows how British intransigence actually feeds on the climate of defeatism fostered by Catholic clerics and politicians.

The 'Times' falsely asserted that last week the united front of the hunger-strikers and their supporters was almost cracked "and now the Irish government in the direction of those prisoners' captors." It attacked the proposed 'diplomatic offensive' against British intransigence due to be discussed at the following day's cabinet meeting in Dublin.

Tuesday's 'Times' may have had some success with whipping the Dublin stooges into line, as on Tuesday night John Kelly launched another attack on the IRA absurdly relating the pressure being put on his cabinet colleagues to act against Britain as part of an overall IRA strategy, his mistake being not to recognise that the build-up of such pressure has an independent momentum fuelled and outraged by Free State inactivity.

An example of their lack of preparedness to stand up to the British was their advice to the French President, Francois Mitterand, who apparently was prepared to boycott the recent Royal wedding as a way of expressing France's disapproval at Britain's handling of the hunger-strike. Such a dramatic gesture would have exposed the Free Staters as spineless, so FitzGerald discouraged the French and instead asked them to work 'behind the scenes', on the ridiculous pretext that the open snub could possibly harmen Thatcher's intransigence.

Last Wednesday, the Free State cabinet discussed the type of campaign they would be launching.

It falls far short of that demanded by H-Block activists and the relatives of the prisoners as necessary to break British intransigence — breaking off diplomatic relations and ending cross-border political and military co-operation.

But the very fact that the discussion took place shows that the tide is beginning to shift again against the British and that the unity of prisoners' supporters behind whatever stance the prisoners and hunger-strikers adopt is what has brought this action about.

Important elaboration on prisoners' position

THE republican blanket men in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh issued an important statement on Thursday week, August 6th, in which they once again spelt out in a reasonable and precise manner the basis for a settlement of the hunger-strike and for a permanent ending of the prison protests in Long Kesh and Armagh women's prison.

Leading republican Gerry Adams, commenting on the statement, emphasised that:

"The Catholic hierarchy and collectively the SDLP as a party, the labour movement, the Dublin government, and all other elements of the Irish establishment, as well as the loyalist elements, have a duty to spell out clearly their position on the

prisoners' statement. Either they believe the terms outlined by the prisoners are reasonable and just, or they support the British government's death policy in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh."

Despite the reasonable and conciliatory stance taken by the prisoners, the British government, through their Northern direct-ruler Humphrey Atkins, rejected the prisoners' statement and maintained its intransigence.

Ludicrously, Atkins claimed, on Friday, August 7th, that 'the protestors' demands, as elaborated in their latest statement, cannot be met unless the government agree to the abandonment by the prison authorities of their proper responsibility for

control within the prison."

The prisoners, on Saturday, August 8th, issued a reply to Humphrey Atkins, denying that the implementation of their five demands, as elaborated in their statements of July 4th (see 'An Phoblacht/Republican News', July 11th) and August 6th, would mean them taking control of the prison.

The full texts are published here of the political prisoners' August 6th ten-point statement and their subsequent reply to Atkins (which was written before the death of Thomas McElwee on Saturday).

August 6th statement

1) WE, republican prisoners in the H-Blocks, have been asked to elaborate on certain aspects of our July 4th statement and are only too happy to oblige.

We again reiterate that we are not seeking elitist or preferential treatment from other prisoners.

2) We are not seeking to take over the prison. It is ludicrous and ridiculous to even suggest otherwise: the evidence of this was clearly displayed in our July 4th statement and will be reinforced in this statement.

3) With neither of these fundamental principles of British policy in question there is no acceptable reason why a solution as envisaged in this statement should not be implemented.

When all is said and done, it is the British, for inflated and grossly exaggerated political reasons, who have the power to end this issue to everyone's satisfaction; yet they refuse to act sensibly, humanely, realistically, or reasonably to resolve this issue.

4) The British refusal to settle leaves us with absolutely no alternative but to continue with this strategy.

Their defiance, in the face of reason based on the reality that an obvious and principled solution exists, challenges the authority of every concerned body in Ireland. It is our opinion that every authority has pursued a moderate approach which the British have treated as weakness and dismissed contemptuously.

If further deaths are to be avoided, more vigorous pressure will have to be applied to the British by the offended Irish authorities, which we primarily pinpoint as the Dublin government, the SDLP and the Catholic church.

5) There is a vast difference between prison conditions and the prison system. Prisoners can be held in decent conditions but still be treated as sub-humans.

What, in essence, we seek is the uplifting of the present Victorian prison system. We are convinced that all prisoners are entitled, as human beings, to retain their dignity and self-respect. The present system, virtually unchanged from the nineteenth century, denies prisoners both.

6) No elaboration is needed on the clothing demand: prison clothes are either abolished or retained.

7) As we pointed out, it takes goodwill and the all-important desire — which breeds flexibility — to end this issue. The British do not possess either; and the stark evidence of this is their dogmatic refusal to parallel, or even incorporate, our views on prison work into their views.

We have already said that what the regime regards as work we do not. Also, an examination of what we propose will reveal that a high level of compatibility exists.

The government's 'What happens when the protest ends?' statement compounds our point that the prisoner is an unopinionated

robotic object in their eyes, something whose entire life is totally programmed. The government attitude is wrong and can only lead to more deaths.

As pointed out in our July 4th statement, we are prepared to clean wings and blocks.

As well as that we are willing to do any maintenance work within our capability, such as painting our blocks.

Also, given the facilities, which would not amount to much, we are prepared to do our own cooking within our blocks.

The term 'self-education' seems to have caused some confusion. Basically we define self-education as the right to choose how you feel you should be educated and what subject you should pursue in your education.

It must be realised that until the government recognises education as work, it is almost impossible to participate in cultural or academic education during the prison working day. Usually a prisoner has to forfeit his association to attend a class. Day-time education is available usually only for the educationally sub-normal.

But the machinery for an education system as envisaged by us already exists. We envisage an education system where prisoners of proven outstanding tutorial ability can blend with outside teachers to provide an excellent educational system.

It is a fact that the Irish language, which originally was limited to only a few prisoners, has been taught by some of the aforementioned prisoners to 80% of all blanket men. So successful has this self-education system been that Irish has virtually replaced English as the principal language in the protesting blocks.

Likewise, there are blanket men who from experience are exceptionally adept at handicrafts and blanket men who are accomplished musicians — all of whom would be willing to pass on their knowledge.

The primary prisoner-orientated education would be the Irish language, culture and history.

Also, we would like to have the choice of the wide range of educational subjects that are available at present to conforming prisoners. There will be prisoners taking 'A' and 'O' level examinations and Open University examinations; and teachers will be needed to provide specialist education. We do not object to this.

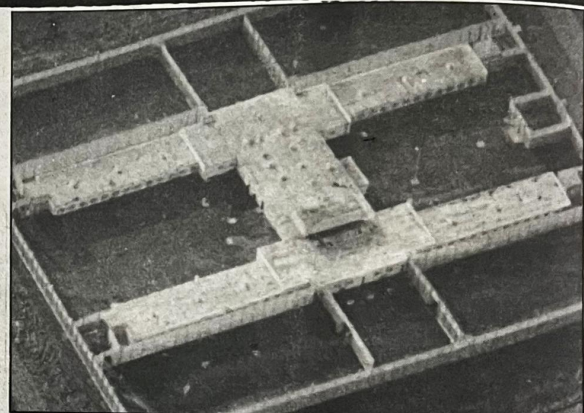
As can be seen, a substantial degree of compatibility exists; but it takes the government to meet us halfway, as we have met them, as illustrated above. We are not going to engage in unrewarding demeaning work.

8) There is no reason why we should not have the freedom of the wing for association between the hours of lock-up. It would be of benefit educationally; and, with prison officers guaranteed immunity from attack or rebuke, their supervisory roles would not be diminished.

Segregation is a must if any degree of harmony is to exist within the prison.

Wing visits should not present any problem to the authorities.

Letters, visits and parcels are, at present,



a privilege to conforming prisoners, to be withdrawn as the regime sees fit. We would like them to be a prisoner's right.

Also, we fail to see why prisoners at one end of this camp should receive a substantial food parcel, and we should receive only 4 lbs. of fruit. We want our food parcel increased to the amount available at the other end of the camp. The only reason for this particular piece of inequality is punitive.

9) Remission, as we pointed out, is only a by-product of this issue. There is no reason why full remission cannot be restored.

10) We call on all concerned in this issue, the British, the Dublin government, the SDLP, the church, and all bodies who were involved in this issue, to respond to this statement. It should not be disregarded solely because we wrote it.

Reply to Atkins

WE, republican prisoners in the H-Blocks, in our two policy statements of July 4th and August 6th, not only spelt out the just and practical solution to the H-Blocks impasse, but spelt out in no uncertain terms that talk of us prisoners taking control of the prison was 'ludicrous and ridiculous'.

On August 7th, Humphrey Atkins dismissed our statement on the assertion that to implement the changes we outlined would be to give us control of the prison.

This is a bland, unsubstantiated statement which will cause a tremendous amount of unnecessary suffering to our prisoners and our community.

Equally, Atkins says that Northern Ireland prisons cannot be different from UK mainland prisons. What happened to the often-used phrase that 'we want to keep NI prisoners to the fore in prison reform'?

It is ludicrous for Atkins to suggest that we would have control of the prison. Each

wing of the H-Block is a special control unit within a block, which is itself within a high security cage. The blocks themselves are within a special high security phase of the prison.

In fact we are held within a prison, which itself is within a prison, within another prison.

We are monitored and guarded by prison warders, British soldiers, and RUC men, equipped with electronic gear, weapons and war dogs. Every section of the prison is observed by soldiers in watch towers.

Our proposals are not aimed at changing any of this, or at restricting the security role of the prison administration. We are merely attempting to outline a prison regime which will permit prison officers and prisoners to peacefully co-exist.

We ask Mr. Atkins to state if he is now going back on his 'Northern Ireland prisons to the fore in prison reform' policy? This was illusory all along and aimed at an unimproved police.

His dismissal of the Dublin government's appeal to implement his proposed ambiguous changes immediately is contemptible and once again shows that he has duplicity in mind at a future date.

For him to claim he has stated his position clearly in relation to 'what will happen when the protests end', despite the fact that no-one really knows what is on offer, shows the insensitivity of his position and policy.

We suggest that he won't outline his policy publicly because (a) he hopes to do an about-turn at some stage, and (b) he knows what is on offer is too little and that even moderate opinion would be insulted.

The British have decided on a semi-genocide policy on the H-Blocks. Their sick vanity has made them oblivious to reason and as human beings they are immune to sensitivity and compassion.

Very much prominent in their thinking is the belief that sooner or later we are going to pack up and give in. They have a rude awakening awaiting them.

COALITION GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO PROMOTE DIVERSIONS ON HUNGER-STRIKE CRISIS

Free Staters' dilemma

BY KEVIN BURKE

LESS THAN two days before Thomas McElwee died on hunger-strike last Saturday, Free State premier Garret FitzGerald had his relatives thrown out of government buildings in Dublin. It was the conclusion of his latest 'initiative' on the hunger-strike crisis.

A meeting between the relatives of the hunger-strikers (eight were allowed into the meeting room and six were left in the lobby) and the Free State premier and his acting Minister for Foreign Affairs John Kelly, which took place on Thursday week, August 6th, had broken down almost an hour before.

Mary McElwee, a sister of Thomas who left the meeting in tears, gave a telling verdict as she told pressmen that the Free State government were going to allow her brother to die. 'He's doing nothing', she said of FitzGerald, 'he is asking us for suggestions'.

The emptiness of FitzGerald's motives, thus neatly summed up, is of course illustrated by his refusal to do what the relatives were suggesting — public support for the five demands, ending diplomatic links, and ending border collaboration.

This refusal, so far, to make these positive moves is a clear reflection of the inevitable, but not unsurmountable, dilemma of any neo-colonial non-independent government, particularly one so close as the Dublin government aims to be to the London government.

HORNS

This particular dilemma has several horns.

In the first place, the Coalition leadership does not care, on a humanitarian basis, what happens to the hunger-strikers. The mistreatment last week of the hunger-strikers' relatives — whom nobody at all could possibly fault for supporting the prisoners — is a clear indication of that. The Coalition's sordid history of oppressive anti-republicanism underlines this point.

Nevertheless, there is indeed true humanitarian concern within both Fine Gael and Labour, as evidenced by sentiments expressed at this week's special Wexford county council meeting on the hunger-strikes. That concern cannot be ignored by the party leadership.

SNUB

Secondly, attempts by the Free State government to ingratiate itself with its former colonial masters (evidenced this week by further verbal attacks on the IRA) fail miserably, with public humiliation in the shape of a British rebuff for their weak pleas and proposals — the latest snub being for their suggestion of meaningless prison reforms for conforming H-Block prisoners.

Nevertheless, to be publicly rebuffed by Britain and ignored by the United States, and the humiliation which results, stings the Free State government to anger — as evidenced by Michael O'Leary's attack on Thatcher last Sunday. This anger can and should be taken advantage of.

Thirdly, the Free State government fears greatly the added stature that it might give to the Irish

freedom struggle, and those who pursue it inside and outside the prisons, if it comes out in support of the prisoners and takes meaningful measures logical to that support.

But, on the other hand, the Free State government fears just as much the fact that their inactivity on the hunger-strike is also building more recognition of the true nature of the Irish freedom struggle, its total relevancy for all Irish people, and the high principles of its participants.

It is clear then, that the Free State government is by no means in control of events and can, by careful orchestration of pressure with these three major factors in mind, be propelled into real action by supporters of the hunger-strikers acting intelligently.

And we need not fear that the Free State government is going to be able to divert Irish public opinion from support and concern for the hunger-strikers. Irish public opinion, if it is kept fully tuned with up-to-date information by prisoners' supporters, will remain at too high a pitch for that strategy.

PLOY

The Free State government's diversionary ploy — in calling for the IRA leadership to order an end to the hunger-strike — petered out last week in the face of media exposure of its shallowness.

Last weekend, leading columnists in the *'Sunday Press'* and the *'Sunday Tribune'* make nonsense of such calls. (The previous week, the *'Sunday World's'* leading columnist had led the way.) And, also on Sunday, the RTE *'This Week'* programme carried a major interview with Fr. Oliver Crilly, a member of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, who also refuted the idea that such a call on the IRA leadership was in any way honourable.

That red herring gone, the Free State government is now pursuing another diversionary line, with acting Minister for Foreign Affairs John Kelly demanding that the IRA should surrender, and abandon its military campaign, if it wishes to save the hunger-strikers.

This will presumably be answered in the press too.

Where was John Kelly when there was a virtual ceasefire with the IRA before the death of Bobby Sands?

And, in the wake of hunger-strike deaths, what figure would John Kelly put on the number of plastic bullet deaths, if the British army and RUC were not forced into some caution by IRA activity?

Simplistic attempts at diversion such as Kelly's will no longer succeed.

STRENGTHEN

Supporters of the prisoners in the twenty-six counties, aware of all the currents and undercurrents which are daily pressurising the Dublin government, can do much to strengthen that pressure.

The Wexford county council meeting has shown all-party concern on the issue.

In the last fortnight Fianna Fail Senator Noel Mulcahy has called for road-blocking in the



● FitzGerald's gaudy eject hunger-strikers' relatives from government buildings in Dublin two days before Thomas McElwee's death: above: Theresa Moore (Micky Devine's aunt) and Dominic Devlin (Matt Devlin's brother), and below: Sean Sands (brother of the late Bobby Sands), being led away



North; Fianna Fail Euro-MP Sile de Valera has called for the expulsion of the British military attaché in Dublin; Fianna Fail Leinster House member Terry Leyden has called for the recall of the Dublin parliament in the light of the death of Kieran Doherty, TD.

These people, and those many other like-minded people in the establishment parties can be followed up. The Cavan/Monaghan H-Block/Armagh committee have announced a campaign for all Leinster House members to be lobbied for the recall of the parliament. There is a plan of action.

On the media front, we have seen strong concern in the influential provincial press — from major coverage of the death and funeral of Kieran Doherty (including three pages of death notices) in the Monaghan-based *'Northern Standard'* to strong editorial calls, based on true humanitarian concern, in such as the *'Donegal Democrat'* and the *'Leinster Express'*.

Where this understanding exists

it can be encouraged and stimulated further. Where anti-prisoner views are dominant there is room for detailed and calm explanation and, if necessary, strong and visual protest.

The last fortnight has also revealed those who continue to oppose the hunger-strikers — most prominently the 'Sticky Workers' Party', and the independent Leinster House members Jim Kemmy and Noel Browne.

But even these people can be argued with, the confusion of their thought pointed to, and asked with whom they stand: the British government or the Irish people?

CONFUSION

Poor Noel Browne's confusion of thought was clearly illustrated in his letter to the press, last Saturday, August 8th, in which he insisted that the SDLP should have intervened in the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election 'in order deliberately to split the Catholic vote, lose the election and elect the Protestant Unionist parliamentarian who is not a gunman, to

the House of Commons'. (A reference to UDR major Ken Maginnis.)

Perhaps Noel Browne could, for the time being, be regarded as a hopeless case, but nevertheless should, along with the others, be challenged and if necessary exposed to those who put them into the Dublin parliament.

But perhaps the strongest indication of the power of the hunger-strikers' sacrifice was the revelation that the French president Francois Mitterand had offered, to the Dublin government, to boycott the British royal wedding as a public international display of French displeasure with the British government's handling of the hunger-strike. The Dublin government prevented him doing so.

That is an illustration of the strength of international feeling which could burst out in support of the hunger-strikers if the Dublin government ended its role as a flood-gate protecting Britain. That flood-gate has shown that it will move if pressure is applied, it is up to us to open it.

Tribute to Kieran Doherty

A TRIBUTE to hunger-striker and IRA Volunteer Kieran Doherty, TD, which was read out in a wing of H3-Block on Tuesday 4th August, the day Kieran was buried in his home place of Andersonstown, west Belfast, and which was subsequently smuggled out of Long Kesh.

BY A BLANKET MAN COMRADE

COMRADES, four times I've begun, and four times I've destroyed, this oration. I now begin for the fifth time, and in spite of my still-present fear of being misunderstood, I shall continue and finish it this time.

I aim, by what I say here, to bring home forcefully to us all, the relevance of the single most important aspect of Big Doc's life and death, that being his total commitment to our cause, his uncompromising and fierce pursuit of what he saw as important short-term objectives.

There were no half-measures with Big Doc. He worked out what needed to be done and he did it. He couldn't abide, and constantly criticised, all and any who fell short of his expectations.

He had that type of attitude which is all too often misread as being one of superiority. Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth.

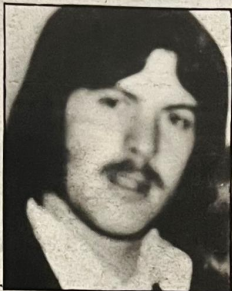
DEDICATED

Big Doc was single-mindedly and absolutely dedicated to our cause, and in his zeal he strove to push all others to a like position.

Doc lived his entire adult life in the service of the Irish people. The bulk of that life was spent in prison with the intermittent periods spent in engaging our nation's oppressors in armed struggle. He was a revolutionary soldier in the tradition of Cathal Brugha, and he died as he had lived, fighting and strong, right to the last ounce of his strength.

And, comrades, I stand in awe at that type of example. It raises questions for me (and I feel that others must be in the same boat): Am I that dedicated? Do I, by my life, honour his death?

I just don't know. But one thing I have learned is this: at some stage



or other we must decide: 'as and from today I shall live for the revolution'.

REBORN

Comrades, we must be reborn: we must let die our own personal and selfish ambitions; and we must direct our life's work to the building of a true people's republic. Our rebirth can be immediate, or it can be piecemeal.

But this I know: when we decide to live for what Doc died for, we must henceforth constantly examine our lives with a view to charging ourselves with the crimes of apathy, self-centredness, and the hundred other misdemeanours and sins of omission.

I think, comrades, of how many times in the past I've said: 'The RA should do this', or 'the RA should do that'.

Comrades, we are the 'RA', and we must alter that attitude, each of us must build for ourselves a total picture of how the war stands, and we must examine that picture to see what is wrong and what can be improved, and then we — you and



● Watching at the funeral of his comrade Sean McDermott in April 1978 was Kieran Doherty (extreme left, in background). Kieran was on active service with Sean when he was killed. Kieran escaped and was told to 'lie low' for a few days but appeared at his comrade's military funeral to pay his last respects

I — must see how we can act upon what needs to be done. No matter where a man is, if he has a clear vision of how he aims to achieve it, then nothing, save death, can stop that man.

OUTLIVE

Doc is dead. He joins Bobby, Frank, Ray, Patsy, Joe, Martin, and Kevin. The price which we are paying is horrendous and nothing short of major forward motion in the struggle can make that price worthwhile. There are thousands on the streets, and as the agonising and horrifying prison struggle progresses, we must ensure that no effort is spared to bring all these people to a fuller understanding of what the struggle is all about.

We must build something out of the struggle which shall outlive the H-Blocks and strengthen our nation's march to the freedom of a

socialist republic. And the type of work needed to realise that goal can never be done by part-time republicans.

Comrades, when all is said and done, we remain part-timers until such times as we break out of the mentality which a lifetime's indoctrination at the hands of the capitalist system has shackled us to. Please don't misunderstand me, comrades, I don't aim to criticise, rather I aim to admonish.

We must face truth, no matter how unpleasant. We're either in, or we're out, there is no half-way house. The time when we could simply drift along carried by the stream of the struggle is long gone.

AWAKEN

We, the rank-and-file, we, the foot soldiers of the working class, must awaken to our call. We must become the active policy-makers of

our movement, we must make our influence felt, and comrades, where will our struggle be if we are not equipped for such a formidable task?

I pray now that I (along with all the others in our movement) am able to come fully to terms with my commitments as a Republican Volunteer.

Let us all pledge now, in the shadow of Big Doc's supreme example, to spare no effort in our task. Henceforth, let us aim to totally fulfill the duties of our position and let us try at all times to insist that all around us do likewise.

Unity and true sense of purpose are our most powerful weapons. Let us individually and collectively display those two in our outward and inward attitude.

Doc mór, you died not in vain. Victory shall be ours. An réabhlaid aibí.

Tribute to Kevin Lynch

A TRIBUTE to hunger-striker and INLA Volunteer Kevin Lynch, which was read out in a wing of H3-Block on Monday 3rd August, the day Kevin was buried in his North Derry home town of Dungiven, and which was subsequently smuggled out of Long Kesh.

BY A BLANKET MAN COMRADE

AS one parade follows another, acceptance, familiarity, could set in if it weren't for the fact that there is something personal and meaningful in each for us.

To people outside it is symbolic, but as each of our comrades die, their character, related angles and points, reveal to us pieces of the make-up of a freedom fighter, of revolutionary struggle, and of final victory.

With our cara Kevin Lynch points of interest and of discussion arise, such as — because of his membership of the INLA — the role of the splinter group.

Kevin is also the third of the eight hunger-strikers to die who began his republican involvement in the Sticks: Frank Hughes and Patsy O'Hara being the other two. Perhaps one of the most interesting points arising out of this is the way we all tend to lightly classify and group people, often wrongly.

Above all else, Kevin, I think, personified firstly a fierce internal struggle, and secondly a deadly political lesson for the Brits.

STRUGGLE

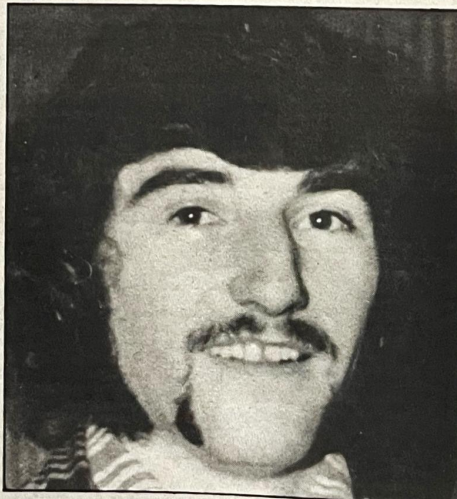
The internal struggle was based around his family background.

Most of us were born working class, and on the receiving end of a system designed to ensure that we remained the poor relations of the working class in this capitalist six-county statelet.

Because of this we never had the alternative of accepting a fairly cushioned position in the capitalist system, as did Kevin as he grew up. He was naturally influenced by the middle class values and advantages which were part of life for the son of a pub owner in a small village like Dungiven.

This struggle of Kevin's began when he was at school. Never claiming to be an academic his clearest memory of school were those stories on local history which he remembered so vividly from his primary school days: the history of the O Cachain clan, Shane Crossan, etc., which he told out the door here in 79.

This feeling and interest for the history of his local area displayed perhaps the formation of the man who was later to lay down his life



for his people in one of their fiercest fought battles.

His later involvement with the Sticky Fianna in the immediate aftermath of the civil rights campaign saw the development and strengthening of his republicanism.

However, the draw of the other forces were ever present and they came rushing in, sweeping Kevin for a time to England, and the acceptance of that system in its entirety.

I remember him saying hun-

dreds of times when talking about this period: Bhí meon donna agam ag an am sin.

However, Kevin came home again on holiday and stayed. The rest is now history. As he breathed his last I feel that it was something of a final personal glorious victory for republicanism.

LESSON

From this comes the lesson for the Brits.

Unlike Frank Hughes, for example, Kevin's active commitment to the revolution was periodic. Two years ago, perhaps even one year ago, Kevin did not think that he would die as he did. His action was that of an Irishman pushed by degradation and intransigence beyond the point of acceptance.

In that is the lesson. By their intransigence the Brits are now pushing not only us, but the entire Irish people in the same direction. How many people outside today, with minimal or even no republican tendency, will next year be beacons of strength and will lay down their lives in our struggle. In that latent strength of a people lies our final victory.

Kevin, with our dead hunger-strike comrades, has shown the way. It is with humble admiration that we show our respect to our INLA comrade tonight.

Beidh an bus againn mar gheall oraibh.

THE FUNERAL OF THOMAS McELWEE



■ IRA Volunteers flank the coffin of their fallen comrade Thomas McElwee



■ Thomas' eight sisters - Kathleen, Mary, Bernadette, Annie, Enda, Nora, Pauline and Majella - carried the coffin of their brother

THE FUNERAL OF

BY UNA O'NEILL

FOR the second time in three months, last Monday, August 10th, the winding lanes and green hills around Bellaghy were covered with thousands of mourners. For the second time in three months a tricolour-draped coffin was carried along these lanes, from the townland of Tamlaghtduff to Bellaghy graveyard.

Another Volunteer of the South Derry Brigade of the Irish Republican Army had died on hunger-strike. Another emaciated young body had to be brought back to another little house nestled in the peaceful countryside, its peace belied by the sorrow of a family, by the anger and bitterness of neighbours, and by the rage and frustration of thousands across Ireland.

Thomas McElwee died last Saturday, August 8th, shortly before mid-day, on the sixty-second day of his fast. He died at the age of twenty-three, in a lonely hospital cell in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, without his family being allowed to assist him.

Like his cousin, friend, and comrade-in-arms, Volunteer Francis Hughes, who died on May 12th, Thomas McElwee fought British oppression by waging a relentless armed struggle in the hills of South Derry; then, having been injured in a premature explosion and captured, he fought British cruelty in the H-Blocks with the prisoner's ultimate weapon: his own body.

As cars and buses were converging towards Bellaghy last Monday morning, the RUC and British army took up positions on all the surrounding roads, behind trees and bushes, and six British army helicopters began their slow hovering over the countryside.

Just as the funeral was about to start, twenty-one-year-old Benedict McElwee arrived at the family bungalow, on a ten-hour parole from the H-Blocks.

Benedict had been arrested along with his brother in October '76; and along with his brother he had joined the first hunger-strike in December '80. Looking extremely pale but determined, he made his way through the silent crowd to his brother's coffin.

The prison authorities in Long Kesh, typically enough, had refused him permission to visit his brother the previous week, yet had asked him to identify

his brother's body on Saturday. They had, however, allowed Tom's fiancée, Armagh prisoner Dolores O'Neill, to see Tom for half-an-hour on Friday night, hoping perhaps in their crass stupidity, that as a member of the so-called 'weaker sex', she would try to talk Thomas out of his fast.

GUARD

As the IRA guard of honour, composed of six men in full uniform under orders of a seventh, and six women of Cumann na mBan, took their positions on either side of the path leading to the McElwee house, the coffin was carried out by Thomas' eight sisters, establishing a new tradition started by the sisters of late Volunteer Kieran Doherty.

As the cortege reached the road, three IRA Volunteers wearing battledress and armed with revolvers emerged from the crowd, and fired a volley of shots over the coffin of their comrade. The

crowd which had steadily grown to cover the surrounding fields and hilltops, cheered in defiance as they disappeared.

The cortege then moved off, led by two girl pipers from Belfast playing the 'blanket men's song'. The coffin was first carried by Thomas' relatives, including Benedict, who had to muster all the strength he could find in a body weakened by years of H-Block deprivation. (Later Benedict had to be helped by his family along the five-mile route to the church.)

The tens of thousands of mourners, Thomas' relatives, neighbours, friends and supporters, included leading republicans, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness; veteran republican from Tipperary, Dinny Gleeson, who fought the Black and Tans with his Flying Column; a delegation from Noraid including Tom Egan from New York, who like Dinny Gleeson was honoured at this year's annual republican testimonial; Joe Keavitt and others from New Jersey Noraid; prominent members of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee: Christina Carney, Jim Gibney, Bernadette McAliskey, Maura McCrory; as well as representatives of the families of the dead hunger-strikers, and of those presently on hunger-strike.

INFLECTED

The Requiem Mass in Bellaghy Parish Church was celebrated by parish priest Fr. Michael Flanagan who inflicted on a captive audience a political sermon of a totally different tone from the one he had adopted at Francis Hughes' funeral.

After denouncing British 'indifference' to the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, he went on to criticise the hunger-strikers: "When they achieved political electoral victory in both the North and South they could have spared their own members and their families and communities continued suffering and not have allowed any more deaths."

He further appealed for an end to the hunger-strike: "It is not too late, even after nine deaths, to end the hunger-strike, and trust the future of the prisoners to the many able people who have worked on their behalf and showed evidence of concern for the prisoners down through the years."

Apart from the extremely bad taste he showed in using the pulpit for a political speech, causing some women members of the congregation to walk out in disgust, while others decided to sit it out with the McElwee family, Fr. Flanagan was three times wrong: in assuming, firstly, that electoral success was one of the aims of the prisoners; secondly, that the Republican Movement is in a position to order an end to the fast; and thirdly, and lastly, that without the pressure being brought to



Members of the McElwee family standing at the graveside of Thomas



IRA Volunteers form a guard of honour as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer folds the tricolour

bear by the hunger-strike, the clergy and politicians would bother about the plight of the prisoners.

WISH

The funeral continued in the graveyard nearby, where Thomas' dying wish was carried out, as his coffin was laid down beside that of his cousin Francis Hughes. Well-known South Derry republican John Davey chaired the graveside ceremony.

Prayers were led by Fr. Flanagan, then wreaths were laid on behalf of the McElwee family; the Republican Movement including the prisoners; the families of the previous eight dead hunger-strikers; and the families of the present hunger-strikers, Micky Devine, then on his fiftieth day of fast, Laurence McKeown, then forty-three days, Pat McGown, then thirty-two days, Matt Devlin, then twenty-seven days, Liam McCloskey, then seven days, and Pat Sheehan, that morning.

A wreath was also laid on behalf of the Troops Out Movement from England, Scotland and Wales, which was then in the middle of a successful delegation

to the North.

Fr. Piaras O Duill, of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, said a decade of the Rosary, and Thomas' sister Mary read a poem, as many in the crowd were seen openly crying.

Prominent in the crowd was Fr. Sean McManus, of the Irish National Caucus in America, who has openly criticised the IRA many times in the past, and whose presence could only be explained as an attempt to regain some consideration among Irish-Americans by parading himself at the funeral of an IRA Volunteer.

ORATION

The oration was delivered by Danny Morrison, Sinn Féin director of publicity and editor of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News'.

The full text of the oration reads:

"We have walked in silence through the small roads and green lanes of south Derry to honour and pay homage to Thomas McElwee, son of Jim and Alice, and by our presence offer the McElwee family the limited comfort of our solidarity in their bereavement."

"May I, on behalf of the

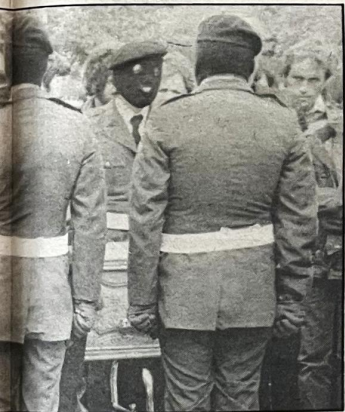


Thomas' eldest sister Kathleen, and his father, with love and grief, look on at the gaunt remains of a courageous republican and hunger-striker

Republican Movement sincere condolences to Mr. and Mrs. McElwee and their family on the death of Thomas, a friend, a courageous republican. "Thomas McElwee, Volunteer in the Irish Army and an unbroken man who endured six years of grueling hunger-strike to allow himself to be a political prisoner, to be Irish, to be free, to be those from whom we were to learn, whose temporary rule would force us to conquer the superior of an Irish man by the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, lying out on the fields of south Derry."

LIBERATION "Thomas McElwee was not a man who could not tolerate British rule. Those of us who have seen British rule in its true light, who have seen through a land where early and mid-twentieth century people were liberated by the armed struggle of the McElwee and his family."

THOMAS McELWEE



● The funeral cortege passes along the winding lanes of County Derry

government would renege as they had done last December.

"In every one of their faces one could see the proximity of death, yet their fearlessness reigned supreme. I know that the Mc Elwees, just as the families of other dead hunger-strikers will know what I mean, when I say that their son was invincible from beginning to end, in life as well as in death.

PAISLEY

"It is thus particularly galling that that self-appointed preacher, Mr. Paisley, just couldn't leave off once or skip an opportunity for distressing further the Mc Elwee family with his comments about Thomas' soul.

"In my opinion Mr. Paisley is about as close to God and heaven as the bottom of a coal mine. Mr. Paisley is a hypocrite and a coward and pales into ignominy beside Thomas McElwee who was a man and who endured over thirteen hundred days in an H-Block cell. Mr. Paisley had a holiday when he was in Crumlin Road jail for a short while in 1969, claimed he was ill and spent his time with privileges practising Free Presbyterianism in Crumlin Road prison hospital — there was no prison uniform or prison work for him.

"But Paisley can afford to have a big mouth and a swagger in his walk since over thirty-three thousand armed British forces prop up loyalist supremacy and the six counties with violence and laws directed against the nationalist people.

"Perhaps the most brutal weapon used against the nationalist people who have come out and protested in support of the

H-Block hunger-strikers has been the plastic bullets which claimed the life of another innocent victim in Belfast only hours after Thomas' death.

"Like part of the general malaise which has struck the leadership of the SDLP and the Catholic hierarchy, both of which have actively promoted defeatism throughout the hunger-strike as a substitute for actively pressing and embarrassing the British government, they have been unforgivably silent about the plastic killers in a way they wouldn't be were the IRA responsible for inflicting a fraction of the mounting injuries and deaths on the civilians thus attacked.

"Those of you who were able to hear Fr. Flanagan's sermon today will have been struck by what is wrong with the Church's politics. We were asked to pray for an end to the hunger-strike, for an end to violence and for peace. Certainly, let us pray for an end to the hunger-strike, and let us pray for an end to violence, and let us pray for peace.

"But there is a bigger prayer which we have to make, and that is a prayer for an end to the cause of violence — the British occupation of our country. It is time the Church prayed and called for that.

PROLONGED

"Similarly the inactivity of the Fianna Fail and now the Coalition government in the Free State has undoubtedly prolonged the hunger-strike. Yesterday's attack by deputy premier Michael O'Leary on Margaret Thatcher will not alter British intransigence. What is needed is decisive and effective

public action at ambassadorial and international level.

"It may yet come to that type of action when the Free State government realizes that its own domestic credibility and/or stability is at stake, but meanwhile that delay is costing the prisoners dear.

"The Free State government, like many other influential bodies in Ireland which represent the vested interests, have not got the welfare of the prisoners at heart and would quite frankly like to see the hunger-strike collapse.

"Of course, there are many people in the middle genuinely motivated by humanitarian interests which unfortunately handicaps their assessments and recommendations, but to the others nine dead hunger-strikers and five years of prison protest are as irrelevant as the poor of Ballymun or the unemployed of the Bogside. And to them Thomas McElwee was a dangerous man because he thought for himself, saw through them, and espoused the cause of Republicanism.

"The unity of the hunger-strikers, their families and supporters and the organisations to which they belong have been prodded for weaknesses. For some time now it has been open season for apportioning blame for the continuation of the hunger-strike on the leadership of the Republican Movement. This is just a variation of the Roy Mason theme in 1976 and 1977 that prisoners were forced on the blanket protest by those on the outside.

ROOTS

"The roots of the hunger-

strike were built into the British H-Blocks, into the British policy of criminalisation which forced the men on the blanket five years ago and which led ultimately to republicans resorting to the traditional weapon of hunger-strike as the ultimate means of gaining their demands.

"British criminalisation policy is expressed in the application of prison rules aimed at forcing republicans to conform to an abhorrent regime which inside the jail would destroy their political conception of themselves and which on the outside is aimed at projecting the Irish cause as a criminal conspiracy.

"The blanket men believed, perhaps more than supporters generally, that Britain's criminalisation policy would not be settled short of deaths, such was the great store which Britain had placed and continues to place in this policy of crushing the integrity of the Irish people's struggle.

"This struggle up until success in a united, independent Ireland, free and at peace, can offer its supporters and activists only suffering, distress, anguish and death, broken hearts, the tears of bereavements and the gravestones of testimony to the courage of the Irish people. The British government have made sure that those are the penalties for breaking the chains of imperialist rule.

PRIDE

"Mr. and Mrs. McElwee, Irish men and women, hold your heads high with pride, let your bitter tears wash away the cowardice of so many of those nationalist leaders incapable of dealing with the Brits, let your tears water the seeds of fresh resistance to British rule.

"Thomas McElwee laid down his young life, just as he laid down his freedom, for an ideal, for a cause which was once termed 'greater than the man', seeing man had his weaknesses and faults, but which in this republican generation, in these blanket men, in this hunger-strike, the cause is matched by the courage and love of the man for his fellow prisoners and his country.

"And in the last few hours of his life, Thomas repeatedly expressed his dying wish, that he longed for the day when the Protestant and Catholic people of this land would live together in peace and harmony.

"It is quite clear from the recent statements from the blanket men that they have not been demoralised or defeated by Britain's continued intransigence in the sixth month of the hunger-strike. Their hearts have certainly been rent asunder by the deaths of their comrades, but their determination to see the criminalisation policy and the degrading regime in the H-Blocks overturned has been if anything galvanised by the terrible procession of coffins from that deadly prison camp.

"Their determination has not waned and neither should ours. No one should surrender to demoralisation, to feelings of helplessness or hopelessness. Despair is easy; our enemies want us to despair. To struggle on is a harder task but the reward is there at the end of the road and Thomas McElwee will be proud of us, as we are proud of him, if we play our full part in winning this prison struggle, in winning, as he set out to win, Irish freedom from the ruins of British rule..."

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Francis Hughes, whom we laid to rest in this very cemetery, in this very plot, just three months ago.

"Their actions and the language of us who believe in and support the use of force against British rule are the actions and language of an oppressed people against an imperialist oppressor. And we do not claim to be perfect, nor do we claim the certainty of God's blessing on our work.

"But we stand over this, that as sure as there's a sun in the sky and as the earth turns on its axis, then there can never be moral wrong in an oppressed people anywhere using force against their oppressors. And there can especially be no moral wrong in an Irish man or woman destroying British rule in Ireland.

"Last month I visited Thomas and seven of his hunger-striking comrades in the prison hospital, three of whom, Joe McDonnell, Kevin Lynch and Kieran Doherty have since died. Thomas spoke about the hunger-strike and about the various efforts being made to resolve it and he was adamant that their demands had to be met before the protest could end, because otherwise the British

THE FUNERAL OF THOMAS McELWEE



■ Oliver Hughes, brother of dead hunger-striker Francis Hughes (left), and Thomas' blanket man brother, Benedict (front-right) carried the coffin



■ Thousands packed into Bellaghy for the funeral

NÁLA POIST

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

PADDY QUINN

Dear editor,

Everyone in Ireland knows that British intransigence, in its prison policy, has been responsible for the deaths of nine young Irish patriots since May 5th of this year.

Every nationalist in Ireland knows, also, that they have a contribution to make in the mounting campaign of pressure to break that intransigence; whether one's contribution be in the form of a humble financial donation, the display of a poster of support, or in attempting to persuade one's own association, society, political organisation or trade union to endorse the prisoners' five demands.

The problem is, that the more one's social or political associates actually view the status quo of prison life as being either indifferent, beneficial or even necessary to their needs, the more uncomfortable, even undesirable, it becomes to support the prisoners.

Hence the squirming and shifting of responsibility that emerged the week before last in some quarters of the nation's would-be political and moral leaders. In the midst of it all, a frail, elderly woman from Belleek in South Armagh, made them all look like a tin of worms.

Mrs. Catherine Quinn, mother of Paddy Quinn, the H-Block hunger-striker who lapsed into a coma for the second time in twenty-four hours, on Friday 31st, on his forty-seventh day of hunger-strike, sought medical intervention to help her son.

Her motives were pure and untainted by any political needs.

So many fine young people are dying for their comrades in this terrible way?

Let us not be confused as to the basic reasons for this action by the prisoners. Bobby Sands said it all in his few gallant words about the lack in captivity, though in a poetic way.

Stripped of its poetry, the message is that in being sentenced to the Long Kesh (or Maze) H-Blocks these men are being delivered into the hands of their political enemies who suffer conditions imposed by no judge, the objective being to break them in body and soul (or mind, if you don't believe in soul).

This begins as soon as the prisoner refuses to address the warden as 'sir' (unofficial, of course) is to be beaten up.

Beatings take place as often as opportunity presents itself, all too frequently.

Political (or other) status apart it became obvious soon enough after the ending of political status (under whatever semantic clothing) in Long Kesh that the result of these constant beatings, accompanied by humiliating and degrading treatment, would be the breaking of the prisoners, as happened to the Fenian prisoners in like circumstances; that non-violent action was the only way to combat it; and that only a special status, enabling the prisoners to protect themselves against the warders, their hatred and their constant beatings, would make it possible to survive in the Long Kesh and emerge more or less whole, in body and mind.

How sad it is that Fitz and the other twenty-six county politicians, and their supporters, interested themselves in the Kesh only when the hunger-strikes threatened political power in the twenty-six counties.

What cynical crust of authority we have in the twenty-six politicians, and their positions of wealth and power are threatened by hunger-striker TDs do the leaders of this society concern themselves with what is, literally, a matter of life and death for all the H-Block prisoners.

If it were possible for me to do anything, I would do all in my power to end these hunger-strikes, in the hope against hope that some respite might have been gained for the men inside for their terrible conditions, and in the hope against hope that the cruel society in which all of us in Ireland are trapped would end. A romantic dream, I suppose.

But I would not do anything to undermine these prisoners in what they see as their only arm against their tormentors. The H-Block is a place where inmates are forced to abandon all hope. For one on a long sentence a tortured future stretches into a hopeless eternity.

Let us try to be realistic. In such circumstances how can anybody hope to persuade these people to end their protest and return to their torture? As well as that, of course, the protestors have one dim hope, even now, that eventually they must win better prison conditions for all prisoners, a sort of bill of rights, one which will be observed.

Have we forgotten the words of Mr. Patrick Conney when Minister for Justice in Dublin, that 'prisoners have no rights'?

This, of course, is the background to all prisons in these Isles. There are no rights, only privileges at the discretion of the governor.

When the governor is one of one's political enemies what can one expect, especially if the warders are drawn from the same source?

She simply could not "bear the sight of him... in immense pain screaming and kicking," (according to a family statement).

The opportunists — media, moral and overtly political alike — were not found wanting in recommending Mrs. Quinn's honourable action as a general remedy for their mutual discomfort at the increasing danger of being exposed as hostile to the hunger-strikers.

Nor indeed were the Quinn family hesitant, as in the way of honest folk, in forthrightly stating their views on the exploitation of their situation.

In a statement issued by the family on Sunday week, they clarified their position on the events since the afternoon of Friday 31st July when Paddy's mother and sisters arrived at the prison at 4.30 p.m.

He was already unconscious due to "several epileptic attacks which were caused by shortage of oxygen to the brain. He was obviously in immense pain and was screaming and kicking. His mother was unable to bear the sight of him enduring such suffering and asked the doctors to save him... The whole Quinn family backed their mother's decision."

Perturbed by the cynical exploitation of their grief, the family statement continued: "We would like to utterly condemn the media suggestion that other families should adopt it and should still act in the way that our did."

Of the prisoners' demands, and in reference to those with political clout, the family stated: "We

wish to stress that we are one hundred per cent behind the prisoners' five just demands, and call on everyone of influence to put pressure on the British government to end their cruelty and settle the prison dispute."

In conclusion, the family stated: "We feel that the British government should give the already conforming prisoners what they intend to give the protesting prisoners if the protest ends."

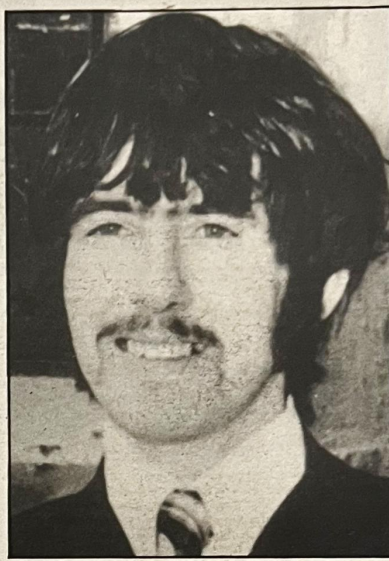
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Mr. Kelly is not unaware that that suggestion is identical to the call on the British government to publicly state its position in writing.

You can fool some of the people Mr. Kelly but not forever.

Sean McCormarty,
Andersonstown,
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The IRA and the hunger-strike

A chara,

It is understandable that, while Dr. Garret FitzGerald takes a swipe at the London government, he should take another swipe at the Republican Movement and particularly at the Irish Republican Army. If only to stress once again what he has alleged before, that he is independent, being neither a creature of the English nor of the Republican Movement.

At least, that is one way of putting it, a way which Fitz should find acceptable.

It is not so understandable that he should accuse Republican leaders of manipulating the hunger-strikers. This is a threadbare cliché, one which will bounce back to Fitz's disadvantage, like any other lie.

One would expect a rather better intellectual response from one of Fitz's calibre — whatever else may be said against him, he is no fool — and rather better politics (if that is the level of things) from his advisers.

Anybody who has concerned himself (or herself) to ascertain the facts of the present hunger-strike, and its background, must be aware that the Republican leadership did everything possible to prevent it from taking place; and that, in fact, they succeeded in delaying it for about two years, when the men in the Kesh were so keen to start.

But this was done by advice, by pleading, not by order. One cannot order people to go on hunger-strike, or stop it, once they have started, and hope to be obeyed.

Is Fitz prepared to admit that, as a start?

It has been well documented. There are various neutral persons available to testify, among them Revs. Faul, Brady and Murray, as well as persons who have left the Republican Movement. I

would imagine that the 'peace people' would testify, and the SDLP.

It is easy enough to understand why most military organisations similar to the IRA disapprove of hunger-strikes and do their utmost to avoid them.

Such military organisations strive to be in full control of tactics. They want nothing of any tactic which they cannot control fully. Of their very nature prison hunger-strikes are impossible to control. No commander can tell one man to go on hunger-strike and another not to do so. The entire matter is in the realm of conscience; and conscience has little to do with tactics.

More important, perhaps, from a military viewpoint: no guerrilla organization will survive long if it is not excessively cautious and ensure that every important tactic will succeed.

We know from the history of hunger-strikes that sometimes they succeed and sometimes they do not.

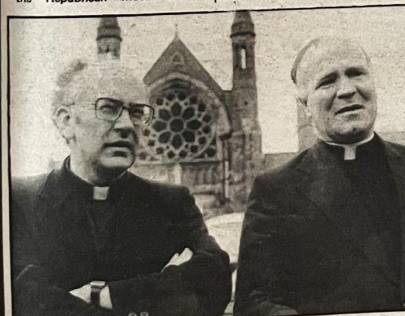
The issue being in considerable doubt, it would be incautious and irresponsible for the leadership of a guerrilla organization to order a hunger-strike without having virtual certainty of success. Also, failure would be extremely damaging to morale and would weaken support. It might even cancel most gains made.

The most important consideration of all, perhaps (and to me certainly), is the potential loss of the cream of the guerrilla force in prison, persons of the stature of Bobby Sands, the quality of whom is apparent immediately from his prison writings, even to those who never had met him.

Finally, one might conceive of a military leadership of no great intellectual resource and who would be prepared to gamble. After the loss of the first few lives, however, it would be obvious to all, and damaging to the leadership, to let the hunger-strike continue if, in fact, it was manipulating it, had full control of it.

These, I would suggest respectfully, to you, sir, and to Dr. Garret FitzGerald, are reasoned arguments and reasonable ones.

Let us, if we must, argue among ourselves and disagree, even violently, as to how to cure Ireland's ills, but let us try to keep debate, even abuse, at the level of credibility. It is too much to ask for dignity in debate at a time when



Fr. Murray (left) and Fr. Faul: witnesses to the Republican leadership's attempts to prevent the hunger-strike

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I regret that it is so long. Perhaps it might be published as a 'right of reply'. However, I am writing only on my own behalf, though a member of the Republican Movement for decades. Nevertheless, I believe that I articulate the Republican conscience though of course, subject to correction by the leadership.

As to the English servants of the Crown, once again they have made a principle out of nothing and nothing out of a principle.

Dara MacDara,
Baile Atha Cliath.

Remember, it begins Monday 17th August.

South Antrim GAA Committee against the H-Blocks, Belfast.

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alleged directive, we are sure that the members of the GAA will turn out in large numbers to support the fast vigil.

The timetable for the vigil is: Monday: O'Donnell's, McDermott's, Derragh's, and Rossa; Tuesday: Clonard, Davitt's, and St. Agnes; Wednesday: St. Paul's, Gael Uacht, O'Connell's, and Dwyer's; Thursday: Lamb's, Deane's, Pease's, and St. Enda's; Friday: St. Theresa's, Gort na Mona, and Ardoyne; Saturday: St. John's, Mitchell's, and Riverdale; Sunday: Sarsfield's, St. Gall's, and St. Malachy's.

Laurence McKeown

BY SEAN DELANEY

HUNGER-STRIKER number thirteen is twenty-four-year-old IRA Volunteer Laurence McKeown — known as Lorny to his friends and comrades — who comes from Randalstown in south-west Antrim. This Saturday will mark his forty-eighth day without food, in the prison hospital at Long Kesh.

A quiet, reserved and easy-going young man, Laurence combined a high level of military activity with courage and discretion, operating in the adverse circumstances of a predominantly loyalist County Antrim town before his capture.

Arrested from his home, at the age of nineteen, in August 1976, following an ambush on an RUC patrol which had taken place a mere fifty yards from the house three weeks earlier, Laurence was sentenced to life by a Diplock court (which he refused to recognise) in April 1977, and immediately went 'on the blanket' in the H-Blocks.

Last December, Laurence was one of the thirty republicans who took part in the four-day fast which coincided with the end of the fifty-three-day seven-man hunger-strike on December 18th.

This time, Laurence was quick to volunteer to take part in the hunger-strike and he was originally scheduled to replace Bobby Sands. But after the Belfast republican's death, Laurence's place was taken by Bobby's former comrade-in-arms Joe McDonnell, and he had then to wait until the blanket men escalated the hunger-strike with four men joining the fast at weekly intervals (to a total of eight hunger-strikers) — the last man being Laurence McKeown himself.

An extremely dedicated and determined republican, as well as being academically very clever, Laurence does not fit into any republican 'mould' as far as his motivation for actively participating in the war of liberation is concerned.

RANDALSTOWN

There is no republican tradition in his family — though the McKeowns have been fully behind Laurence throughout his prison protest — and Randalstown, although not entirely free from Brit and RUC presence, or harassment on the streets, is certainly not a major sufferer from British military repression.

The town, a few miles from Antrim town, has a population of only a handful of thousand, and is almost two-thirds loyalist in composition. Given these factors it is not surprising that the bulk of the nationalist population preferred over the years to 'keep their heads down', and leave any stridently nationalist sentiment to nearby predominantly nationalist towns such as Toomebridge.

In fact, until the end of 1973, there had been no actions of republican military resistance taking place in Randalstown itself. Republicans in the south-west Antrim area had preferred, because of the adverse operational circumstances, to keep a low profile on Randalstown, using it mainly for arms dumps etc., and using Toomebridge as the centre of military operations.

The change-about, from the end of 1973 and, at the end of the ill-fated 'truce', up until mid-1976 when Randalstown and Antrim were being 'hit' once a week, or maybe more, coincided with Laurence McKeown's joining, and active service with, the Irish Republican Army.

His commitment, then, coming despite the lack of a republican tradition within either his family or his home town, despite the lack of overt heavy repression, and despite his having gained academic qualifications which

would ultimately have assured him of a relatively comfortable place in Randalstown middle-class life, is a profound reflection on his understanding — both native and acquired through reading — of Irish history, and his belief in the need for resistance, by those who were strong enough, on behalf of the whole unfree Irish people.

FAMILY

Laurence Patrick Paul McKeown, the second of three children, was born in the Farnflough townland of Randalstown on September 19th 1956, but when he was a little over two the family moved a few miles to Carngranny in Antrim, before returning to Randalstown in 1969, to their present home on the Barnish Road, in the predominantly nationalist townland of Whitehill.

His parents are George (aged 52), who was himself born in the Randalstown area and who works as a driver for an industrial company, and Margaret (aged 59), whose family comes from neighbouring County Derry.

The couple were married in St. Mary's, Desertmartin, in 1952, and their children are: Mary (aged 28), Laurence, and Eugene (aged 22).

From early on in his life, Laurence has been a quiet and reserved, though not shy, sort of a fellow, whose discretion is a natural trait and not something which had to be learned and practised during his later republican years.

Neighbours regarded him as a very quiet, good-natured lad who never caused any bother, and with his family too he wasn't one to talk about what he had been doing or even about what was happening in the neighbourhood.

Mrs. McKeown remembers on occasions discovering some interesting fact of local life that had happened recently before, and telling the family, only to learn that Laurence had known of it for weeks. He was very much the quiet one, not a gossip and not, especially later on, one to bother friends or family with his problems.

Whenever he was visited in the H-Blocks, after his joining the blanket protest on being sentenced in April 1977, looking pale, nervy and dirty as he fought within himself to acclimatise to the rigours of imprisonment and the horrifying degradation of the no-wash protest, he would nonetheless keep to himself his punishing experiences as a blanket man, brushing questions aside with a laugh.

It had been the same before his imprisonment, when he always refused to say where he had been or what he had been doing, even to other republican Volunteers who

Portrait of a hunger striker



had not been along with him. He just used to laugh, and the only clue his questioners would get would be when the news began to filter through of another local bomb attack.

Laurence went to Farnflough primary school where he passed his 'eleven plus' and went on to St. Malachy's boys' grammar school in Belfast. However, he was the only boy to go on to St. Malachy's from Farnflough in several years, and without the company of at least some of his primary school friends he couldn't settle in the far larger Belfast school.

He took to 'mitching' some days, catching the bus to Belfast in the morning as usual but then walking round the city all day until it was time to catch the bus home.

Before long though he was caught on, by his father who — working in Belfast one day — spotted him. Realising he wouldn't be happy at St. Malachy's, Laurence's parents transferred him to St. Olcan's in Randalstown where he 'jumped up' a class because of his ability and then went on to the Antrim 'tech' for two years.

At the 'tech' he was described by the principal as showing 'excellent work and progress. He has undoubted ability'; and in Christmas exams in both 1971 and 1972 he came first, out of a class of eleven the first year, and of nineteen the following year.

In the summer of 1973 Laurence took, and passed, six 'O' levels: in English; Mathematics (a grade one pass); Physics with Chemistry; Science (Building and Engineering); Geometrical Drawing; and Engineering Workshop Theory and Practice. He also passed City and Guilds exams, at the same time, in general engineering, being the only one to gain 'credits' and not just 'passes' for all four component parts of the course.

ABILITIES

Outside of school too, Laurence did a lot of reading, of books and newspapers. His friends remember that he had a good memory and could have told you the whole plot of a story after one quick reading.

And his mother recalls that back in March, when the blanket men were first allowed in selective reading material on ending their no-wash protest, Laurence asked her to send in a couple of books on psychology which he specified. But in line with the prison authorities' refusal to allow the prisoners any educational reading material, the books were returned to Mrs. McKeown without Laurence ever receiving them.

Despite his undoubted academic abilities, Laurence was an outdoor



■ THE MCKEOWN FAMILY: from left: Eugene; Mr. McKeown; Gerry Small (Mary's husband); Mary; Mrs. McKeown; and Laurence — the picture was taken at Mary's wedding in April 1976, less than four months before Laurence's arrest



■ Mr. and Mrs. McKeown, with daughter Mary, at home in Randalstown

person, popular with his friends, who enjoyed driving tractors and helping out neighbours with farm work, baling hay, and so on.

Very particular about his appearance, always clean and tidy, he went most weekends to dances at Ardboe and Moneyglass and 'liked to live it up a bit' when he got the chance.

Tall and strongly built — a fact which his friends attribute to the occasional large bottle of Guinness he used to drink, and which his mother attributes to the chest expander he sent away for when he was fifteen — it was often the sight of the masked six-foot figure of 'Big Laurence' bearing confidently down with his Armalite on the owner of a car which had

just been commandeered for a proxy bomb mission, which pre-empted the civilian from panicking and allowed the operation to be conducted quickly and, above all, safely.

Leaving the 'tech' at seventeen, instead of staying on as he might have done, Laurence took a job as a wages estimator for McLaughlin and Harvey, a local building firm. It was the sort of job which would not interfere with his republican activity, for as a comrade of Laurence's recalls: 'all he thought about from when he left the 'tech' was the Republican Movement'.

BOMBING

Laurence joined the IRA at the (continued on next page)

Calm, determined and intelligent



didn't want to harm us and that we were not to move," recalled one of the men in a later statement to the RUC.

The operation, taking place alongside Antrim army base, had been audacious enough, but imagine the Volunteers' surprise and shock when after driving off in the commandeered car they discovered two Browning automatic pistols under the seats. They had just tied up, and commandeered the car of, three plainclothes Brits (and had politely informed them that they didn't want to harm them!). It took about two hours to sink in, laughs one of the Volunteers who took part in the operation.

But it was Laurence who had insisted that the Volunteers carried an Armalite (and not just pistols) along with them that night, 'just to be on the safe side'. If it had not been the deterring effect of the Armalite on the Brits they might well have been emboldened to open fire on the unsuspecting republicans, with tragic results.

OPERATIONS

Other operations did not always run to plan either. On one occasion Laurence had driven away a commandeered car and was returning with it after loading the bomb.

On the way, the car stalled and wouldn't start, but keeping calm Laurence cheerfully asked a passer-by to give him a push, and that done, he drove on to his destination.

Another time, Laurence leapt into the front seat of a car that had just been commandeered, and promptly put both feet straight through four dozen eggs which had been left on the floor of the car!

In June 1974, fearing that he was about to be arrested, following an attempted proxy bombing that was foiled by the RUC after, apparently, a passer-by witnessed the car being commandeered and phoned Portlengone barracks, Laurence went south 'on the run' in Dublin and Monaghan.

However, with the beginning of the 1975 truce, and feeling that things had cooled down, Laurence returned to Randalstown, taking casual labouring jobs and generally adopting a low profile, while staying away from home as often as possible.

It is likely that although the RUC had, as a result of the foiled 1974 operation, no firm evidence against Laurence, they had enough circumstantial pointers to implicate him in general republican activity in the area. From that time on they were watching for him and keeping periodic observation on his home.

NERVELESS

Undeterred, Laurence's involvement became only greater. 'He would have had you out on operations seven nights a week,' recalls a comrade, 'and if you'd have gone out all the time you'd certainly have ended up in jail.' Even if the area was crawling with Brits Laurence was 'game' and couldn't be argued out of it, sometimes operating on his own.

He was a nerveless operator and enjoyed a laugh when he could, trying to maintain a necessary sense of humour. Once, approaching a roadblock with a car-load of republicans, Laurence - sitting in the back seat - pretended to push something into the front-seat passenger's pocket.

'Here, just look after this for a minute,' he said. The unfortunate passenger almost died of fright there and then before he realised

that the 'something' was in fact nothing at all, and only a joke.

Another time however, Laurence and some comrades were stopped in a line of traffic in a car which contained 10 lbs. of gelignite, two .45 revolvers, a Browning automatic and an Armalite.

Laurence, this time in the front passenger seat, calmly leaned over to the RUC man and told him that they were going to the same destination as the car immediately in front of them, which had just been cleared through the roadblock: Laurence, from local knowledge, knowing where it was most likely the occupants of the car in front were going at that time of the day.

ARREST

The operation which led to Laurence's arrest took place on Sunday 11th July 1976, at 11.20 p.m., a mere fifty yards from the McKeown's home on the Barnish Road.

An RUC landrover driving along the road came under attack when an IRA Volunteer calmly stepped out into the middle of the road as it passed and emptied a clip of ammunition from a Garand rifle into the landrover, wounding an RUC man.

Although the Volunteer, operating alone, fired only the eight rounds on his clip of ammunition, the RUC panicked so much that one of them subsequently stated that he judged that forty rounds had been fired at them from two directions!

The RUC patrol returned fire from a Sterling sub-machine gun but the Volunteer returned safely to base.

It was obvious, however, that the RUC, to salvage some reputation, would need to find a scapegoat for the operation, and the McKeown's home being so near at hand and Laurence being by now a suspected active republican, he was the obvious choice.

At 6 a.m. on August 2nd 1976, the McKeown's house was raided - for the first time ever - and Laurence was arrested and taken to Castlereagh, at that time a place just beginning to earn its reputation for physical and psychological torture.

Two and a half days later, Laurence was charged with the attempted killing of the RUC man

and with a number of explosions. After being held on remand in Crumlin Road jail he was tried in April 1977 and convicted on the sole basis of an alleged verbal, unsigned, statement, after he refused to recognise the court.

Throughout his detention in Castlereagh and during his trial, Laurence refused to implicate any of his comrades, and the savagery of the sentences imposed on him was the Brits' vengeful acknowledgement of that fact.

H-BLOCKS

For someone so fond of reading, as well as - like most republicans - an exuberantly outdoor person, the horror of the H-Blocks was particularly difficult for Laurence to adjust to, but he never once has wavered in his commitment to the protest and has taken up the Irish language enthusiastically during his four years in the H-Blocks, writing out smuggled communications in Irish as well as using it as a means of communication with other blanket men.

Coming up to the hunger-strike, he had visibly become calmer and more cheerful, even stopping smoking (the smuggled tobacco) - a sign that he was more at ease in the protest than formerly. He told close friends that in fact he was 'looking forward' to the hunger-strike, anxious as always to be involved up front.

The McKeown family, proud of their son and brother, have - like the families of the other hunger-strikers - had to come to terms first with the blanket protest, then the no-wash protest, then the hunger-strike, and now - as British intransigence mocks the death of nine hunger-strikers - with the very real possibility of Laurence's death in around two weeks' time.

Mrs. McKeown recalls talking over the hunger-strike with Laurence and gradually understanding his motivation as he explained the grim reality of the blanket men's position for the past four-and-a-half years.

Two weeks ago, she met Free State premier Garret FitzGerald, along with other hunger-strikers' relatives, for the first time, and didn't think then that he was pressurising Britain hard enough.

And she says: 'If he has the power and can do something, why doesn't he do something now?'

(continued from previous page)

end of 1973 and it was about this time that a number of republicans, including Laurence, began a series of intensive commercial bombing attacks on the centres of Randalstown and Antrim.

It was a hazardous business for republicans like Laurence, operating in a small, localised and predominantly hostile environment where anyone 'seeing anything' was more likely to inform the RUC than just walk on by.

Despite all this, Laurence quickly established a reputation as an extremely determined republican without a trace of nerves while

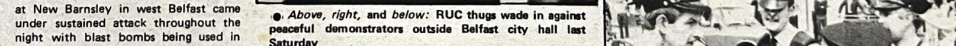
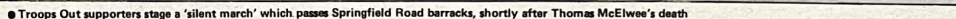
on active service duty, always ensuring that car bombs were safely primed in order that no injury should be caused (and none ever was) to civilians through a premature explosion.

Nonetheless, the republicans operating in the area, especially in those early days, were prone to occasional mistakes. Probably the most embarrassing occurred on March 4th 1974, when a car containing three men was commandeered for later use in a bomb attack, as it came up to ramps in the Castle grounds at Antrim. The three men were on their way to Derry from Aldergrove airport.

'They took us into a wood and tied our arms behind our backs and gagged us and told us they

North

With popular resistance this year at



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

Belfast parade

ON the tenth anniversary of internment, a several thousand strong commemorative parade in Belfast was boosted by the welcome and colourful attendance of three to four hundred 'troops out' supporters from Britain, and a number of other international visitors and delegations. These included Irish republican sympathisers and hunger-strike supporters from the United States, France, West Germany, Norway, and Denmark.

The marchers, led by a man with a tricolour at half-mast, and two women carrying a black flag, walked in silence, in memory of hunger-striker Thomas McElwee, who had died the previous day.

They walked in sombre mood from Dunville Park in the lower Falls to the busy Bee at Andersonstown, where a brief rally was held.

Banner-carrying 'troops out' contingents from various parts of England — namely, London, Birmingham, Leeds, Norwich, Merseyside, Harlow, Hull, Coventry, Brent and Brighton — and Belfast action committee contingents, were interspersed with more than half-a-dozen bands, from Belfast and Glasgow, silent except for lone pipers and drum beats.

There was also an impressive GAA contingent with club banners held defiantly aloft.

The three-abreast marchers were flanked by hundreds of local youths, walking along the pavement, keeping pace with the parade; and were watched from the pavement by several thousand, who should in fact have been marching, but who clapped appreciatively as particular contingents, such as 'Ex-soldiers against the war in Ireland', passed them by. Many in fact did join in behind appropriate local banners.

Passing Andersonstown barracks, women and youths on the march blew whistles, a piercing reminder to the occupants peering from behind the grotesque fortifications adorned with electronic surveillance equipment, that their presence is most unwanted by those whose peace they disturb.

At the Busy Bee, rally chairman and well-known Belfast republican Tom Hartley performed as master of ceremonies, publicly welcoming each banner in turn into the square, with special greetings for the foreign visitors.

The first speaker was Lloyd Hayes, a black former British soldier, who had served in the North eight years ago.

He thanked the people of Belfast for the 'whole-hearted welcome' which the 'troops out' delegation had received. He said: "In addition I would like to express my personal thanks to you for welcoming me as an ex-soldier, one who for eight months in total wreaked havoc and destruction upon your daily life, upon your very existence."

Lloyd Hayes spoke of the recent wave of militant street resistance by black people in England against the racist police, stating that: "I am sure you are very aware that the situation in



● The rally at the Busy Bee

England today, as far as black people are concerned, is in no way very different from what it is for you here in the North of Ireland...

"For many years we sat back and took all the shit and rubbish that was being heaped on us, but fortunately black people in England are now standing up and we are fighting back, as you are aware from what you have seen on your television and in your newspapers."

Lloyd Hayes went on: "For many people there are many misconceptions as to what the struggle here in the North of Ireland is all about. It is talked about that it is religious bigotry, that it is sectarian bigotry, but we would like to say that as far as we are concerned the sole reason for the struggle is that it is a struggle for national liberation, that it is a struggle we, as black people, know very much about..."

"Now, at the moment we're only having to contend with the racist fascist police, but how long will it be before we will also have to contend with the British army, who are occupying your country?"

"I hope that we will never have to get to that stage, but if it should happen, then having seen the courage that you have portrayed, I hope that we will also be able to emulate you and stand up and fight, if it is needed, to defeat the British army."

"I say this in conclusion. That whatever happens it is up to you, and up to you only, to decide what happens in your country. It is not for the British to say whether you live as a united country, or as a divided country; and what we've seen so far is a situation where Britain has dictated for so many years."

"This cannot continue for much longer. So we say: Victory to the hunger-strikers! Victory to the people of the North of Ireland!"

The second speaker was Sile Darragh, from Short Strand in Belfast, who was released from Armagh jail the previous Wednesday having served a full five year sentence on the prison protest.

She thanked people for turning out on the march and stated that although "it is a very bad time" for the women in Armagh, "with their comrades dying on hunger-strike", morale is high considering the situation.

She concluded: "Margaret Thatcher can't break the hunger-strikers, she can't break the prisoners, not while our people are behind us. Victory to the hunger-strikers!"

Paddy Bolger, from Dublin, a member of the Sinn Féin ard comhairle, and of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, was the third and final speaker.

He recalled how the resistance of the people and of republican Volunteers had defeated internment in the early 'seventies, and would now defeat Britain's present day H-Block criminalisation policy.

Paddy Bolger concluded: "These are grievous and sad times for us all, but we must never be defeatists. If we build our forces to the right peak, if we organise and mobilise the broad mass of the Irish people behind the prisoners, they will gain their five demands."

"We call upon all those who share anti-unionist views to come together, no matter how diverse their opinions might be, behind the prisoners. The time is too late for fence-sitting."

"We call for broad national unity behind the prisoners. We call for all the Irish people to stand up to Britain..."

"We know we can not be defeated. We know that our prisoners will never shirk. Let our resolve be matched by theirs. Victory to the hunger-strikers! Victory to the people!"



■ SILE DARRAGH released from Armagh last Wednesday



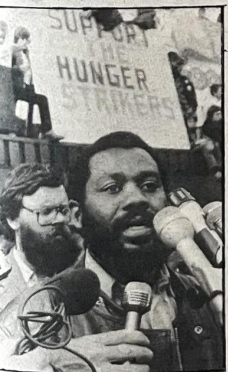
● The march, at St. James'



● The march, at Springfield Road corner



● Some of the French delegation on the march



■ LLOYD HAYES former British soldier in the North

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

South

THE death of hunger-striker Thomas McElwee, last Saturday, August 8th, was met with the usual black flag vigils, around the twenty-six counties, which continued until the funeral on Monday.

There have also been continuing hunger-strike pickets, marches and meetings, with two separate American visits passing through Dublin, and an encouraging response to the hunger-strike crisis from Wexford county council.

The Wexford county council move came last Monday, August 10th, at a special meeting called in response to the death of Kieran Doherty, TD. A vote of sympathy was passed to the relatives and there was unanimous condemnation of the British government's intransigence and several calls for British withdrawal.

The feeling of the speeches made was typified by a speech from Fine Gael councillor Deirdre Bolger, who paid tribute to Kieran Doherty who 'had died for love of his country and a principle he honestly believed in'.

The Free State premier, the British ambassador, and all other county councils, are to be informed of the Wexford county council's resolutions. This latter move will put the hunger-strike on the agenda of all county local authorities in the twenty-six counties.

Passing through Dublin on Thursday week, August 6th, from a visit to the North, where he attended the funerals of Kevin Lynch and Kieran Doherty, Paul O'Dwyer, the New York civil rights lawyer, told pressmen that he hoped to get United Nations action on the hunger-strike and to intensify pressure on US President Reagan.

On Friday, 7th August, two more visitors from the United States arrived in Dublin en route to Belfast and expressed support for the hunger-strikers at a press conference. They were Rev. F. D. Kirkpatrick, an associate of the late black civil rights campaigner Martin Luther King, and Wally Feather, a member of the American Indian Treaty Council.

Continuing hunger-strike activity on Friday included a march and meeting in Waterford city centre, during the evening, in which over five hundred people took part.

In Sligo, supporters of the hunger-strikers opened a stall at the Ballisodare rock festival which attracted much attention throughout the weekend. In Kerry, a similar stall was open throughout the week in Killorglin during Puck Fair, which attracts a major attendance.

And on Friday afternoon, a meeting of fifty-one shopstewards, representing all twelve trade unions on the giant Alcan construction site in the Shannon estuary, held a special meeting at which they unanimously pledged support for the hunger-strikers. The site has closed down on the day of each funeral of a hunger-striker.

Last Saturday, August 8th, black flag pickets and vigils followed the death of Thomas McElwee that morning.

In County Cork, four hundred people attended a meeting in Middleton after a silent march through the town. A similar meeting was held in Dunmanway in the west of the county. There were black flag vigils in Wexford, Sligo, and Galway.

In Drogheda, there was a march and meeting during the afternoon, and elsewhere in County Louth there were meetings in Ardee, Collon and Dunleer. In Dundalk, the rosary was recited in the town square each evening over the three day mourning period.

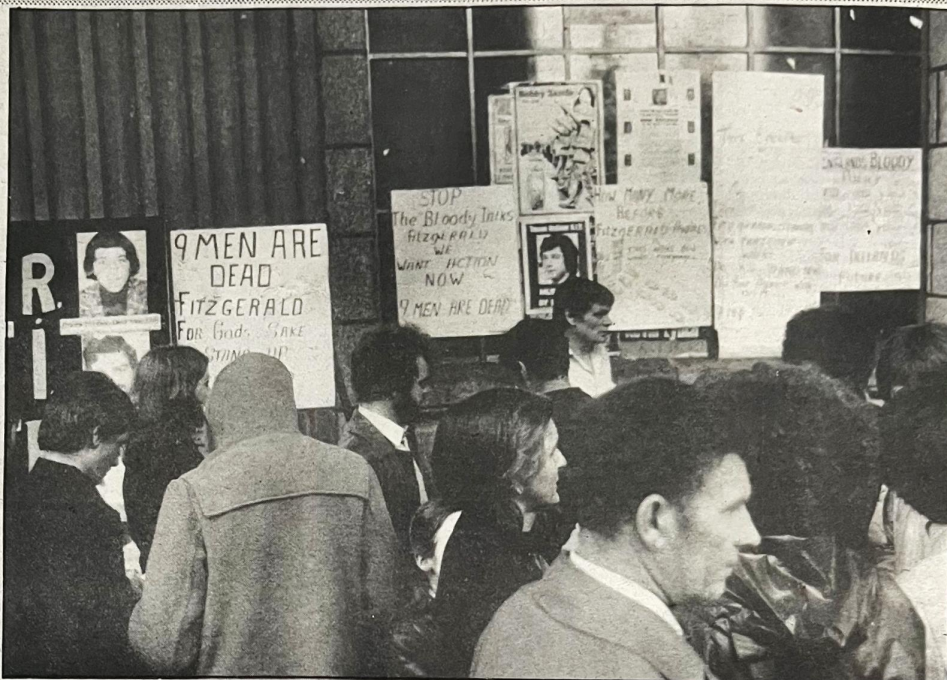
In Nenagh, County Tipperary, there was a meeting on Saturday evening following a hurling semi-final in the town. In Dingle, County Kerry, there was a meeting following the races there.

Around Dublin, where a black flag vigil was held at the GPO on Saturday night, vigils were held and books of condolences opened at Lucan, Saggart, and Clondalkin, as well as in Dublin city districts.

Also on Saturday, several hunger-strike activists were arrested by Special Branch men in Dublin, Monaghan, Tipperary, Cork and Clare. All were released within twenty-four hours.

Last Sunday, August 9th, hunger-strike activity included several meetings around the twenty-six counties.

In Cavan, about four hundred people attended a public memorial meeting for Thomas McElwee. In Clones, County Monaghan, two hundred people took part in a march and attended a meeting



● Signing the book of condolences for Thomas McElwee's family, outside Dublin's GPO last Saturday



● **Dublin GPO vigil on the day of Thomas McElwee's funeral**



● Republican Eamonn MacThomais speaks at the GPO vigil

afterwards, which was addressed by Sinn Féin president Ruairi O'Bradaigh.

In County Cork, about three hundred people attended a meeting in Clonakilty. In Tipperary, a meeting followed a hurling match in Borrisokane.

In Dublin, there was a stall and leaf-letting at Croke Park for the Kerry versus Mayo GAA football semi-final. Elsewhere in Dublin a vigil and meeting was held in Finglas during the morning. Over six hundred people signed the books of condolences.

Later on Monday evening, hunger-strike activists met the manager of London soccer team Tottenham Hotspur, who were in the city for a match with

Last Monday, August 10th, there were several meetings and vigils to coincide with the funeral of Thomas

In Cork city, around one thousand people took part in a march to, and meeting at, the national monument in the city centre. A wreath was laid by Thomas MacCurtain, whose father died on hunger-strike, at the hands of the British, in 1920, when he was Lord Mayor of Cork.

In Limerick, a march and meeting

followed a special Mass in the city's O'Connell Street. A daily vigil has been continuing in the city.

Alcan workers in County Limerick stopped work during the afternoon and held a black flag vigil in Newcastle West, as the international 'Tour of Ireland' cycle race was passing through.

Later on Monday evening, hunger-strike activists met the manager of London soccer team Tottenham Hotspur, who were in the city for a match with Limerick United, and presented him with a letter outlining the hunger-strike crisis.

In Navan, County Meath, shops closed during a vigil held in the town during the afternoon. Shops and businesses closed in Waterford where several hundred people marched in the afternoon.

In County Wexford, a march and vigil was held in New Ross. In Dundalk, County Louth, about a thousand people took part in a march and meeting on Monday evening.

In Galway city, a silent march, followed by a meeting in Eyre Square, drew considerable tourist attention. The meeting was addressed by English playwright John Arden and two Welsh visitors.

In Sligo, where vigils were also held on Saturday and Sunday evenings, a three-hour vigil took place on Monday and included a march behind nine black coffins in which five hundred people took part. In County Sligo, vigils were also held in Mullaghmore, Riverstown and Dromore West.

* In Dublin, a vigil was held outside the GPO on Monday evening. In Monaghan town, about a thousand people took part in a march, headed by a colour party, and a meeting which followed.

In County Donegal, gardai attacked protestors in Ballyshannon.

- Vera Bannon, Sinn Fein PRO in County Donegal, was pushed to the ground by a garda as she went to stick a poster on an Ulsterbus. She was kicked in the face as she tried to get up and was taken to hospital with a broken nose. A picket was put on the local garda station.

in protest, and demonstrators also sat down in the road blocking traffic. Other buses were successfully posted

In Letterkenny, in the north of the county, a march and meeting was held during Monday afternoon. Rosary vigils had been held in the town over the three day mourning period, and a special Mass was held at the cathedral. There were also vigils and meetings in Buncrana, Letterkenny, Lifford, Ballybofey and Dunfanaghy.

Tralee in County Kerry held its memorial march for Thomas McElwaine on Tuesday afternoon, when about five hundred people marched through the town. Protestors occupied the Royal Liver Assurance offices and the Post Office for twenty minutes, and also brought traffic in the town to a standstill for half-an-hour by blocking the Mall. There was also a meeting in Killapney on Tuesday.

In County Louth, a fund-raising ten-mile sponsored walk attracted much attention at Castlebellingham during Tuesday evening.

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

Abroad

INTERNATIONAL interest and concern for the hunger-strikers continues to rise with the mounting death-toll in the H-Blocks. Supporters of the hunger-strikers have been keeping up their activities, whilst other evidence of international pressure on Britain continues to be revealed, even though the major pressure necessary to move Britain has still to come.

In New York, an American city where flag-flying is traditional - with scores of different national flags fluttering alongside the Stars and Stripes outside hotels, office buildings, and shops - the British flag is less in evidence these days.

Some British outposts in Manhattan, which usually fly the Union Jack, appear to have decided that it is unwise, or unsafe, to show the British colours these days. Even outside the skyscraper which houses the British consulate-general, the British United Nations mission, and other British government offices, the Union Jack has disappeared recently.

"It's normally raised each day, but we haven't had it up for a little while because of the demonstrators," a Brit official has told newsmen. Since the death of Bobby Sands on hunger-strike, at the beginning of May, Irish-American protesters have picketed the building almost every day.

The official said: "The demonstrators have already had their own bonfires in the street, burning a British flag they brought along, and also burning Mrs. Thatcher in effigy. They have spat at our staff entering and leaving, our library has been invaded, and there was the man last week who came into the consulate and said he had a bomb wired to his body."

The official added that some of the placards carried in recent days, by the one hundred to two hundred Irish republican sympathisers who turn out on schedule each afternoon at 5 p.m., bore messages taunting the British government for being 'afraid to fly the Union flag in New York'.

At the British consulate-general in Los Angeles, where there are also regular anti-British demonstrations, the British flag is flown from a stand inside the building's lobby.

In Boston, which, after New York, has the country's second largest population of Irish-Americans, the Union Jack has not been flown outside the British consulate-general since it moved into new quarters about ten years ago.

And, last Tuesday, August 12th, it was revealed that, in the face of this increasing anti-British feeling in the United States, British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington has requested the American authorities to step up security at British consular offices and other British buildings there.

Demonstrations in New York, outside the British consulate there, this week peaked one hundred and twenty consecutive days. Following the death of Thomas McElwee an hour-long demonstration outside the consulate was followed by a march to the United Nations building and a memorial Mass.

In San Francisco and Chicago, demonstrations following the death were held outside the British consulates' residences there. Chicago too has been holding daily pickets, one of which was joined during the week by five hundred Syrians commemorating a massacre by the British in their country.

In Canada, former blanket man Fra McCann has been continuing his tour.

In recent weeks he has been in Montreal, Charlottetown, Newfoundland, Halifax and Ontario. At each venue he has given interviews with the media and addressed public meetings, forming and strengthening local Irish Prisoner of War Committees. He has also had meetings with churchmen, politicians and trade unionists.

In Australia, there was an encouraging development on August 27th July when waste pickets outside Port Kembla in Wollongong refused to work on the British-owned vessel Cape Horn - the first industrial stoppage in Australia in support of the hunger-strikers.

Elsewhere in Australia, in Newcastle, there was a picket outside a restaurant, on Wednesday 29th July,



● Troops Out picket, Earl's Court, London, August 1st



● 'Boycott British' picket, Wollongong, Australia

where a dinner was being held to celebrate the British royal wedding. Diners had to watch a black coffin being carried outside the picture windows of the restaurant for the duration of the dinner.

In Yugoslavia, a leading newspaper 'Vjesnik' has recently published an eighteen-part serial on the history of the Irish struggle up until the present hunger-strike. It has also published letters smuggled out of the H-Blocks.

In Italy, a new Irish committee has been set up in Milan and it is campaigning for lessons in Irish history to be taught in local schools.

Italian Euro-MP Mario Cappanna, who has consistently supported the hunger-strikers, was recently challenged on his knowledge of Irish history by British members in the Strasbourg parliament. He replied with a statement running to five pages and starting from the sixteenth century dealing with Britain's record in Ireland.

In Flanders, the Irish solidarity group has just concluded a fortnight's camp, run for children from the Andersonstown and Short Strand districts of Belfast.

During the camp an effigy of British premier Margaret Thatcher was burnt on a bonfire following a public meeting. Pickets and posters of British businesses have continued and at the beginning of August there was a successful hunger-strike display at a folk festival in Antwerp.

Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi has sent a message to United Nations secretary general Kurt Waldheim condemning Britain's intransigence and asking for UN intervention. He said that the prisoners should be granted political status "because they are in political status for a just and sacred cause fighting for a just and sacred cause for the cause of freedom for their people."

In a two-day festival organised by the 'Women's Front of Denmark' in Copenhagen, last weekend, Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th August, a resolution was unanimously passed in solidarity

with the five demands of the hunger-strikers and the Irish people in their fight for national independence.

The outdoor festival, which attracted more than twenty-five thousand people over the two-day period, was addressed on Saturday by Christine McAuley, of Belfast, from Sinn Féin's Department on Women's Affairs, who outlined the influence of British imperialism in Ireland over the past eight hundred years and the reasons for the current hunger-strike in the H-Blocks. (The interest in Ireland's struggle held by the audience was demonstrated by the sheer numbers who afterwards came forward to express their solidarity.)

Other groups taking part in the festival included representatives from the Palestinian Women's Union, a delegate from Bolivia who spoke of the plight of her country under a military junta, and delegates from Turkey and South Africa.

Britain

SUPPORTERS of the hunger-strikers in Britain were once again concentrating their activities on black flag vigils over the weekend following the death of the ninth hunger-striker, Thomas McElwee.

Meanwhile there has been continued pressure on the British Labour Party, and the journal of the British Medical Association has carried an interview praising the courage of the hunger-strikers.

Last Saturday, August 8th, following the death of Thomas McElwee, a vigil was begun in Kilburn square in London, which attracted the usual support with many people stopping to pray.

On Sunday, supporters of the hunger-strikers held a black flag vigil outside Westminster cathedral throughout the morning aimed at the attitude of the

English Catholic hierarchy to the hunger-strike.

Vigils and protests have also been held in Liverpool and Birmingham following the hunger-strike deaths.

In Liverpool, the protests by members of the Troops Out Movement have taken place on the steps of St. Luke's church in the city centre - a church bombed during the war and left in ruins as a war memorial.

In Birmingham, protests following the hunger-strike deaths have included bin-lid banging and whistle-blowing in the strongly-Irish Sparkbrook and Sparkhill areas.

Also last weekend, a three hundred strong delegation from London travelled to Belfast to take part in protests around the tenth anniversary of internment. The number was double that which travelled last year.

Last Monday, August 10th, a hunger-strike delegation met Alex Kitson, chairman of the British Labour Party, in London to press the prisoners' case. The delegation comprised Nora McElwee, sister of the late hunger-striker Thomas McElwee; Malachy McCreesh, brother of the late hunger-striker Raymond McCreesh; and Maura McCrory of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee. At a press conference afterwards they described Kitson's attitude as 'neither sympathetic nor unsympathetic'.

Meanwhile, this month's issue of the British Medical Association's 'News Review' carries an interview with Dr. Michael Thomas, a lieutenant colonel in the British Royal Army Medical Corps, in which he praised the courage of the hunger-strikers.

"Is it suicide for a soldier to charge a machine-gun nest, knowing that he was almost certainly going to get killed?" asked Thomas.

"Isn't it what we describe as laying down one's life for a brother? That's what Bobby Sands was doing. Although I don't agree personally with him, what he felt he was doing was making the supreme sacrifice in a war."

WHAT'S ON

FUND RAISING SOCIAL

Music by Coolin Folk

Friday 14th August

ANDERSONSTOWN

Belfast

Admission £1

Organised by

Gerard McAuley Sinn Féin Cumann

H-BLOCK SOCIAL

Folk music by Oul Hand

Friday 14th August

O'Donnell's club

BELFAST

Admission £1

HUNGER-STRIKE MARCH

3.30 p.m. Saturday 15th August

Assemble Swan View

WEXFORD

GERARD McAULEY

COMMEMORATION

(12th anniversary)

Sunday 16th August

Assemble Colliard St.

March to Bombay St.

BELFAST

Organised by Sinn Féin

HUNGER-STRIKE MARCH

Saturday 15th September

Assemble 1.30 p.m. town centre

LUTON

England

Organised by Sinn Féin (Britain)

H-BLOCK FUND-RAISING

BALLAD SESSION

Music by the Phoenix

8.30 p.m. to 11.30 p.m.

Friday 21st August

Pat Dowling's

PROSPEROUS

Co. Kildare

Admission £1.50

COLE/COLLEY COMMEMORATION

3 p.m. Sunday 23rd August

Assemble Rendezvous Carpark

BEAUMONT

Dublin

ENGLISH PRISON PICKETS

1 p.m. Sunday 23rd August

Simultaneous pickets will take place at

Wakefield, Durham, Leicester, Parkhurst

and Albany prisons.

Organised by Sinn Féin

BALLAD SESSION

Featuring

The Furey Brothers & Davy Arthur

8.30 p.m. Tuesday 25th August

Sunnybank Inn

BRAY

Co. Wicklow

Admission £2.50

Proceeds to

Sinn Féin National Finance Committee

GAUGHAN/STAGG COMMEMORATION

Sunday 30th August

BALLINA

Co. Mayo

BODENSTOWN DRAW

The Bodenvon Draw will be held at

the Sunnybank Inn, Bray, Co. Wicklow,

on Tuesday 25th August. All outstanding

cash and counterfoils should be handed in

to 44, Parnell Square, Dublin, as soon

as possible.

DRAW RESULTS

AN CUMANN CABHRACH, DUBLIN

July Draw results

£100: 267; £50: 111; £25: 16; £10: 89

and 41; £5: 357, 355, 43, 82, 130, and

242.

DONEGAL SINN FEIN OFFICERS

A GENERAL MEETING of Donegal

Sinn Féin was held recently at which

the following committee officers

were elected: chair: Liam MacEilínne,

vice-chair: Brendan Magill, secretary:

Pat Murphy, assistant secretary: Jim

Coll, joint-treasurers: Donal de Barra

and Ann Rose Doherty, education:

Eddie Fullerton, and PRO: Vera Bannon.

Organisers were elected, as follows:

Milford: Jim Coll and Pat Murphy,

Letterkenny: Eddie Houston and Pat

Dawson, Glenties: James Doherty and

Donal de Barra, Inishowen: Jim Ferry

and Eddie Fullerton, and South Donegal:

Jim Gallagher and Mick Callan.

At a meeting to reorganise the Seamus

Harvey Sinn Féin cumann in Ballybofey,

County Donegal, the following officers

were elected: chair: Kevin Follen,

secretary: Joseph Floyd, treasurer:

Patricia Floyd, PRO: Michael Quinn.

Anyone wishing to join Sinn Féin in the

area should contact any cumann member.

COUNTY ARMAGH

NEW CUMANN

NEW Sinn Féin cumann have been

formed in the Drumbrada area of Armagh

city, named the Charlie Agnew cumann,

and in the Kilwilly estate of North

Lurgan, named the Terry Brady cumann.

Anyone wishing to join Sinn Féin in

these areas should give their names to

the local Sinn Féin Phoblacht/Republican

Newsletters.



Sochraid Tomás McElwee a fuair bás ar stailc ocras. B'eisean an naoi fear a fuair bás sna H Blocanna

Fiacha le n-Aisioch

LE ROISIN NI RIAIN

TA Ciarán Ó Dochartaigh, Teachta Dála i gcóir Cabhán, Muimneachán tar éis báis. Ag sé neomat déag tar éis a seacht a dúirt an nuacht linn. Lfón an scéal le huaigean agus le brón mé, mar a dheineann leis na mílte, b'fhéidir na milliúin Éireannach, sa bhaile agus i gcóir.

An t-ochtú duine. An t-ochtú laoch a fuair bás mall, m'ádhmharach, cróga ar stailc ocras le trí mhí anuas. Is cuma cé mhéid uair a chloisim an droch scéal seo, fág, tagann tocht in scornach agus fearm in chroí.

Tagann deora im' shúile. Deora brón — dá chlann agus do náisiún na hÉireann agus deora buíochais — buíochas go bhfuil sí amach faighte le dheire aige as an uafás Sasanaigh sin — An Cheis Fhada.

SAMHAIL

Níl sa Cheis Fhada anois ach samhail d'Eirinn ar fad. Ní ar mhaithe leo féin amháin atá fearaibh agus mnáibh na Cise Fada agus Ard Mhaca ar agóid. Má deintear coirpigh díobh san, déantar coir-

peach degach Éireannach a sheas aigh riann i gcoinne riall ghránna Shasana sa tír seo.

Ní h-aon ionadh ná fuil aon rud á rá ag Rialtas na hÉireann mar gheall air, mar tá fhios acu sin má athnótar na príosúnaigh sa tuaisceart mar chímí polaiticiúla — ag troid ar son saoirse a dtíre — go ndéanfaidh sé stáic magaidh dá Rialtas féin.

Chíonn Thatcher ó seo agus is dóigh léi má bhriseann sí an stailc ocras go mbrifidh sí muintir na hÉireann ar fad. Dáir ndóigh níl an obair sin ó fhagaint fuithe féin amháin. Tá go leor cabhair á fháil aici ó "Rialtas" úd na hÉireann, ó pholaitoirí "psuedo" náisiúnta ó thuaidh agus go h-áirithe le

déanaí, ó'n gcleir.

FIACHA

Rud amháin i gcoitinne ag an dtrúir dream úd, is lena leas féin, muintir na hÉireann a choimeád faoi chois — an meon sclabaíochta atá ag furmhor acu a choimeád i réim sa tír — mar tá's acu nach mbeadh aon áit dá leithéid féin, agus a meon Sasanaigh, in Éire a bheadh saor agus Gaelach.

Mar sin is mór an fiacha orainn ag Clarán Ó Dochartaigh agus an seachtar fear a fuair bás roimhe. Ní in aise a fuairadar bás. Tá muintir na hÉireann móscaíte acu. Sé an t-áit is fear inar féidir linn an fiacha sin a aisic ná tré obair gan sos gan staonadh, ní amháin ar son an cúig éileamh, ach ar son an rud amháin a chuirfeadh áthas ar a gcroíthe go léir — Éire aontaithe agus saor go dté o riall Shasana. Ní dheanfar dearmad oraibh. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamnacha.

Litr os na blocanna

TÁ litir eile againn an tseachtain seo ós na Blocanna H. Tá an litir scríofa i nGaeilge agus tá crógacht agus neart na bhfear sna Blocanna léirithe ann, is soláidir nach bhfuil siad sásta géilleadh do na Sasanaigh agus go bhfuil siad chun leanúint go dtí go mbeidh an bua acu.

CUIREADH an Rialú Díreach orainn ag Sasain, ar feadh bliana eile le déanaí. Cuireadh "Roinn Comhairle" ar bun arís le cabhair a thabhairt do na Sasanaigh chun an t-áit is fear a bhaint amach leis an Tuaisceart a smachú. An bhfuil aon rud nua?

Naoi mbliana ó shin, nuair a thug siad Rialú Díreach isteach don chéad uair, bhí Roinn den saghas céanna ann agus theip air. Ní aon difríocht anois. Ní éireoidh leis an iarracht seo ach oiread.

Áfach, léiríonn an gnó seo dúinn go soláidir, gur fiú faic na hiarrachtaí Sasanaigh, le síocháin síorra a thabhairt don fhadhb seo, toisc nach bhfuil siad toilteanach an fhadhb a aithint, 'sé sin nach bhfuil aon áit in Éirinn doibhtha ar chor ar bith. A thús a ghlacann siad le sin, is é tús a bheas síocháin sa tír seo.

AN CHEIST

Cén cuma leis na Ranna, nó na coistí, má's Sasanaigh nó lubraitheoirí áitiúla a fionas iad? An athróidh sé agus go bhfuil an náisiún críochdeighilte fós? Sin an cheist is cóir doibhtha a fhreagairt, ach is leis nach ag lorg réitigh atá siad, ach ag lorg síl (in ghlaichtha go hidirnáisiúnta) chun fáil a dhéanamh ar mhuintir náisiúnta an Tuaiscirt.

Nochtfaidh ó seo i gceir na mBlocanna H agus go mór mhór an Stailc Ocras faoi láthair. Scaoil an Stát Rúnaí raites ar an 30ú lá de mhí Meitheamh ag leagadh amach a pholasaithe "nua" fé dtaobh na mBlocanna. Níorbh iarracht na polasaithe seo le réiteach a fháil in aon chor. In ionad sin, ba chleas ghlic é chun tacaíocht a bhaint dínn, agus an t-ollán a tharraingt síos ar shúile an phobail faoina dtárlaíonn.

Deirneann sé go bhfuil an Rialtas ag tabhairt geallúint go mbeartaíonn siad mallairt a chur ar an saol do phríosúnaigh sna Sé Chontae. Ní abran sé cad iad, nó cén uair, ní abran sé ach gur chóir dúinn stad a chur lena n-ádh. Tá sé ag éileamh ár ngeallúint ach ní ghéill-



Teach Stormont áit a raibh párlaimint na Sé Chontae

fimid riann! Masla mór a bheadh ansin dár gcomrádaíthe cróga a fuair bás cheana.

BUA

Tá cúig éileamh á lorg againn, éilimh is ceart dúinn. Tá an fhios ag na Sasanaigh go slánófar na saolta dá dtabharfaidís iad dúinn. Ach níl siad ag déanamh iarracht na saolta a shábháil. Níl suim acu i saolta Éireannacha. Cruthaíonn siad sin go laethúil.

Rialú Díreach, na Blocanna H, agus ach an rud eile a thug siad leo d'Eirinn, buanaíonn siad an fhulaing, ach leis an buan tá muintir na hÉireann á mhúscailt. Tá muintir na hÉireann ag éirí, ag dílú agus ag taobú leis an choimhlint ar son saoirse, an choimhlint a bhuafas go hiomlán roimh i bhfad. Gan chéim amháin ar ais, bua go luath.

The early Church

Dúchas

By
Desún
Breathnach

WE HAVE seen how Christianity left its impact on early Christian Ireland even down to the very placenames, particularly where the name of a saint is combined with the word 'cill', meaning in former times the cell of the monk, to provide a title later for a town.

A similar word, though not found so frequently in the placenames as 'cill', is 'desert', coming to us again via the Latin and easily recognisable in modern English as 'desert'.

The holy men and women of early Christian Ireland often enough were not content merely to join a community. Some of them built their beehive houses in a wilderness far from any living creature; and in modern Irish 'desert' means a deserted place, a retreat or hermitage.

Because of the fame of these anchorites, however, people tended to flock to them for a variety of reasons, often seeking cures or guidance; communities sprang up about them and the besieged were forced to withdraw farther into the wilderness.

Here are a few of such placenames, distorted from the original meaningful Irish into an English mould to satisfy a foreign administrator: Dysart, Disart, Diarmada, Desertoghilly, Desertmartin. There is even the Desert alongside Armagh.

Here are some of the foundation dates of the more famous monasteries which today are known as towns, the places of learning having been destroyed by foreigners.

Doire Cholm Cille ('Derry'), 546; Daru ('Dunroon'), Port Laoile, 556; Cluain Mhic Nóis ('Clonmacnoise'), 550; Cluain Fear ('Clonfert'), 541 or 559; Beannchar ('Bangor'), 603; Glenn Dá Loch ('Glendalough'), 618; Tuam ('Tuam'), a little later.

SURNAMES

Christianity also made its impact on surnames, initially, rather than on given names of the Irish; and we can note, with a smile, perhaps, such surnames as Mac an tSagairt ('Macentagart'), son of the priest; Mac an Aba ('MacNabb'), son of the Abbot; and Mac an tEaspig ('McEnaspy') or some similar connotation, son of the bishop.

Sometimes the surname is even more telling, perhaps, as is Mac Giolla Easpaig, the son of the bishop's servant (housekeeper) which is Englished, on occasion, as 'Magillseay'.

We do not have Mac an Phápa but, as we know, at least one of the popes of Rome had one hundred sons, Roman custom, however was rather more restrained than that of the Irish.

Very many Irish surnames indicate that the founders of such families had monastic origin of some kind, perhaps of

a lay kind, perhaps of holy orders. (It should not be forgotten that, at one time, perhaps most of the monks were lay brothers in the Irish monasteries and that only a few, the more brilliant and outstanding, were ordained.)

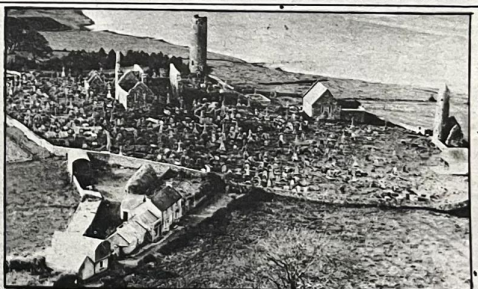
The surnames to which I refer now in their correct Irish form have the prefix 'Maol' (often Englished as 'Mull') indicating tonsure, the shaving of the head to indicate that the wearer had been dedicated to God.

This 'maol' was joined to the name of a holy person to indicate a particular order of monks or anchorites. Thus we have still, today, bearers of the following surnames: Maol Eoin ('Malone'), Maol Iosa ('Melissa'), Maol Mhuire ('Myles'), Maol Ruadhain ('Mulroon'), Maol Eochlainn ('Malachy'), Maol Suthain ('Mulsattin'), Maol Ruba ('Mulroba'), and as many more.

SURMISE

How exactly these surnames come about we can only surmise. We have instances of them having been used — as surnames but as given names as well, a typical example being Maol Iosa (used today as the first name for both males and females).

It may have happened that these ancient orders of the Celtic Church had become so popular with the people in general that they sought to be identified in some way with them and that, with the compulsion to adopt surnames in the eleventh century, they reached out for that which they most admired.



The famous monastery of Clonmacnoise was founded in AD 550

Also, of course, it might indicate the falling by the wayside of the occasional monk or anchorite with a resulting offspring to which the monk's order was added as a protection.

By the Middle Ages, all over Europe friars had acquired a reputation for loose living, and even in Shakespeare's time some monasteries and nunneries were renowned more for the breach than the observance of poverty, chastity and obedience, as we may infer from Hamlet's order to Ophelia, 'Get thee to a nunnery', nunnery having become a slang word for a brothel by that time (of course, both meanings remain).

In general however, the early Church in Ireland appears to have been very pious and to have had a good effect on the people, not only in the religious sense, but also in the areas of learning, technology, agriculture, medicine, navigation, metal work, art and design in general (in metal, on stone, in text) and of course, on music, as we shall see later.

SITES

At the back of Kathleen Hughes'

'The Church in Early Irish Society' there is a map showing the sites of ecclesiastical settlements, particularly monasteries, up to the arrival of the Vikings. Mostly, they are confined to the east and to Leinster. This is not difficult to explain. The island off County Cork, Oileán Cléire, the Island of the Clergy (Englished as Clear), is said to have been the first spot in Ireland to have been Christianized, though not by Pádraig.

Over in Wales the first place to receive Christianity was the highly romanized area of south-east Wales and it was from there that missionaries travelled to Ireland, concentrating first on Oileán Cléire, possibly for important political reasons.

On the Hughes' map, Connacht has hardly anything to show for its Christianity apart from Tuam and the islands. There was a good reason: most of Connacht at that time was impenetrable forest and it was only the coast that had churches, even up to the time of the Irish wars against the English of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Sympathy

DOHERTY. Deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Vol. Kieran Doherty, TD. From Paddy and Brian, Dublin.

DOHERTY. Deepest sympathy to the family and comrades of Kieran Doherty, TD. From Kinscourt H-Block/Armagh Committee, County Cavan.

DOHERTY. Deepest sympathy to the family and comrades of Kieran Doherty, TD. From Bailieborough H-Block/Armagh Committee, County Cavan.

DOHERTY. A personal tribute to a gallant comrade who died for his principles. Sleep brave warrior, you have earned your rest. From your comrade Paddy Agnew, TD.

DOHERTY. Deepest sympathy to Mr. Doherty, Doherty and family, on the death of their son Kieran. From Paddy and Jane Agnew.

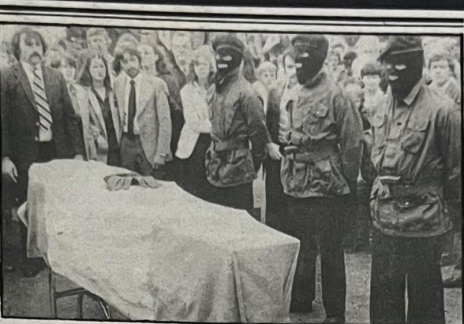
DOHERTY. Deepest sympathy to the Doherty family and also to Kieran's girlfriend Geraldine. Mary Queen of the Gaiety pray for him. From his friends and comrade Michael Holden (H-Block), and also from Kathleen Holden and family. Masses offered.

DOHERTY. Following the death of my dear friend Vol. Kieran Doherty, 1st Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, who died at the hands of the British, my deepest and heartfelt sympathy to Ailie and Margaret and family, and especially to his girlfriend Geraldine. From Delaire, Limerick jail.

DOHERTY. Sean Fitzsimons (H-Block) extends his deepest sympathy to the family of his friend and comrade, Vol. Kieran Doherty. "Those cold empty cells will rot and stain, and the grass will grow where none grows today." Blessed are those who hunger for justice.

LYNCH; DOHERTY; McELWEE. We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of our late comrades, Kevin Lynch, and Tom, who were brutally murdered by the British government. "No greater love hath any man, than to lay down his life for his friends." St. Jude pray for them. Remembered by Gerry, Benny, Mike, and all the lads in 'B' wing, H-Block.

LYNCH; DOHERTY; McELWEE. The RCG, London, mourns the deaths of Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, and Thomas McElwee, murdered by British Imperialism. We salute their heroism



McELWEE. The Republican Movement, comprising Oglagh na hEireann, Cumann na mBan, Cumann na gCailíní, Na Flanna Eireann, Sinn Féin, and Cumann na nEireann, deeply regret the death of Vol. Thomas McElwee, Oglagh na hEireann, who died on Saturday 8th August, on the sixtieth day of his hunger-strike to win the five just demands of the republican political prisoners. IRA Volunteer Thomas McElwee, a dedicated republican from the South Derry village of Strake, remained steadfast up to his death on hunger-strike, at the hands of the intransigent British. Thomas is especially remembered by his former friends and comrades for his sincerity and easy-going nature.

"If they aren't able to destroy the desire for freedom, they won't break you, people, is in my heart. The day will dawn when all the people of Ireland will have the desire for freedom to show it, and then we'll see the rising of the moon."

BOBBY SANDS, Thomas' comrade.

and steadfast refusal to submit to barbaric British Imperialism. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families, friends and comrades. Victory to the Irish people! Victory to the hunger-strikers!

LYNCH; DOHERTY; McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the families of Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, and Thomas McElwee. "May the sod rest lightly on all those brave men." From the republican prisoners in Hull prison.

McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the families of Vol. Kevin Lynch and Vol. Thomas McElwee, also to Dolores in Armagh. From Monica, Letterkenny.

LYNCH; McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the families and friends of Vol. Kevin Lynch and Vol. Thomas McElwee. From Liam and Veronika May.

MCDONNELL. My deepest sympathy to Goretti and her two children, Mr. and Mrs. McDonnell, and all the family of Vol. Joe McDonnell, Oglagh na hEireann, RIP, who died on hunger-strike for the just demands of the Queen of Ireland pray for him. "Of course we can be murdered, but while we remain alive, we remain what we are, political prisoners of war." (Bobby Sands) I deeply regret by his friend and comrade, Delaire McDonnell (Limerick jail), and all the McDonnell family circle.

MCDONNELL; HURSON; LYNCH; DOHERTY; McELWEE. The sincere sympathies of Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, TD, and the McDonnell family circle.

McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the family of Vol. Thomas McElwee, and also to Dolores. From Peter and Bernie. **McELWEE.** The sincere sympathies of Vol. Thomas McElwee, Oglagh na hEireann, who died on the sixtieth day of his hunger-strike on Saturday 8th August. "He shall be spoken of among his people, and generations shall remember him and call him blessed." To his family, friends and comrades we extend our most profound sympathy.

McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the family, friends and comrades of Vol. Thomas McElwee, Oglagh na hEireann, who died on hunger-strike as a result of British intransigence. Mary Queen of the Gael pray for him. Remembered by friend Paddy Loughran (H-Block), and all the Loughran family.

McELWEE. The West German Irish support groups and anti-H-Block committees would like to express our deepest sympathy to the family of Tom McElwee, who died after sixty-six days on hunger-strike because of the intransigence of the British government. We demand that the British government concede the five just demands immediately.

McELWEE. The Bellaghy Prisoners of War Welfare Association extend deepest sympathy to the family, friends and comrades, of our comrade Vol. Thomas McElwee, who died while on hunger-strike on Saturday 8th August, murdered by Brit intransigence. I mean Macra na nGael go raib a anam go saoi.

McELWEE. The Carty/Crowley/Loughran Sinn Féin circle remain, in unison, deeply regret the death of Vol. Thomas McElwee, who died while on hunger-strike for the just demands of the political prisoners. We extend our most heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved McElwee family. "It is on those who can endure the most who will ultimately triumph."

McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the family of my friend and comrade Thomas. Always remembered, Jim and Serena.

McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the family, friends and comrade Thomas. "They have held our bodies in the most inhuman conditions but while we remain alive, we remain what we are, political prisoners. We extend our most heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved McElwee family. "It is on those who can endure the most who will ultimately triumph."

McELWEE. Deepest sympathy to the family, friends and comrades of Vol. Tom McElwee, murdered in H-Block by British intransigence. There is no force on earth capable of enforcing slavery on a people really resolved to be free." Mary, Queen of the Gael, pray for him.

IN MEMORIAM

CLARKE, Michael; PARKER, Ann. (9th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Michael Clarke, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, and Vol. Ann Parker, Belfast Brigade, Cumann na mBan, who died while on active service duty as a result of a premature explosion on August 11th 1972. Thoirid siad suas fuair siad báis go abair ar son na Poblaíochta. Never forgotten by their friends and comrades in the Belfast Brigade.

CLARKE, Michael; PARKER, Ann. (9th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of our dear friends, Vol. Michael Clarke, Oglagh na hEireann, and Vol. Ann Parker, Cumann na mBan, who died on active service on August 11th 1972. Always remembered by Danny and Eilish McCattigan and family.

CLARKE, Michael; PARKER, Ann. (9th Anniversary). In loving memory of my good friends Ann and Michael, who were killed in action on August 11th 1972. RIP, Mary, Queen of the Gael, pray for them. From their friends Mr. and Mrs. Mulvenna and family; from Mrs. Magee and family; from Martin Walsh (H-Block), wife and family; also from Mr. and Mrs. Stone and family.

HARVEY, Seamus; MCGLYNN, Jimmy. (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Seamus Harvey and Jimmy McGlynn, Oglagh na hEireann, Tyrone, who died while on active service duty on August 11th 1973. Fuair siad báis go raib a anam. Never forgotten by their friends and comrades in the Republican Movement, Tyrone.

HARVEY, Seamus; MCGLYNN, Jimmy. (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Seamus Harvey and

Jimmy McGlynn, killed on active service, August 11th 1973. Always remembered by the Seamus Harvey Sinn Féin cumann, Ballyboyley.

LENNON, Danny. (5th Anniversary). In loving memory of Vol. Danny Lennon, 'B' Coy., 1st Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Irish Republican Army. We will always remember you. Sadly missed by Jokey, Crumlin Road jail, and all the Flynn family.

LENNON, Danny. (5th Anniversary). In loving memory of Vol. Danny Lennon, 'B' Coy., 1st Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, who was killed on August 10th 1976. Always remembered by the Magill and Adams families.

LENNON, Danny. (5th Anniversary). In loving memory of Vol. Danny Lennon, 'B' Coy., 1st Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, who was shot dead while on active service duty on August 10th 1976. "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." Always remembered by his friends Imelda and Ann-Marie Flynn, and Bow Weir.

LENNON, Danny. (5th Anniversary). In loving memory of Vol. Danny Lennon, 'B' Coy., 1st Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, who was shot dead by trigger-happy thugs in London. RIP. Always remembered by his friends and comrades in the Republican Movement, Tyrone.

McANALLAN, Daniel; QUINN, Patrick. (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Daniel McAnallen and Patrick Quinn, Oglagh na hEireann, who died while on active service duty on August 16th 1973. Codail go dtuin a comradh, go dhéanfaid dearmad orthu. Always remembered by their friends and

comrades in the Republican Movement, Dunannon.

McAULEY, Gerard. (12th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Flan Gerard McAuley, Belfast Brigade, Na Flanna Eireann, who was shot dead while on active service duty on August 15th 1969. Chail sé a saol go raib a anam. Always remembered by his friends and comrades in Na Flanna Eireann, Belfast.

McAULEY, Gerard. (12th Anniversary). The Gerard McAuley Sinn Féin cumann remember with love and pride Flan Gerard McAuley, Belfast Brigade, Na Flanna Eireann, who died on August 15th 1969. I measc Laochra na nGael go raib a anam go saoi.

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In loving memory of our dear son, Vol. Robert 'Bobby' McCrudden, 'B' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, killed in action on August 3rd 1972. Mary Queen of the Gael pray for him. Always remembered by his mother, father, brothers and sisters.

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In proud memory of my dear brother, Vol. Robert 'Bobby' McCrudden, 'B' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, killed in action on August 3rd 1972. Never forgotten by his brother Joe.

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In proud memory of my dear brother, Vol. Robert 'Bobby' McCrudden, 'B' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, killed in action on August 3rd 1972. Always remembered by his brother Sean.

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In proud memory of our brave

comrade, Vol. Bobby McCrudden, 'B' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, killed in action on August 3rd 1972. "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." Never forgotten by his comrades Robert, Jimmy and Big Marty (H-Block).

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In loving memory of my dear brother, Vol. Bobby McCrudden, 'B' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, killed in action on August 3rd 1972. Always remembered by his sister Barbara, husband Damien, and family.

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In proud memory of my dear brother, Vol. Robert 'Bobby' McCrudden, 'B' Coy., 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, killed in action on August 3rd 1972. Always loved and remembered by his sister Isabelle, husband Chris, and family.

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of my brother, Vol. Bobby McCrudden, Irish Republican Army, who died on active service on August 3rd 1972. "A happy thought, a silent tear, to me, dear Bobby, you're always missed by your sister Rosemary, husband Albert, and niece Lisa."

MCCRUDDEN, Robert. (9th Anniversary). In proud memory of my brother Vol. Bobby McCrudden, Irish Republican Army, who died on active service on August 3rd 1972. "A happy thought, a silent tear, to me, dear Bobby, you're always missed by your sister Rosemary, husband Albert, and niece Lisa."

McWILLIAMS, Paul. (4th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of our brother Flan Paul 'Jason' McWilliams, who was murdered on August 9th 1977. St. Martin pray for him. "God needed a star in heaven, a brilliant star to shine out of this world of sorrow he chose you, dear brother of mine. I think of him at early morn, I think of him at noon, but never once did I think that he would die so soon. I loved my God over all he said and then I loved my land, Oh mother dear, I was true to God, to Ireland and to you, Sleep, Irish soldier sleep." Always remembered by his loving

brothers, 'Crip' ('A' wing, Crumlin Road), and Martin ('C' wing, Crumlin Road).

LIAM, Paul. (4th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of our friend Flan Paul 'Jason' McWilliams, who was murdered on August 9th 1977. Always remembered by Al and Dolores.

PARKER, Ann; CLARKE, Michael. (9th Anniversary). In loving memory of my daughter and her friend Michael, who were killed while on active service duty on August 11th 1972. Always remembered by her loving mother, father and all the Parker family. Also from their friends Eugene Murphy, and John and Patricia Donnelly.

QUINN, Patrick. (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of our dear son Patsy, who was killed in action on August 16th 1973. "Those who think of him today, a little prayer to Jesus say for him." Always remembered by his mother, father, Paula, Gerard and Michael.

QUINN, Patrick. (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of my dear brother, Vol. Patsy Quinn, who was killed in action on August 16th 1973. Always remembered and sadly missed by his sister Jacqueline and brother-in-law All Black, Dundalk.

QUINN, Patrick. (8th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of a dear brother, Vol. Patsy Quinn, who was killed in action on August 16th 1973. Always remembered and sadly missed by his brother Francis, sister Valentine and nephew Patsy, Dundalk.

SIMPSON, Seamus. (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Seamus Simpson, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hEireann, who was killed while on active service duty on August 11th 1972. Thug sé a raib aise go raib a anam. Never forgotten by his friends and comrades in the Belfast Brigade.

TOLAN, Tommy. (4th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of our dear friend Vol. Thomas Tolan, murdered by enemies on July 27th 1977. Mary Queen of the Gael pray for him. Always remembered by Mr. and Mrs. Bryson and family circle.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

BROWNLEE, Beige. (Armagh). Happy birthday, Beige. Love from mammy, daddy and all your sisters, brothers and sisters-in-law. In Belfast and Dublin.

BROWNLEE, Beige. (Armagh). Happy birthday, Beige. Hope to see you soon, to.

BURNS, Arthur. (H-Block). Happy birthday, Arthur. The time will not be long, but never forget me. From Terence, Pauline, Laura, Ellen; Eamon and family; and the Agnew family.

BENEDICT, Benedict. (H-Block). Best wishes on your birthday, Benedict, on August 20th. Victory to you and all your comrades in your fight for political status. From the Bellaghy Prisoners of War Welfare Association.

NORDONNE, Stephen. (Hull). Happy birthday, big brother. From Frederick, Linda, Donna and Gary.

NORDONNE, Stephen. (Hull). Happy birthday, Stephen. Remembered by Sibel, Damien, Tommy, Anne and Margaret and all your friends in Dundalk. From Gary and Maureen.

KELLY, James J. (Portlaoise). Wishing you a very happy birthday, James. With love from wife Ann, daughter Julie, and sons Julian and Jonathan.

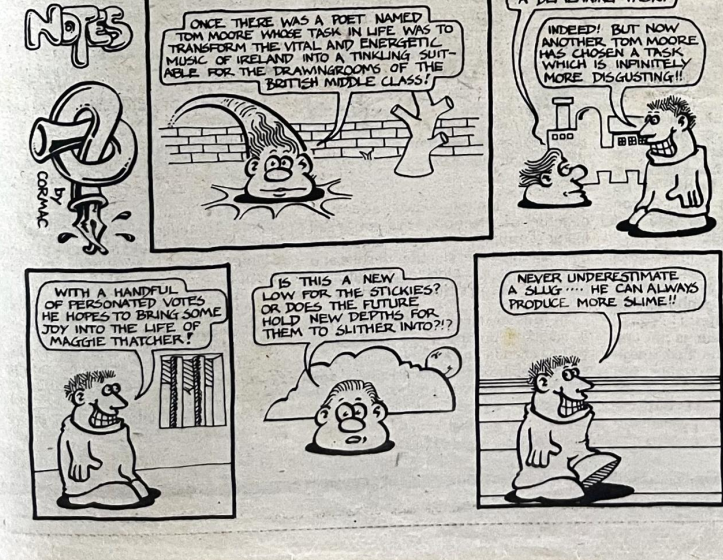
KELLY, James J. (Portlaoise). Very happy birthday, Jimmy. From Amanda; from Susan and family; and from Joe Collins.

WHELAN, Joe. (Portlaoise). Wishing you a very happy birthday, Joe. Remembered and Alan with all our love.

WHELAN, Joe. (Portlaoise). Wishing you a very happy birthday, Joe. Remembered and Alan with all our love.

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WHELAN, Joe. (Portlaoise). Wishing you a very happy birthday, Joe. Remembered and Alan with all our love.



SURPRISE TOTAL OF SIX CANDIDATES IN FERMANAGH AND SOUTH TYRONE BY-ELECTION

Owen Carron

The prisoners' choice

BY KEVIN BURKE

NOMINATIONS for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election closed on Friday 7th August with a surprising total of six candidates in the field for the election next Thursday, August 20th.

As expected, UDR man Major Ken Maginnis represents the Unionist Party, Seamus Close stands for the Alliance Party, of which he is chairman, and Owen Carron goes forward as a proxy-prisoner and is the anti-H-Block/Armagh candidate, the prisoners' choice.

The surprise three are: Martin Patrick Green, who styles himself 'The Peace Lover' and comes from London; Simon Hall-Raleigh, from Norfolk, who is a 'general amnesty' candidate; and Thomas Moore, from Newry, who has moved westwards to contest the seat on behalf of the Sticky 'Republican Clubs The Workers' Party'.

STICKS

The intervention of the last candidate, Thomas Moore, has probably caused the most anger among the nationalist population of the constituency, who see it as an attack on the hunger-strikers and as an effort to underpin the British role in the election, who first of all were responsible for the death of Bobby Sands and then excluded other prisoners from standing.

In the event, the 'Sticks' are unlikely to siphon off any damaging amount of nationalist votes — given the rout of their candidates in the June local elections in the North and are likely to regret rushing in where even the SDLP fear to tread. The fact that they have had to forge at least one of the signatures on their candidate's nomination form has so far been overlooked by the constituency returning officer.

The task undertaken by Owen Carron, in contesting the seat on behalf of the prisoners, is, in many ways, a much heavier one than in the last by-election. He is not a hunger-striker, which in the last election indisputably crystallised support.

He is also faced with a Unionist candidate, who, unlike Harry West last time, commands almost total unionist unity, and there is unlikely to be the large number of spoiled pro-DUP votes which were in evidence last time.

The other candidates in the field also give scope for some nationalist slippage as they are no doubt designed to do. Owen Carron therefore



■ Owen Carron (left) and Sean Sands, brother of the late Bobby Sands, MP, at a press conference in Belfast last Tuesday, to formally launch Owen's campaign to contest the seat left vacant by Bobby's death

will need more votes than Bobby Sands got last time in order to win the seat, on the first-past-the-post system.

FAVOUR

On the other hand, there are several factors in Owen Carron's favour.

First of all, there is the grim reality in this hunger-strike of nine dead hunger-strikers.

There is the gross insult to the nationalist electorate of the British government telling them whom they could not elect — an H-Block prisoner. This attempt by the British to rig the election should win Carron support even from those who did not vote for Bobby Sands.

There is also the fact in Carron's favour that so far the SDLP leadership has not repeated its call of the last by-election for its supporters to boycott or spoil their votes.

And, of course, there is the reassuring history that the Fermanagh and South Tyrone electorate has always backed the strongest nationalist candidate, and this time out the Unionist candidate is particularly

unattractive.

VIGOUR

The campaign on Owen Carron's and the prisoners' behalf in Fermanagh and South Tyrone is being pursued with maximum vigour, with all the political elements who supported Bobby Sands active this time also.

Predictably, harassment of the campaign by the RUC and UDR has been at a constantly high level, surpassing even last time's experience, with an actual UDR major in the race now.

Francie Molloy, Owen Carron's director of elections, has instanced many examples of UDR and RUC men tearing down election posters and attacking or allowing loyalist attacks on Owen Carron's election workers.

In this by-election, Owen Carron is standing on the same platform as Bobby Sands in seeking support at the ballot box for the prisoners' five demands, and is endorsed in his candidacy by the prisoners themselves, the relatives of the dead

hunger-strikers and of the current hunger-strikers.

Owen Carron has pledged that when elected he will spend all his time in the constituency as a full-time working MP, both for the prisoners and in solving everyday problems of his constituents. For this purpose he will be establishing full-time offices in Enniskillen and Dungannon, and promises to be contactable twenty-four hours each day.

In the final analysis the nationalist people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone are being asked to show once again their backing for the prisoners and in particular their unity against Thatcher in the aftermath of nine hunger-strike deaths and the attempt by Thatcher to rig the election.

In the light of all that, the wide field of candidates are unlikely to effect the outcome.

As Owen Carron said on Friday of last week as nominations closed: "I am confident that the people of Fermanagh/South Tyrone are too sophisticated to allow a UDR major to misrepresent them."