

# COISTE NÁISIÚNTA H-BHLOC/ARD MHACHA NATIONAL H-BLOCK/ARMAGH COMMITTEE

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## DAY 62 OF THE HUNGER STRIKE

### PRESS STATEMENT

We are not surprised that Francis Hughes quite bluntly told Don Concannon today that he was not very pleased to meet him, or that Concannon was forced on Bobby Sands unannounced. Concannon, after all, was the former political overseer of the H Blocks of Long Kesh whose policies forced the prisoners onto the dirty protest and subjected them to arbitrary beatings. This latest manouvre following closely on the heels of Mr Atkins' recent hysterical outburst is a sign of the extreme pressure now being felt in British ruling class circles. Atkins' latest "discovery" is quite clearly a two pronged ploy aimed at diverting attention from the hunger strike, whilst at the same time providing a cover for the continuing spate of arrests and detention of H Block/ Armagh activists.

If anyone has already shown that they are preparing for a death, it is the British Government through their mini-internment operation. Concannon and Michael Foot have now given their public blessing to this repressive operation.

This coming together of the British political establishment is in marked contrast to the silence of Ireland's so-called political leaders who have consistently refused to stand up to Thatcher.

We demand of Mr Haughey that he immediately call on the British to grant the five just and reasonable demands of the prisoners as the only realistic way of saving the life of Bobby Sands and his comrades. If the British refuse Mr Haughey should immediately send the British ambassador home as a signal that all collaboration diplomatic, political and military, has ended.

The fact that in conversation with Bobby Sands Concannon was forced to admit that he recognised that Bobby Sands and his comrades are engaged in a political struggle shows that the British recognise that in the eyes of the world, Bobby Sands and his comrades are clearly seen as political prisoners.

This proves once again if indeed proof were needed that the British have created a prison regime to suit their political strategy in Ireland, a strategy based on "criminalisation", a policy overwhelmingly rejected by the electorate of Fermanagh/ South Tyrone and by the overwhelming mass of the Irish people.

Vincent Doherty  
NATIONAL H BLOCK/ARMAGH COMMITTEE