

An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS



Sraith Nua 1ml 4 uimhir 9 Deardain Márta 4

Thursday March 4th 1982

(Britain 25p) Price 20p

Armagh jail picket

Sunday 7th March

DUBLIN bus leaves 10.30 a.m. Sunday from the Art Gallery,
Parnell Square. Fare £5.50

BELFAST bus leaves 12.30 p.m. from Dunville Park



● Thousands marched in Belfast last Sunday to mark the first anniversary of 1981's heroic hunger strike which was led by IRA Volunteer Bobby Sands

Heroism and sacrifice

THE anniversary of the hunger strike commenced by Bobby Sands on March 1st last year, which claimed the lives of ten republicans during its gruelling seven-month course, has been marked over the past week both publicly — in the fitting commemoration march and rally in Belfast last Sunday — and privately — in the individual thoughts and prayers of the scores of thousands of nationalist people who supported the hunger-strikers in every imaginable way in a desperate attempt to secure

(continued on next page)

Heroism and sacrifice

(continued from previous page)

the prisoners' demands and to save their lives.

Now is perhaps a suitable moment to pause briefly and remind ourselves of what caused the hunger-strike in the first place, and of what has happened since. And to answer the doubters and the critics, whether well-meaning supporters or implacable enemies of the protesting prisoners, who continue to ask: 'but what did the hunger-strike achieve?'

One year ago no-one could have foreseen what lay ahead, the agonising months of hunger-strike, the almost incredible level of British intransigence, and the callous indifference of the Free State government, the Catholic hierarchy and the SDLP, when Bobby Sands first began to refuse food on March 1st. But the almost inevitable seeds of that hunger-strike had been planted exactly five years earlier — in March 1976 — when the British government implemented its 'criminalisation' policy, aimed at destroying the Republican Movement by first breaking its prisoners.

From that moment on, from the very beginning of the blanket protest, the final dreaded possibility of a hunger-strike loomed as evidence of the political prisoners' grim determination to resist.

DIARY

Their realisation of the effect of their protest on the wider struggle beyond the H-Block walls was clearly articulated by Bobby Sands himself, writing in his prison diary on the first day of his hunger-strike: "I am dying not just to attempt to end the barbarity of H-Block, or to gain the rightful recognition of a political prisoner, but primarily because what is lost in here is lost for the Republic and those wretched oppressed whom I am deeply proud to know as the risen people."

Though Bobby Sands and his comrades did not succeed in wresting all of their five demands from a vengeful British government, they did emphatically and undeniably succeed in defeating the British strategy that sought to criminalise them and their republican comrades-in-arms. That very real victory can never be diminished, nor should it ever be squandered by the failure of others to push their victory to its ultimate conclusion, the establishment of a free, socialist republic.

Those ideals which the ten hunger-strikers epitomised so sharply throughout their ordeal, heroism and sacrifice, are the same ideals which motivate their comrades in the Irish Republican Army and its thousands of nationalist supporters throughout this country. Those are the ideals which will be needed more and more, and in even greater degree, as the struggle for national liberation intensifies.

The welcome size of last Sunday's march in Belfast — confounding those who love to be pessimistic — shows clearly that the nationalist people are not demoralised by the only partial gains in the H-Blocks, nor by recent arrests of republican personnel in the North, but that — on the contrary — they are inspired by those ideals of heroism and sacrifice.

And that they too, whether by marching, whether by holding dumps and sheltering republicans, or whether by taking up arms themselves, are ready to contribute whatever heroism and sacrifice are needed (just like the hunger-strikers) to make sure of our final victory.

THREE SINN FEIN CANDIDATES CONTEST SHANNON TOWN ELECTION

Fighting on local issues

BY DAMIEN O'ROURKE

THREE Sinn Fein candidates are standing in elections for the newly-established Shannon Town Commission which are to be held on Wednesday, March 10th. They are Paddy Byrne, Frank Johnston and Blaise Phelan who have been involved in local politics in the town for several years.

There will be nine seats on the new local authority and the election is also being contested by seven Fianna Fail candidates, five from the Labour Party, four from Fine Gael, two IRSP, one on behalf of People's Democracy and four independents. The total electorate is 4,220.

Since Shannon began to emerge as a major industrial location twenty years ago, the population has grown to around ten thousand people, attracted to the area by the jobs in the Shannon Free Zone, where some one hundred companies now operate with the benefit of financial incentives, tax freedom and non-repayable grants. Significantly there is a large proportion of the population which comes originally from the North, from Belfast in particular.

BOUNDARIES

However, neither the industrial estate nor Shannon airport are included in the boundaries of the new town commission which deprives the local authority of its major revenue source.

In October last year, a plebiscite was held in which the boundaries, set by the Free State Department of the Environment and supported by the three major parties, were put for the approval of the electorate. Sinn Fein campaigned strongly against the proposed boundaries, but they were accepted by 795 votes to 441 — a turnout of 29%. However, part of the Sinn Fein platform in this election is to continue the fight for an extension of the boundaries.

Sinn Fein is also calling for the withdrawal of control of housing from the non-elected Shannon Development to Clare County Council. They also say that housing is presently geared to the economic needs of the industrial estate rather than the social needs of the people and stress the need for more houses to be built.

They are also critical of the severe delays in house repairs and strongly oppose recent rent increases.

Shannon Sinn Fein are also pointing out that the once boom area is now facing an unemployment problem and are seeking a commitment that preference be given to local workers by Shannon industry as well as that all contracts in building and maintenance work should exclusively involve trade union labour. They are also pressing for the establishment of an employment exchange in the town.

HEALTH CENTRE

There has been a long-time demand by Sinn Fein for a full-time ambulance to be based in Shannon and they have extended this to include a call for a health centre to be provided in the town, emphasising in particular the necessity for an ante-natal clinic, with women at present having to travel to Limerick.

In the area of transport, Sinn Fein is highly critical of the public transport system which they say ignores the needs of the town, gearing its timetable to the airport and industrial estate. They put forward proposals for bus-links between the housing areas and the town centre and also float the idea of a rail-link between Shannon and Limerick.

With two-thirds of Shannon's population consisting of young people there is a considerable lack of facilities available for them. Sinn Fein condemns the increase in the school-entry age without the provision of pre-school facilities and are highly critical of the present pre-fabricated classrooms in use at local schools. They defend local teenagers against accusations of under-age drinking, pointing out the desperate need for several centres around the town which could include coffee bars, gymnasiums, snooker tables and so on.

Although the elderly are a very small

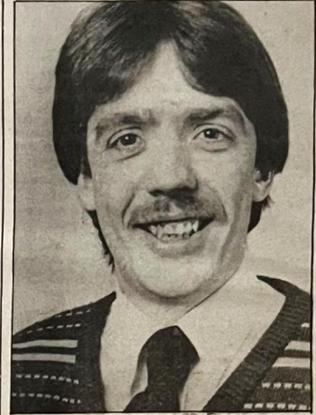


Paddy Byrne

PADDY BYRNE, a twenty-five-year-old married man with three children, has lived in Shannon since 1978, having originally lived in Belfast's New Lodge area. He lives in Cronan Grove.

He works as a fitter in Limerick and is a shop steward in the National Electrical Engineering Trade Union (NEETU).

Involved in local politics since coming to Shannon, he is secretary of the Terence Mac Swiney Sinn Fein cumann and chairman of the Shannon H-Block/Armagh Committee.



Blaise Phelan

BLAISE PHELAN is aged twenty-two and married with one child. He lives at Cronan Park but is from the Drumgeely area of the town where his family lives since moving from Athlone eleven years ago.

He is currently employed as an assembly worker at the Bombardier bus factory and worked previously as a painter and decorator when he was a shop steward in the National Painters and Decorators Union.

An active sportsman, Blaise Phelan is a member of the Wolfe Tones GAA club of which his father is president, he also plays soccer for the local Newtown club.

A Sinn Fein member for the past five years he is presently PRO of the Terence MacSwiney Sinn Fein cumann and represented the organisation on the Shannon Town Alliance.



Frank Johnston

FRANK JOHNSTON is aged thirty-two, married with two children and lives at Finian Park. He is a painter and decorator by trade.

He has lived in Shannon since 1979 and is originally from the St James's area of Belfast. He was interned in Long Kesh from August 1973 to December 1975, during which time he received a nine-month sentence for involvement in an unsuccessful escape attempt. He was arrested again in 1977 and spent fifteen months on remand as a republican prisoner in Crumlin Road and the H-Blocks before the charges against him were dropped.

Frank Johnston is the chairman of Sinn Fein's Terence MacSwiney cumann in Shannon and is a former PRO of the Tradaree and Cluain Airne Tenants Association. He was also a Sinn Fein representative on the Shannon Town Alliance — the precursor of the Town Commission — by which representatives of the political parties in the town met each month with Shannon Development.

proportion of the Shannon population Sinn Fein has already successfully campaigned to get a commitment for older people to be given preference in the allocation of bungalows and ground floor flats. They also stress the need for a general awareness of the needs of the physically disabled including the basic provision of ramps on pavements and in other public places.

INVOLVEMENT

Sinn Fein has also pointed out a wide range of other local services on which action is required including lighting, telephone kiosks, dumping facilities for non-domestic waste, the provision of a town park, and the protection of

sporting club facilities against the encroachment of development.

After seventeen years of political activity in Shannon, including involvement in many local struggles as well as pressing forward the national demand, Sinn Fein has established a significant presence in the town. The Sinn Fein candidates stress that they are under no illusions about the real power of a town commission but say that it can be a forum where the voice of the Shannon people can be raised.

They also state that they will not hesitate to encourage the people of the town to organise themselves militantly so as to be better able to fight for their rights.

WAR NEWS

Lowry escapes justice

THE Lord Chief Justice of the North, Lord Robert Lowry, was almost on the receiving end of some *revolutionary justice* last Tuesday when IRA snipers opened fire on him. In other attacks this week there was a short gun battle between Volunteers and British soldiers on the South Armagh border and a golf club was badly damaged in a bomb attack in Lurgan.

The twenty-minute gun battle took place late on Sunday night, February 28th, between about six IRA Volunteers operating on high ground and a British army foot patrol from the nearby military base at Middletown. Intensive rifle fire was exchanged but no hits were claimed.

LOWRY

The attack on the North's top legal figure ironically took place at the exact same venue as an unsuccessful attack last June on the former British Lord Chancellor and architect of the criminalisation programme, Lord Gardiner, at Queen's University, Belfast.

Last Tuesday, Lowry, who was a British intelligence officer during the war before leaving the army with the rank of major, was arriving at the side entrance of the university's staff common room in College Gardens where he was due to address academics in the Law Department at an unpublicised luncheon. Two cars pulled up in the street: the first carrying a number of armed

bodyguards, the second, a chauffeur-driven, armour-plated Rover, carrying Lowry and more bodyguards. As the sixty-three-year-old Lord Chief Justice emerged from the vehicle and made his way to the building two IRA Volunteers, overlooking the street, opened fire through the window of an unoccupied house to which they had earlier gained entry. The bullets, perhaps marginally deflected by the glass, narrowly missed Lowry, and one of the four shots accidentally struck and slightly wounded Professor Robert Perks who was awaiting Lowry's arrival.

The Volunteers escaped from the scene in a red Toyota which had been earlier commandeered in Andersonstown and was later found abandoned in the Falls area.

Lowry's bodyguards, after some theatrics and a respectable delay, surrounded the by-now empty house, and reinforcements sealed off the university area including all major roads in south, and into west, Belfast.

Only last week the RUC warned



● Queen's University, Belfast, where Lord Chief Justice Lowry (inset) narrowly escaped a sniper attack and the revolutionary justice of the IRA

public figures to be on their guard against possible attack, yet the IRA were able to breach the security surrounding the North's number one judge — who also considers himself a jury. In claiming responsibility for the attack the Belfast Brigade of the IRA said: "Lowry's position as the head of a corrupt and bigoted loyalist judiciary, enforcing the repressive and inhuman legislation of a foreign colonial power in Ireland, made him an inevitable target."

Lowry, who has an unwarranted reputation as an enlightened legal thinker, does no more than sometimes put a gilt edge on a corrupt, black law. Such suavity adds a mystifying sophistication and a great deal of pretension to what is largely an 'executioner's' job.

Lowry has been Chief Justice since 1971 except for a year in 1975-76 when he set aside his law position to chair the Constitutional Convention. At that convention the dominant loyalist groupings produced a report, which they quote to this day, recommend-

ing a return to loyalist rule at Stormont.

REACTION

There was the predictable political reaction to the attack which occurred in the south Belfast constituency two days before the by-election there, caused by the demise of Robert Bradford at the hands of the IRA last November. The DUP candidate, William McCrea, used the attack to endorse his party's strong stance on repression and the plumpish Belfast councillor, David Cook, who is the Alliance party's candidate contrived to link the 'cynical' attack — "it was more than coincidental" — with the by-election.

Taking up this ridiculous theory an editorial in Wednesday's *Irish Times* went further and in wispy language vouched for Lowry's pedigree as if that was exculpation for his present role: "there are still a few Home Rule landmarks on the Protestant landscape. Some will remember the estimable essayist and Home Ruler, Robert Lynd,"

said the *Times* all importantly. "The Lord Chief Justice's mother was a sister of that Robert Lynd."

One person who will never forget the attack is SDLP leader John Hume. He arrived at the university about the time of the shooting, heard the shots and thought that the Lord had called him!

GOLF CLUB

A bomb in a milk churn, weighing close to a 100 lbs, was left outside Lurgan golf clubhouse at Windsor Avenue last Tuesday evening. A number of telephone warnings, including one to the club itself, ensured that the premises were cleared about three-quarters of an hour before the explosion which caused structural damage to the club. Despite the long warning British army bomb disposal experts only arrived on the scene as half of the clubhouse departed. This third attack caused damage running into thousands of pounds, compensation which will have to be paid for by the British exchequer.



● The bombed Lurgan golf club

DIVINE INTERVENTION

BY HILDA McTHOMAS

ECONOMIC gloom, waves of arrests and rumours and leaks from a now totally disconsolate Jim Prior, form the sadly familiar background of another week in the occupied six counties, with a south Belfast by-election as the only note of excitement amidst the desolation.

The SDLP's crucial role in the counter-insurgency strategy of the Brits was illustrated last Tuesday, as it was revealed through the press and the usual 'reliable sources', that Jim Prior's 'rolling devolution' scheme would now definitely have an Irish dimension; that is, that the proposed devolved assembly would be linked in some way to the London-Dublin council by having elected members to that assembly sit on the inter-parliamentary tier of the council.

This was a new departure for the Prior administration which seemed to have shelved the tier system of the council proposed by his predecessor, Humphrey Atkins, in 1981. One of the possible reasons for resuscitating it is the counter-insurgency need to defeat the IRA by making the SDLP relevant. The poor results of anti-imperialist candidates in the Free State election two weeks ago

has made the SDLP feel confident that they would get a renewed mandate as spokesmen for the nationalist community in a future election. They have spent the last few months posturing as defenders of nationalist interests and as upholders of the 'Irish dimension'.

BY-ELECTION

Eagerly awaited by unionist watchers are the results of the south Belfast by-election this Thursday, March 4th. No less than four shades of unionism are fighting for the seat, and are hoping to use the election results to demonstrate that they are entitled to speak for the unionist population. The constituency has always been an Official Unionist stronghold but the new working class estates may tip the scales in favour of the more populist strand of unionism of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). Official Unionist candidate, Reverend Martin Smyth, Grand Master of the Orange Order, is facing Reverend William McCrea, Free Presbyterian, Commander of the Third Force, successful gospel-singer worth thousands of pounds, for the DUP. It would be difficult to find two characters more suited to symbolise all the features of unionism, and the significance of the confrontation has not escaped the public.

High level of participation, if not divine intervention, expected on March 4th!

Will the Kincoora scandal stop the DUP in its irresistible ascension to the position of sole representative of the unionist population? Will Martin Smyth's political weight be enough to re-establish the Official Unionist leadership? As for David Cook, for the Alliance Party, who could be described as a 'social-democratic unionist', he has been claiming that his party would do well out of the division in the unionist camp. A very doubtful claim, if last year's local election results are anything to go by.

Finally, representing the loyalist murder gangs of the UDA, an 'independent Ulster' platform, is John McMichael, who may steal some of the DUP's votes and push Martin Smyth past the post. The other candidates, including the SDLP, are standing for the sake of it, although the SDLP's presence will ensure that Alliance does not get the seat. SDLP candidate Alastair McDonnell has made a few door-to-door calls in the nationalist Markets area, and is counting on the old anti-unionist reflex to claim his mandate and possibly get selected for a future assembly election later in the year.



● Kincoora — the latest development. Roy Garland (above), referred to up to now as Mr. 'X', finally revealed his identity and confirmed that it was he who supplied documented evidence about the sex scandal to Paisley in 1974, but Paisley "didn't want to know" (The Irish Times, 1974)

SPECIAL COURTS AGAIN CIRCUMVENT EXTRADITION BAN

FOUR JAILED

BY DAMIEN O'ROURKE

IN the second successful use of the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act, introduced by the Free State government in 1976 to circumvent the international law ban on extradition for political offences, four more Belfast republicans have been jailed in Dublin for escaping from Crumlin Road jail.

Last Thursday, February 25th, the Dublin Special Criminal Court, having listened to evidence from RUC men and Belfast prison warders, imposed sentences of ten years' penal servitude on Angelo Fusco (26), Paul Magee (34), Michael McKee (24) and Anthony Sloan (27) on charges of escaping from the prison whilst on remand last June.

Two days before Christmas last year, two of the other escapees, Robert Campbell and Michael Ryan, were given similar sentences when they became the first victims of the collaborationist act.

The six men (who are now in Portlaoise jail) along with two others who have so far evaded recapture, Gerry Sloan and Joe Doherty, took part in one of the most daring IRA jail-breaks of the decade on June 10th 1981 when they shot their way to freedom from the high-security Crumlin Road jail in Belfast.

SENTENCED

All of the men, except Michael Ryan, were members of what had been labelled the 'M60 squad', captured after the killing of SAS Captain Herbert Westmacott during a siege on a house on Belfast's Antrim Road in May 1980. Forty-

eight hours after the escape, they were all found guilty in connection with that siege and sentenced by Belfast crown court.

Angelo Fusco, Paul Magee, Robert Campbell and Joe Doherty were given several life sentences for the killing of the SAS captain and the attempted killing of other SAS men. Gerry and Tony Sloan and Michael McKee received sentences of eighteen years, twenty-five years and twenty years respectively for a variety of charges involving possession of an M60 machine gun and its use in attacks on the RUC and British army.

The eighth escapee, Michael Ryan of Ardboe in County Tyrone, had been awaiting trial on charges of killing an RUC man and a UDR soldier.

Eleven days after the escape, Paul 'Dingus' Magee made a dramatic appearance at the Wolfe Tone commemoration in Bodenstown which was also attended by others of the escapees.

COLLABORATION

Since then, however, six of the eight have fallen victim of determined collaboration by the Free State government, designed to display its ever-extending willingness to pursue republicans on behalf of



● Crumlin Road, Belfast — scene of last year's dramatic IRA jail-break

the British.

The Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act, introduced over five years ago, amidst a storm of protest (including loud protests from Fianna Fail) has now, after the dust has settled, taken its place in the statute book as another weapon of repression. Both sets of convictions under the act have passed with little protest, which is a dangerous omen, not only for any hopes of removing this infamous piece of legislation, but also for rallying support against further oppressive measures.

UDA man freed

IN sharp contrast to the imprisonment of the four repub-

lican escapees, the Free State Department of Justice decided on Wednesday 3rd March to free UDA man Frederick Parkinson from Mountjoy prison where he had served less than five years of a twelve-year sentence imposed for fire-bombings in Dublin at Easter 1977.

Credit for securing Parkinson's early release "on humanitarian grounds", was given by the Free State authorities to representations made by the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Official Unionist John Carson.

But a prediction of speedy freedom for Parkinson was made last year following a meeting in Dublin

between the Free State Minister for Justice Jim Mitchell and leading members of the murderous, yet legal, UDA.

In a similar move in September last year, the Coalition government, also "on humanitarian grounds", freed from Mountjoy the two Littlejohn brothers, both self-confessed British agents.

At that time Kenneth Littlejohn had served only eight years of a twenty-year sentence (having escaped in 1974 and remained free for almost a year) and his brother, Keith, (whose escape bid failed) had served nine years of a fifteen-year sentence.

The maximum remission normally allowed for good behaviour in Free State prisons is one quarter of the sentence imposed.

BY HELEN STEVENS

IN LONDON on Saturday, February 27th, 270 delegates, half of them from trade union branches and half from local Labour Party branches, attended a labour movement conference organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland and the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland. There were also 120 observers present.

Inez McCormack, regional officer for the public service union NUPE in the six counties, said it was necessary to go beyond simply stating the need for Irish unity: the main issue was how to achieve it. She said the Protestant community had no legitimate right to block progress. Britain should make them an offer they can't refuse — a major financial subvention plus the assurance that certain rights should be guaranteed. They should be told, 'If you don't accept that, you get nothing.'

She said that in the north of Ireland the trade unions are working in a colonial context which has laid the basis for a division in the working class, and this has caused a paralysis in the trade union movement. She said that if you ignore the discriminatory pattern of employment, then you ignore the reality that faces young people in Belfast and you are unable to develop policies that will achieve unity. She said she had no sympathy with the view that if you concentrate on economic and social issues you can bring the working class together. 'You cannot resolve the divisions solely on an economic level.'

Matt Merrigan, district secretary of the ATGWU (the Irish section of the British TGWU), said that to remove sectarianism the national question must be resolved. The British Labour Party, if and when it returned to government, should put forward concrete legislative steps to set up a constituent assembly in Ireland after making a declaration of

Ireland discussed



● Part of the large audience of trade unionists and party political activists who attended last weekend's conference held in London

intent to withdraw. All groups in Ireland should come together to decide the constitution.

DEFEAT

Labour Euro-MP Richard Balf, who is currently campaigning with Neil Blaney at Strasbourg for the banning of plastic bullets, said that the British government had suffered a considerable diplomatic defeat in Europe. Overseas, British tactics and methods in Ireland were not considered acceptable. He stressed that there was no prospect of a peaceful solution until Britain withdrew.

Cive Soley MP, a Labour Party spokesman on Ireland said that policies were needed to implement the Labour Party's commitment to Irish unity by consent. He obliquely raised the spectre of the 'bloodbath theory', suggesting that if unionist consent was not achieved, they would resort to violence. He was heckled intermittently throughout his speech, especially when he blamed 'paramilitaries' for the 'terrifying growth of the police state', and when he included among his proposals 'an all-Ireland court to deal with paramilitary offences'.



● Inez McCormack, NUPE: 'Britain should make them (the unionists) an offer they can't refuse'

The conference brought together for the first time most sections of the withdrawal movement. A leading Communist Party member, speaking from the floor, stressed, 'There is more that unites us than divides us.' But antagonisms were still evident, particularly over the old question of whether supporting the armed struggle should be a priority. The dominant sentiment was that, in Britain, such a position would get little support, and that it is far more constructive to concentrate on putting across the basic arguments for British withdrawal.

An Phoblacht - cuimhneachan caoi

BAINÉADH stad asam an tseachtain seo agus an t-eagrán seo den nuachtán á chur le chéile againn. Nuair d'fhéachas ar na fógraí báis chonaic mé go raibh Micheál Ó Mongáin in ndiaidh bás d'fháil. Ní raibh an mhór aithne agam ar Micheál ach bhuaileas leis ó am go chéile ag crunniú Chomhairle Chúige Laidhean agus ag Ard Fheisanna.

Bhí an Ghaeilge go líofa ag a labhairt. Bhí sé in measc an mion-Micheál agus ní raibh aon léisce air i lach, sin de Phoblachtaigh, a bhí

gníomhach ar son na Gaeilge. Caillúint mhór a bheidh ann dúinn go léir atá ag oibriú ar son na Gaeilge.

Thosaigh sin ag smaoineamh siar mé ar na Poblachtaigh go léir a fuair bás ó thosaigh an feachtas seo. Seachtain in ndiaidh seachtaine tá siad ag fáil bháis agus

gan Poblacht na hÉireann bunaithe go fóill.

Cúireann sin díomá orm ar shí. Tá daoine ag fáil bháis a chait a saoil lomláin ag oibriú ar son na Poblachta agus anois agus muid ar tháirseach na Poblachta faighann siad bás. Tá súil againn ná fada eile a bheidh muid ag fanacht go

dú go mbuid an Phoblacht bunaithe againn, agus beidh sé sin mar chuideamhachán chaoi dá n-íobartáil uiligh.

Solas na bhFiaitheas duit a Míchíl agus do na Poblachtaigh uilig a fuair bás ó thosaigh an feachtas seo.

MORE ELECTION PLEDGES DROPPED AS POLITICIANS VIE FOR POWER

Coalition turn to split

BY KEVIN BURKE

AFTER the split in Fianna Fail had been papered up once again, with the anti-Haughey element temporarily routed at the parliamentary party meeting last Thursday, February 26th, it was the turn this week of the splits in the Coalition to take the centre of the stage.

With less than a week to go before the crucial Leinster House vote on Tuesday, March 9th, which will decide the next twenty-six county government, the sound of Coalition principles hitting the rubbish-chute grows louder as the fateful day draws near.

It is a measure of the level of contempt with which Free State politicians view their electorate that Fine Gael are now almost certain to perform yet another U-turn in an attempt to hold on to office.

In June 1981, the Fine Gael/Labour Coalition came to power on a series of election promises which included reducing a variety of taxes, providing a range of benefits and not increasing other specified taxes. The promises were Fine Gael ones. Labour, having fought that election on a totally contrary platform, to no-one's surprise abandoned their policies in exchange for the delights of power.

BUDGET

The Coalition government then went ahead, in the next six months in office, not only to break all these election promises but to do, in most cases, the exact opposite. This culminated in January in the most punitive budget ever attempted by a Free State government.

When it fell on this budget, the Coalition fought this latest election on a 'principled honesty' platform which insisted that the most distasteful parts of the budget — such measures as VAT on clothes and shoes and the removal and reduction of food subsidies — could only be altered at the cost of total economic bankruptcy.

Now, faced with another hung parliament



● Pro-coalition Labour Party leader Michael O'Leary and anti-coalition Labour Party chairman Michael D. Higgins took part in a party administrative council meeting on Wednesday which endorsed yet another inevitable bid for power in coalition

and the necessity of winning the support of the three Sticky Workers Party deputies and the two independents, Tony Gregory and Jim Kemmy — to whom those particular budget proposals are political anathema — Fine Gael is apparently prepared to alter its budget proposals, which less than a fortnight ago were sacrosanct.

So far in all of this the Labour Party has followed its usual transparently unprincipled strategy, although under strong pressure within from some of its more tender consciences.

The problem which that party faces is two-fold. Firstly, and most importantly for the majority of its Leinster House deputies, it is attempting to hold on to the sweet reins of power. Secondly, it has to try and ensure that its electoral position is not wiped out by a push from the left in the form of the Sticky SFWP and the

socialist independents.

ANTI-COALITIONISTS

Already, there is strong evidence that the anti-coalitionists in the Labour Party membership, under the leadership of its chairman Michael D. Higgins, the deputy for Galway West, are getting very close to a majority after the experience of the latest term in coalition.

Labour Party leader Michael O'Leary's strategy to avoid the threat that this poses has been to put off, if at all possible, a special delegate conference on the question of entering a new coalition such as the one held last June.

To this end, on Tuesday this week, March 3rd, the parliamentary Labour Party announced what is virtually a split in the Coalition and washed its hands of the budget, in defence of which it fought the election.

O'Leary then announced that the price of support for a new government with Fine Gael was the removal of the unpalatable VAT and food subsidy proposals, the introduction of capital taxes, an additional bank levy, and more funds for its precious National Development Corporation.

With this call under his belt he went to meet the party's administrative council on Wednesday, which in theory has the power to either call a special delegate conference or endorse a Coalition package itself. So far the council has been marginally anti-coalition, but is not anxious to take a humiliation at a special delegate conference which could still, with its preponderance of conservative rural delegates, plump for coalition.

MERGER

This sudden concern by the Labour Party also relates to the second part of its problem. It cannot — if a new Coalition comes into government with the support of the three SFWP members plus Tony Gregory and Jim Kemmy — allow those five to take the credit for the watering down of Fine Gael's budget. To let this impression harden without trying to steal some of the kudos, would mean an even further merger, in the voter's mind, of the Labour Party into Fine Gael, with the consequent disastrous outcome at the polls.

Ironically, Labour's need to take this position as the 'leaders of the left' — a position they much prefer to take in government rather than opposition — automatically pushes the five independents towards Fianna Fail, where they can claim exclusive credit for the concessions they gain, rather than being submerged by claims from the Labour Party.

The attraction in voting Fianna Fail into power for Tony Gregory, whose single vote will be enough on March 9th, is therefore even more enhanced and therefore even more likely.

Meanwhile, the horse-trading for power is certain to continue almost to the crucial hour next Tuesday, which makes several of those days — which we are told are a long time in politics — yet to pass.

APPEAL OPENS AGAINST HIGH COURT RULING ON SECTION 31

RTE ban in Dublin supreme court

BY KEVIN BURKE

THE censorship of republican spokespersons on radio and television in the twenty-six counties was once again in the news this week as the hearing began in the Dublin Supreme Court on Tuesday, March 2nd, of an appeal by the Free State government against a decision by the High Court that the legislation enabling the ban was unconstitutional.

The Supreme Court hearing was expected to take a number of days.

The Dublin High Court decision in question was made on Tuesday, February 16th, two days before the twenty-six county general election which was contested by seven Sinn Fein candidates, and it quashed a ban imposed by the Coalition Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Patrick Cooney, on party political broadcasts by Sinn Fein.

On that occasion, agreeing to an application by the Sinn Fein candidate in Longford/Westmeath, Sean Lynch, Mr. Justice O'Hanlon held that Section 31, subsection 1 of the Broadcasting Authority Act 1980 (as amended by Section 16 of the Broadcasting Authority

(Amendment) Act 1976) was unconstitutional. He therefore decided that the order extending the existing Section 31 ban on Sinn Fein to apply also to party political broadcasts was void.

The relevant section states: "Where the Minister is of the opinion that the broadcasting of a particular matter or any matter of a particular class would be likely to promote, or incite to, crime or would tend to undermine the authority of the State, he may by order direct the (RTE) Authority to refrain from broadcasting the matter or any matter of the particular class, and the Authority shall comply with the order".

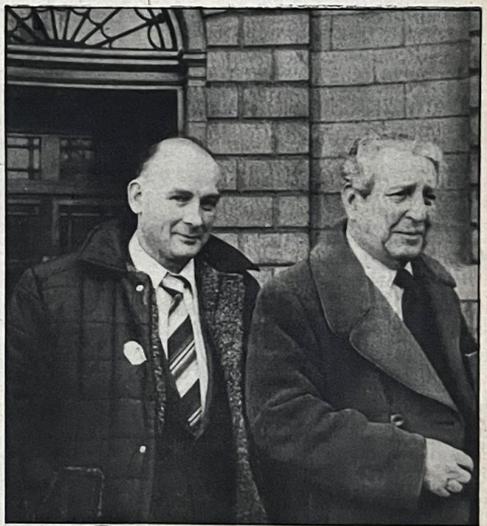
Mr. Justice O'Hanlon's opinion was that the section is unconsti-

titutional because it appears "to contain insufficient safeguards for the constitutional guarantee of the right of freedom of expression of opinion with particular reference to the freedom of the press, radio and now television from executive control".

However, Mr. Justice O'Hanlon was careful to point out that he saw ample grounds to justify the state in interfering with, and precluding access to, the state's radio and television by Sinn Fein, as long as the Free State framed their enabling legislation in a constitutional manner.

The High Court postponed the quashing of the ban for twenty-four hours to allow an appeal by the Free State government to the Supreme Court. The following day that court set a date for the appeal hearing as March 2nd, but did not further suspend the quashing of the ban.

So, the technical legal position on the eve of the election was that the ban on Sinn Fein's party political broadcast was void and therefore RTE had no authority



● Sinn Fein county councillor Sean Lynch and his solicitor Con Lahana, leaving the Dublin High Court after last month's decision that the RTE ban on Sinn Fein is unconstitutional

to refuse them television time. However, RTE did refuse to allow such a broadcast, relying on a cryptic remark by the Free State Chief Justice, Mr. Justice O'Higgins, that "the position ap-

peared to be that there was a decision affecting Section 31 which was now the subject of an appeal and that if the appeal succeeded it would mean that the ministerial order was valid at all times.

Thousands recall hunger-strike

BY MAEVE ARMSTRONG

LAST Sunday, February 28th, a crowd of several thousand people gathered in Belfast's Dunville Park to march to the Busy Bee in Andersonstown, marking the first anniversary of the second H-Block hunger-strike. Little did we know on that historic day one year ago that ten young men were about to lose their lives at the bloody hands of Maggie Thatcher. Nor indeed did anyone realise the far-reaching effects their deaths would have on world opinion; the prisoners were recognised as political prisoners and the Irish struggle recognised as a war of national liberation.

Apart from many banners from the six counties, banners from Mayo, Dublin, Sligo, Cavan/Monaghan and Tipperary were present as well as trade union groups, such as banners carried by workers from De Lorean and the Royal Victoria Hospital. Many other banners were carried by several GAA clubs, Sinn Fein and PD. But perhaps the most

noticeable participants in the swelling crowd was the number of banners carried by the youth who worked unceasingly and willingly gave their all in an attempt to prevent deaths in the H-Blocks.

As the crowd made its way up the Falls Road — which was lined with several hundred spectators — the bright sunshine evoked high spirits among the marchers many of whom were reminis-

ing on events during the hunger-strike and voicing their disgust at Britain's inflexibility on the prison issue.

EMOTIVE

At the Busy Bee, the meeting was chaired by Maura McCrory of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee and chairperson of Belfast H-Block/Armagh Committee. The first speaker to address the crowd was Mrs. Margaret Doherty, mother of hunger-striker Kieran Doherty. In an emotive speech she thanked all those who had given their support during the hunger-strike and who had worked so hard on the prisoners' behalf. In particular she thanked the people of Cavan/Monaghan whom she said had 'taken Kieran to their hearts'. She went on: "I also ask you not to forget the women in Armagh and the men in Long Kesh most of whom went into prison at seventeen and who still have twenty and thirty years to do."

Although the hunger-strike ended

in October of last year, almost five months have expired during which time practically nothing has been done by the Brits or the prison administrations to improve conditions. In fact, in a statement read out by Tom Kelly, an ex-prisoner recently released after five-and-a-half years in the H-Blocks, little effort has been made to introduce any of the promised reforms. The prisoners thanked those who had given them their support but cautioned them that they might need their help in the future and therefore to remain vigilant. The same sentiments were expressed in a statement from the women in Armagh which was read by ex-prisoner Christine McAuley.

Several other speakers took the platform including Jim Daly, of the IRSP, whose wife, Miriam (a prominent H-Block activist) was assassinated last year; Chris McKenna, Youth against H-Block and Armagh; Richard McAuley, Belfast Sinn Fein; and Michael Doherty, a trade unionist from

the Royal Victoria Hospital.

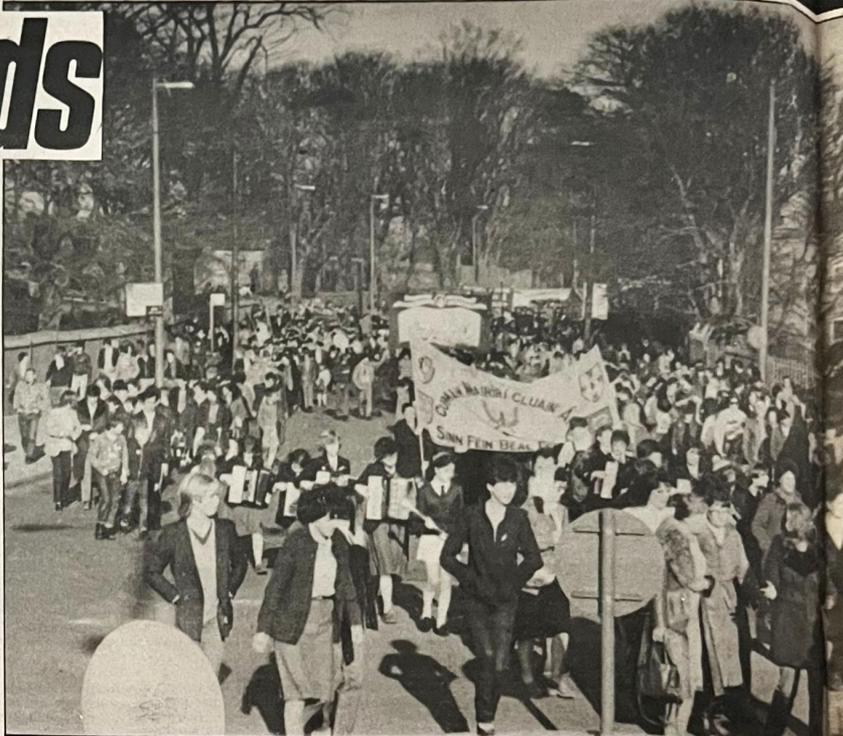
RE-ORGANISE

A fiery and emotive speech given by Chris McKenna was greeted by enthusiastic applause especially by the hundreds of youths who bedecked the roof of the Busy Bee. Calling on the Irish youth to re-organise he said: "As we grow up as youth, we see people incarcerated in the filthy holes of British jails; we've seen too often the murder, hate, imprisonment of our people. And we say to Maggie Thatcher today, 'We will not be put down!' Like the poster says: 'She may kill the revolutionary but never the revolution'. We have to stay out on the streets, we have to keep on marching. We can't afford to sit back and let the Brits overcome us. We know there's a war in this country and we will show Prior and Thatcher and all the other British lackies that we, the Irish people and the Irish youth, will never be put down!"

In honour of the ten hunger-strikers each of their read out by Maura McCrory crowd stood for a minute each one no doubt reflecting on the courage and sacrifice of the strikers.

REMEMBER

Richard McAuley of Belfast reminded the demonstrators of the five demands which could have been broken, and demands successfully against the treacherous stand of the political parties, the Catholic Church and the SDLP leadership. He refused, while crying out about the hunger-strikers, to confront Thatcher. He spoke honourably and honestly of



MRS. MARGARET DOHERTY mother of hunger-striker K



TOM KELLY ex-H-Block prisoner

MALA POIST

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

Stand beside us



A chara, For over four years, I have been on the protest for our basic rights as political prisoners and during this time I have witnessed torture and endurance. Endurance which has bound us in the knowledge that we are right. Endurance which, when we have been at our lowest ebb, has steered us on the road to recovery and given us the ability to continue to fight. A fight which is against this inhuman system, the fight which rages in us all — the instinct for survival and for the preservation of one's sanity amidst this upheaval of insanity.

During the first two years of protest, we were locked up for twenty-one hours per day and were denied parcels, weekly visits, association, recreational and educational facilities, plus severe loss of remission. We were even then subjected to both physical and verbal abuse from male and female screws although not on the scale I witnessed in 1980 when we were forced on the no-wash protest.

For one hellish year we lived in our own excreta and urine, with all the added complications of monthly menstruations plus the almost daily assaults on us by screws. The health hazard we faced was enormous and even today I often wonder if any future problems, either physical or mental, will result from that year of what can only be described as 'hell'.

When the first hunger-strike started, three women in here were at it. Words are inadequate to describe the worry and sorrow at that time. We were, as always, united as one but even more so with the prospect of our comrades dying.

When the hunger-strike ended, relief and joy were felt by us all. We thought the British had agreed to an honourable settlement. Later on, we learnt that they had done so but reneged on the agreement reached. An old friend of mine once said: 'Never trust the British. They are like us, slippery b...'. I always believed that, but never more so than on the day we found out about the Brits' double dealing.

Today we are left with ten brave young Irishmen dead. Their blood is solely on the hands of the British government. An honourable settlement is easily attainable, and always was so, if the British are flexible on the situation.

During the time when our comrades were on hunger-strike, we were deeply concerned and when the first hunger-striker, Bobby Sands, died we were stirred with grief. As more of our comrades died, we were consumed with an anger that went through our very bones. So much suffering and anguish.

We remember all these men with a burning pride and we vow to continue the struggle. I'm sitting in my cell writing this and I feel as if I've said

nothing. Sometimes I find words so inadequate to express the deep physical and emotional upheavals we women have come through during these past five years. I can only hope that I have given you some insight into our world. It is hard to get even a glimpse of hearts and minds in this cold society for everyone is wary of motives, we especially because of what society has put us through.

I, as an individual, feel privileged that I have spent my years in jail alongside these women, from whom I have learnt so much and when I think of my comrades who gave their lives so unselfishly for each one of us and for their country, I feel both humble and proud.

I ask you women to stand beside us in our just fight, in our united awareness of the injustices of this system, a system which has ravaged us unmercifully. We will act as a battering ram against it.

This letter cannot even touch on the personal grief, the sorrow and the very real problems which we women here have faced and still face. We face it all, with our hearts and minds turned to eventual freedom, not only freedom for ourselves but freedom for our country.

Republican protesting POW, 'A' Wing, Armagh Jail.

Jobs not YOPs!

Dear sir, We read Geraldine Heggarty's piece about YOP schemes in Derry. We are an unemployed group of young people in Derry who have had experience of such schemes. We think Geraldine wrote about some people's ideas of the scheme, but the reality is different. The article paints a nice picture of some of the schemes, and we admit that some of the things she says are true.

We are given the opportunity to simple work, we learn a bit of this and a bit of that. We enjoy doing this, depending on the work and the people we work with. We also like the recreational side of the scheme,

A chara, The results are in! There is no disguising the facts. This is a disappointing result for us and it provides a warning against any complacency or euphoria resulting from the election performance last year. At the same time there are legitimate reasons why we could have expected to do badly in this election and we are entitled to take heart from them.

The votes cast for Sinn Féin in this election were unequivocally for the Republican Movement and its policies and not the result of a coalition campaigning to save the lives of our prisoners. Inevitably, from this alone, it was clear that our vote was going to drop. We were illegally denied party political broadcasts. The election took place in circumstances which forced people to concern themselves with the question of who was going to govern. On the anti-Fine Gael side, Fianna Fail was able to rely on the votes of many who in different circumstances would have voted republican.

But despite all this our vote, even in our strongest areas, was well below the quota and in some places was in the region of 1,000. We can only conclude from this that we have failed to present ourselves to the people of the twenty-six counties as offering anything relevant to them.

In the six counties the real benefits in peace and justice which obviously flow from a British withdrawal are enough to give us widespread support, but in the South this in itself can be of little more than symbolic and emotional importance to all but a minority facing the terrible problems of unemployment, runaway inflation and excessive taxation on the basic necessities of life. We have not yet managed to break out of the crude 'Brits Out' image and yet, if we are to gain the initiative and leadership of all the Irish people, our



YOP schemes may help unemployed youth to 'pass their time' but at the end of the course it's back to the dole queue

the mountaineering and residential weeks, the seminars, and we make friends and learn about each other. It's not much different from school except that the teachers are more friendly. Those of us who were in the Workshop did not find it much different from Youthways or the Training Centre, except that the Workshop lasts longer and we could doss around if we wanted to.

Most of us went into the schemes for money (£23.50 is a bit better than the dole), except that you have the name of working and people expect you to have more money to flash around. Some of us had hopes that we would learn something which we could use maybe to get us a job when the scheme finished. But we didn't learn enough and anyhow there is no work.

The people who run the schemes have grand ideas and are always talking about them

ELECTIONS



James McEwain during the recent Free State election in which his son, Seamus, stood as a prisoner candidate

Movement has to show clearly what the new Ireland will offer them — North and South.

It is no good complaining that we are unjustly excluded from the media although it is absolutely correct to do our best to force the establishment to respect our rights and grant us the same facilities as everyone else. But let us remember, we are revolutionaries — we do pose a real threat to the gommeen men of the Irish establishment (Fianna Fail and Fine Gael) and our democratic socialist reputation will drive them into the sea along with the Brits. Given this we are bound to face repression and discrimination and we can overcome them.

We should build up our newspaper 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' by pushing up its circulation and improving its news coverage and presentation. It might be worth considering the inclusion of regional supplements to improve its local coverage without putting an exceptional strain on what is necessarily a small paper. The supplements, as integral parts of the paper, would help train a local editorial and journalistic team and thereby improve not just local propaganda

but the general content of our paper when local stories become national. The great advantage would be the opportunity to place our local and regional campaigns within the context of the whole national struggle against imperialism.

We must begin a concerted drive to expand our campaign in several target areas initially. Teams of candidates for local and national elections should be chosen as soon as possible and given training and experience in the political skills which will be necessary if we are to extend our influence. An immediate target should be set of building up sufficient support in Louth, Sligo/Leitrim and Cavan/Monaghan to allow us to extend our council presence and to capture at least one or two Leitrim House seats. The advice centre built up during the H-Block campaigns are an essential and commendable basis for this work.

Our medium-term aim ought to be the position where every person in the country is given a chance to register support for the Republican Movement in an election. To this end we ought to advance to the position where we are able to stand at least one candidate in every constituency.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that 1918 ought to be enough to demonstrate that we can never achieve freedom through the ballot box, but if we are unable to persuade Irish people to vote for us then we do not have enough support to win by the uncompromising struggle on all fronts which will be required. It is time that Sinn Féin began to plan our strategy for the next election which could again catch us by surprise. We have to show the same dedication and understanding of our tasks as has been shown by our comrades in the IRA. Vencere mos UPI!

Gerry MacLoughlainn, Irish republican POW, Maidstone, England.

dole and there's no way these schemes give us any preparation for getting lifted, which is what happens to most of us, sooner or later.

The schemes create jobs alright for workers and skilled people, and we think it is dishonest for people to pretend that they give any hope to us for work in the future. The whole thing is just cheap labour and we are the cheap labourers.

Five Derry Youths.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Name withheld by request.

Imperialism

A chara, In a letter to this paper (issue dated December 31st), Katerina from Chester explained the continued British occupation in Ireland and why, despite not getting any monetary benefit since being opposed by an armed force, this imperialism continues.

According to Katerina's analysis, Britain maintains its grip on the North purely as an example to other liberation forces in its territory that the British state cannot be defeated by 'an armed insurgent force of ordinary people'. This analysis, I believe, is totally wrong.

While it may be true to say that Britain no longer receives any benefit from the North, it now engages in a war against the liberation forces in an attempt to win back these 'bygone' benefits, not to maintain a lost situation for the sole purpose of impressing its strength on its other enemies. The British intend, to defeat the IRA

by a military campaign and by a social campaign of reducing republican support.

So while the British government might like to boast of its victory over the Irish liberation forces, the reason for its grip on the six counties is for its real possibility of re-asserting its benefits from this colony.

Peadar Mac an Fhailigh, Lios Dubh, Caislean n' Bharraigh, Co. Mhaigh Eo.



Polish/Irish parallel

Dear editor, In reply to K. Tierney's 'Polish/Irish parallel' (AP/RN January 21st) I would like to say that there seems to be some similarities and differences that the author has left out.

All true democratic-minded people applaud the efforts of the Polish Solidarity union. But, let us establish the true intentions of their movement.

The rank and file, along with the leaders of the union, have constantly stated their support for the socialist economic system. They want to change the administration (political system) of that economy. They know that a socialist economy is to be controlled by the workers and the peasants, not military generals and their friends (the bureaucrats). This would set up a true socialist economic and political system. Never has Solidarity expressed a wish to have the 'freedom' of having their mines and factories owned by a blood-thirsty capitalist.

Likewise, the republican/nationalist population of Ireland realise that they cannot trust their future to the national bourgeoisie of Ireland. We see the disastrous effect of this emanating from Dublin, and from the SDLP collaborators in the North. As Sinn Féin works to raise the political consciousness of the Irish workers the parallel between the Solidarity union movement and the Republican Movement, towards a democratic socialist republic, will become more numerous and acute.

As Marx once said: 'Workers of the world, unite!' He did not mention generals. Faron E. McGraw, Avendale, LA, USA.

Thanks

A chara, I would like to express my thanks to all those people who gave me such excellent assistance during the recent Free State election campaign. To everyone who gave their money, materials, cars, and so much of their time gabhann mo bhfuíochas ó chroí libh go léir.

Special thanks to Paddy Boiger, my election agent. Christy Burke, Dublin North-Central Community Officer, Sinn Féin, 5 Bleasington Street, Dublin 7.

Turkish delights

Burke's at the back
BY KEVIN BURKE

SO Jack Lynch did not stand idly by in the recent push to overthrow his old enemy Charles Haughey. Not only was he deeply involved in the plot with his protegee and near-neighbour in Rathgar, Des O'Malley, but also lent him his personal press officer, Gerry O'Mahony.

After the farce flopped, Lynch's bitterness overflowed into a public expression of his belief that O'Malley should still replace Haughey. But it was yet another failure for the hurler who won't stay on the ditch.

When it was all over, Lynch flew out on a three-week visit to Turkey fully paid for by an organisation calling itself the Grand Order of European Tour Operators.

Turkey is currently ruled by a military dictatorship which seized power by a coup in 1980. Some twenty-five thousand people are held in military prisons there on political charges and even as Lynch was on his way, twenty-two of the country's leading left-wing professors, doctors, lawyers and journalists were seized in night-time swoops on their homes.

Also on trial in Turkey is the former Socialist Democrat prime minister Bulent Ecevit.

What on earth is Jack Lynch's fact-finding tour aimed at? Can it be that he has not finished with Charles Haughey yet?

★★★

In a bizarre religious twist to the United States' apocalyptic rush towards nuclear Armageddon, the US Navy has named one of its new nuclear-armed fast attack submarines 'Copus Christi' — the body of Christ.

Groups of Christians in Washington and in Dublin have made strong condemnations of the choice of name and have urged other Christians to "protest at this blasphemery".

★★★

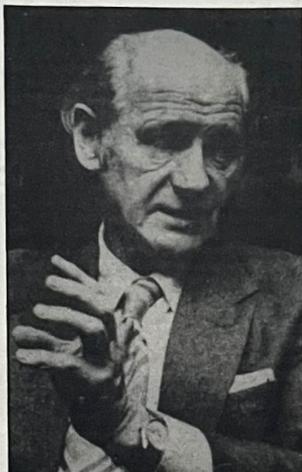
The Free State, it was revealed last week, is top of at least one of the EEC's comparative tables.

There are proportionately more people living in poverty in Ireland than in any other EEC state. According to official statistics, 172,000 households in the twenty-six counties, or 23% of the total, are below the poverty line.

And these statistics are apparently many years out of date, not taking into account the effects of the current economic slump and dramatic increase in unemployment levels.

★★★

Some people are never satisfied. The



● JACK LYNCH, having been involved in the abortive coup against his old adversary Charles Haughey, has gone on a three-week tour of Turkey, which is ruled by a military dictatorship, and where the former prime minister is currently standing trial.

Federated Union of Employers (FUE) have acknowledged that the level of wage settlements in the twenty-six counties for this year, are already an average of 7% behind the rise in the cost of living so far. The further boost to inflation rates by the delayed budget will leave workers even further behind.

But the FUE want a total wage freeze. And they are also continuing their campaign to have the legal minimum wage system, which covers 100,000 of the lowest paid workers, completely set aside so that these wages can be reduced.

★★★

Meanwhile, some of the highest-paid salary-earners in the twenty-six counties are to receive special increases of between £1,000 and £3,000 a year. The rises apply to top civil servants, including prison governors who get an extra £2,400, and in addition to the increase that they will also receive as part of the general pay increase already negotiated throughout the state sector.

★★★

I have been keeping an interest in one

Cornelius Condon who has been appearing occasionally in the Dublin district court to be further remanded on bail on charges of inflicting bodily harm. For some reason press reports have been very coy about revealing Condon's occupation.

In fact he is a garda, and the charges relate to an assault, leading to hospitalisation, of a man named William Travers at Crumlin garda station last August.

The next court appearance by Garda Cornelius Condon will be on Monday 22nd March.

★★★

It was revealed at a trial in the Belfast high court last week that three RUC Special Branchmen known to be members of the illegal Ulster Volunteer Force are still on duty.

In the trial of three Portadown UVF men, the defence lawyer revealed that a UVF member turned informer, Clifford McKeown, had not only fingered his clients but that twenty-four others involved in UVF activities in County Armagh had been arrested as well.

However, three RUC Branchmen also named as being involved in at least one murder, two attempted murders and fourteen armed robberies, have remained untouched. The RUC men are also known to have tipped off the UVF about McKeown's activities as an informer. Just another few 'bad apples' of course.

★★★

A County Down reader informs me that last month's bombing of the Crown Hotel in Warrenpoint has seriously inconvenienced local RUC men for whom it was a favourite watering-hole. In fact so popular was it that the local Special Branchmen held their annual dinner there last Christmas.

★★★

In the Westminster House of Commons on Monday, Northern junior minister John Patten moved a supplementary estimate of £43.3 million to the British cost of staying in the North. Included in it was an extra half million pounds for repair damage caused by riots during the hunger-strike.

"That £500,000," Patten plaintively explained, "stands as a kind of token, a surrogate, for all the millions and millions of pounds that have failed to come to the province because inward investment has been deflated by the image of the province."

This latest supplementary figure brings the total provision for 1981-82 by the British exchequer to remain in the North to £2,388 million. And that figure does not include the cost of keeping the British army there, which is provided through the defence department estimates.

Families presented

A VERY special presentation was held in the Felons' Club, Belfast, on Monday night last, the first anniversary of the commencement of the second hunger-strike. Beautifully made and finely engraved Celtic crosses, painstakingly carved in the cages of Long Kesh during the past eight months, were presented to each of the nine families who attended. Each cross carries a small metal plaque inscribed with a dedication to each individual hunger-striker.

The presentation was organised by the Irish Republican Prisoners' Welfare Committee and three recently released prisoners, Sean Stewart from Newry, Kevin McGettigan from Derry and Geraldine Crawford from Belfast, were there to individually present crosses to each family. Geraldine Crawford also read out a message from the republican political prisoners in Armagh, which said: "Every one of your sons holds a special place in our hearts and the sheer courage



● The hunger-striker's families with their presentation Long Kesh crosses

which they all showed gives us inspiration and the strength to carry on. Their inspiration gives us the courage to move forward with strides of purpose and determination, while your strength as families supporting your sons remains a major source of encouragement."

Michael McCreesh on behalf of all the families, thanked the Irish Republican

Welfare and Felons' Club committees and the men in the cages for their thoughtful consideration. A special message to the families from the republican political prisoners in the cages was printed inside the elaborately produced invitations. It read: "We salute you, the unselfish families of our ten illustrious comrades, who witnessed daily the determination

and resolve of these unyielding martyrs. In you, who suffered personal agony and torment, we recognise the true and unselfish people of Ireland who gave of their own so that others might not suffer. It was you, your loyal families, who were in their thoughts as they bravely endured the long days and nights in their lonely prison cells.

WHAT'S ON

BALLAD SESSION
Music by 'Phoenix'
8 p.m. Friday 5th March
No. 5 Club
5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN
Admission: £1 members,
£1.50 non-members

IRISH LANGUAGE CLASSES
All welcome
7.30 p.m. every Saturday
commencing 6th March
5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION
"Bin-lids and barricades"
12 noon Saturday 6th March
Junior Common Room
Trinity College
DUBLIN

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION
1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday 6th March
Felons Club
ANDERSONSTOWN
Belfast

SOCIAL
Traditional & folk music
8 p.m. Saturday 6th March
Midland Hotel
Upper Dominic Street
DUBLIN
Admission: £1

SOCIAL
8 p.m. Saturday 7th March
The Crescent
ST. JAMES'S
Belfast

MEMORIAL UNVEILING
In honour of IRA Volunteer Johnny Tadhg O'Sullivan who was killed during the Civil War.
Sunday 7th March
Assemble: 3 p.m.
Caitiana Baiters bar
Gleesk
KELLS
Co. Kerry

FAREWELL BALLAD SESSION
Music by 'Phoenix'
Sunday 7th March
Kevin Barry Club
44 Parnell Square
DUBLIN
Admission: £1
(Doors close 9.30 p.m. sharp)

DARTS COMPETITION
Monday 8th March
No. 5 Club
5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN
(Closing date for entries:
Saturday 6th March)

BALLAD SESSION
Music by 'Phoenix', Gerry Crilly and Margaret Kelly
Monday 8th March
Carnelot Hotel
Malahide Road
DUBLIN
Admission: £1.50

NATIONAL H-BLOCK/ARMAGH CONFERENCE
11 a.m. Sunday 14th March
West County Hotel
Chapelizod
DUBLIN

BALLAD CONCERT
Music by 'Phoenix'
8.30 - 11.30 p.m. Tuesday 16th March
Spa Hotel
LUCAN
Co. Dublin

PRESENTATION TO CHARLIE McGLADE & TONY RUANE
Music by 'The Dublin City Ramblers'
8 p.m. Thursday 18th March
Carolan Room
The Embankment
TALLAGHT
Co. Dublin
Admission: £2
Organized by the Sinn Féin National Finance Committee

COMHAIRLE CUIGE LAIGHEAN MEETING
2.30 p.m. Sunday 28th March
5 Blessington Street
DUBLIN
(All Lethanach readers to send delegates)

Election analysed

AT the monthly meeting of the Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle last Saturday, the recent Free State elections were discussed and analysed. A number of reasons were put forward for the disappointing results and these ranged from the relative isolation of the North (in a 'budget election') as an issue this time round in comparison to last June when the hunger-strike gripped people's imagination; the RTE ban which meant that Sinn Féin candidates had no input into current affairs programmes or chat shows; Sinn Féin's credibility as a serious political party instead of being seen as an adjunct to the armed struggle; and the difficulty of selling in a two to three week campaign the idea of an abstentionist — albeit a working — TD.

However, the Ard Chomhairle also agreed upon the positive aspects of the election contest — the benefits and lessons of experience and the need for thorough preparation for the twenty-six-county local government election in two years' time.

There is a need for a more disciplined and ideologically committed membership rather than a membership some of whom consider themselves merely in a 'Brits Out' role. An election cannot be won on a two-week programme but only if the work is carried out at grassroots and community level. Also, elections were only part of republican strategy and should be used to politicise people and build up the revolutionary movement. There were many outstanding debts incurred from the election and money was still urgently needed to defray campaign costs and the expenses for the ongoing civil action against the Free State government over Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. All sections of Sinn Féin are to be reminded of their responsibilities towards meeting these costs.

The prompt return of affiliation fees would help.

The Ard Chomhairle discussed the position of national organisers, left vacant in January by the RUC arrest and jailing of Belfast republican Jim Clancy. The position was filled by a reshuffle and a fresh appointment to the Economic Resistance and Trade Union Department. Paddy Bolger was proposed as national organiser. His position as Education Officer was taken over by Dave Ferrell. His position in the Trade Union Department was filled by the appointment of Peter McAleer (Clones).

Derry appeal



DERRY Sinn Féin have launched an international appeal fund for the preservation and maintenance of Free Derry Corner, a symbol of nationalist Derry's resistance to British rule. The surviving gable wall requires immediate structural stabilisation to prevent it toppling, as well as maintenance on a regular basis.

A goal of £3,000 has been set, and the fund will also provide for the landscaping of the site behind the wall and the planting of fourteen oak trees as a memorial to the victims of Bloody Sunday, killed nearby. In addition, the fund will be used to maintain the Bloody Sunday memorial plinth at Roseville Flats.

Donations should be sent to 'Free Derry Corner appeal fund', c/o 15 Cable Street, Derry (telephone Derry 68926).

Dublin commemoration

THE first anniversary of the beginning of last year's H-Block hunger-strike was commemorated in Dublin on Monday evening, March 1st, with a march from the GPO to the Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square.

A crowd of over one hundred and fifty people was addressed by Jim Monaghan, chairman of the Dublin H-Block/Armagh Committee, who told them: "If we walk in the footsteps of the hunger-strikers with the measure of the heroism shown by them, then there is no way our enemies can defeat us."

A wreath was laid by Terry Hughes, brother of the late hunger-striker Francis Hughes.



● The revamping of an active campaign in support of the political prisoners' demands will prove difficult

NATIONAL H-BLOCK/ARMAGH COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

Prison struggle

BY SEAMUS BOYLE

THE National H-Block/Armagh Committee conference scheduled for Sunday 14th March, in Dublin's West County Hotel, should provide an interesting and useful focus for the on-going discussion about future strategy among political activists, prisoners, supporters and the various groups involved in the prison campaign.

This discussion, limited, to date, and conducted generally on an informal basis, will undoubtedly develop at the conference with formal positions being proposed from the various tendencies and groups. Such a discussion, if it is to be meaningful and realistic, must, of course, include as a pre-requisite, a review of the developments of the campaign and an evaluation of the gains and losses, particularly over the last twelve months.

IMPROVEMENT

The state of play within the prisons is especially pertinent at this time, because even after the hunger-strike it has to be stated that the political prisoners have yet to realise their five demands. The right to wear their own clothes has been won, as has a relative improvement in the living conditions in both Armagh women's prison and the H-Blocks, but whether this improvement is of temporary duration remains to be seen.

At present, almost three hundred political prisoners are continuing a 'no work' protest in the H-Blocks and Armagh prison for the outstanding demands of segregation and the right not to do menial penal work, while more than one hundred remand prisoners, both republican and loyalist, are engaged in a segregation protest which involves self-segregation with subsequent loss of exercise, association and the hardship of a prolonged lock-up.

The remand prisoners awaiting trial have been moved from Crumlin Road jail to the H-Blocks and republican prisoners in this category are continuing with normal republican structures and activities. The prison regime here is more selective in its harassment, and, as always, more favourably disposed towards loyalist prisoners, but criminalisation remains the order of the day with no opportunity being lost by the administration to undermine the republican structures.

PROTESTING

More extreme, however, is their attitude towards those prisoners who join the on-going prison protest, on being sentenced. These prisoners are subjected to extreme deprivations and are isolated from the bulk of the protesting prisoners in H-Blocks 4 and 5 and every effort is being made to force them to conform.

In the protesting H-Blocks and in Armagh prison, with the ending of the 'no wash' protest, the winning by the prisoners of the

right to wear their own clothes, and the subsequent relaxation of rules permitting limited exercise and association, there has been a relative improvement in physical conditions. Pettiness by the prison regime in restricting reading materials and generally engaged in petty restrictions continues, but the savage loss of remission remains the most severe hardship suffered by these prisoners.

There is obviously, therefore, in the face of continued protests inside the prisons and with the expected and predictable continuation of British criminalisation efforts, a need to re-activate the prison protest campaign on the streets. With firm indication from the prisons that the protests will continue indefinitely, at least the uncertainty, on the outside, about the prisoners' intentions, partly responsible for the lack of action since the end of the hunger-strike has now ended.

DIFFICULT

Despite this, the re-vamping of an active national campaign in defence of the political prisoners will prove difficult and must necessarily be linked to other complementary short-term objectives.

This in itself presents many difficulties, not least in that some of the groups involved have, in the republican view, a premature desire to see some kind of formalised 'anti-imperialist front' growing out of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee structure.

Republicans have consistently made the point that if a successful and genuinely broad mass movement is to emerge from the experiences of the prison struggle then the lessons of the H-Block/Armagh campaign and strategy must be digested and carefully re-appraised.

In the past, republicans have, in fact, suggested that the best way that such a development could be considered is after the national committee has helped the prisoners win their demands and thus concluded its role allowing a period of critical re-appraisal before activists consider coming together again in a new campaign behind new demands.

Because this is impossible at the present time, a balance between the two tendencies must be reached so that the campaign in defence of the political prisoners can be revitalised while activists, and particularly republican activists, consult and discuss, both internally and externally, the feasibility of building a mass movement, the demands of such a movement, and the objectives and strategy of whatever new movement, if any, emerges at the end of such deliberations.

NEW

If a new movement with new national demands is to be successful in mobilising the maximum support, then more than an alliance of anti-imperialist forces is required. Ordinary men and women, workers, small farmers, and the grass-roots of the 'constitutional parties'

must be involved.

Whether or not this is possible, at the present time, or in the near future, is a matter of opinion and would obviously depend on the demands of the campaign, the form it would take, and the political breadth of its base. The question of unity among anti-imperialist groups, some quite small and others insignificant, and the differences in attitude towards electoral policies are also significant and major stumbling blocks.

Republicans, especially those who were active in the H-Block/Armagh campaign, recognise, and the Republican Movement has acknowledged, the leadership role played by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, especially during the hunger-strike.

Despite differences of emphasis and strategy between campaign activists, the national committee achieved maximum unity and mobilisation within the historical limitations forced upon us all by, for example, the effects of partition or the absence of any significant anti-imperialist involvement in the trade union movement.

Electoral policy is one question pitted with imponderables and one which severely strained the national committee's united approach. It is a tribute to all those involved that such an approach, with a few exceptions, was maintained, but whether this could be true of the present and the future, without the unifying effect of the hunger-strike, is another matter.

UNITY

It is generally recognised that gains were made by and for the national and anti-imperialist struggle during the last twelve months. These gains were secured at a terrible price paid by the hunger-strikers and their families.

Not least among these gains was the unity and education of ordinary people. This unity would be squandered by any premature attempt, doomed to failure at this point, to dramatically change the nature of the demands of the campaign.

Within the political prisoners' outstanding demands, and the national committee's strategy of exposing collaboration and the use of repressive legislation, lies the kernel of a short-term way forward. Again, the defence of those activists jailed or awaiting trial as a result of the Dublin embassy demonstration, and the large number of people in the six counties presently being charged with involvement in demonstrations, is an issue which deserves urgent attention.

It is to these issues that the forthcoming conference must give its immediate attention. In the meantime the whole subject of the long-term way forward must be urgently, intelligently and realistically debated and all of us, republicans included, must decide whether or not a mass movement is a feasible, desirable or 'achievable' mechanism upon which the struggle can progress.

Nuachtán bríomhar

LE TOMÁS Ó SÉ

Tá Preas an Phobail, an nuachtán neamhspleách Gaeilge ó Bhéal Feirste ag dul ar aghaidh go maith. Tá reimsí maith leiteoireachta á chur ar fáil acu, agus bíonn sé speisialúil i gcoitinne. Uaireanta bíonn scéal acu nach mbíonn le fáil áit ar bith eile.

In eagrán uimhir a hocht déag den dáta fiche Feabhra bhí an scéal seo a leanas: Tá dúitithe ag Comhdháil Náisiúnta Na Gaeilge glacadh leis na cinní polaitiúla sa Chéis Fhada do chomortas Ghlior na nGael.

Chuir na príosúnaigh isteach ar an gcomortas ach i litir chúchú, mhígháil Cearúl Page, bainisteoir "Glor na nGael" nárbh fheidir glacadh lena n-iartrasas toisc go bhfuil sé d'aithne ag an gcomortas "teacht ar an bháile nó cheantar is fearr sa tír a dhéanamh iarracht an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn".

DEACHRACHTAÍ

Sé deacrach na bpríosúnach gur pobal dearfa iad féin agus go bhfuil

ag éirí leo an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn ina saol féin. Tá an cumra ar an scéal go bhfuil Comhdháil Náisiúnta na Gaeilge ag iarraidh sleamhnú sa glacadh leo.

Ach, agus é ag caint le "Preas an Phobail", dúirt an t-Uasal Page, agus is soláir gur bh é seo cora na faidhbe, dúirt sé go mbeadh deacrachtaí ann le moltóireacht agus cúrsaí riaracháin le d'nlacaf le hiartras na bpríosúnach. Agus le ionad iarracht a dhéanamh ar na fadhbanna sin a shárú is amhlaidh go bhfuil siad á úsáid chun na príosúnaigh a choimeád amach. Ní ró-fhada ó bhí stailc ar siúl sa Comhdháil mar gheall ar chúrsaí pá. Bhí sé speisialúil ag an am go raibh an Comhdháil ina mbailín den



Federated Union of Employers (FUE). Is soláir go bhfuil siad ag iarraidh gach gné réabhlóideach a choimeád amach ón nGaeilge.

NAÍScoil

San eagrán céanna de Preas an Phobail tá cur síos ar Marítín Mac A' Mhuilleora ar dhul chun cinn na Gaeilge i mBéal Feirste. An grúpa a thosaigh an Tine Bheo i mBaile Mhic Airt tá siad ag tabhairt a scoimeanna chun cinn san Halla Pobail úr a osclaíodh sa cheannair. Tá ranganna Gaeilge ar siúl sa Halla agus tá an theadóg stáin á mhúineadh.

Taispeánann seo go léir an dóchas mór atá ag pobal Bhéal Feirste i ndul chun cinn na Gaeilge. Molaim an nuachtán Preas an Phobail dár léitheoirí uiligh. Is féidir é d'fháil ar feadh ráithe ach E4 a sheoldh go dtí an t-Eagarthóir, Preas an Phobail, An Ard Scoil, 25, Sraid Dhuibhise, Béal Feirste, BT12 4RD



IN MEMORIAM

CROSSAN, Gerard; JOHNSTON, John; LEWIS, Tony; McCANN, Tom. (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vois. Gerard Crossan, John Johnston, Tony Lewis and Tom McCann, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who died while on active service duty on March 9th 1972. Fhad's aís na uathbhanna seo in Éirinn bhí bheidh síocháin ann sa saoirse. Always remembered by their friends and comrades in the Belfast Brigade. **CROSSAN, Gerard; JOHNSTON, John; LEWIS, Tony; McCANN, Tom.** (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of four very dear friends, Vois. Gerard Crossan, John Johnston, Tony Lewis and Tom McCann, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who were killed while on active service duty on March 9th 1972. Always remembered and missed by Maureen Blanchard and family, Hampstead, New Hampshire, USA. **CROSSAN, Gerard; JOHNSTON, John; LEWIS, Tony; McCANN, Tom.** (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of my friends and comrades, Vois. Gerard Crossan, John Johnston, Tony Lewis, and Tom McCann, 'C' Coy 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who died on active service on March 9th 1972. Fuair siad aís ar son saoirse na hÉireann. The vision of a socialist republic shall become a reality. Never forgotten by their friends and comrades, Sean, 'C' Wing, Crumlin Road Jail. **DUFFY, Paddy.** (4th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of a dear friend, Paddy, who died on March 1st 1978. "Lay him away on the hillside along with the brave and the bold, inscribe his name on the roll of fame in letters of purest gold." Always remembered by Sally, Patsy and Martin. **HUGHES, Charles.** (11th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Charlie Hughes, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who was shot dead by

renegade Irishmen on March 8th 1971. Chait sé a shaoi ag obair agus ag troid ar son saoirse. Always remembered by his friends and comrades in the Belfast Brigade. **HUGHES, Charles.** (11th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Charlie Hughes, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who was murdered by renegade Irishmen on March 8th 1971. They may kill the revolutionaries but never the revolution. Always remembered by the Charities of the Sinn Féin cumann, Rathmines/Ranelagh, Dublin. **KAVANAGH, Albert.** (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Albert Kavanagh, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who was shot dead by the hated RUC on March 4th 1972. I measc laochra na nGael go raibh a anam. Never forgotten by his friends and comrades in the Belfast Brigade. **KAVANAGH, Albert.** (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of our dear son, Vol. Albert Kavanagh, 'A' Coy, 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann who was killed on active service on March 4th 1972. Mary, Guen of the Gael, pray for him. Deep in our hearts you will always stay, loved and remembered every day. Always remembered with pride by his parents, brothers, sisters and circle. **KAVANAGH, Albert.** (10th Anniversary). In proud and loving memory of Vol. Albert Kavanagh, 'A' Coy, 2nd Battalion, Belfast Brigade, Oglagh na hÉireann, who was killed on active service on March 4th 1972. Fuair sé bás ar son saoirse. Always remembered by the Frank Stagg Sinn Féin cumann, Liberties, Dublin. **STAGG, Francis.** (6th Anniversary). In proud memory of Vol. Frank Stagg, Oglagh na hÉireann, England, who died on hunger-strike on February 12th 1976. "It lights the dark of this world, it thunders forth its might. It is the undaunted thought, my friend, that thought that says, Bobby Sands." Always remembered by the Frank Stagg Sinn Féin cumann, Liberties, Dublin.

Sympathy

BREEN. The Sinn Féin Trade Union Department extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late Gerry Breen, who was tragically killed in a car accident. The 'Ballad of diesel blue' will always be remembered. **DALY.** Since an Anniversary, sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Mal Dáligh who died recently.

Go ndéana Dia trícaire ar a hanam. From Liathroma comhairle ceantair, Sinn Féin **McCAUGHEY.** Liathroma comhairle ceantair, Sinn Féin, extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the death of his wife. Ar dhéan Dó go raibh a hanam. **MONGAIN.** The staff of 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late Mícheál Ó Mongáin Portlatington, County Laois, who died recently.

Coiste Cuimhneachain na Poblachta Republican Commemoration Committee

REQUESTS for speakers at Easter commemorations should be made as soon as possible to: An Runai, Coiste Cuimhneachain na Poblachta, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

EASTER LILIES available from: Mrs. P. King, 29 All Saints Park, Raheny, Dublin 5. Price £12.50 per 1,000.

Honour Ireland's dead - wear an Easter lily!

Notes



GREETINGS

BRADLEY, Hugh. (Magilligan). Birthday wishes for March 7th. Hope you have one foot in the grave you're getting that old. Ha, ha! See you on Tuesday. From your friends, Eileen, Tommy, and children, Stephanie, Rory, Tracy and Bronagh Sinead. **BRADLEY, Hugh.** (Magilligan). Happy birthday, Hugh. Hope you've settled into your new home. Ha, ha! All the best. From your friends, Eileen, Tommy, CUNNINGHAM, Gerry. (Long Lartin). All the very best on your birthday, Gerry. Hey, what happened to all those good poems? Best regards from all. From Mary, Raymond and wee Patrick. **GUILF, POYLE, Patrick.** (Gormwood Scrubs). Best wishes on your birthday, Patrick. From Mary, Raymond (Albany) and wee Patrick. **KELLY, Martin.** (H8-Block). Happy

21st birthday, Martin. May your next one be spent in freedom. From Hoss and Lorraine. **KELLY, Martin.** (H8-Block). Happy 21st birthday, Martin. From all the boys in the GOR, UT. **McCANN, Jennifer.** (Armagh). Happy birthday, Jennifer. Sorry we're late for the 1st but better late than never. From your friends, Eileen and Tommy, and children, Stephanie, Rory, Tracy and Bronagh Sinead. **McCANN, Jennifer.** (Armagh). Happy birthday, Jennifer. We'll have an extra drink in the 'Hitchin Post' for you. From your friends, Mary, Donna and Moysa. **McCLUSKEY, John.** (Hull). All the best on your birthday, John. Twenty-one is it now? From Mary, Raymond and wee Patrick. **MORGAN, Michael.** (Portlaoise). Birthday greetings to you, Michael. From Mick and Dolan, Sinn Féin POW Department, Dublin.

Thanks

MR. & MRS. SEAN GLYNN would like to thank the members of the Jackie Griffith Sinn Féin cumann and na Fianna Éireann, Dublin, for their Mass card and expressions of sympathy on the death of Sean's mother.

SINN FEIN NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE

National Collection

Friday 12th March to Saturday 20th March

Donations should be sent to: National Finance Committee, 44 Parnell Square, Dublin 1. Tel. 726932.

Draw results

Co. Monaghan H-Block/Armagh 400 Club draw
Week 12
£100: Mick Tierney, Scotstown; £50: Mrs. Kathleen Moran, Lurgan; and £50: Brendan Mooney, Carrickoh.

Week 13
£100: V. McCaughey, Castiblayne; £50: Francis Boylan, Smithboro; and £50: Ned Hamill, Monaghan.

Kerry Republican Aid Private members' draw
£150: No. 472, Sean O'Carroll, Limerick; £100: 033, Joe O'Connor, Lilstow; and £75: 0370, Sean Kelly, Fenit.

South Derry
Five-week draw
The five-week £1,000 draw in aid of a new South Derry Memorial Hall has been postponed. The first draw will now take place on Wednesday 17th March (St. Patrick's night) and the fifth and final draw will be held on Easter Monday night, Monday 19th April. Tickets are still available from all Sinn Féin cumann in the South Derry area.

DUBLIN SINN FEIN PRIVATE MEMBERS' DRAW
£300: Christy Maher, Cabra; £200: Sean Golden, Ballsbridge; Portlaoise: Tommy Cullen, Co. Kilkenny; Selection of Peace records: Jackie Clarke, Co. Mayo; Leather wallet or purse: Anny Mooney, Finglas.

International Women's day

NEXT MONDAY, March 8th, is International Women's Day, a day which annually marks for women throughout the world their determination to achieve liberation. The women prisoners in Armagh have a place of special significance in the women's struggle.

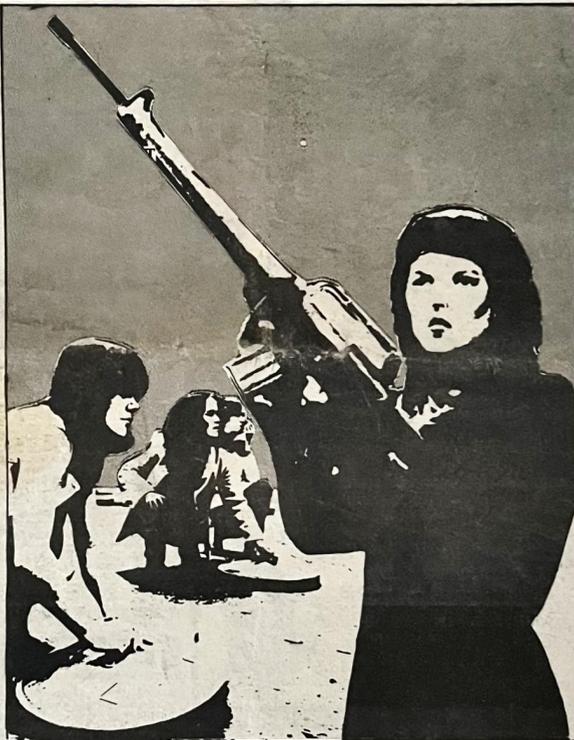
In a letter published in 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' this week, a woman POW writes about the last five years in Armagh. She does not mention herself or her own personal suffering and remains unidentified. Her letter is an illustration of the unity and comradeship of the women prisoners. It is this unity of purpose and concern for each other that has sustained these young women through five years of what she herself calls 'Hell'.

We publish here a message from Armagh jail, a poem written by a republican inmate and a statement issued by the Sinn Fein Women's Department to coincide with International Women's Day.

Statement From Armagh POWs

We, the women republican prisoners in Armagh jail, extend solidarity greetings throughout the world on International Women's Day, especially to those who, like ourselves, are engaged in the struggle for freedom, in El Salvador, Palestine, the Basque country, and the many others who have pledged their support to us.

"We extend a special greeting to women throughout Ireland who have constantly engaged in the Irish struggle for freedom, whether their role involves taking up arms, or protesting on the streets — or any of the other dimensions of the struggle, none of which must be underestimated, for



each has its own value, and can but further our cause.

"With the war situation in our country, political and social issues are an everpresent reality of day-to-day

life. Our knowledge and awareness have grown as each crisis falls upon us. As women come to terms with hardship after hardship, few have been left unscathed by British oppression, and

while we continue to play our part in the struggle, we should also look to ourselves as women and determine what we wish to obtain for ourselves in our *Eire Nua*, our New Ireland.

"As seen in the past, Irish women did not successfully tackle women's issues in the aftermath of the Rising, and we should learn from those mistakes. In 1914, James Connolly had warned women against this, and yet it happened, because women could not handle both issues together, that of national liberation and that of women's rights.

"We are WOMEN NATIONALISTS. We should not allow one issue to cloud the other, but instead we should combine the two in our pursuit for freedom. When we achieve our thirty-two county, democratic socialist republic, our full potential as women must be recognised and our equal status assured. It is up to us women to ensure that that is the case, and that no backward step is taken. We must remain beside our male comrades, not only in planning our country's future, but also in establishing equal rights for ourselves. Today, we should avail of every opportunity present to come together to discuss and explore what we want to see in the Ireland of tomorrow. Sinn Fein's Women's Department provides such an opportunity for us women to express our views and ideas.

"We cannot allow the same situation to evolve as in the past, when women played a comparatively strong role in the Rising and the Civil War, but afterwards disappeared into oblivion, gaining little or nothing for women's rights. It is our country, and as women nationalists active in the struggle, we must not halt at the half-way house, but follow it through until we have asserted all our aims."

Statement From Sinn Fein Women's Department

ON this, International Women's Day 1982, Sinn Fein Women's Department salutes all women in Ireland and abroad. The war in Ireland is a people's war. It is a war against a colonially-imposed partition and the ensuing divisions and inequalities, a war for national liberation and socialism.

"In this war tremendous suffering has been borne by Irish women, be they mothers, wives, political activists or Volunteers in the armed struggle.

"There are today twenty-one of our sisters on a no-work protest in Armagh jail. The majority are under twenty-five years of age, and eight of them are serving sentences of over ten years. In spite of six years' of struggle against criminalisation, of one year on the no-wash protest, of weeks of hunger-strike in December 1980 alongside seven of their comrades in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, in spite of the death on hunger-strike of ten of their comrades in 1981, the women political prisoners in Armagh still lack proper medical care, and are still denied access to education or recreation facilities.

"These prisoners see themselves as fighters for the liberation of their country, but also as women demanding equal rights for their sisters. The two issues are not contradictory, indeed they are not separate. Women in the Republican Movement face oppression as women in a male-dominated society, and as Irish republicans in a country dominated by British imperialism.

"The Sinn Fein Women's Department supports all agitation against the oppression of women — but it also stresses the necessity of a victory in the anti-imperialist

war and the overthrow of the capitalist system in order to achieve the complete liberation of women.

"We send our greetings on International Women's Day 1982 to our sisters struggling in other countries for justice and freedom, and our thanks to those who supported us during the dark days of the hunger-strike when ten of our dear comrades died rather than accept the criminal status the British would impose on them, and on us all.

"Ireland's struggle liberates women.
"Women's struggle liberates Ireland."

ENDURE

You hear the voices crying out
It's International Women's Day,
Women unite, take up your fight,
Do not be led astray.

From every road and creed and age
Our hands are clasped with you,
From this our jail we'll not refrain
To spread our gospel true.

For woman did not come from man
Or owe him any debt,
But stand in full equality
And in that we're firmly set.

So come and rally to our cause
Join in and forge ahead,
Until we attain those women's rights
And discrimination is dead.

By Anne Marie Quinn, 'A' Wing