

We're not criminals, but Irishmen!

Irish Republican Prisoners in Maghaberry Gaol, Co Antrim, have commenced a dirty protest at the continued denial of political status by the British government. Conditions in the prison have steadily deteriorated over the past couple of years with death threats and attacks on republican prisoners by loyalists becoming commonplace. The British policy of forced segregation means that no more than two republican prisoners are kept on one landing where they are surrounded by loyalists, common criminals and drug abusers and in some cases are outnumbered twenty to one. Cells in the prison have been destroyed, fires have been lit and a rooftop protest has taken place to highlight their plight.



Support the Four Demands!

1. Segregation from Loyalists and criminal prisoners.
2. Recognition as a group.
3. The right to have their own spokesman.
4. A wing of their own.

The issues at stake are not new. It is a continuation of the 'normalisation' (ie criminalisation) process begun by the British in the Six Occupied Counties in the mid-1970's - to treat the political conflict caused by the British occupation as a series of criminal incidents to be dealt with by the police and the normal justice system. The fact that these prisoners were sentenced in a politically directed non-jury Diplock court gives the lie to Britain's criminalisation process. Under the hidden agenda of the Stormont Agreement, the political status gained by Billy McKee and his comrades on hunger strike in Belfast Jail in 1972 and won back once more after it has been removed by the British government in 1976, was withdrawn again for new prisoners. It was, of course, the blanket protest followed by the no-wash protest and the prolonged hunger strike in 1981, resulting in the supreme sacrifice by Bobby Sands and his nine comrades, which recovered political status on the second occasion - that time at enormous price.

The prisoners' actions are politically motivated, they are charged under political acts and tried in political non-jury courts. They are political prisoners. We appeal to all concerned individuals and groups to support the four basic demands before we are faced with the daunting prospect of another hunger strike. We are not calling on you to back their political opinions, but we do ask that you back their basic rights as political prisoners. We will not allow England to criminalise our prisoners or our struggle for freedom and we intend on making this issue a live one over the coming weeks.



"We refuse to lie here in dishonour! We are not criminals, but Irishmen! This is the crime of which we stand accused..."
- Bobby Sands

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You CAN Help!

Letters, eMails and Phone Calls Save Lives:

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For more information:
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Organised by **Na Fianna Éireann**
and **Working Class Action**

www.FiannaEireann.com



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