

roll of honour

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derry brigade Óglaigh Na hÉireann

This Easter, all other considerations are overshadowed by the hunger strike for political status in the H-Blocks. With all the hunger strikers in hospital in the last agonising days of the hunger strike, this is the single most important issue facing the Irish people at the moment. This is why all the forces opposed to the British presence in Ireland must be brought to bear in resolving this issue and saving lives. For the ultimate solution we must look, in radical terms, to the cause of Ireland's problems today: the British presence. We look in the same direction as the men and women whose deaths we commemorate at Easter throughout Ireland: towards reunification of our country and self-determination for the Irish people.

Numerous so-called "nationalist" politicians who turned their backs on the people and sought to obtain a united Ireland through collaborating with Britain, her politicians and political processes, failed utterly to achieve their goal. These political processes are further discredited by the British ignoring the result of the Fermanagh by-election.

The result of the Fermanagh/S.Tyrone by-election was not only a clear demand for the right of political status for political prisoners, but also a demand for political status for our oldest political prisoner, Ireland herself. The election of Bobby Sands was a vote of no confidence in the way establishment politicians are dealing with the problem. In marked contrast, Republicans attack the problem at its root, and make no apology for undertaking this necessary task. The result was a clear expression of the indomitable will of the Irish people, overwhelming all the forces ranged against it, native and British, which attempted to distort and suppress that will. The people of Fermanagh/S. Tyrone used this unique public opportunity to reaffirm their faith in the creed of Easter 1916 and express support for the continuing struggle to unite our land and win self-determination for the Irish people.

It is impossible to forget all that took place, to write off the numerous dead, to pretend it never happened and that everything is rosy in the garden. Those who call for an unconditional cessation of violence offer nothing to fill the vacuum, nothing to guarantee our children will not recognise that same necessity for freedom and reassert it in their own time.

On winning a victory for political status for political prisoners, we must push on in full strength to final victory -- to win political recognition for the Irish nation itself: national unity and self-determination for the Irish people in a democratic socialist Republic.