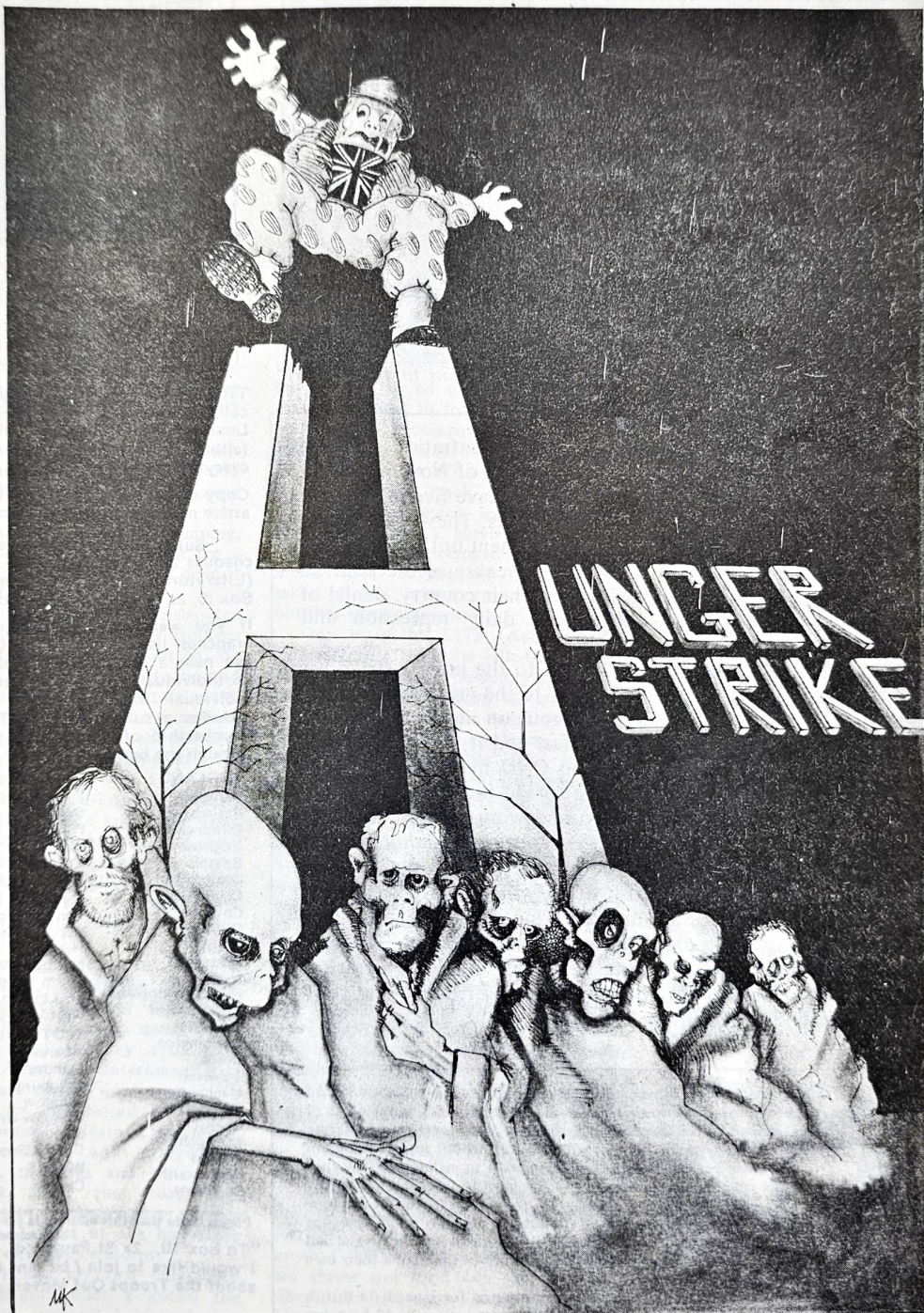


# TROOPS OUT

Vol. 4, No. 3, December 1980

Paper of the Troops Out Movement 15p



**TROOPS OUT NOW!  
SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE  
IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE!**





National Demonstration in London on 15th Nov. draws attention to the Hunger Strike. (Photo TOM)

On October 27th seven Irish prisoners in the concentration camp of Long Kesh went on hunger strike, and at the end of November four women prisoners in Armagh Jail joined it. They have five simple and practical demands which amount to political status. They are political prisoners, a fact recognised by the British Government until 1976. They are people who have landed up in prison only because of the political situation in Northern Ireland—the division of their country, denial of national independence, military occupation, daily repression and suspension of civil liberties.

The response of the British Government to the hunger strike has been to sit back and say it will not "give in" to the prisoners. And the press colludes with this by a complete blackout on news about it. On October 26th over 30,000 marched in Belfast and it was hardly mentioned in the newspapers, while a London CND march of the same numbers got a front page and centre page spread in the *Daily Mirror*. But each day that passes brings these men and women closer to death. December is the critical month because the seven men cannot actually survive much longer if their demands are not met. If one dies another will join the hunger strike: the British State will not just be running concentration camps, it will be running extermination camps. Will we shut our eyes and pretend we didn't know it was happening? Act now—in cities all over Britain there are protests, pickets and demonstrations taking place to condemn the government's callous brutality and show support for the prisoners. Get out and join them!

The Troops Out Movement is a national movement made up of people who believe that the cause of the 'troubles' in the north of Ireland is the continuing British presence there, both military and economic. We believe that British troops are in Ireland not as a peacekeeping force, but in order to maintain British rule, and that their presence is the most serious obstacle to any progress towards peace. For over ten years the troops have been occupying a part of Ireland, coercing and oppressing the nationalist people, maintaining the division of Ireland and ensuring that its people cannot unite to determine their own future.

We have been working as an organisation for immediate British withdrawal since the early 1970s. We now have over 40 branches around the country. These branches, working locally in whatever

ways circumstances allow, are the backbone of the TOM. Membership, or affiliation, is open to any individual or group supporting the demands:

**TROOPS OUT NOW**

**SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE**



#### NEW PAMPHLET: 'SINN FEIN SPEAKS'

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If you want to join one of the TOM branches listed below, or if you don't live near a branch and want to join as an individual, fill in the coupon below. Individual membership is £3, which includes a subscription to Troops Out. Membership of a branch is £2, payable through the branch.

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# The Education of a Hunger Striker

In 1968 in Armagh I wasn't yet thirteen when the first civil rights march was held. I didn't understand it at all. I only sensed that something important was happening. PAISLEYITES TOOK OVER THE TOWN THAT NIGHT. The most I remember of the march itself was being crushed in the crowd.

In 1969 I watched on TV as the RUC and the people of the Bogside battled it out. The RUC had always been hated — they never gave us peace so we didn't give them much either.

August 14th — That night I stood at the Shambles area. A meeting was in progress at the city hall. Senator Lemmon and others spoke. The B Specials, RUC and Paisleyites gathered in the town. I remember the tension. Trouble was inevitable. After the meeting the Paisleyites and the RUC attacked. I managed to stay about for an hour or so and then the shooting started and the older men chased us home. That night I didn't sleep. The gunfire continued until early morning. I watched the glow of the burning buildings from my bedroom window. Next day I attended John Gallagher's wake. I walked to Cathedral Road to the spot where the B Specials murdered him. I still remember the dark clotted blood on the path. I remember the rings painted around the bullet holes in the ground and walls. My father and I followed the cortege. My da said at the graveside that this was only the beginning, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, wait and see. This was how it was, trouble followed trouble.

1970 — The B specials were disbanded and the RUC disarmed. The troubles and riots and now shooting went on. We all took part, we didn't have to be told why it was happening. I saw it as us the poor hitting back, looking for something better. That year I found myself avoiding the RUC who were hunting me for throwing stones.

1971 — There was a lot of talk about the IRA. I didn't quite know who they were but they were on our side anyway. I remember watching the Easter parades. I was beginning to learn a bit now and take more interest. I saw men behind the barricades at night with guns.

In August armoured cars rumbled into our estate. Things had changed now with the Brits — they didn't play football in Sherrys field no more. When they left our estate they took men with them. After that internment was more than just a new word to me. We built barricades and rioted for weeks on end. I began to learn a lot more. Slogans covered the walls everywhere. Big marches, meetings and riots were commonplace. The ring road and Drumarg estate were centre points of resistance. I slept at the barricades until dawn broke many a morn.

1972 — I had my first experience with organisations when I joined the Fianna (youth section). I learned that there was more to war than throwing petrol bombs. The Officials called a cease-fire that year and the Provos too. I was arrested and questioned more times than enough. I appeared in court where I pleaded not guilty to

riotous behaviour charges but was found guilty.

1973 — I was avoiding the Brits now but not for long. I was arrested and taken to the RUC station. Then early next morning I was taken by land rover to Gough barracks. I was dragged out of the jeep and frog-marched across to a helicopter. I was scared as this wasn't the usual routine. The helicopter headed off with me handcuffed to the seat and an RUC man on my right. It stopped near Castledillon and got fuel, then headed for Ballykelly, the now infamous interrogation centre. The turbulence scared me and the pilot seeing this played up to it. The RUC man threatened to toss me out. Threats and insults accompanied me all the way. I spent three days in Ballykelly in a room about 6ft by 6 ft with the walls all painted black and a bare electric light bulb which was left burning day and night. I survived Ballykelly but 'Sam' who interrogated me assured me I would be got and no questions asked. I was beaten up in Ballykelly, but that was nothing new.

One night in 1973 (April 7th) a bullet from a Brit rifle killed my friend Jake and another seriously wounded me, as we walked along the street. My bowels and intestines hung out of a big hole cut in my abdomen. I don't know how I didn't die. Jake was hit in an artery, his blood spattered over me as we both fell to the ground. I talked with him before he died. I remember well all he said and how he faced death bravely. I've always wanted to write down all he said. I will always remember the blood and the screams for help. After this I have been afraid of death, that is of a painful death.

1974 — In February at my trial in the Diplock Court I pleaded not guilty but despite my testimony and that of three witnesses the judge, Gibson, accepted the word of a Brit soldier and found me guilty. I was sentenced to 5 years. This was not to be my last experience with the Diplock courts.

LONG KESH — I arrived in Long Kesh the day after my trial and tried to settle in and take an interest in education. I read a lot about politics and learned a lot but more trouble soon arose. Conditions were bad and in protest we threw our food out over the wire. Sheets and pillowcases hung on the wire. Visits and parcels were stopped and tension increased. This culminated in the fire. When we burnt the camp we were attacked by the Brits with tear gas, batons and dogs.

When the split came and the Irish Republican Socialist Party was formed,



*In Belfast today. Will these children have to fight for their freedom? (Photo TOM)*

myself and C. McQuaid joined. We were not given recognition by the prison authorities but after a thirteen day hunger strike we got our demands. I educated myself reading Connolly, Lenin and anything else I could get. When I was released after 2½ years I was well aware of our history both social and economic and eager to get back into the fight.

1976 — I didn't realise in 1976 how much things had changed. By December I was back in Crumlin Road. The blanket protest had begun in Long Kesh in the H-Blocks.

1977 — In September, after nearly 10 months on remand, I appeared in another Diplock court. I pleaded not guilty to their charge of armed robbery but McGrath, the judge, found me guilty on the basis of a VERBAL statement the RUC claimed I had made. I don't think he even listened to my side of the story. He gave me 14 years. Two days later I was in an H-Block cell wrapped only in a blanket. Then came the dirty protest.

THREE YEARS LATER I'M STILL HERE — My skin is covered in a rash, my body emaciated. Three years of suffering in this stinking wretched cell.

I refuse to be treated as a criminal. This history since 1968 clearly shows why I am here doing what I do. I AM prepared to do much more — even to die. I believe that my death will do something for others. DARE TO STRUGGLE — DARE TO WIN!

John Nixon  
H-5, Long Kesh



# BRITAIN~ SUPPORT BUILDS UP

**Friday 24th October**

The Birmingham Hunger-Strike Action Group hold a Press Conference in Birmingham Labour Club.

The RCT organise a picket of Brixton Prison on the anniversary of Terence McSwiney's death there on hunger-strike.

**Saturday – Sunday 25th-26th**

Street meetings, leafleting and petitioning in Birmingham, Wood Green, and a torchlight march through Kilburn. 250 people attend a blanket protest/picket outside Downing Street. It's organised by Charter 80 and supported by Sinn Fein, IRSP and TOM. A 5 person delegation hand a letter into Thatcher, appealing to her to get the Government to avert the hunger-strike by conceding the 5 demands.

Three women from the Relatives Action Committee in Belfast, Lily Fitzsimmons, Eileen McMullan and Rose McAllister stage a 24 hour fast in solidarity with the hunger-strike, outside Downing St, which is supported for the whole period.

600 women from the Socialist Feminist Conference picket Rochester Row police station where Anne Boyle and Maire O'Hare are being held, after being detained at Heathrow on their way to the Conference. The picket goes on nightly until Thursday.

The route of the CND march is painted with H-Block and Armagh slogans. 12 are arrested and 3 are subsequently charged with criminal damage! There's mass leafletting of the CND march and a friendly presence on it.

There's a blanket protest outside St. Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham.

**Monday – Friday (27th-31st)**

Charter 80 organise a Press Conference in the House of Commons, where Deborah Devenney and Mrs McKearney speak. Deborah has a brother on the blanket protest and Mrs McKearney a son on hunger strike.

LBC (London radio station) interview Mrs McKearney and Deborah and a representative from the Troops Out Movement takes part in a phone-in programme.

There are torchlight pickets in Islington and Birmingham. The rally in Birmingham is attacked by fascists. The Irish Solidarity Society hold 24 hour token fast and take a collection for the H-Block appeal fund.

Deborah Devenney addresses 4 student unions in London:– Goldsmiths, City of London Poly, LSE and Central. All pass motions supporting the 5 demands. Middlesex passes a further motion in support of Troops Out Now! LSE does a 72 hour solidarity fast, and Central donates Deborah's fare and £100 to Charter 80.

East London TOM hold a well-attended meeting.

A Manchester Charter 80 meeting is attacked by fascists.

Leeds TOM show the Patriot Game to 150 people, preceded by mass leafletting about the hunger strike and Pauline McLaughlin's situation.

**Saturday Nov. 1st**

Marches and leafletting in London areas continue, also in Oxford.

Norwich TOM suspend a Political Status banner from the Town Hall, and a leaflet underneath it. They get good publicity

There is a women's picket of Durham Jail, and the IRSP have a successful social in London.

**Monday – Sunday (3rd - 9th Nov)**

RCT organise a rally in Manchester on the 6th.

There are pickets and leafletting around the serious condition of Pauline McLaughlin.

On Friday, a 48 hour fast in support of the hunger strike begins outside Downing Street. Sinn Fein, IRSP Charter 80 and TOM members take part. Lord Gifford, Alan Sapper and Gordon McClellan also come. The fast ends with a march and picket of Downing St. by over 200 people, on Remembrance Sunday.

On the Saturday, as the Lord Mayor's Show made its stately way through the streets of London, the RCT hung a 30 foot banner from the top of St Paul's Cathedral – "Smash H Block".

**Monday – Friday (10th - 14th Nov)**

Charter 80 and TOM branch public meetings in West and North London

– Prisoners' Action Groups set up locally. On Thursday there's a Press Conference in Westminster on the condition of Pauline McLaughlin. Her case is taken up by Lords Longford, Gifford, Kilbracken, Brockway.

On Friday there's a large torchlight picket for Pauline in Downing St for 2 hours.

IRSP holds a well attended meeting

with Nora Connolly O'Brien speaking.

**Saturday – Sunday (15th-16th Nov)**

National Withdrawal Committee National Demonstration in London. Supported by TOM, Sinn Fein, IRSP and left socialist groups. Over 3000 march through Central London. TOM delegation concentrates on the prisoners' issue.

Sinn Fein, IRSP, South London and East London TOM organise an orderly protest in Mass at Westminster Cathedral after Cardinal Hume's letter is read out which condemned the hunger strike. They get support from other members of the congregation and an interview on LBC, broadcast throughout the day on the News.

**17th – 24th November**

On 21st. Nov. there is a meeting held by the South London Hunger Strike Action Group in Lambeth Town Hall. Speakers from Trade Unions and Sinn Fein.

On 22nd there was a blanket picket of Winston Green.

Another rally in Manchester (23rd) – on the anniversary of the Manchester Martyrs – 19th century Fenians whose fight for Irish freedom continues today. Manchester's Hunger Strike Committee hold a 24 hour fast in St Peter's Square.

A blanket protest and mass leafletting in Precinct City centre of Coventry. Public meetings held in Leicester, Colchester, Harlow, Cambridge, Derby, and every Saturday in Liverpool.

There's a Dundee march on 29th Nov.

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The Conference of Plaid Cymru – the Welsh republican Party – passed this strong and understanding resolution in support of the prisoners: "In view of the recent statement that the prisoners held in barbaric conditions in Long Kesh are now committed to a hunger strike until death in an effort to achieve political status, this Conference condemns the British Government's treatment of these prisoners and the fact that they are denied political status, and supports this attempt to achieve justice in the struggle for Irish independence." This amendment was also passed: "Plaid Cymru will actively support Charter 80, the campaign for Irish POWs and will mobilise its membership into the activities of Charter 80".

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# TIDAL WAVE OF SUPPORT



## Monday – Sunday (20th-26th Oct)

Torchlight procession, vigils and H-Block displays are set up to build for the eve of hunger strike march in Belfast. Action groups and Youth against H-Block groups are set up.

Meetings held at Queens University and Ulster Polytechnic, both pass motions supporting the 5 demands. Over 1000 march in Derry for hunger striker and Pauline. The Sunday march in Belfast is massive – 25,000 – the biggest since the internment marches.

## Monday – Sunday (27th - 2nd Nov)

There are extensive roadblocks set up by pickets in Belfast and Derry. Construction workers down tools in solidarity in Market area.

Over 300 women occupy a store in Belfast city centre and display placards. Local radio stations are occupied in Derry and a new leisure centre's reception occupied at its opening for 2 hours. Torchlight marches continue in local areas. Over 100 people attempt to get into Derry Council's meeting. Its cancelled but they agree to meet H-Block delegation.

## Monday – Friday (3rd-9th Nov)

The Youth Group picket Fort Jericho in W.Belfast.

Windows of houses are smashed by the Army in Andersonstown for displaying H-Block posters – so large numbers start to display them.

The Dept. of Manpower Services are picketted, also the Income Tax Office, British Home Stores, a Social Security Office and a Health Centre are picketted. An Action Committee is formed in Armagh – and mass leafletting of

estates goes on. Marches in local areas continue, one is protected from Loyalist attack by IRA Volunteers.

In Derry a delegation to the Council demand the transfer of Pauline McLaughlin to a civilian hospital.

There are torchlight processions in Newry, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone and Dungannon.

2 busloads from Belfast picket SDLP Conference with the slogan "Action not Words".

In Derry, 200 people lobby AGTUW, blocking road for an hour. The next day they occupy the Diamond, taking over the most expensive shop. A tricolour is hoisted. The opening of the new railway station in the Waterside, attended by the Chairman of N.Ireland Ireland Railways is also flanked by pickets. The Embassy Court building is occupied the next day.

Big marches continue at the weekend. An evening march in Tyrone faces Loyalists and 500 RUC men. 40 car wind-screens are smashed by Loyalists.

## Monday – Sunday (10th - 16th Nov)

In Belfast there are massive traffic disruptions with roadblocks at eight points, and people are attacked by the RUC. On the Tuesday 400 dockers and dockyard workers in docks (ITGWU) down tools and picket the office of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to protest at their inactivity on H-Block issue, with many other H-Block protestors. There are more pickets in the evening at the opening of Beechmount Leisure Centre and Alliance Councillor John Cousins.

Armagh sees a several thousand strong torchlight march – the previous Sunday the road was blocked in the city.

Back in Derry, 200 people picket the ITGWU offices to get commitment to day of action. They fail and proceed

to block the city road. They occupy the Ulster Bank and close it down for an hour.

The road is blocked again the following morning – the RUC attempt to run down the brother of Ray McCartney (Derry hungerstriker).

Wednesday sees a huge industrial walk-out, which paralyzes shops and businesses throughout the city. 10,000 come out onto the streets. Couteaux and Dupont, among other factories close down for the afternoon, as workers down tools. Further industrial action is being planned. Dungannon (Co. Tyrone) council offices are picketed, and a store occupied in Strabane, in the face of RUC brutality towards women and children present. Tyrone flying pickets are helping out in setting up action groups in neighbouring Cavan and Fermanagh, where support is less organised.

## IRELAND – SOUTH

The H-Block struggle has become a central issue in Irish politics. There have been mass meetings and marches throughout the country and rallies in all the major towns and motions supporting the hunger strikers have been passed by Trinity College Dublin, several Urban District Councils and the Conference of Major Superiors (representing 18,000 priests, nuns and brothers) and the Dublin Council of Trade Unions. Popular support has been dramatically highlighted by a number of blanket protests at major public events such as the Kerry-Armagh football match, while in Cork a number of women protesters locked themselves into the City Hall at a meeting of the Corporation. And on 22 November in Dublin, over 11,000 marched in the biggest ever National Smash H-Block demonstration in Ireland.

In the *USA* there has been a weekend national day of action in support of the hunger strikers.

In *Australia*, three hundred people attended a function in Melbourne in support of the strikers.

In *Denmark*, signatures in support of the strikers were obtained from 6 MPs. In the *Basque Country* many notable signatures have been collected, including those of seven MPs.

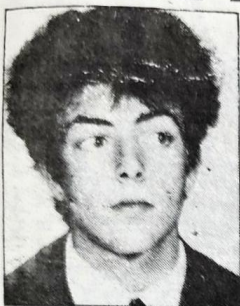
In *Germany* an extensive tour by the H-Block delegation is planned.

In *Holland* the British Embassy was picketed by members of the Irish Solidarity Committee.

In *Norway* solidarity committees are busy collecting many signatures and sending out letters calling for support. In the *USSR* the official Party newspaper, *Pravda*, has condemned Britain's treatment of the prisoners in no uncertain terms.

In *Switzerland* the solidarity committee has sent letters of condemnation to various British 'notables': Atkins, Thatcher and so on. . . . . And there are many more.

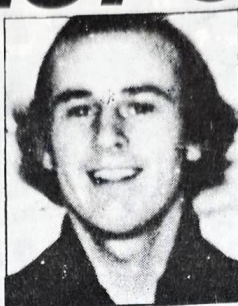
# THE HUNGER STRIKERS THEY'RE NOT CRIMINALS



Sean McKenna



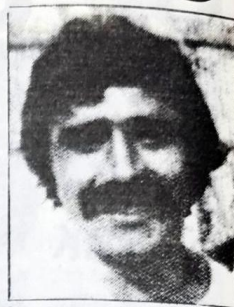
Tom McFeeley



John Nixon



Ray McCartney



Brendan Hughes

In 1969, when the British army moved onto the streets of the North, these men were mostly teenagers, witnessing harassment and sometimes murder, of their families, neighbours and friends by the British Occupation forces, Loyalist thugs, and a sectarian police force (RUC), for the 'crime' of being nationalist or for fighting back as they could. By their twenties, many had been interned in camps, without any trial. Many continued to be summarily lifted, interrogated for periods of up to 7 days without any let up, any access to lawyers – under Special Powers decreed by Britain.

All were beaten, and threatened, and many tortured until they were on the brink of dying, or breaking down in terror.

At their trials, in the special Diplock Courts – decreed by Britain, any vital evidence in their defence was often ignored, and any statements extracted by torture were used as 'admissible evidence' to sentence them to 20 years. Some have brothers a few hundred yards away in the cages at Long Kesh, who have the political status that they have lost.

## SEAN McKENNA

**Aged 26, from Newry, Co. Down**

**FAMILY:** They moved to Newry from Emyvale in Co Monaghan. At 17 he was rounded up in the first internment swoop (Aug 9th, 71) with his father, also named Sean, under the Special Powers Act. Sean, the father, was interrogated for 9 days – with the infamous hooded treatment and white noise. His case was among the worst torture cases that went before the European Commission of Human Rights, which found Britain guilty of torture. His father died four years later.

**HIS STORY:** Sean was interned on the Maidstone prison ship – and later transferred to Long Kesh, with his father and hundreds of others. He was released, aged 21, later. He then moved to his father's cottage in Edentubber, Co. Louth, 1½ miles by road from the border, but 600 yards across fields. A year later the SAS smashed into the cottage, and dragged Sean out. Having kidnapped him, they told him that no-one would know where he was and they'd shoot him if he didn't 'talk' to the RUC. They took him to Bessborough RUC barracks. His mother: 'I'll never forget that week. We searched for him everywhere. Rang hospitals . . . and all the barracks in the North, but they denied having him. Then on Monday I heard the news that he would be appearing in court at eleven.' Sean didn't talk, but too many witnesses saw him in the barracks for an assassination by the SAS to be practical. He was kicked, beaten and kept in a dark room.

**TRIAL:** after another 14 months on remand.

**SENTENCE:** 20 years for allegedly attempting to shoot an RUC man. Sean would have been due for political status, (his charges pre-dated March 76), but the RUC brought IRA membership charges up to March 12th (the day of his arrest) so he missed it by 12 days. Sean has been on the blanket for 3½ years.



Tommy McKearney



Leo Green

## LEO GREEN

**Aged 27, from Lurgan, Co. Armagh**

**FAMILY:** When Leo was 17, his older brother, John, was interned in Long Kesh. He escaped and was assassinated by the SAS in the Free State, just across the border in Co. Monaghan, where the gunmen entered illegally, 4 years later. His brother Lawrence, 23, is doing 12 years in H-Block 5, on the blanket. His 17 year old sister was taken to Armagh barracks – sexually insulted, and her brother's killing mocked at to her face. The family home is frequently raided – and the British army have stolen jewellery and money from it.

**HIS STORY:** He was arrested at 23 and badly beaten for 5 days of interrogation.

**TRIAL:** After 12 months on remand.

**SENTENCE:** 25 years for the alleged killing of a RUC man. H-Block 4, he has been on the blanket protest for 2½ years, and has suffered many attempts to beat him into being 'criminalised'.

## JOHN NIXON

**Aged 25, from Armagh City**

**FAMILY:** They have all been subjected to British army harassment since the nationalist resistance to internment in 71. His brother Leroy (24) was arrested in September 73, sentenced to 18 years for attacking British forces, and has political status in Long Kesh.

**HIS STORY:** In April 73, John and a friend, Jake McGerrigan, were fired on in the street by a British soldier. Jake died in front of him and John spent 2 weeks in an intensive care unit. To justify the murder, the RUC subsequently charged him for possession of arms on the evening of the shooting. At the trial (10 months later) John was sentenced to 5 years, despite there being no forensic evidence, and no weapon produced. He served this as a political prisoner in Long Kesh. He was released and re-arrested in December 76, when he was interrogated for 6 days.

**TRIAL:** after 9 months on remand. He was charged with an armed raid on a Post Office. The evidence against him was the word of a RUC man who alleged he made a last minute verbal admission of guilt.

**SENTENCE:** 14 years. In H-Block 5 where he went on the blanket immediately.

## RAY McCARTNEY

Aged 25, from Derry City

**FAMILY:** His brother, George, was interned in Long Kesh, and spent another year on remand. His cousin, Jim Wray, was murdered by British paratroopers on Bloody Sunday in Derry (Jan 72). He was 14 when the Civil Rights marches began in Derry (a focal point as Derry had been gerrymandered for 50 years to keep a Loyalist minority ruling the city). Ray saw a peaceful march being baton-charged by the RUC. He was arrested in October 73, interrogated for 3 days at Ballykenny army camp. He was interned for 18 months in Long Kesh. He was then constantly harassed and lifted under 3 day detentions until he was arrested 2 years later.

**TRIAL:** He was charged with killing the industrialist Jeffrey Agate, and an RUC detective. He denied the charges and a doctor testified in court that he had been badly beaten (whereby the extracted confession should have been inadmissible evidence). Vital witness statements about his movements were ignored by the judge.

**SENTENCE:** 25 years. His appeal against the conviction will be heard shortly. Ray's mother: *"We taught our children right from wrong, and we told them always to try and right a wrong if they saw one. Well, Raymond saw wrong things being done in his own country, and in his own way he's trying to rectify things."*

## TOM McFEELEY

Aged 32, from Dungiven, Co. Derry

**FAMILY:** His brother is in the cages of Long Kesh, serving 12 years. His own family, his wife Patricia and children Mary 9, Roisin 7, and Aine 5, suffered much harassment in the North and moved South.

**HIS STORY:** He was arrested by Free State authorities in May 74. He escaped from Portlaoise in a mass break-out 3 months later. Tom was re-arrested in May 76 in the North and taken to Limavady RUC barracks. He was interrogated for 7 days and choked unconscious by rubber tubing tied round his neck, and burned on the chin with cigarettes.

**TRIAL:** was after 6 months on remand.

**SENTENCE:** 12 years for allegedly taking part in an armed raid. 14 years for possession of a gun. On the blanket, Tom has solidly defied the prison regime. He called men to attention before Mass, and was beaten and given long periods of solitary confinement, and segregated from others to break his will. In March 78, after 6 weeks in solitary, he went on a hunger and thirst strike. He was let out after 8 days.

## TOMMY McKEARNEY

Aged 28, from Moy, Co. Tyrone

**FAMILY:** Have suffered harassment for a decade. His brother, Sean, an IRA Volunteer, was killed on active service in March 1974. Another brother, Padraig, is a republican prisoner on remand in Crumlin Road Jail.

**HIS STORY** — He was 15 when Bernadette Devlin was elected MP for mid-Ulster in 1969. He was arrested in October 1977, taken to Dungannon RUC barracks, and then to Castlereagh. He was interrogated and tortured there for 7 days, and threatened suffocation with a black plastic sack.

**TRIAL:** Dr Irwin, (a RUC doctor who resigned because of the torture) testified "He had a black eye that looked fairly recent and bruises whose colour suggested they were five to six days old. His forehead was swollen and many of the muscles at the back of his neck, forearm and abdomen were swollen and tender. His fingers were trembling . . . he was pale, nervous and exhausted." A key witness said that Tommy was not the man who had held her at gun-point.

**SENTENCE:** 20 years for the shooting of a UDR man. H-Block 3, on the blanket protest for 2 years.

## BRENDAN HUGHES

Aged 32, from Lower Falls, Belfast

**FAMILY:** His father, Kevin, was interned in Crumlin Road in the 40's. His brother Terry was interned in Magilligan and Long Kesh in the 70's. Another brother, Joseph, was a sentenced prisoner with political status in Long Kesh. The whole family has suffered intensive harassment and their home is regularly raided.

**HIS STORY:** He was arrested in June 73. He was badly beaten in Springfield Road barracks, interrogated and interned in Long Kesh. He escaped in October 73, and was recaptured in Belfast 6 months later.

**SENTENCE:** 14 years for possession of arms and ammunition. At first, Brendan had political status in the cages of Long Kesh. This was stripped from him in January 1978. He had tried to cool a fight between another prisoner and a warder, after the warder had insulted the prisoner's wife during a visit. H-Block 5, on blanket protest immediately.

Inside the concentration camps of Long Kesh and Armagh Jail, the struggle for the right to gain political status goes on. It is at the core of the people's fight for an Ireland free of Britain and reunited. These prisoners have only their own bodies to fight with, outside Irish people continue the struggle how and where they can. Here, in Britain, we must also fully support the fight for freedom, in whatever ways we can do that best.

## PAULINE MCLAUGHLIN

The list of British crimes against the Irish people is seemingly endless. What is happening to a young woman prisoner in Armagh Jail is horrific beyond belief.

Pauline McLaughlin is 23 years old and is serving an indefinite sentence — "detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure". Justice does not come into the matter: she was convicted solely on the basis of a signed confession, no other evidence was presented. But she is illiterate. She cannot read and write. The police offered her a deal — plead guilty to explosives charges and get an eight year sentence. She refused. Also, during her interrogation she was deprived of sleep and shown colour photographs of mutilated bomb victims — which the police later admitted in court had nothing whatsoever to do with the charges against her.

She has a stomach illness which has been undiagnosed and not treated properly whilst in prison. This illness means that she cannot hold down her food. Her weight has dropped to 4½ stone. A friend said, "What does she

have to be like to be released? They have broken her physically and I believe they are trying to break her mentally. I know that she's too determined and strong willed for that . . . I think they'll let her die."

She has been taken to hospital, but to a military hospital where she was put on a drip for a couple of days and then shipped back to jail. Her last stay there ended with her requesting to be transferred back to Armagh because she feared for her life there. Male guards in the hospital made threats, kept her awake, even accompanied her to the toilet.

There have been scores of protest pickets to save Pauline, including a demand to the General Medical Council that the prison doctor be struck off the register. She needs proper medical care: she is being denied it by a political decision by the British Government.

**ACT NOW TO SAVE PAULINE MCLAUGHLIN.** Contact the Armagh Coordinating Committee c/o A Woman's Place, 48, William IV St. London WC2.



Whitehall picket for Pauline. 150 turn up in pouring rain. (Photo Joanne O'Brien)

# SIXTY YEARS OF A POLICE STATE



Police in Derry join up with Loyalist civilians to stone civil rights marchers in 1969.

There was even a company vote; business firms had up to six votes to cast in an election, which often decided the result in marginal seats. This might be said to create social peace, in the sense of quietly consenting to your own exploitation, and consenting the more readily because there is someone below you being kicked to Hell. For this paternalistic rule enforced a division within the working class between Loyalist Protestants and Nationalist Catholics, to bind the Protestants to Unionist rule and British control at the expense of the Catholics.

## SPECIAL POWERS

Such a charming set-up cannot be kept going by good-will. Right from the beginning the Unionist Party backed up its rule by the Special Powers Act. This law outlawed organisations, banned meetings and parades, suppressed newspapers, gave the Government powers to imprison people without trial and impose curfews and issue exclusion orders. If all this wasn't enough for the job it outlawed "any act . . . . . prejudicial to the preservation of peace or maintenance of order" which the Northern Ireland Home Secretary could interpret as he wished: you and I ordinary citizens had no way of knowing if our activities were against the law or not.

## AND SPECIAL COPS

To enforce the law there was a very particular kind of policeman — the B Special. They were at first recruited from the Ulster Volunteer Force, paid for mainly by the British State and used to get the partition settlement to work by suppressing the Nationalist people's opposition to it. This function lasted right up to when they were disbanded in 1969. They were exclusively Loyalist Protestant and armed with guns, including sub-machine guns, to terrorise their Catholic neighbours under the protection of the law.

## BRITAIN IN THE DOCK

Anyone living in such a society, particularly the Nationalists against whom the repression was directed, would be wrong NOT to want to fight against it. Those who do so now CANNOT be called criminals: they are fighting for freedom. If the methods used, the methods of armed struggle, be criticised, we must point to the methods of repression that have existed as long as "Northern Ireland" has existed. We must look at the State guns and tear gas that greeted the Civil Rights marchers in 1968; above all we must look at the British State that is ultimately responsible, which gave its agreement to Unionist rule during all those years of misery and then since 1969 held the pieces together with the help of 23,000 British soldiers, concentration camps and torture centres.

In October 1920 the mayor of Cork, Terence McSwiney, died in Brixton Jail after a long hunger strike. Weeks later his country was partitioned: 26 Counties of Ireland became independent but the wealthiest industrial part in the North East was kept by Britain and ruled by politicians who were loyal to Britain and hostile to Ireland.

Today the result of that partition is another hunger strike. The result is war, armed soldiers roaming the streets, the biggest prison in Europe, courts without juries and proven torture of suspects.

## "GUARANTEE TO THE MAJORITY"

That settlement in 1920 has a lot to answer for. The Government today justifies it as being "the interests of the majority" and says that Britain is there to stay "as long as the majority wish it". Now, majority rule usually has a flavour of democracy and social peace, so we should look at Northern Ireland's record on such matters.

First, Northern Ireland was separated off from the rest of Ireland in violation of a democratic vote. In the General Election of 1918, 73 out of the total 105 Irish seats went to Sinn Féin on a platform of independence from Britain. The British Government's response was to send in the army.

In the North of Ireland the big shipbuilding and engineering firms were very much tied in with British capital wealth and so were concerned to keep Ireland within the United Kingdom; they had created their political machinery — the Unionist Party — and a military force — the Ulster Volunteer Force — to do just that.

However, after two years of bloody strife which left the Irish independence forces (the IRA) unbeaten, this goal was not on the cards and a division of the country was their next best option. This the British Government achieved, not by checking out the "wishes of the majority" but by a threat of "immediate and terrible war within three days" (Lloyd George, British Prime Minister).

## DEMOCRACY. . . FOR SOME

Sixty years have passed since then: how much democracy, peace and social justice has there been to justify this division of a country? Northern Ireland is part of the UK but with its own Government (until March 1972) responsible for running law and order, local planning, housing, development grants etc. The government was absolutely a one-party affair: the Unionist Party. Voting was by property qualifications (ownership of a house or council tenancy) at a time when Britain had voting for all adults. The electoral boundaries were gerrymandered so that the Unionist Party won seats even where there was a majority of Irish-nationalist people.

Furthermore, the structure of the Unionist Party was a paternalist kind, in which your factory owner happened to be your councillor or MP.



REVIEWS

REVIEWS

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Peter Taylor: *Beating the Terrorists ? Interrogation in Omagh, Gough and Castlereagh.* Penguin £1.50.

Peter Taylor is a leading TV reporter, well-known for his work on *This Week*, *TV Eye* and *Panorama*. *Beating the Terrorists* is an in-depth investigation into the allegations of torture of Republican – and occasionally Loyalist – suspects in the Interrogation centres at Gough and Castlereagh since 1976. That year saw a major reorganisation of the British political and military campaign against the Republican movement. Internment had gone out and the Government had set itself the task locking up their political opponents by getting convictions through the courts instead. To this end they abolished juries and introduced the no-jury Diplock courts. *Because they had no other way of getting evidence against suspects they then introduced a regime of systematic torture in the Interrogation Centres such that in 80% of cases convictions were based on no other evidence than 'confessions' allegedly made by suspects to the police in custody and thereafter strenuously denied in court.*

Taylor's book shows that the practices were known at all levels of the police apparatus, and that leading politicians were deeply involved in the cover-up. The torture was carried out in the main by some 80 detectives of the Regional Crime Squad who were given the full backing of their superiors if their actions threatened to come to light. The Government has since tried to blame a few 'bad apples' but there were not many apples there to start with. The rottenness runs from top to bottom.

The detailed documentation which Taylor provides is largely based on sources inside the police, notably the police medical reports to which Taylor has received privileged access. This is no accident. The story only broke publicly because of a split in the police ranks over the tactical usefulness of torture as a way of beating the Republican movement. Taylor identifies very closely with one wing of this split and has been taken into their confidence.

The group who took the lid off the scandal were the police surgeons. They are no heroes. For three years they watched what was going on while literally thousands of suspects passed through the Interrogation Centres. Yet they did nothing. They did not want to rock the boat nor harm the campaign of the state against 'terrorism'. So they stayed silent about torture.

Two things changed this. Firstly the torture reached such levels that they feared it would all spill out and that they might be the 'fall guys' or that their professional standing would be damaged. To save themselves they blew the gaffe.

Secondly, they and a layer of other police officials began to question whether the method was really effective. Torture only hardened the resistance of the nationalist community to the police and created political dangers of condemnation by bodies such as the European Court of Human Rights. As Taylor succinctly puts it: "Ill treatment is not only illegal but politically counter-productive because it destroys confidence in the police without which law and order can never be effectively restored . . . Finally, even if the end were to justify the means, the end has not been achieved. The IRA has not been defeated." In terms of a cynical cost-benefit analysis it seems that torture might not pay.

Taylor has presented an 'inside' story – the story that came out when those involved began to point the finger at each other in order to save their own skins.

**Ten years on in Northern Ireland**, by Boyle, Hadden and Hillyard. 120pp, £2.50 post free from the Cobden Trust.

**Rights ! Focus on N.Ireland**, the news paper of the National Council for Civil Liberties. Both from 186, Kings Cross Road, London WC1 9DE.

*"Contrary to the conclusions of the Gardiner Committee, prisoners with special category status are not more likely to emerge from prisons with an increased commitment to terrorism", according to this new book just published and written by three university law lecturers.*

Although not advocating British withdrawal they point out that the British people, if given the chance, would almost certainly be in favour. But the main thrust of the book is an indictment of the courts, prisons, security forces and the whole judicial system. They cite the suspension of jury trials, relaxing of the rules of evidence, detention without charge and continuing abuses during arrest and interrogation.

While arguing with the help of numerous facts and figures that the reform of emergency legislation and criminal procedure is a prerequisite for a lasting solution they fail to point out that the Northern State has existed for 60 years, and can only exist, with the help of these repressive powers.

However, if you wish to write or give a talk on the denial of human rights in the North of Ireland then the previous book, along with the pamphlet *'Rights'* will be invaluable. The latter with articles

on Civil Rights, the Police, The Media, PTA, H Blocks and Gay Rights offer the facts that are usually just on the tip of our tongue – 85% of convictions in the no-jury Diplock Courts are based mainly of wholly on a statement or confession; of the 4,977 detained under the PTA in Great Britain only 69 have been charged with an offence under the Act and only 55 found guilty.

Worth the money as a source of reference

**Why we say: Troops Out of Ireland**, published by the Socialist Workers Party, 30p & 15p postage, 24pp A5, from Socialists Unlimited, 265, Seven Sisters Rd., London N4 2DE.

Any pamphlet which presents self-determination as an alternative to the sickening policies of Labour/Tory bipartisanship on Ireland is very welcome and should receive maximum publicity and circulation.

This publication is a collection of answers to the usual myths and lies which are inevitably given by the Media, Army and Government, i.e. the troops were sent in to keep the peace, British withdrawal would lead to a bloodbath, the majority of N.Irish wish to remain British, etc. It is short and to the point, describing the undemocratic founding of the N.Ireland state, the sectarian armed Protestant police force during the fifty years of one-party rule, the civil rights movement in the late sixties, the introduction of British troops in '69 with the subsequent growth of the IRA, and the Special Powers Act (now called the Emergency Provisions Act) used exclusively against the Catholics.

But every review will find some criticism, and the section dealing with the IRA at times smacks of British Left chauvinism and is quite patronising in parts: *"Recently, however, the Provisional IRA have moved significantly away from their old tradition and are more receptive to explicitly socialist ideas. This does not mean that they have made a clean break with the politics of nationalism, but it is a step towards the struggle for a socialist republic."*

It might be a good idea first for the SWP to recognise that nationalism in an oppressed country is a far cry from nationalism in an oppressor nation. For people in Ireland, for example, nationalism is not something to be outgrown like an adolescent fantasy – the national struggle is a progressive and essential force without which a socialist republic is but a sparkle in your eye. Notwithstanding, if you have 30p and see this in a bookshop, buy it.

**Buy "NO BRITISH SOLUTION"**  
**A Troops Out Publication**, 24pp, well illustrated. Detailed, lively and comprehensive explanation of the cause of the war and the solution  
50p + 15p p&p



#### WEEK 20th-26th OCTOBER

The Cabinet announce their decision to allow all male prisoners in N'Ireland to wear their own clothes. There is immediate Loyalist outrage — both Unionist cries of 'giving in to blackmail', and Paisleyite cries of 'surrender' and secret deals giving into other demands. The following evening, Atkins capitulates — elaborating on TV that the 'clothes offer' is just prison-issue type civilian clothing, and there will be no concessions of political status. The timing of the announcement is coincidental, he adds. The 'offer' confuses international support for the prisoners and falsely raises relatives' hopes — intentionally? A statement from the blanketmen reject the substitute clothes offer as meaningless. They point out their protesting women comrades in Armagh have the basic right of their own clothes, which does not meet their requirements. They say "the British are engaged in a cruel piece of teasing and political brinkmanship." Cardinal O'Fiaich who had flown into London, leaves quickly, and issues statement with Bishop Edward Daly expressing "deep disappointment that the move stops short of what the situation demands."

There are 3 'commercial' bombings by the IRA, including one inside Belfast's security cordoned centre.

Frank Maguire (Westminster MP for Fermanagh) makes statutory annual visit to Armagh Jail. He is shocked by the insubstantial state of the prison generally, the inadequate diet, the harassment of the women and their visitors and claims whole prison system there to be wrong.

Anne Boyle and Maire O'Hare detained at Heathrow, they're part of a delegation to Socialist Feminist Conference and also plan a hunger vigil outside Westminster. On the eve of the hunger strike, 25,000 march in Belfast, showing Irish resistance to British oppression. "Let me remind the British Government, let one prisoner die and you may well light the spark that frees the other six." Bernadette McAlliskey, who means the Counties as well as the prisoners.

It's also announced that Pauline McLaughlin is, at 4% st., in a critical condition in Musgrave military hospital. (For news of Pauline and protests national and international, see pages 4, 5 and 7).

#### WEEK 27th OCT-2nd NOV

Monday sees the start of the hunger-strike. 190 more prisoners join the blanket protest in support of the 7 hunger-strikers.

Government backpedalling continues in Commons, Thatcher repeats there will be no Surrender to prisoners' demands. On Tuesday, all Unionist groups issue joint statement condemning Tory handling of the issue and

accusing them of 'capitulating' (as the clothing move applied only to N'Ireland).

The first ever film of H-Block protestors shown on BBC 2. The inhumanity of the concentration camp structure is clear. Conversation with 2 blanketmen is forbidden, but the commentator describes their condition as "quite unbelievable". The messages in Gaelic shouted up and down the wing can be heard.

Republican Press Centre says the hunger strikers are being cruelly tempted by warders who leave food in their cells, including overnight. The seven are taking water, requests for salt have been refused, but its sprinkled on the food.

Two were refused a medical unless they went to the Admin. section in prison clothes, which they refused.

Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry appeals to hunger strikers to call it off.

The UDA (Ulster Defence Army) threaten to "eliminate certain Provisionals active in the H-Block campaign." They stress it's not a threat to the Catholic community. A few hours later James Gillen (N'Belfast) shot in bed at 5am by masked, hooded men who knew him enough to address him by his name.

The following night, Margaret Kelly, aged 76, is shot in the side while at an all-night vigil in New Lodge. The car used in attack hijacked and dumped in Loyalist areas.

A H-Block meeting in Dublin calls on Haughey to keep promise to relatives of prisoners, that he would pressurise the British Govt. into acceding to the 5 demands.

The Presbyterian Church reaffirms its support for the British Government.

The Prison Officers dispute spreads to Officers refuse to receive new remands or return remand prisoners. Present level on remand is 360 in Belfast!

Irish National Caucus (US) asks FBI to investigate Ku Klux Klan and Loyalist paramilitary links, including UDA in N'Ireland.

Suzanne Bunting says that without any doubt the SAS murdered her husband Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little, in an interview from her hospital bed. "I even told them (RUC) I did not believe they will ever find my husband's killers for they will soon come up against a brick wall of silence."

Peter Heathwood (27) a Catholic gunned down in Belfast 13 months ago and paralyzed, awarded £145,000 compensation. Gunmen were never found.

Joe Austin and Danny Morrison (Sinn Fein) challenge Paisley and Bradford (Unionist MP in S'Belfast) to a public debate on H-Block issue. Neither respond.

Una O'Higgins O'Malley (whose father Kevin was assassinated after the Treaty in

the 20s) appeals to British Govt. to "prevent the deaths of H-Block hunger strikers and Pauline McLaughlin." She says to accede is not moral defeat. (She is a well-known opponent of the IRA).

The IRA call on Army to defuse 100lb bomb planted by a school near Bessbrook. Security forces found it on the Friday night but left it untouched. IRA say they would use the situation for an anti-IRA propaganda exercise when the children returned to school.

Sile de Valera (Fianna Fail deputy) makes speech in Letterkenny (pre-Donagall bye election) condemning Thatcher's lack of compassion on H-Block issue. She says it's Fianna Fail's duty to present case clearly to Govt (British) who must shoulder responsibility for deaths inside and outside prisons in the 6 Counties.

At the Sinn Fein Ard Fleis, Ruairi O'Braighaigh says "we must bend every muscle, strain every nerve in support of the hunger strikers. This is a showdown with Imperialism... the building of resistance — economic, social, cultural and national on all fronts is of extreme urgency, as the general crisis of Imperialism deepens."

New contraception laws in the Free State badly affect Family Planning Clinics, and make married women dependant on doctors and chemists, either of whom can refuse to give her contraceptives.

Two men are badly hurt when they are shot by British Army in S'Armagh. Barracks issue statement saying both were challenged and ordered to halt.

#### WEEK 3rd — 9th NOVEMBER

After relatives of men shot make it clear no warning was given, Army issue further statement saying shooting was a mistake, but piping carried by the men was taken for a rifle. But they say the two were "persons who have exposed themselves in this way, in an area where terrorists have been active in shooting incidents" i.e. it's self-inflicted. The wife of one man will take legal action against the Army.

Seamus Mallon (SDLP) calls on Atkins to end Army's 'shoot to kill' policy.

Secret German Govt report uncovers links between loyalist paramilitaries Ulster Volunteer Force and Neo-Nazi groups.

IRA Volunteers protect marches in Lower Falls, Twinbrook, Ardoyne, Markets and Andersonstown from loyalist attack.

Billy Corbett (44 year old post office engineer) is the third victim of loyalist assassination attempt in 2 weeks. He is seriously wounded in Belfast shooting. His brother was murdered by UFF (a cover name for the UDA) a year ago. His brother-in-law murdered by them 6 years ago. He himself survived a bomb attack at his home in Ligoniel in 1978.

On Thursday the hunger strikers are moved into 'clean' one-man cells. N.I. Office says its to better monitor their situation, but Sinn Fein say it's to deprive them of support of fellow prisoners, and prevent contact. Some are already showing, too early, symptoms that are worrying.

Reagan, new US president, says it's not for America to interfere in Irish affairs. He refuses to comment on whether he would lift embargo on arms to RUC.

Atkins states that the banning of the UDA is 'under consideration'. The Alliance Party threaten to refer matter to European Court of Human Rights, to embarrass Atkins into action. They say that proscription of terrorist organisations is not applied fairly. The UDA enjoy the same status as the boy scout movement or girl guides.

A member of the RUC Special Patrol Group is charged with the murder of Michael McCartan (17 yrs.) after 3½ months. He is released on bail of £45,000.

At the weekend, Fianna Fail win the Donegal bye-election, and the SDLP conference appeal

to the hunger strikers to call it off, pending further talks. It calls on Govt. to reconvene talks on clothes to start a new progressive regime. It calls for the UDA to be banned, and for a new Irish constitution for a new, 'agreed' Ireland, despite the contradiction of intransigent Unionists.

A RUC sergeant, who claims taking part in vigilante patrols in E. Belfast with other officers in early '70s, suspended from duty. He's a founder-member of DUP (Paisley's party).

**WEEK 10th - 16th Nov.**

Judgement reserved in Criminal Court of Appeal in Dublin, where Eamonn Kelly appeals sentence in Sallins Train Robbery. The other two framed IRSP members were released on appeal in June. Kelly returned from life on the run in USA after their release.

Gerry Fitt (ex-SDLP, now Ind MP for W. Belfast) chooses debate in Commons on Prison Officers dispute to attack hunger strikers and beg the Govt. not to give in to their demands. He criticises Cardinal O'Fiaich and Bishop Daly for 'interceding' in the 'controversy' - with 18,000 clergy, as this antagonises Unionist majority and polarises camps. He declares 'victims' of hungerstrikers did not have choice of living or dying.

Cardinal O'Fiaich and Bishop Daly strongly reject Fitt's statement and say they are motivated by 'pastoral concern'. Bernadett McAlliskey says the statement is murderous, and H Block Committee say members of IRA risked their lives and liberty to protect Mr Fitt day and night, at his request. Now he's prepared to let them die. Sinn Fein call on him to resign his seat in W. Belfast and see that his policies are out of touch with his electorate. The Alliance Party and the DUP commend his callous speech.

Fianna Fail (Haughey's party) members are to be reported to Executive if they support the 5 demands of prisoners.

On Friday, women protesting prisoners in Armagh Jail announce their decision to hunger strike, to underline their commitment to the 5 principles of their comrades in H Block, within next two weeks.

The seven hunger strikers affirm in a smuggled statement that "no solitary concession (clothing) would end our protest, which is for political status. To promote the clothing issue as a feasible solution served only to cause confusion and increase anxiety."

National H Block Committee deny association with any paramilitary organisations. "The Committee exists solely for the purpose of highlighting prisoners' case-winning support for the 5 demands and organising that in a non-violent democratic manner - reflecting the dignity of the prisoners." This is aimed at John Hume (SDLP) who attacked them after a protest at his office.

Cardinal Hume, in a letter to be read at Masses in his Diocese, calls on hunger strikers to stop. He claims their hunger strike in itself is violent.

Garret Fitzgerald (Fine Gael) also calls for end of hunger strike and urges Govt. not to concede political status.

Special Branch gardai are to increase harassment (arrests) of H Block activists in the Free State.

Peter Valente (33) from Stanhope Drive murdered by gunmen on Friday. He was an H Block activist and a brother of a blanketman. UDA held responsible.

The UFF (UDA cover name) claim responsibility for assassination attempts on footballer Matt Bradley and businessman Sean McConville (Thursday night).

Army recruitment centre announce 17% increase in recruits to Army. They say that unemployment situation is partly responsible, but also improved wages and conditions.



Mass support for the Hunger Strikers in Belfast

## LETTERS • LETTERS

Dear Comrades,

The protesting political prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh, after four years of constant suffering, embarked on the ultimate form of protest open to them, a hunger strike to the death. Only unprecedented mass mobilisation on the streets and pressure on the British Government can now avert this horrible conclusion. For this reason, we the Republican prisoners in the cages of Long Kesh (where political status still exists) appeal for your solidarity at this crucial time.

The British Government created this situation as a direct consequence of its criminalisation, Ulsterisation normalisation policy, initiated five years ago in an attempt to convince people that the struggle for National Liberation was a massive criminal conspiracy. This policy crumbled and was exposed as a falsehood by mass agitation on the streets, military resistance carried on by Republican socialist activists and by the heroic sacrifices of the political prisoners who refused to accept the tag of criminality which was being forced on them and the whole anti-imperialist movement. With the public failure of their ill-conceived policy, most politically minded people expected the Brits to cut their losses, recognise the political prisoners and allow the issue to fade away. However, this was to assume a level of commonsense which the British Government did not possess. Instead they continued in a bloody-minded fashion to victimise the political prisoners in an apparent revenge for the overall failure of the criminalisation policy. Four years of isolation, nakedness, semi-starvation, beatings and unbelievable squalor ensued for the protesting prisoners as the Government, in trying to paint the prisoners as criminals, actually demonstrated the depth of their political awareness and commitment. This counter-productive strategy by the British eventually had even the most respectable establishment figures appealing for an acceptable solution.

Now after four years the hunger strike has begun. We appeal to you

for all your energy in the next few weeks of struggle. Our brothers and sisters have suffered long enough isolated in their excreta-covered cells - mass mobilisation and widespread support can save their lives and end the suffering of the women in Armagh Prison and of the men in the H Blocks of Long Kesh.

In solidarity,

**Tommy Carol, POW, Long Kesh**

Dear Comrades,

As a participant at the demonstration against the Army tattoo at Margam Park I was quite interested to read the report in the November edition of *Troops Out*, sent in by the Cardiff TOM Branch.

The report is right to stress the enormous possibilities there are for work around anti-recruitment in South Wales; already this year we have seen three large demonstrations against army recruitment. However, I felt on the day at Margam Park that some of the tactics adopted by individuals can only lead to the isolation of such a movement.

It was clear during the afternoon that there were two methods of disrupting the tattoo, one way was to involve all the demonstrators, the second was to individually provoke soldiers into brawls. I feel that this latter approach, if allowed to develop without criticism, will not help to build a mass anti-recruitment body in South Wales (or in Britain as a whole) as it means that only those who believe in taking on the army in isolated fights will be willing to go on demonstrations.

We can fight the British Army's attempts to recruit in Wales, but only if we are clear in denouncing tactics, which may appeal to the romantics in us, but which ensure that those campaigning around recruitment and Ireland are seen as small bands of nutters who take delight in fighting squaddies. It is time for organisations and groups who are serious about building any mass campaigns, to think long and hard about the necessary tactics. In solidarity,

**R.J.**

# IT COSTS *THEM* A LOT !

## The Combat Soldier's kit.

This picture shows the kind of personal equipment and weapons a combat soldier can expect to use during his service in different parts of the world.

1. Sleeping bag. 2. Suitcase. 3. 7.62mm self-loading rifle. 4. Webbing. 5. Boots (best pair). 6. No.2 dress shirt & tie. 7. Combat shirt. 8. Cold weather liner for combat clothing. 9 & 10. Auxiliary pouches for Canteen & Equipment. 11. Canvas shoes. 12. Red & white P.I. vest. 13. Combat kit disruptive pattern.



## COST OF THE WAR TO THE BRITISH STATE (figures in £million)

Year	Cost of the RUC	Cost of the UDR	Extra cost of Brit. Army in N. Ireland	Govt. subsidy to N. I. Budget
1969-70			1.5	74
1970-71	8.9	1.1	6.5	88
1971-72	17.9	3.6	14.0	126
1972-73	21.4	5.5	29.0	181
1973-74	26.7	7.1	33.0	314
1974-75	38.1	8.7	45.0	393
1975-76	51.9	n/a	60.0	571
1976-77	64.9	11.7	65.0	625
1977-78	80.5	13.8	68.8	694
1978-79	97.3	17.7	81.5	856
1979-80		*20.0	†97.0	*956
1980-81		*27.1		
Totals		116.3	501.3	4878

Figures in right-hand column do not include payment of £250 millions to Northern Ireland Electricity Service during 1977-78. Including that figure the total subsidy since 1969 is £5,128 millions.

\* Provisional figures.

† Financial Times estimate.

Sources: Northern Ireland Office and Hansard, 24th May, 1979.

# IT COSTS *US* A LOT

NEEDED: £379 PER MONTH

The Troops Out Movement is in a very active period indeed: a glance at all the events around the country listed on page four shows this clearly.

Members of the T.O.M. are pulling out all stops at the moment to build support for the demands of the hunger strikers.

However, movements cannot be run on enthusiasm and commitment alone. There is another vital ingredient: *funds*. For every leaflet produced, for every poster, for every telephone call made from the T.O.M. office, money is spent. In order to keep on the office and full timer, almost £400 per month is needed. This sum includes rental, telephone bills, stationary and other miscellaneous items.

*What you can do:*

*Either:* Give a donation, large or small.

*Or, better:* Take out a standing order. If you take out a standing order of £1 per month, you will be worse off only to the tune of half a pint of beer per week, one loss on the fruit machine, or a cup of tea in a cafe.

Name of bank: Co-op  
Name of account: T.O.M. Office  
Account number: 50107995  
Bank code: 08-03-08  
*Or both!*

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**London, Wed 3rd Dec.** Public meeting + film on the Hunger Strike. Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, at 8pm. Organised by East London Prisoners Action Group.

**Oxford, Thurs 4th Dec.** Public meeting on the Prisoners. Northgate Hall, 7.30.

**Derby, Thurs 4th Dec.** Public meeting on the Hunger Strike. The Cambridge Pub, Dairy House Rd, 8.00.

**Birmingham, Fri 5th Dec.** Public meeting + film called by the Midlands Committee on British Involvement in Ireland and Birmingham Hunger Strike Action Group. Ring 021-773-8683 for details. The Group meets every Monday at 7.30, at the Labour Club, Bristol St. Activities every Saturday and Sunday.

**London, Fri 5th Dec.** Film on the Hunger Strike, organised by Sinn

Fein, Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

**London, Fri 5th Dec.** Public meeting 'Support the Hunger Strikers' + film 'H Block, The Hunger Strike' + speakers from Socialist Organiser (fireman), LCI, IRSP, East London TOM and Armagh Coordinating Committee. Toyne Hall, Commercial St, E.1, 8pm.

**London, Sat 6th Dec.** Local demonstration in support of the Hunger Strikers. March from Archway Tavern to Camden Town. Assemble 11.30am. Organised by Camden and Islington Irish Prisoners Support Group and Camden and Islington TOM.

**London, 7th December.** National demonstration for the Prisoners. Assemble Speakers Corner, 1.00pm. Coaches from Birmingham leave from Hall of Memory, 9.15.