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# HUNGER STRIKE BULLETIN

## NO.1

## POLITICAL STATUS NOW

WE are now four days into the hunger strike which is the end result of four years of protest in the H-Blocks.

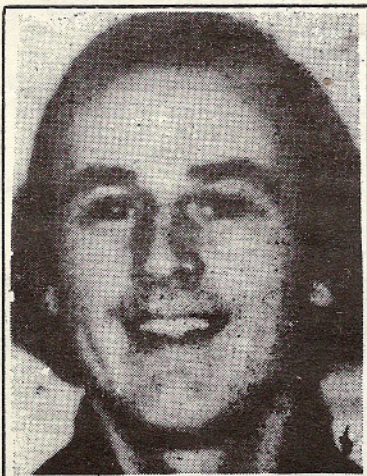
IT is not the end we would want if we had the choice but, despite the protests both inside and outside the prison since 1976, the British Government has pigneadedly pursued its policy of "criminalisation". A policy intended to degrade not only the prisoners but all those involved in and sympathetic to the political and military struggle for Irish freedom.

THERE have been times when we have all been war weary but the prisoners have been our inspiration to keep going. To give in to the Brits - to return to a situation of "normality", as they call it, would be to accept sectarian Unionist and British rule and be kicked back into the gutter.

IN 1974, the burning of Long Kesh provoked massive demonstrations on the streets and raised such an outcry about the injustice of internment that the Brits were forced to abandon it.

THE COURAGE AND DETERMINATION OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS HAS UNITED AND MOBILISED THE NATIONALIST POPULATION IN THE SIX COUNTIES AND HAS PUT THE H - BLOCK STORY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT.

THEIR LIVES ARE IN OUR HANDS AND THE TIME WE HAVE IS SHORT.



John Patrick Nixon - Armagh.

DETAILS ABOUT  
THE SEVEN HUNGER  
STRIKERS .....  
ON PAGE THREE

## S.A.S. ACCUSED

TWO WEEKS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF RONNIE BUNTING AND NOEL LITTLE SUZANNE BUNTING HAS NOW RECOVERED SUFFICIENTLY TO DESCRIBE THE ASSASSINS - AND SHE HAS DECLARED HER BELIEF THAT THEY WERE MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH ARMY S.A.S.

Despite being critically injured herself (she was shot four times and presumably left for dead) Suzanne has spoken out about the attack.

She described how the men smashed the lock off the front door of her home at 3.30am, and ran upstairs ... apparently well informed of their victims whereabouts. First they went to the bedroom of fifteen month old Ronan where they shot NOEL LITTLE as he lay asleep in the spare bed beside the child's cot.

Suzanne and Ronnie were awakened by the noise and tried to secure their bedroom door against the attackers - but it was forced in.

Two men, wearing matching green army trousers ribbed jumpers with shoulder and elbow patches and balaclava hoods with eye-slits burst into the room and opened fire. Although shot herself, Suzanne hung onto one of them as they continued to shoot at Ronnie. As they left, she staggered to the top of the stairs and the last man to leave turned and fired a shot which hit her in the mouth.

The calm and methodical way in which the attack was carried out and the ease with which the killers were able to approach and make their getaway from the Buntings home confirms the suspicion in people's minds - more confirmation was provided a week later in Twinbrook - that this was indeed an S.A.S. operation designed to decapitate the leadership of the popular struggle for political status on the eve of the hunger strike.

Meanwhile David McKittrick, northern correspondent of the Irish Times, claims that Ronnie and Noel were assassinated by the U.D.A. whom he says have now "the confidence to strike quickly into areas where they have not usually dared to go in the past." If this is true the U.D.A. which despite its long record of sectarian atrocities is still "legal" can only have gained such confidence through collaboration with the other "legal" assassins - the Brits and the U.D.R. and R.U.C.

THE I.R.S.P. SALUTE OUR DEAD COMRADES RONNIE BUNTING AND NOEL LITTLE.

THE BEST AND ONLY TRIBUTE WE CAN PAY TO THEIR MEMORIES IS TO CONTINUE THEIR STRUGGLE FOR A UNITED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.



# HUNGER STRIKE HISTORY

## THE FENIANS OF 1860

THE TREATMENT OF IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS BY THE ENGLISH HAS CHANGED VERY LITTLE OVER THE PAST CENTURY. IF ANYTHING IT HAS BECOME MORE REFINED IN ITS CRUELTY. PRISONERS WERE, AND STILL ARE, SUBJECTED TO A SAVAGE REGIME WHICH AIMS TO BREAK THE BODY AND SPIRIT AND MAKE THEM "CONFORM" AND RENOUNCE THEIR POLITICAL CONVICTIONS. THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY A MASSIVE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DESIGNED TO SWAY PUBLIC OPINION AWAY FROM THE PRISONERS BY PORTRAYING THEM AS "CRIMINALS", THUGS AND AS SOMETHING LOWER THAN ANIMALS.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE FIERCELY RESISTED THESE ATTEMPTS TO CRIMINALISE THEM AND THEIR STRUGGLE. THE CAMPAIGN OF THE FENIANS (IRISH REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD) IN THE 1860'S IS ONE HEROIC EXAMPLE OF SUCH RESISTANCE.

ALL the Fenians sentenced during this period were put to hard labour and they were singled out for "special treatment". For example, they were made to wash in water which had already been used, they were forced to wear disease ridden clothes, they were whipped, put in solitary confinement or put on a bread and water diet for the slightest breaking of prison rules.

O'DONNOVAN ROSSA, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment was kept for thirty five days in a dungeon with his arms chained behind him day and night. He was not even unshackled to eat the food which was left for him on the floor. Another old Fenian, O'Leary, who was over sixty years old was put on a bread and water diet for three weeks because he refused to conform to prison rules in not stating his religion- he called himself a pagan (like the old Irish) and he

refused to renounce paganism. Martin Carey was committed to an asylum after he went mad due to the isolation and ill-treatment he had been subjected to

THE Fenian prisoners were frequently moved between prisons and their visits were held in special cages made up of three compartments separated by iron bars with a screw seated in the middle. The coroner at the inquest into the death of Michael Terbert, who died while in prison on Spike Island, said that death was due to torture. Over a period of two years more than 20 Fenians died or went mad due to the special treatment given to them by the British government who, whilst all this was going on, were putting out statements denying torture, whippings, and the most degrading and dehumanising treatment.

IT WAS ONLY WHEN THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT CAME UNDER PRESSURE FROM MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE STREETS THAT THEY WERE FORCED TO CHANGE THEIR POLICY.



IN Limerick, in 1869, 30,000 people protested; while in the same year in Dublin there were 200,000 on the streets. In London, England, 100,000 gathered in Hyde Park. Also important was the fact that O'Donnovan Rossa, who was still in prison, was put up as a candidate and elected as M.P. for Tipperary.

DUE to the protests the government was forced to grant an amnesty to the Irish Political Prisoners ... although many of them were forced to exile in America.

THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE TREATMENT METED OUT TO THE FENIANS ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO AND THE TREATMENT OF THE PRISONERS IN THE H-BLOCKS TODAY ARE ALL TOO OBVIOUS

WITHOUT MASSIVE STREET DEMONSTRATIONS O'DONNOVAN ROSSA AND HIS COMRADES WOULD HAVE DIED ... WITHOUT THE SAME DEMONSTRATION NOW THE HUNGER STRIKERS WILL DIE.

WE WILL NOT HAVE BRENDAN HUGHES, TOMMY McKEARNEY, TOM McFEELY, JOHN NIXON, RAYMOND McCARTNEY, LEO GREEN AND SEAN McKENNA JOIN THE RANKS OF McSWINNEY, GAUGHAN AND STAGG

VICTORY TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS  
VICTORY TO THE BLANKET MEN  
VICTORY TO THE ARMAGH WOMEN  
VICTORY TO THE IRISH PEOPLE

**SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS**



## JOHN NIXON

JOHN NIXON AGE 25 years  
Armagh City

SENTENCE: 14 years

Arrested in July 1977 and taken to the local barracks and interrogated for six days and charged with an armed raid on a post office.

In September 1977 John was sentenced to 14 years solely on the word of an R.U.C. special branch man.

In 1973, John and his 17 year old friend James McGetrigan, were fired on by Brits as they walked along the street. McGerrigan was killed outright and John was severely wounded. As a cover-up he was charged with possessing arms. Despite there being no evidence he was sent to the Kesh for 5 years.

John is on the blanket in H5 Block and has been subject to severe beatings from the screws.

## BRENDAN HUGHES

BRENDAN HUGHES AGE 32 years  
Lower Falls, Belfast

SENTENCE: 14 years and 5 years

Arrested in June 1973, and after being brutally beaten in Springfield Rd. R.U.C./Brit army barracks was interned in Long Kesh.

In October 1973, he escaped from the Kesh but was recaptured 7 months later in a flat off the Malone Rd. and was sentenced to 14 years for the possession of arms and ammunition.

In January 1978, he was given a further 5 years and had political status stripped from him as a result of allegedly assaulting a prison screw.

Brendan was put into the H-Blocks where he immediately went on the blanket. He is in H3.

## LEO GREEN

LEO GREEN AGE 27 years  
Lurgan, Co. Armagh

25 years

Arrested in April 1977, and badly beaten during 5 days of interrogation.

He was charged with killing a R.U.C. man and after spending a year on remand in Crumlin Rd. was sentenced to 25 years.

He immediately went on the blanket in H4 Block and there were many attempts to beat him into wearing a criminal uniform.

Leo's older brother, John, was assassinated by Loyalist/S.A.S. gunmen at Mullyash in Co. Monaghan in Jan. 1975. His younger brother, Lawrence, is serving 12 years on the blanket in H5 Block.

## SEAN McKENNA

SEAN McKENNA AGE 26 years  
Newry, Co. Down

SENTENCE: 20 years

In the early hours of March 12th. 1976, the front door of his cottage at Edentubber was smashed in and Sean was surrounded by plain-clothed S.A.S. men. He was dragged across the border and was told that they would shoot him on the spot if he would not "talk" to the R.U.C. Sean played for time and his life and agreed to "talk" to the R.U.C.

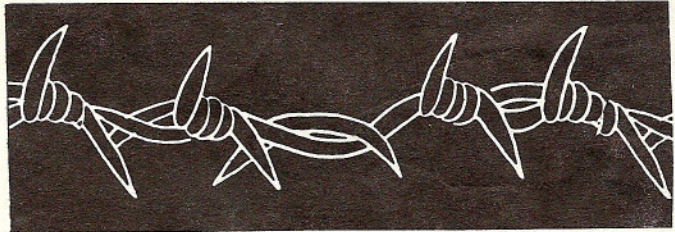
Sean was taken to Bessbrook where he refused to answer any questions: by this time too many witnesses had seen him for the S.A.S. to assassinate him.

He was kicked and beaten and charged with attempting to shoot an R.U.C. man.

After 14 months on remand he was sentenced to 20 years.

On internment day Sean's father was lifted and interrogated for nine days and subjected to the infamous "hooded" treatment and white noise.

His father died prematurely at the age of 42 as a result of this treatment.



## TOM McFEELY

TOM McFEELY AGE 32 years  
Dungiven, Co. Derry

SENTENCE: 26 years

Arrested in May 1974 by Free- Staters and imprisoned in Portlaoise. In August 1974 he was one of the 19 escapees.

In May 1976 he was arrested in the North and taken to Limavady R.U.C. barracks where he was interrogated for 7 days (rubber tubing was put round his neck and he was choked until he was unconscious; he was burned with cigarettes) He was charged with taking part in an armed raid and was sentenced to 14 years for possession and 12 years for the raid.

Tom has endured long periods in solitary confinement segregated from fellow blanket men. In March 1978 he went on hunger and thirst strike to protest against these punishments. After 8 days the prison authorities gave in.

Whilst in the blocks Tom has been badly beaten and has had ground glass put in his food.



## RAYMOND McCARTNEY

RAYMOND McCARTNEY AGE 25 years  
Derry City

25 years

Arrested in February 1977, and after a vicious beating by R.U.C. special branch men charged with the killing of an industrialist and a branch man.

A doctor, who examined him, testified that he had been badly beaten. Witnesses gave vital evidence accounting for Ray's movements at the times of the killings.

Judge McDermott ignored the testimony of the doctor and key defence witnesses and sentenced him to 25 years. McDermott claimed that this was a very lenient sentence.

Raymond's appeal against conviction is to be heard within the next few months.

## TOMMY McKEARNEY

TOMMY McKEARNEY AGE 28 years  
Moy, Co. Tyrone

20 years recommended

Arrested in October 1977, taken to Dungannon R.U.C. station and from there to Castlereagh interrogation centre.

Interrogated and brutally beaten for seven days Police doctor, Robert Irwin, testified that Tommy had been badly beaten with black eyes, bruises and abrasions and no explanation as to how these injuries had been sustained.

A key prosecution witness stated that Tommy was not one of the men who had held her at gun-point.

Despite this, Judge Murry sentenced Tommy to 20 years recommended for shooting a U.D.R. man.

Tommy spent 14 months on remand in Crumlin Rd. and has been on the blanket in H3 since he was sentenced in December 1978.



## ARMAGH VICTIM

WHEN PAULINE McLAUGHLIN WAS ARRESTED IN OCTOBER 1976 SHE WAS A HEALTHY 19YEAROLD WEIGHING 9½ STONE. TODAY SHE LIES DYING IN MUSGRAVE PARK HOSPITAL. AFTER 4 YEARS OF THE ARMAGH REGIME SHE WEIGHS ONLY 4½ STONE. Denied political status and an adequate diet Pauline has literally withered away. In July this year she collapsed because of lack of fluid in her system but after only five days in hospital she was returned to Armaghs barbaric conditions where she collapsed again at the start of October.

While doctors have neither diagnosed nor properly treated her condition she remains unable to keep down food and is rapidly approaching death. A psyphiatrist from the R.V.H. has declared that her illness is "self inflicted" but Pauline herself is trying to eat. It is the barbaric conditions of her imprisonment which have brought her to death's door.

WE JOIN THE Association for Legal Justice IN DEMANDING THAT PAULINE BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY. IT IS HER ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL

## HUNGER STRIKE FIGHTING FUND

DONATIONS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR OUR HUNGER STRIKE FIGHTING FUND IN ORDER TO PRODUCE POSTERS AND LEAFLETS TO COUNTER BRITISH PROPAGANDA AND ORGANISE SUPPORT FOR THE HUNGER STRIKERS.

DONATIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO..... HUNGER STRIKE FIGHTING FUND

392, FALLS ROAD  
BELFAST 12





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