

# H-BLOCK ARMAGH BULLETIN

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London H Block/Armagh  
Committee

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5p

THE PRISONERS' DEMANDS: THE RIGHT NOT TO WEAR PRISON UNIFORM \* THE RIGHT NOT TO DO PRISON WORK \* THE RIGHT OF FREE ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER PRISONERS \* THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE THEIR OWN EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND TO RECEIVE ONE VISIT, ONE LETTER AND ONE PARCEL PER WEEK \* FULL REMISSION OF SENTENCE.

## WELCOME

This weekend, 100 relatives of protesting H-Block prisoners come to London, accompanied by the recently elected M.P. Owen Carron. It is now nearly a year since the first hunger strike began.

The horror of what is happening in the H-Blocks has resulted in the deaths of ten young men. One of these, Bobby Sands was an elected member of the British Parliament, another Kieron Doherty was an elected member of the

Irish Parliament. All the hunger strikers and the protesting prisoners are in the H-Blocks in special circumstances. They have all grown up, with British soldiers on their streets. They have been arrested under special legislation, convicted by special juryless courts, given special sentences and sent to special gaols. In response they asked for the obvious i.e. that they are special prisoners. Their 'specialness' they have expressed in the '5 demands'.

We welcome the prisoners relatives and their elected representative, Owen Carron. We welcome them as friends and as perhaps the only people who can break through the terrible acceptance of what is happening in the H-Blocks in our names; who can force the government to back down, and negotiate with the prisoners.

The H-Block and Armagh protest must be brought to an end now, by the implementation of the five demands.





## PLASTIC BULLETS PROTEST

Several thousand people marched through west Belfast on Sunday, to protest against the use of plastic bullets by the R.U.C. and the British army in Northern Ireland. Seven people have been killed by plastic bullets since the beginning of the hunger strike in April. The march ended at Linden St. in the Lower Falls, where Mrs Nora McCabe was fatally shot in the head by a plastic bullet in July. Mrs. McCabe was returning from an evening out when she was fired upon.

Among the speakers were Kathleen Stewart, mother of Brian who was the first victims to die from a plastic bullet injury in 1976; the brothers of Carol Anne Kelly (12) who was shot dead while returning from the shot in May; and Joe Austin of Sinn Fein.

Joe Austin stated hows the British Army and the R.U.C. repeatedly fixed plastic bullets at point black range at people's head and reminded the marchers of the statement by Willie Whitelaw that he would not issue plastic bullets for riot control in England because they were dangerous and some one might be killed.

## GERARD HODGINS

Gerard Hodgins, 21 became the twenty-second prisoner to go on the hunger strike since April 1st, when he refused on Monday morning. Gerard has one brother and one sister. His mothers lives in the family home in Turf Lodge. Gerard was refused compassionate parole when his father died in 1977.

The Hodgins lived in the Springfield area of Belfast, until after internment when they were forced to move to Turf Lodge because of intimidation. Gerard's interest in Irish history and the events happening around him, led him to become increasingly active in the Republican movement.

On May 4th 1976 when he was

16 years old he was arrested and taken to Newtownards R.U.C. station. For three days he enduring beatings and intense interrogation. He was charged with the attempted murder of several R.U.C. members in Downpatrick. Later this charge was dropped and substituted with a charge of possession of a semi-automatic pistol. After 6 months remand he was brought before a Diplock Court and was convicted and given a sentence of 14 years.

He immediately joined the blanket protest in the H-Block and also took part in the later 'dirty protest'. In 1979 he shared a cell with the late Bobby Sands M.P. Gerard is now held in H-Block 5.

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## 47 DAYS

Liams McCloskey, began his 47th day on hunger strike this morning (Friday). He weighs only 8 stones but is still able to keep water down. Both he and Pat Sheehan who is on his fortieth day without food are in the prison hospital. Jochie McMullan (33 days) is suffering from a kidney complaint. He is also having to endure considerable petty harrassment from the warders. Bernard Fox, (26 days without food) was sick over last weekend. His request to have the heating turned up in his cell has been refused by the governor. Last week he was kept waiting for 3 hours in the cold, for a meeting with his solicitor. Hunger strikers are very sensitive to the cold and this is used against them by the prison establishment. All the hunger strikers not in prison hospital have been refused, pygamas, dressing gown and slippers. They still have only a blankets to wear. The hunger strikers in the cells are also denied daily and Sunday papers.

Meanwhile both Paddy Quinns and Pat McGeown have both been returned to an outside hospital. When their families took them off the hunger strike, they were immediately put under intensive care in an outside hospital. However in an apparent attempt to demoralise those on hunger strike they were soon transferred back to the prison hospital to adjourning beds. Because of their serious condition they have had to be returned again to an outside hospital.



Bernadette McAliskey at Paris press conference with Alain Krivine

Bernadette McAliskey, a member of the National H Block/Armagh Committee (Ireland) marched through Barcelona on Friday and spoke at a large public meeting afterwards. She had intended to go to Catalonia to attend La Deada, a day of national independence festivities, but the Spanish authorities refused her entry into the country when she arrived at Barcelona Airport. However the following day she drove over the French/Spanish border and eventually got to La Diada. She had been invited to attend the La Diada "as a gesture of solidarity with the prisoners."

At a meeting in Barcelona's Congress Hall, Bernadette shared a platform with speakers representing the Catalan organisation Terra Cliure (Free Land) the PLO and a support group from the liberation movement in El Salvador. "I spoke about the national problem and the prisoners on hunger strike in

the H Blocks. The position is understood in Spain because there are a hundred political prisoners from the Basque region on hunger strike in Southern Spain."

While in Spain she met the president of the Catalan autonomous Parliament, the head of the university in Barcelona and a number of Catalan Members of Parliament.

Meanwhile Owen Carron MP has spent the last week in France, continuing the campaign by H Block/Armagh supporters there. On Friday he met Mr Lionel Jaspin, leader of the ruling Socialist Party.

"We would like to get the French Government to apply pressure on the British Government so that an honourable settlement can be reached," Owen said. "I do believe Mr Jaspin personally supports the prisoners' five demands and I would like to see that translated into action."



## HUNGER STRIKERS DETERMINED

The hunger-strikers are urgently discussing ways of persuading their relatives not to intervene to prevent their deaths after they become unconscious.

One option being discussed would involve hunger strikers making out a legal document which would in effect prevent members of their families going against their wishes to fast till death by instructing doctors to give them nourishment as they pass into a coma.

However the prisoners see this as a last resort. The prisoners feel that this would put an awful strain on relationships with their families.

The prisoners are discussing the idea of making out a legal document while still in a sound frame of mind naming someone else such as another prisoner as next-of-kin. This idea has been discussed with some of the relatives of the seven men now on hunger strike.

The prisoners are also discussing the idea of preparing themselves mentally to go back on hunger strike in the event of families intervening. However this would be extremely difficult especially on when they are given nourishment, they are also given some drug which creates a strong dependence on further nourishment.

### FAMILIES SUPPORT

The families of the six prisoners then on hunger strike, issued a statement, last Thursday to give public support for the prisoners five demands and for "our loved ones on hunger strike".

They called in the British government to ensure a permanent ending to all the prison protests, by implementing the conditions outlined by the prisoners and requested a public response from the British government to their appeal.



*Saturdays March to the home of the British Military Attache near Dublin. A letter was handed in demanding that Brigadier General Robertson leave the country, by Tony O'Hara brother of dead hunger striker Patsy O'Hara. Tony himself was a prisoner in the H-Blocks until recently.*

## NATIONAL H-BLOCK ARMAGH COMMITTEE

At the recent National H-Blocks/Armagh conference it was decided to co-opt five members to the elected National H-Block/Armagh committee. This was to give the committee a wider base. The five who have agreed to join are Thomas MacAnna, the director of the Abbey Theatre (Ireland's National Theatre); Labhras O Murchu, president of Comhaltas Ceoltioiri Eireann (an Irish music association); Sean MacMathúna, general secretary of Conradh na Gaeile (the Irish language association); Maura McRory, of the Belfast Prisoners Relatives Action Committee; and Barbara Brown of the Belfast Trade Union Committee.

### SYDNEY FASTER

**The mother of Eamonn O'Connor, flew to Australia last week to be beside her son, who is on hunger strike, in support of the H-Block and Armagh prisoner's five demands.**

Eamonn, who migrated to Australia nine years ago, has said he will fast to the death unless the Australia Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser asks the British government to grant the demands of the hunger strikers.

He is lying on a water bed in the Gaelic club to ease bed sores and is taking only water with added salt. He has lost three stones since he started his fast on the steps of the British Consulate in Sydney on August 9th.

Eamonn will probably reach a critical stake in his strike at the beginning of the forth-coming Commonwealth conference in Melbourne at the end of this month.

## US MONEY SUPPORT

**Irish Northern Aid (Noraid) raised \$250,000 in the United States from February 1st to July 31st of this year. The \$250,000 for six months compares with an average figure of \$110,000 every year over the last seven years.**

"We attribute this last increase in money as an expression of the opposition of Irish-Americans to Mrs Thatcher's policies which have resulted in the deaths of 10 Irish men on hunger strike". Martin Galvin, publicity director of Noraid, commented in New York.

"This figure should surprise no one. There is a tremendous degree of moral outrage in the US towards the British Government because of the H Block deaths", he added.

Martin Galvin said that Irish American anger has been illustrated again and again by the thousands who have attended nationwide demonstrations of the hunger strikers.

He cited as one example of this the reception which Prince Charles received in New York and the fact that British flags have been driven from all buildings in that city. "They won't even fly the Union Jack over their own consulate here," he said.

As an illustration of the change among Irish Americans since the hunger strike became a US issue, he mentioned Governor Hugh Carey's statements condemning Mrs Thatcher's Government.

"That statement was forced from him by his awareness of the great numbers of Irish American votes who are concerned with this issue."



Eamon O'Connor



# We Support Our Prisoners

## MASS DELEGATION

### Thursday

**3.00** Press conference chaired by Lord Tony Gifford  
**7.30** Public Meeting, Irish Centre, Murray St. Camden  
 Speakers: Owen Carran, Relatives, Richard Balfe MEP  
 Harry McHugh

### Friday

**11.00** handing of letter to Downing Street, Lobbying of MP, Trade Unions etc.  
**7.30** Public Meeting South Bank Poly, Rotary St, SE1

### Saturday

**11.00am** Public Meeting, Kilburn Sq.  
 Public Meeting, Camden (opp. Inverness St. Market)  
**2.4pm** Black Flag vigil Downing St.  
**8.00** Social South London Irish Club, Wimbledon Hackney Trades Club, 96 Dalston Lane E.8

### Sunday

**10.00am** Black Flag vigil outside Westminster Cathedral

For further details ring **H-Block/Armagh Cttee (London) 267 2004**

**PLEASE TELL THE OFFICE OF EVENTS IN YOUR AREA. Ring 01-267 2004.**

**IF A HUNGER STRIKER DIES, BLACK FLAG MOURNING VIGILS** will continue in **KILBURN SQUARE** for three consecutive evenings or until the day of the funeral, starting each evening at 7.30pm.

### MARCH FOR THE 5 DEMANDS

**Called by Sinn Fein**

**SATURDAY 26th SEPTEMBER**  
**IN LUTON**

**Assemble People's Park 1.30pm and march to town centre**

### SAOIRSE – IRISH FREEDOM FESTIVAL

**October 17th,**

**Caxton House, London N19**

**Org. Cttee. for Withdrawal from Ireland**

An all-day event of cultural resistance to Britain's continuing war in the north of Ireland. Exhibitions, films, video, music, poems, talks. Stalls available. Contact : 1 North End Road, London W14 8ST.

On Wednesday September 30th there will be a day long Blanket Protest outside the Labour Party Conference. At 8 o'clock that evening there will be a rally at The Level with speakers from Ireland. Afterwards there will be a torchlight parade to Tribune meeting. Buses leave London 6pm. Details phone 267 2004.

### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY BENEFIT

**People of No Property**  
**Latin American Group**  
**SWAPO Singers**

**Friday 25th September 8.00pm**  
**Hargreave Hall, Hargreave Rd, Archway.**  
**Presented by Troops Out Movement**



**How the Soviet Union sees British handling of Northern Ireland. The above appeared in a recent edition of the weekly English-language *Moscow News* with the caption "Got it!". Drawing by Igor Smirnov.**

### WE OURSELVES SPEAK

**WEDNESDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER 7.30**

**The Factory, Marylands Community Centre, Chippenham Mews, London W9**

**organised by ad hoc Prisoners Action Group**  
**North Paddington**

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