

HUNGER STRIKE

Leading The Way Forward

"The heroism of the ten H-Block martyrs, the courage of the men and women protesting prisoners, the stupidity of the British Government and the principled response of the nationalist people to the prisoners' plight has had a deep and permanent effect on nationalist politics in Ireland.

1981 — the year of the Hunger Strike — was no mere temporary setback for British policies in Ireland. Nationally and internationally its effects will be felt as the struggle for Irish independence progresses in the months and years ahead."



YOU

The Irish Establishment

- the S.D.L.P. the Church hierarchy, the Dublin government, the Fianna Fail - Fine Gale - Labour bloc, the trade union leadership -
STAND INDICTED OF THE LEAGLISED MURDER OF 10 IDEALISTIC, DEEPLY PRINCIPLED YOUNG IRISHMEN IN BRITAIN'S NOTORIOUS H-BLOCKS.

YOU

continuously condemned the hunger strike yet offered no alternative course of action.

YOU

tried to put the prisoners on the defensive by attacking the I.R.A. leadership, claiming they were responsible for the hunger strike by not ordering prisoners off it.

YOU

attempted to mislead the public about the hunger strike claiming it was "morally wrong".

YOU

strengthened Britain's hand by condemning those campaigning for the prisoners.

YOU

did nothing to stand up to Britain in defence of the rights or lives of Irish prisoners in British jails.

YOU

ignored the pleas of dying men, and refused to take the only effective action open to you.

YOU

refused to isolate Britain's administration here by withdrawing from the Councils.

YOU

stood idly by throughout the hunger strike, even to the point of watching one of your own TD's, Kieran Doherty, die in agony after 73 days without food.

YOU

consciously created the illusion of "behind the scenes movement"

YOU

deliberately built false hopes around the intervention of various outside bodies.

YOU

knew their presence and efforts were being cynically exploited by the British as part of their ongoing policy of brinkmanship against the hunger strike.

YOU STAND CONDEMNED

by your silence over the years. You failed to condemn Britain and allowed conditions inside the prisons to fester until prisoners saw no alternative action available to them but the hunger strike.

YOU STAND CONDEMNED - your inaction continually let Britain off the hook at every juncture.

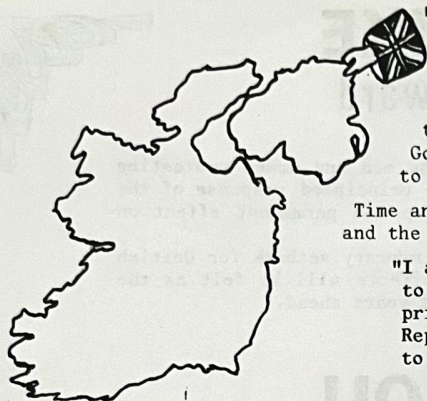
YOU STAND CONDEMNED - by every action you turned your backs on those who sought the essential justice of re-established unity and nationhood.

YOU STAND CONDEMNED - you exploited and distorted the history of this corrupt state to suit your own purpose.

YOU ARE ALL GUILTY

through your collaboration with the British, of the MURDER of the ten hunger strikers plus the thousands who died since the creation of the corrupt sectarian state of "Northern Ireland".

THE HISTORICAL BASIS



All these failures, disappointments and revelations of treachery towards both the hunger strike and the nationalist people by the Dublin Government, the Church and the S.D.L.P. are rooted in their common refusal to face up to the National Question.

Time and again, the blanketmen pointed out the inseparability of their struggle and the revolutionary struggle of the Irish people for freedom:

"I am dying not just to end the barbarity of H-Block, or even to gain rightful recognition as a political prisoner, but primarily because what is lost in here is lost for the Republic and for those wretched oppressed I am deeply proud to know as the Risen People."

(Bobby Sands, Diary, March 1, 1981.)



The establishment has nothing to offer towards a solution. Their spineless response to the hunger strike crisis proved them incapable of taking decisive action to defend either the lives of the prisoners or the future of the nationalist people. Experience has proven time and again there is no future for the nationalist people in the context of the Six County state. Likewise there is no future for the Irish people as a whole in a partitioned Ireland.

Putting the national question into its proper context and analysing their actions, the Irish establishment emerges as a powerful partitionist bloc - no matter how loudly the S.D.L.P., Catholic Hierarchy or members of the Dublin Government protest otherwise. Not words but actions count. Their refusal to challenge Partition denies the irrepressible right of the people of this nation to freedom for the nation - not in part, not as a divided thing, but for the nation as a whole. Their refusal to take action to challenge Partition in effect is a proposal to begin the journey towards unity by making concession to a power whose past behaviour and present policy created Partition and now perpetuates it.



The establishment ignores the fact that Partition was forced violently on the Irish people, by the British, with the threat of "immediate and terrible war". The establishment knows well that in the only opportunity the Irish people got to express their national will in a democratic election, an overwhelming majority voted for freedom and unity. They know this democratic will of the Irish people was frustrated and restricted by the British, who had already unleashed a reign of terror on our people and threatened worse if the terms of the Partition Treaty were not accepted.

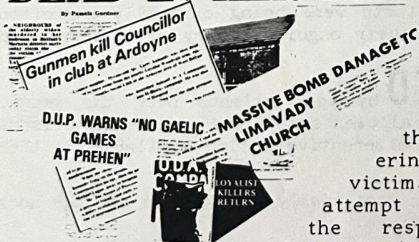
The Unionist of Northwest Ireland played their part in this coercion of a nation, by arming for civil war. The appalling record of the British-created, British-backed Stormont regime stands as public knowledge. Sixty years of Unionist mis-rule set an uneivable record for all to see. This record made inevitable yet another military effort by

an outraged people to end this monstrous injustice. In accepting Partition, the Irish establishment continually expresses their concern for the Loyalists in the Six Counties. These Partitionists ought to demonstrate equal concern for the half million nationalists of the Six Counties who for 60 yrs suffered grievously from the active political hatred of the Unionist politicians, backed by the military guarantee from Britain.



The Legal Position

WOMAN IS SHOT DEAD IN HER BED



the suffering of the victim. Any attempt to shift the responsibility for this disease onto its victim 'the nationalist people' or onto those the 'P.M.' taking direct action to cure the disease at its source, is equally dangerous nonsense.

NONE OF THIS IS PAST HISTORY

It is happening this very day and will continue to happen tomorrow and the next day until justice ends this crime upon the island of Ireland and against the vast majority of the Irish people by re-establishing nationhood and political unity.

The idea that a cancer like partition can be cured by anything less than radical surgery is dangerous nonsense and only prolongs





The People's Response

THE RESPONSE OF THE IRISH PEOPLE STOOD OUT IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE TREACHERY, FAILURE AND GUILT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT. Thousands came out onto the streets from their homes and workplaces to march. They worked within their trade unions, clubs and community organisations to organise massive public support for the hunger strikers and their five demands. Mirroring the endurance of the hunger strikers themselves, the people maintained their staunch and principled solidarity with the prisoners for the duration of a hunger strike that lasted nearly a full year. They successfully resisted every effort by the British and by the Irish establishment to demoralise and intimidate them.

Throughout the hunger strike the Irish establishment stood with the British — despite hunger strikers dying at a rate of one a week. Nothing distinguished them from their Unionist counterparts but words.

Was there ever much difference between the two? Neither seriously questioned partition — Unionists blatantly supported it; the Irish establishment did nothing to end it. Both scrambled after crumbs of power from the British table, jockeying for position in this sectarian statelet. For all their apparent differences, the mountains of words and endless debates failed to change the reality of life for the nationalist community. They succeeded only in keeping the same politicians in power year after year. They claimed to speak for the people, but acted in the interests of the middle and upper classes.

There is no future for the Irish people in the context of the sectarian Partition state. The nationalist community is politically insignificant and totally powerless within the Six County state.

Britain proved this by ignoring the unprecedented demonstrations of the will of the nationalist community. Britain ignored hundred of thousands who came out to marches, to hunger strikers' funerals, ignored the electoral victories, ignored the countless expression of community solidarity and support for the hunger strikers. Once again Britain proved that nothing has changed since Stormont fell or since the set-up of this sectarian



Running Blind

The lesson is clear: the will of the nationalist community is always subject to British and Loyalist veto.

It was Britain who forever undermined their own vaunted principle of using the "democratic process" to bring about social or political change. They not only ignored the result of the first Fermanagh/S. Tyrone election, not only changed the rules then to suit themselves but then ignored the result of the second election as well. Both Britain — by her actions in the hunger strike — and the establishment — by their proven impotence — demolished any argument for nationalist pacifism. The blanketmen observed from their prison cells:

"Nationalist pacifism in the Northern Ireland context dooms the nationalist population to subservency, perpetuates partition, and thwarts the quest for a just and lasting peace".

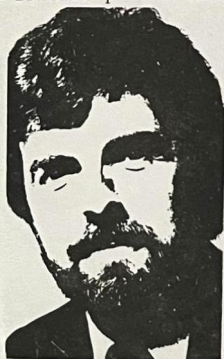
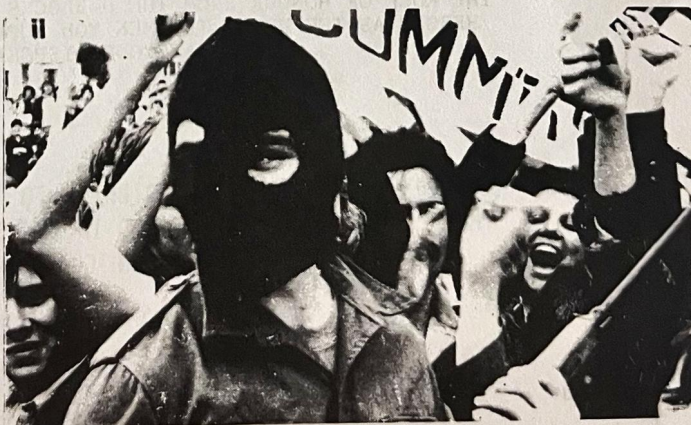
THE HUNGER STRIKERS SHOWED US THE WAY FORWARD — NOT BY PLEAS OR COLLABORATION, BUT BY DIRECT ACTION TO CHANGE THE SITUATION.

The establishment slavishly accepted 60 years of Unionist misrule, rarely even protesting with words. The prisoners resisted for nearly five years by principled protests — and then took their very lives in their hands with their last remaining weapon.

THE ESTABLISHMENT TALKED
REPUBLICAN PRISONERS TOOK ACTION

WHOSE EXAMPLE WILL WE FOLLOW? THE CHOICE TODAY IS OURS.

Nationally and internationally, the hunger strikers achieved universal recognition for their bravery in a deadly political battle. Their determination, courage and selfless commitment to each other and to the Irish people won them international acclaim. By the depth of their commitment to justice they have gained world-wide recognition for the revolutionary struggle of the Irish people for freedom and self-determination in a reunified country.



FORWARD

By their heroic sacrifices, the hunger strikers gave us an unparalleled opportunity to move forward towards a genuine and lasting solution to Ireland's problem. Only the Republican Movement offers any serious alternative to endless establishment policies. Revolutionary change is the only change which will affect the lives of working men and women, the unemployed and their families and the youth. The Republican Movement not only speaks for you but ACTS for you. We look to the future, taking direct action now which will bring that new future into existence.

THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT LEADS THE PEOPLE, WHERE THE ESTABLISHMENT SEEKS ONLY TO
RESTRAIN THEM FROM DEALING WITH THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM.

The Irish people have, because of the sacrifices of the hunger strikers, a unique opportunity to rise and crush the monstrous injustice of a devided, occupied, servile country once for all. The deep unity between the hunger strikers and the people was evident for all to see. We marvelled as the hunger strikers refused to be broken. For those who came out in such principled support of the hunger strikers to abandon the struggle now, to throw away this opportunity to achieve a lasting solution, would be an insult to the lives and memories of the ten H-Block martyrs.



THE ROLL OF HONOUR FROM THE H-BLOCKS RUNS TO TEN MEN, EACH AS
HEROIC AS THE REST. TEN MEN YOU SUPPORTED WITH EVERY MEANS
AT YOUR DISPOSAL.

THERE IS ONLY ONE FITTING TRIBUTE TO THE TEN HUNGER STRIKE MARTYRS:
THE REUNIFICATION OF IRELAND IN THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
FOR WHICH THEY DIED.