

H-BLOCK ARMAGH

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BULLETIN

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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

DEPTHS OF BARBARITY

Patsy O'Hara's Body Desecrated by RUC



ABOVE: Patsy O'Hara lying in state in Derry
RIGHT: In Long Kesh shortly before his death

ELIZABETH O'HARA was yesterday joined by Plaid Cymru MP Dafydd Ellis Thomas in calling for a public inquiry into the desecration of her brother Patsy O'Hara's body.

When told of the desecration Dafydd Thomas expressed shock and questioned to what depths the government would sink in their attempts to break the hunger strike.

Patsy died on the night of the 21st May. At his bedside were Elizabeth, her husband Michael, his uncle and two priests including Father Toner, Secretary to the Bishop of Belfast. Patsy died with no injuries to his face. The chief prison warder was also there, and told everyone to leave the room so that they could clean the body.

Three minutes later Elizabeth asked her husband to come back with her to see her brother one more time, but they were told that the body was on its way to the coroner. Patsy's body, carried in a plastic bag, was thrown into the back of an RUC landrover and in a



DEPTHS OF BARBARITY

(continued from previous page)

convoy with six others, taken to Omagh. After the coroner had seen it, a member of the RUC phoned the undertakers, Bradley's, and said that if they didn't come and collect the body it would be thrown into the River Foyle. At the undertakers' it was noticed that his nose had been broken in two places. The body was then brought to the O'Haras' home, where despite the make-up applied by Bradley's, the injury was obvious to the family as were four cigarette burn marks around his left eye. Both the priests who were at his deathbed witnessed the injuries to his face as he lay in his home.

The government's determination to break the prisoners' struggle continues even after their death. Relatives and

friends are denied the opportunity to mourn them in peace. While Patsy's is the most horrific example, all the other funerals have been interfered with in some way.

Francis Hughes' dying wish was that the people of the Falls should be able to pay their respects, but the hearse was not allowed to go up the road. The RUC threatened the family that if they didn't allow the hearse to be diverted they would forcibly take the body and transport it to Bellaghy themselves by helicopter. Joe McDonnell's funeral was attacked by the RUC who moved in indiscriminately firing bullets — plastic and live.

At Tom McElwee's funeral they tried to provoke a riot by moving in to arrest the driver of the minibus carrying the uniforms.

Elizabeth O'Hara's statement makes it clear why the Grenada Television docu-

mentary 'Lying in State', which had shots of Patsy's dead body, was banned. The rest of the media has refused to give any publicity to these events despite being supplied with photographic evidence, and despite the fact that this was shown on an American television programme.

The attempts to degrade the bodies of the hunger strikers cannot erase the dignity of their actions and only succeed in degrading the perpetrators. They are one more example of the obscenity of this government's policy on the hunger strikes; the obscenity which as we go to press brings Mickey Devine to the verge of becoming the tenth hunger striker to die; the obscenity which is perpetrated in our name, and for which we will be remembered in history unless we act now to break the will of the government.



LEFT: Owen Carron in his election HQ with Sean Sands. The result of what is expected to be an extremely close election in Fermanagh/South Tyrone will not be known until Saturday. Owen Carron, who is standing as an H Block/Armagh candidate, has been supported by many relatives of hunger strikers, in particular by Bobby Sands' younger brother Sean, and by two of Tom McElwee's sisters. The campaign has been extremely bitter, with the Unionists pulling out all the stops. Owen Carron's supporters have come under acute harassment by the RUC, the Army and the UDR, of which Ken Maginnis was until recently a major. Owen's brother John and another supporter were shot at while putting up posters. The last-minute candidacy of Tom Moore, the "Workers' Party" candidate, is seen as an attempt to deprive Owen Carron of sufficient votes to allow Ken Maginnis to be elected.

FITZGERALD

In an ITV television interview last Sunday Ireland's Prime Minister, Garret Fitzgerald said that his government had "a very critical attitude to the British Government and its inflexibility" on the hunger strike and called on them to begin to make efforts to end the hunger strike by negotiating along the lines proposed by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace.

However, on Tuesday, Garret Fitzgerald, refused to meet the National H Block/Armagh Committee. A statement issued by the Committee condemned the decision and challenged Fitzgerald to a television debate. It went on: "When elected, Dr. Fitzgerald made a statement to the effect that solving the H Block

crisis was his number one priority. But in the period since his election, no fewer than five hunger strikers have died including an elected T.D. Yet the Government has still done nothing concrete to pressurize Mrs Thatcher to concede the prisoners' five just demands".

They then called on him to support the prisoners' demands.

GROUNDSWELL OF SUPPORT

However, the fact that Garret Fitzgerald has said anything at all is a change from his days as leader of the opposition. Just before the previous hunger strike ended, he called upon Thatcher not to concede to the prisoners. His guarded criticisms of the British Government have been made because of the ground-

swell of support throughout Ireland for the hunger strikers. While there aren't many large national marches or activities reading of local papers shows that in many counties even the smallest of towns have their support committees for the hunger strikers.

This support is beginning to permeate through to the orthodox political bodies. Frequently the hunger strike crisis is on the agenda of urban and district councils' meetings. After Tom McElwee's death, numerous councils adjourned as a mark of respect. It is slowly but steadily becoming the major political priority, overshadowing all other areas of politics in Ireland. One Irish newspaper has said that as much as 80% of the Irish Government's Cabinet time is now taken up with the hunger strike issue.

MICKEY DEVINE



As we go to print, hunger striker Mickey Devine is drifting in and out of a coma, and his death is imminent. His condition has deteriorated sharply over the past week. He has been unable to hold down water and has been coughing up blood. His eyesight is almost completely gone.

Mickey, who is twenty-seven, has been active in republican socialist politics since the British Army first went into Northern Ireland. He is a member of the IRSP and is leader of their prisoners in the H Blocks. He smuggled out the letter below a few weeks ago from his prison cell which

NEW HUNGER STRIKER

JACKIE McMULLAN, 25, from Andersonstown, Belfast, joined the hunger strike when he refused food on Monday morning.

Jackie was a close friend of Kieran Doherty TD, and shared a cell with him in Crumlin Road Jail

while on remand in 1976. He has been in Long Kesh since December 1976 and has been on protest since then. Like many of the other hunger strikers one of his brothers is also in Long Kesh on the blanket protest.

explains graphically why he is dying on hunger strike in the H Blocks.

Comrades and Friends,

... (Referring to the death of Joe McDonnell)
His example encouraged me in more ways than one. Not only did it strengthen my spirit and deepen my resolve but it also fired me with a burning anger that those who are to blame, not only for his death and the deaths of the other four hunger strikers, but also for the terrible evils and injustices inflicted upon our oppressed people. . . .

How many more must die in the H Blocks before Thatcher and her henchmen are satisfied? None of my comrades who have gone before me wanted to die — they had too much to live for. I do not wish to die for I have too much to live for. Yet in what manner must we live? If we have not our dignity then what have we? I am what I am — a human being — a man with feelings and emotions. Yet in the eyes of my oppressors I am nothing. As each day slips by I will keep uppermost in my mind the unquenchable spirit and magnificent example of those already buried and martyrs' graves and find, in the risen people, the risen Irish people, my source of resistance and strength. There is nothing more that any human being values than life. Everyone clings to it with every ounce of strength of their being. To willingly surrender it is acknowledged as the greatest sacrifice anyone can make. Not only to die, but to choose a death which is slow and agonising, further serves to illustrate the depths of courage and sincerity amongst the men in the H Blocks of Long Kesh. What it takes to willingly undergo this ordeal, willingly undergo suffering, none of us can possibly imagine. . . .

H Block is a festering sore on the face of Ireland. It, and those responsible for it, must be smashed. All we have to give is our lives. We simply ask you to do your share and prevent further tragedy.

Bua do bas.

S.A.S. RAID

It has been learned that the raid on a block of flats in West Belfast in which CS gas was used and several pensioners were injured was carried out by an SAS unit and not by the RUC as previously thought.

Two unmarked cars containing eight men in civilian clothes drew up outside the Louisville flats. They donned gas masks before charging into the complex. They riddled doors with live bullets, then kicked them in.

The soldiers fired CS gas canisters into a flat occupied by Mr. William Sheperd and his wife Kathleen, aged 73 and 68. Two canisters became entangled in Mrs. Sheperd's clothing and she was severely burned on the arms and legs.

The same operation was carried out in an adjoining flat but nothing was found.

SAS units have stepped up their undercover activities in the North of Ireland with the development of the hunger strike. More than 120 soldiers of the SAS have been drafted into Northern Ireland to operate mainly in Belfast, Derry, Armagh and along the Tyrone and Fermanagh parts of the Border.

During the election campaign in Fermanagh, SAS men have been noticed in the company of uniformed patrols along the border, and have also been seen on the southern side of the border.

The recent increase in sectarian attacks and this open use of the SAS bring back ominous memories of the autumn hunger strike campaign, when the series of assassinations of prominent H Block/Armagh campaigners by one or more highly trained squads was accompanied by a spate of plainly sectarian attacks.

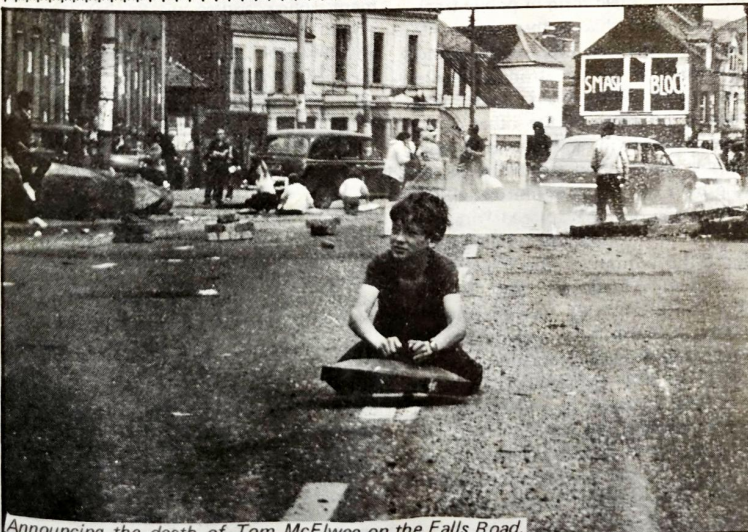
The raid in the Louisville Flats was similar to one in September last year when an SAS unit burst into two houses in Twinbrook occupied by some people in the local H Block/Armagh support group. A woman and her 15-year-old daughter were bound and gagged and held for some hours. Their hands were bound with plastic handcuffs which were similar to those found on Miriam Daly's hands. (Miriam Daly was a prominent supporter of the prisoners, who was brutally assassinated in her home.) They were released only after neighbours caused a huge outcry outside the house for a long time.

Suzanne Bunting, who was seriously wounded when a group of gunmen burst into her house in October and assassinated Ronnie Bunting and Noel Lyttle (two more prominent H Block/Armagh activists) afterwards said she believed her attackers were SAS men.

It is obvious that the SAS unit involved in the Louisville Flats attack had picked the wrong target, but if the flats had contained H Block/Armagh activists, those inside might have come off even worse than Mr. and Mrs. Sheperd.

ORPHANS TO VISIT COUNTY HALL

Three children whose mother was killed when a bomb carried in Tom McElwee's car exploded prematurely are visiting County Hall today (Friday) accompanied by two Paisleyite local councillors from Ballymena. The visit was organised in response to the recent visit of Tom McElwee's mother to the GLC headquarters. In stark contrast to the DUP councillors' total silence on the deaths of children shot by plastic bullets, the visit is a blatant use of the children's tragic position to try to crush support for the hunger strikers in Britain.



Announcing the death of Tom McElwee on the Falls Road.



Recently painted West Belfast wall mural

DANE INJURED BY PLASTIC BULLETS

The British Army and its indiscriminate use of plastic bullets have raised indignant protests from Danes following a newspaper article in Copenhagen on a Danish social worker shot down on the streets of Belfast as he tried to help a Canadian press photographer to escape from riots.

The incident occurred on August 8th but Mr. Neilsen is still hospitalised after being hit by a plastic bullet in the lower abdomen. "I was dragged to shelter and some time later I was taken to hospital by ambulance" he said. "My pelvis was shattered by the bullet and there was excruciating pain."

"At the hospital I tried to get and RUC officer to take a complaint but he seemed to be more interested in what country I was from than in doing anything about my complaint."

"My Canadian press-photographer friend was treated as a suspect although he only wanted to tell what he saw in evidence for me."

"The British Army use their plastic bullets in an indiscriminate way and certainly not, as the British Army says, only in threatened situations. It is now easy for me to understand why people dare not report being shot with plastic bullets by police — they treat you as being the worst form of life", adds Mr. Neilsen.

Meanwhile the army continues to use the plastic bullet as an instrument of oppression. On Monday a white line picket for the prisoners took place just off the Falls Road (these are pickets standing in a line down the centre of the road). Marine Commandos persistently drove their Saracens very fast past the picket, occasionally firing plastic bullets out of the back door. However the picket stood firm.

Many of the other local vigils and marches continue to be attacked in such a fashion, but the most worrying use of plastic bullets continues to be the practice of firing them at playing children.

SECTARIAN ATTACK

A black taxi from the Falls Road Taxi Association was shot at last Wednesday in Castle Street, which is at the end of the Falls Road. The black taxis and the Castle Street shops are used almost exclusively by people from nationalist West Belfast. The attackers fired five shots at the taxi which was full of passengers, but luckily no-one was hit. The motor cycle used in the attack was found soon afterwards in the loyalist Shankill Road.

The following day the British Army blocked off the end of the Falls Road and other roads from West Belfast. Black taxis (which are the main form of public transport) were told that if they wanted to bring their passengers into the city centre they should go via the strongly loyalist Sandy Row. More black taxis then converged on some of the other major city centre junctions and refused to move until the Army lifted the blockade. As traffic built up, the Army retreated, but the following day they placed "dragons' teeth" (a row of metal spikes) across one lane at the bottom of the Falls Road, thus continuing to disrupt traffic.

Because black taxis are run as a co-operative by locals they are very much a people's transport service and have come under increasing harassment from the Army. This incident also illustrates the renewed use of an old tactic of the Army, — using sectarian attacks as an excuse for harassment of the prisoners' supporters, thereby encouraging further sectarian attacks.

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

IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A HUNGER STRIKER, there will be a **BLACK FLAG MOURNING VIGIL** IN **KILBURN SQUARE** for three consecutive evenings or until the day of the funeral, starting each evening at 7.30pm.

PRISON PICKETS

ALBANY, PARKHURST, DURHAM, WAKEFIELD, LEICESTER

All from 1 to 3 pm on Sunday Aug. 23rd
Organised by Provisional Sinn Fein

"WE OURSELVES SPEAK" NEW VIDEO FILM

A new, very well made video, which though mainly about the hunger strike gives a good overall view of Ireland at the moment. Unusual in that it has no commentary but rather uses the voices of people interviewed in Ireland to illustrate the footage.

TWO SHOWINGS ARE COMING SOON:

**Hackney Trades Hall,
96 Dalston Lane, London E8
August 26th at 7.30pm**

Org. by East London Prisoners Action Group

**Hemingford Arms, Offord Road. N1
Tuesday September 8th
at 7p.m.**

Org. by Camden & Islington T.O.M.

LUTON MARCH

**Organised by Provisional Sinn Fein
September 19th
(see further bulletins for details)**

WORKERS' MARCH FOR IRISH FREEDOM

**From Manchester to Blackpool,
5th-8th September**

A 3-day march and lobby of the TUC organised by Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign. To support the hunger strikers, to condemn the TUC and Labour Party's backing of Government policy, and to win British workers' support for the Irish national liberation struggle. For more details write to BM RCT, London WC1N 3XX.

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, videos, music, poems, talks. Stalls available. Contact: 1 North End Road, London W14 8ST.

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