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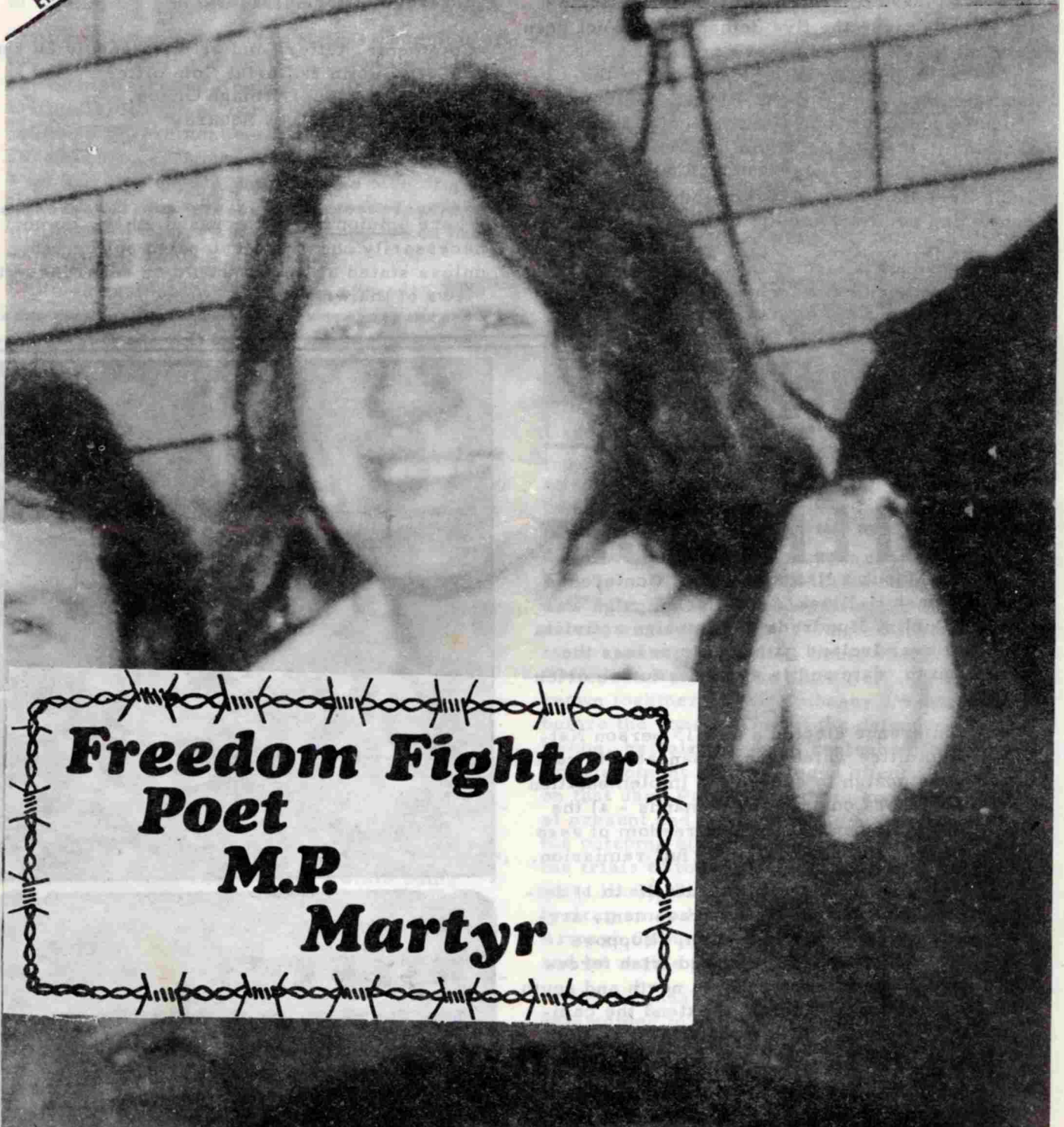
SECTION 31 ... TRIBUTE TO BOBBY SANDS  
EMBASSY 20 ... FALKLANDS CRISIS



EDITORIAL

# THE SPIRIT OF FREEDOM

Vol 1 No 1 Issued by Dublin H-Block Armagh comte.



**Freedom Fighter**  
**Poet**  
**M.P.**  
**Martyr**

# BOBBY SANDS

9/3/'54 — 5/5/'81

# "The Spirit of Freedom"

This newsheet is written and produced by Dublin activists in the H-Block/Armagh movement. Activists are encouraged to submit articles, items of news, cartoons etc. Comment and criticism from the public are also welcomed,

The H-Block/Armagh committee is continuing its work because the five demands have not been granted in full and prisoners are still being subjected to punishments as a result of the continuing protest in the H-Blocks. Without a public support group our political prisoners isolated in their cells would be even more vulnerable. In messages smuggled out from Long Kesh they have stressed the need for continuing publicity for their case.

The movement is also concerned with the defence of members, such as the Embassy 20 who have fallen foul of state laws and with

highlighting the ever increasing repressive laws now operating north and south

This paper forms part of the campaign and it is also an attempt to counterbalance the hostile and one-sided establishment media coverage of these issues.

Comments, letters and articles should be sent to:- Dublin Editorial Committee  
H-Block/Armagh Office,  
30 Mountjoy Square,  
Dublin 1.

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Where opinions are expressed, they do not necessarily constitute campaign policy and unless stated as such, should be regarded as the views of the writer.  
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## NATIONAL RECALL CONFERENCE

On 14th March a National Recall Conference of the Smash H-Block/Armagh Campaign was held in Dublin. Hundreds of campaign activists from all over Ireland gathered to assess the campaign to date and to agree its future orientation.

The conference elected a new 15 person National Committee which was mandated to continue the campaign to secure the implementation of the prisoners outstanding demands - a) the right not to do penal labour, b) freedom of association and c) the restoration of full remission.

The campaign also committed itself to 1) defend campaign activists from harassment, arrest and charges, north and south, ii) oppose collaboration between British and Irish forces and iii) oppose repressive laws, north and south. Furthermore it was agreed to extend the campaign to support all anti-imperialist prisoners in Britain and Ireland.

Lastly it was agreed to hold commemorative demonstrations on the anniversaries of the deaths of the ten heroic hunger strikers.

We urge all those who recognise the justice of the prisoners' demands to continue to support the campaign and its activities.



**HELP THE PRISONERS**

Contribute to the Campaign!  
Distribute "The Spirit of Freedom"  
in your area.

# EMBASSY 20 TRIALS

On July 18th, last year, some 20,000 people from all over Ireland, marched to the British Embassy in Dublin, in order to hand in a letter of protest to the British Ambassador condemning his government's refusal to grant the five just demands of the prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and in Armagh gaol.

At that time, six hunger strikers had died and two more, Kieran Doherty T.D. (on the 58th day of his fast) and Kevin Lynch (57th day) were critically ill. It was becoming clear that the southern government were doing nothing to save the hunger strikers, so much so that Thatcher made a statement in the face of growing critical world opinion, that nobody of authority or responsibility in Ireland had asked her to meet the prisoners' demands.

It was against this background that the marchers set off on their demonstration, determined to exert the maximum pressure on both governments to resolve the plight in the prisons. The marchers were equally determined to exercise their democratic right to march all the way to the Embassy, as had been repeatedly stressed by representatives of the National Committee in their discussions with the police.

However, on arriving at the Simmonscourt Road junction, the road was provocatively confronted by a police cordon and subsequently subjected to a deliberate and planned attack, which left hundreds of protestors seriously injured; an attack consciously designed to beat the campaign off the streets.

## BOTTLENECK

Despite all the allegations that the demonstration was organised to "burn down the Embassy" etc. NO petrol bombs had been brought on the march. The instructions that were handed out on the march, and the conduct of the stewards in turning away people with weapons, proved that the demonstration, while being determined to march with arms linked right past the Embassy, had been organised as a peaceful demonstration. In fact, it had been pointed out by the march organisers that allowing the march to file past the Embassy, rather than creating a bottleneck, would have been the best way of ensuring that no trouble broke out, and this was virtually universally accepted afterwards by reporters, and other observers, many of whom were themselves subjected to the indiscriminate brutal beatings of the gardai. Most of the materials displayed later by the gardai had been gathered at the scene of the riot following the initial attack by the gardai. In fact the truth of the matter is that the gardai were the only people who had come

well armed for a riot in the first place.

## THE ARRESTS

In the weeks that followed the Embassy riot, the gardai stepped up their harassment of the H-Block /Armagh campaign, its activists and supporters. They arrested people for collect-



Gardai loyally protecting the British Embassy ing money, postering, leafleting and even for attending meetings. They called to sympathisers' homes attempting to intimidate them and their families. Most serious of all, on Wednesday 28th October, 20 people appeared before the non-jury Special Criminal Court on charges arising out of the Embassy demonstration. These 20 people were deliberately singled out for politically motivated victimisation, being charged under the "Offences Against The State Act". These cases, known together as the Embassy Twenty are still before the courts. One of the defendants, Patrick Kehoe, has already been sentenced to three years imprisonment for an alleged offence committed on that day. Patrick Kehoe is appealing his case at present and it appears the state is awaiting the outcome of his appeal before proceeding with the trials of the other 19 defendants. It is also quite likely that the state has allowed these trials to drag on so long in the hope that the H-Block/Armagh Campaign will have lost its momentum and be unable to defend its activists.

The National H-Block/Armagh Committee is determined to continue its campaign for the implementation of the outstanding demands of the prisoners, but views with utmost importance the defence of its activists, and particularly in the south, the defence of the Embassy 20, and fully recognises that these trials are not merely intended to imprison twenty dedicated activists but represent an attempt by the state to suppress the campaign itself.

# BOBBY SANDS

## A Tribute

"There is no source or foreign force  
Can break one man who knows  
That his free will no thing can kill  
And from that freedom grows"

(From the 'Crime of Castlereagh'\* by Bobby Sands.)

They did not break Bobby Sands. True his body was broken alright as it lay in the H-Block prison hospital on the morning of 5th May 1981. Certainly, his emaciated remains bore testimony to the long cruel years of incarceration in a bleak concrete box, and to the ravages of a 66 day hunger-strike. But his spirit had not once faltered. Just as he had not bowed to the armed might of the British army and Orange state shock-troops; just as he had withstood the hardships of the freedom fighter's life; as he had not yielded to the torture of Castlereagh Barracks and in the same manner that he had braved the ordeal of four years sub-human existence during the Blanket protest, it was thus that his unflinching spirit did not deviate from the path in his ultimate test - the hunger strike. Even in the horror and agony of this last trial his integrity prevailed against temptation by priest, politician and V.I.P., who hovered with empty promises over his death bed. And when the people of Fermanagh-South Tyrone made him their M.P., where a lesser man might have succumbed to the ego-gratification of this prestige status, Bobby Sands remained true to himself, his comrades and his people, until by the end, his heroic spirit soared in triumph over all adversity, even death itself.

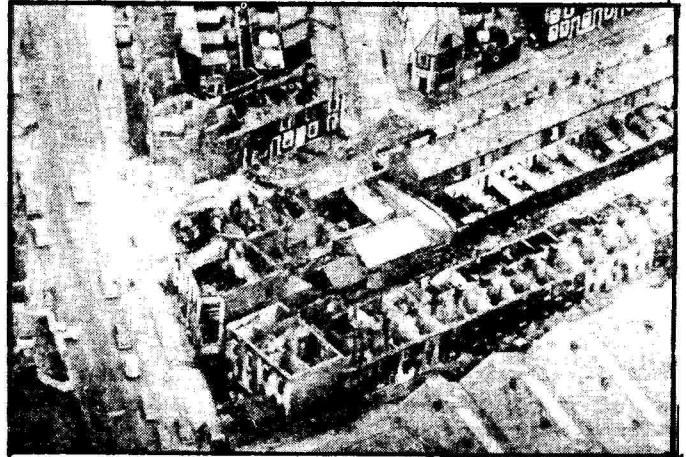
His captors had failed to tame or change his nature. The lark was free again.

### Loyalist Pogroms

Bobby Sands was aged about 14, when the British army first came on to the streets of northern Ireland during the current round of "troubles". Like most youngsters of that age, apart from an interest in Irish history, he had no political leanings. However his experiences were to change all that, and it was the political social and economic realities of northern Irish life and the ways they affected him which moulded him into the revolutionary he later became. After leaving school he had worked for three years as an apprentice coach builder, until Loyalist threats forced him to give up his job. Due to further threats and intimidation his family had to move house in 1972.

What was he to do now? Discrimination and

second class citizenship had been the lot of the nationalist population since the creation of artificial state of northern Ireland.. The concept of one man-one vote was unknown in local elections and the imbalance against Catholics



Result of another Loyalist pogrom-Belfast '69

had been further increased by the device of the gerrymander. Added to all this, were the by now, regular loyalist pogroms against a vulnerable people, along with the terror of the RUC and the British Army. The realisation was beginning to dawn on very many people that, given the context of a permanent artificial majority which existed in this state that constitutional politics would continue to fail, as they had in over 50 years, to alleviate the conditions of the nationalist community.

Down in the south, the so-called Republic, whose reactionary leaders had in the first place abandoned the north( and betrayed the principles of Pearse and Connolly) and who thus bore a major share in responsibility for the terrible legacy which the nationalist population were to reap down the years, had done nothing in over half a century, apart from making the periodical republican noise, when the occasion seemed to demand. It was clear the no help was going to materialise from that quarter.

### Only One Way

There was only one way in which this system might be changed and that was for the oppressed to rely on themselves and join struggle against it. With many other, Bobby Sands did just that. As a result, he was to spend 9 years of his short life in prison.

It must be clear, from this background, that Bobby Sands and his comrades' imprisonment stemmed directly from the prevailing political conditions. The prison protest and the eventual

hunger strike in which he took part, were to nail the British lie, that these were common criminals

In prison, Bobby, along with most of his comrades, became fluent in Irish. He was also to become a prolific writer. The short prose pieces and the poems which he wrote give expression to the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the Blanket men, who were doomed to spend day after day, year after year, buried alive in a tomblike concrete cell, deprived of everything but a foam mattress and a blanket. Despite these conditions, his writings show that he somehow retained his humanity, his concern for the sufferings of his fellow men, with justice and truth; that he had a great love of nature and the countryside, and above all they demonstrate an unquenchable yearning for freedom - his own freedom and the freedom of his people.

Considering the circumstances of his life, the fact that at that time he was deprived of all reading material and that he had to furtively write with a biro refill on scraps of toilet paper, these writings are a superb achievement. He was to become the Bard of the H-Blocks, writing



Part of the massive funeral crowd  
to entertain and uplift the spirits of his fellow inmates and also to leave for us a documentary record, concerned with the most unique and historic prison protest anywhere in the world.

## Courage

The whole episode of the hunger-strike and the manner of its ending must not be seen as a failure. The heroic self-sacrifices of the ten martyrs transformed the prison protest into



Australian supporters fasting in solidarity  
something much larger, internationalising the conflict, winning sympathy and support for the struggle throughout the world, politicising thousands of Irish people, shattering Britain's criminalisation policy and demonstrating to all the integrity and courage of today's freedom fighters. Despite the fact that during the whole traumatic event, Free-state double-speak and propaganda confused and immobilised much of the population, nevertheless, the awesome happenings in the H-Blocks will have struck a cord deep in the Irish psyche. This will, in the fullness of time bear its own fruit and it is not at all improbable that history will look back and recognise the hunger strike and the lasting political repercussions it set in train, as one of the high landmarks on the road to full Irish freedom.

(\* "Prison Poems" and other writings of Bobby Sands are available from 44 Parnell Square.)

## Bobby Sands Memorial Rally

GPO 8pm  
Wed 5th May

MARCH TO THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE  
FOR WREATH LAYING CEREMONY.

# BROADCASTING ACT

## ( Freedom of Speech Denied )

In the recent past the media has given extensive coverage to Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act and the use of this section in banning Sinn Fein from party political broadcasts on R.T.E. The reporting on this issue was carried out in such a way as to create credibility in the so called "process of democracy". However, despite the web of sophistry which the media is attempting to create by clouding the issue in high-faluting legal jargon, the truth of the matter is that the Irish people who depend on the media to give them information are being denied this basic right.

Instead they are being fed with a one-sided and distorted view.

### LEGAL CHARADE

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To those active in the H-Block and other political movements, police harassment, juryless courts, media distortion etc. are well known. However many democratically-minded people who are not familiar with the repressive activities of the state, recognised the highly undemocratic move taken by minister Cooney. For this reason the newspapers, while pretending to be impartial tried to cover up the real reasons behind Cooney's decision. The exercise of demonstrating to the people that government ministers are subject to the law, suggests by inference that political leaders and the legal system are two separate entities. However, this "safety valve" image of the courts only attempts to conceal the fact that the judges and legal elite are part and parcel of the whole state repressive apparatus. The complete subservience and collaboration of the legal elite with the reactionary Irish government is clearly evident in their participation in the undemocratic juryless "special criminal courts". The reason why the so called "impartial" judges are called to the bar, is because they are on side with the political views of those in government. Having been given these positions they are paid enormous salaries in return for doing the government's dirty work. The jails in Ireland are full up with poor people and not with the rich. If these so called justices had any interest in justice, they would lay the blame on those in Ireland who reap huge profits out of society, while as much as one third of the population lives in poverty.

The Broadcasting Act was updated in 1976 as part of a series of legislation designed to repress those standing up against British Imperialism in Ireland. This updating insured effectively that only the voices of big parties ( who are well known to have "special ties" with the various newspapers) are permitted to present the issues to the people. As a result there is a great difference between what the Irish media say and, the way in which the media of other countries present the same issues. While for example, the Irish media presented the heroic H-Block hunger strikers as people "obsessed with dying heroic deaths". The French media presented the same people as "the most advanced politically conscious and principled of Irish people". At the same time as the Irish media label the I.R.A. as "terrorists" and the British Army as "the security forces", another national radio station refers to the "people's army" and "the invading forces".

The big sophisticated legal mock battle which was waged in the press amounted to the fact that Section 31 (as recently extended to include party political broadcasts by Sinn Fein) contradicts sections 16 and 40 of the constitution, which supposedly guarantee "the right to free speech". What resulted was that the high-court after much wrangling, ruled that Section 31 was unconstitutional. The ban on Sinn Fein was lifted but not in time to allow their broadcast to go out. Having failed in the high-court the government immediately deferred the case to a higher court. The case has once again been put and a Supreme court decision is now being awaited.

The ease in which the government can refer cases to the higher courts is in itself an indication of the undemocratic nature of the legal system. It is an extremely expensive process for any individual or group of individuals to take the minister to court, but at the drop of a hat the state can dip into the public purse and spend vast amounts of public money without any problem.

Whatever the result in the Supreme court is, those of us active in the H-Block and other political movements, know only too well that any gains made in the courts will be counter-balanced by the introduction of new repressive legislation. Not only this but we must also remember that when the day of reckoning comes and the Irish people demand their rights for economic and social justice, the Irish government can do away with the entire Irish constitution by a simple majority vote in the Dail

**Traditional and Folk Evening**

See back page

# FALKLANDS ..... The Empire Strikes Back !

TO THE STRAINS OF "RULE BRITANNIA", and the beating of drums, the British fleet is sailed to defend the Empire. The world is pushed to the brink of yet another war and Britain's claim to be 'a democratic power no longer interested in colonial domination' is left bobbing in the wake of her battleships.

The Malvinas issue, despite all the barrage of propaganda from Britain is a straightforward issue of de-colonisation and we in the H-Block movement, may be excused for departing from our preoccupation with the prison issue and issues of repression in our country to speak out against the blatant colonial rhetoric spewing out of London. The facts (for those not familiar with them) are as follows.

Although first sighted and visited by English explorers in 1592, the Malvinas or "Les Isles Malouines" in French, were first settled in the 1600s by France and Spain. In 1766, the French withdrew their claim to the islands in favour of Spain. It was not until 1767 that Britain asserted domination and established a survey post. However this post was abandoned seven years later. In 1774 and later, the Spanish and French settlers also left. In 1820, an administration calling itself the "United Provinces of South America" was set up but destroyed by the U.S. after it detained a party of U.S. whalers. The U.S. declared the islands "free of all government" (terra nullus' in legal jargon) and left. Argentinians set up another colony in the 1820s and it was this colony that was forcibly expelled by a British naval party in 1833. After 1833, the islands have been under continuous British rule although they have been continuously claimed by Argentina.

## Argentina's Claim

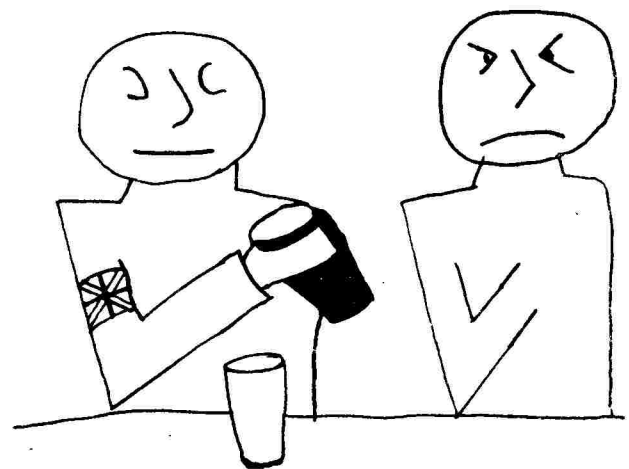
The Argentinian claim to the islands is on the following points:-

- 1.) Argentina inherited Spain's original title to them.
- 2.) Argentina maintained a colony there from 1828 - 1833 when the islands were 'terra nullus'.
- 3.) Their geographical proximity.
- 4.) The islands' present colonial status is anachronistic.
- 5.) The islands have been economically neglected and would benefit from association with Argentina.

Britain's claim is based solely on the fact of 150 years of uninterrupted occupation and the results of ballots conducted amongst the populace.

The historical fact is that the Malvinas belong to the Argentinians, and that this issue of international justice cannot be clouded over by the widespread and correct opposition to the present Argentinian regime.

The claim by the British government to be "defending the wishes of the majority of the Falklanders" should strike a hollow note in all Irish hearts. The logic is this : I seize a colony by armed force, displace the inhabitants, plant a populace, bind them hand and foot to the 'mother country' economically, politically and culturally. Then I conduct a poll! In other words I rob a country and if I can hold on to it for 150 years - then it's mine!



I PUT MY FLAG ON IT ... SO IT'S MINE!

Again Britain's claim to uphold "democracy" is seen to be an utter sham. Just as in Ireland, Britain violated all principles of democracy and partitioned the country to FRUSTRATE the democratic will of the people, then ever afterwards it claimed to be 'only obeying the wishes of the majority' in the six counties, Britain DID NOT CONDUCT A POLL before illegally annexing the islands in 1833. Now, after dominating them for 150 years, it plays the 'democratic card' - What shameless bitter hypocrisy!

In the same way as in the north, the Malvinas should never have become such a violent issue. If the British state had twenty years ago (or 50 for that matter) solidly renounced its colonial claim, ways and means could by now have been found to resolve all the problems and to ensure a solution that properly looked after the inhabitants' interests.

But no, this democratic way has never been the way of the Empire, and until that Empire is forced to adopt it, there will never be any solution in Britain's colonies whether in the south or north Atlantic.

# An t-Olltoghchán

'Sí an chainfhaisneis ba chúis leis an olltoghchán ach bhí plé na cainfhaisneise ag ceartlár na díospóireachta. Ar aon nós, cé go raibh na páirtithe mhóra ag ligint orthu go raibh difríochtaí mhóra eatartha, ag deireadh thiar thall ba léir go raibh an polasáí cheanna acu: 'sé sin na faidhbeanna eacnamaíochta a leagan ar dhroim ghnáthmhuintir na tíre seo agus go mór mhór, ar lucht IMAT (PAYE). Is iomaí uair a raibh cur síos in san bpaipéir agus ar an teilifísean mar gheall air na fadhbanna eacnamaíochta, fostaíochta agus mar sin de. Sé a bhí le rá ag na polaiteoirí na go raibh orainn go léir (mar dhea) an "leine gruaige" a chur orainn ar feadh tamaill. Dúirt Sean O'Ceallaigh (Fíne Gael) le deanaí go gcaithfeadh mna na tíre "good old-fashioned housekeeping" a chleachtadh. Dáiríre 'sé an brí atá le seo na go ndéiríodh na fadhbanna sóisialta níos measa agus go mbeidh níos lu feola agus bia slántuill ag na gnáthdhaoine. Is rud uafásach é go bhfuil (maidir leis na figiúirí oifigiúla) tuairim is an truí cuid de mhuintir na h-Eireann ag maireachtail gan go leor le n-ithe, nó "below the bread-line" mar a dearfa.

Ar an gclár teilifísean an Late Late Show cúpla seachtain ó shoin, rinne Vincent Browne oraid ag ceistiú na slite ina raibh na polaiteoirí ag caitheamh airgid phoiblí. Dealraíonn sé go bhfuil an t-airgead a úsáid ar mhaithe leis na polaiteoirí féin in ionad smaoineamh ar leas mhuintir na tíre. Is amhlaidh anois nach bhfuil ach tríocha fan gcead fagtha den bhfostaíocht a chuir an I.D.A. ar bun, ce go bhfuil na ceadta milliun punt tugtha acu dos na 'multinationals' agus a leitheidí.

Cé nach bhfuil airgead ar fáil ag an rialtas chun plean sóisialta a chur ar bun, ta airgead acu chun níos mó Gardaí a chur ar na sraideanna. Se an reiteach atá ag an rialtas dos na fadhbanna sóisialta na níos mó Gardaí agus níos mó aos óg an lucht oibre a chur faoi ghlas. Ta siad i gceonaí a rá nach bhfuil an t-airgead acu chun fadhbanna na dtinceirí agus na ndaoine bochta a reiteach, ach ag an am cheanna, ta siad ag caitheamh cúpla milliun punt gach bliain chun na teorann a cosaint - ce go ndeir-eann siad gurb é ceann de na h-aidhmeanna atá acu na Éire aontaithe, neamhspleach a chur ar bun.

## **Bobby Sands Commemorative Evening Fri. 7<sup>th</sup> May 8.30 p.m.**

Donal Lunny  
Frances & Martin Black

Kelp

Hill & Lillane  
Mich Fitzgerald + Friends

**Bridget Bourke's  
Old Bawn Tallaght**



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