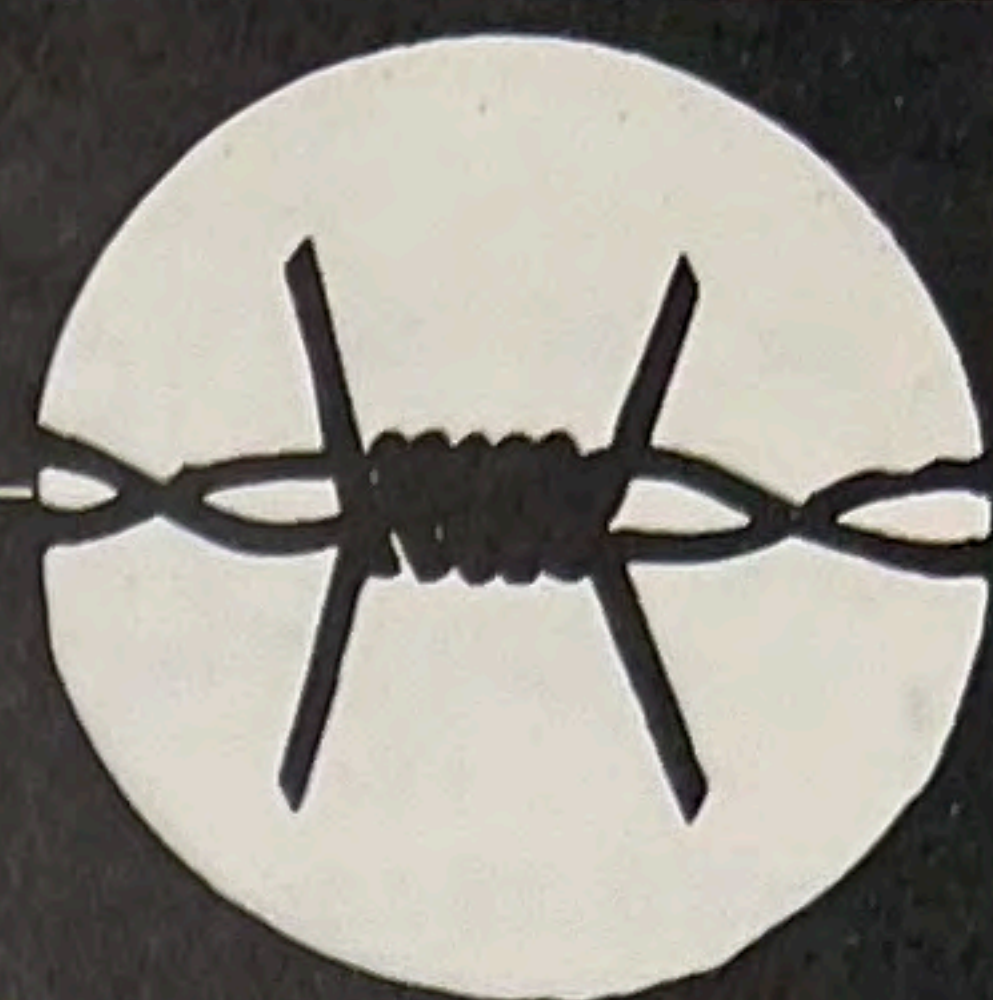


Drumcondra/Whitehall



# H-BLOCK / ARMAGH NEWS

Vol. 1 No. 6. September 26th

## VIOLENCE



## WHOSE DOUBLE STANDARDS

Recent attacks on the "Security forces" in the six counties have been seized upon by the conservative elements in our society (on both sides of the border) in an attempt to undermine the campaign in support of the demands of the hunger strikers. Incidents such as the shooting of a member of the R.U.C. outside a hospital have been exploited towards this end. Media reporting of such incidents have been skillfully aimed at an emotional level in a calculated effort to manipulate public opinion against the struggle in the north and to weaken support for the prisoners. This week, John Hume of the S.D.L.P., following the path of Gerry Fitt, joined in the chorus of condemnations while launching a frontal attack on the H-Block Armagh Movement.

It is not the role of the H-Block Committee to either advocate or to condemn violence (after the manner of the establish-

ment). Our concern is to fight for the prisoners' demands because we believe they are just and reasonable. However, this propaganda attack against the campaign cannot go unanswered.

### SMEAR CAMPAIGN

We stand accused of double-standards on the issue of violence and of lack of credibility in our efforts on behalf of the prisoners. We are not at all impressed by these accusations. The track record of those engaged in this smear campaign as far as work on the H-Block conflict and other fundamental issues of the northern Ireland problem, hardly entitles them to point the finger at us. If any section of society has lost credibility during the hunger strike crisis, surely it is that section composed of the John Humes and his ilk. The courage and heroic self-sacrifices of the hunger-strikers in their pursuit of justice

stands in sharp contrast to (and has increasingly exposed) the hollowness and bankruptcy of the career politicians. It has also demonstrated, perhaps as never before the lack of will and sheer impotence of the Republic's 'leaders' when it comes to dealing with the British (Special relationship or no special relationship!)

As far as double-standards are concerned, one can point to the strikingly different media coverage of, for example, an incident in which a member of Britain's armed agents is killed and the killings of innocent civilians by the same body. This year alone, women and children have been shot dead. Yet, where have been the emotional accounts and the howls of protest which greet an act of resistance against Britain's repressive machine? Are the lives of innocent civilians less important to the establishment media than the lives of RUC and UDR personnel?

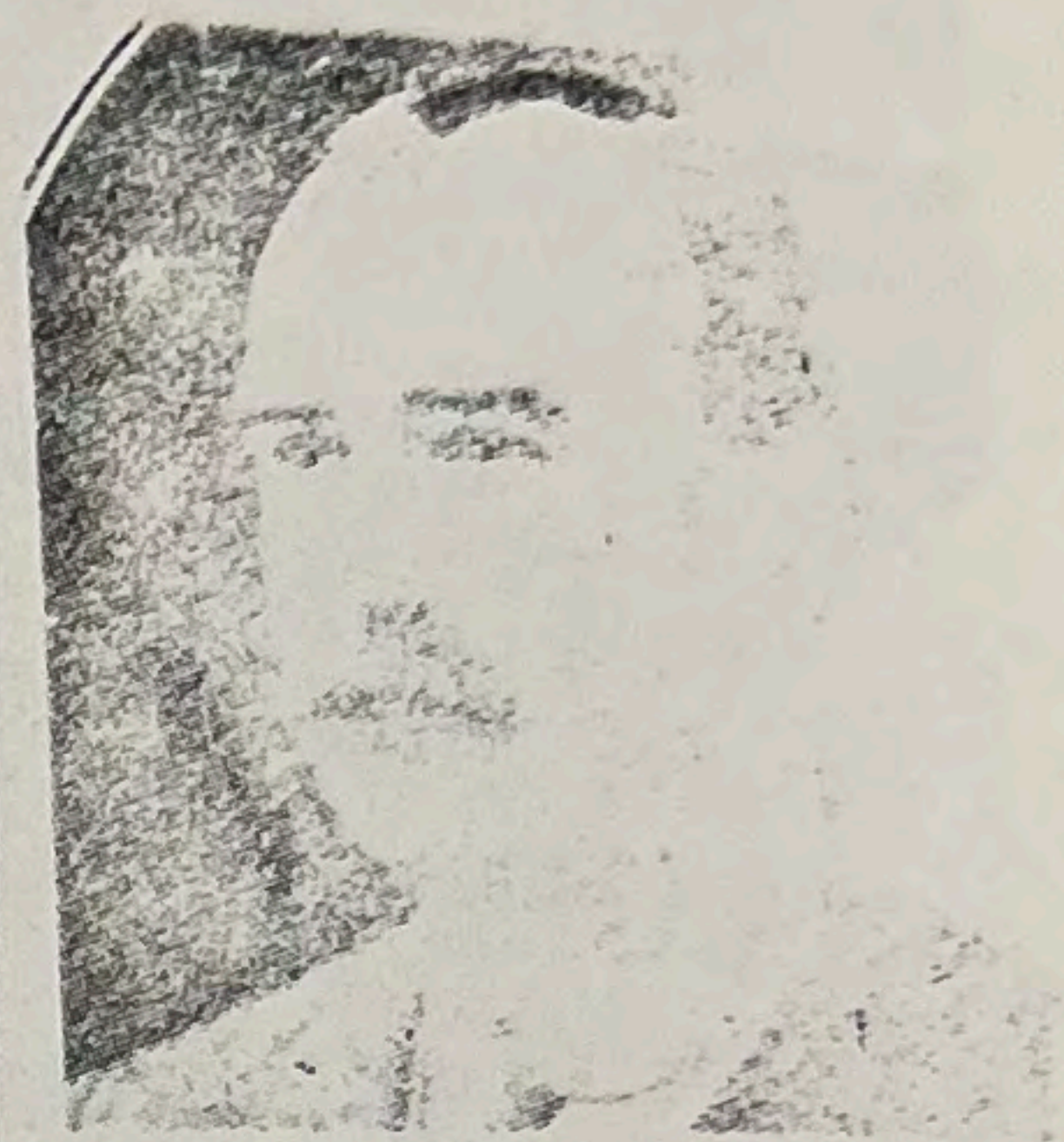
Nor do acts of resistance against the state's forces in the North in any way detract from the justice of the demands of those already in prison. That the people in the North find it necessary to take such action is due in no small measure to the fact that those who hold the power in this country have failed to shoulder their responsibility towards them. After all, they were abandoned by a Southern Government after partition and despite the massive evidence of the indignities and discriminations practiced against them, not one genuine attempt has been made by the politicians here to face up to their plight.

### Ultimate Responsibility

Empty calls for an end to violence are worse than useless. (If those who engage in such calls were to seriously seek out the causes of violence and work towards their eradication, then, perhaps, their words would carry more weight.) Violence does not materialise out of thin air. It is a result of historical, political and economic influences on the social conditions in Northern Ireland. And it is those who created and those who maintain those conditions who are ultimately responsible for all the violence.

That the H-Block crisis is sowing the seeds of a deepening bitterness in northern Irish society is beyond dispute. That an increase in violence is part of the harvest to be reaped is inevitable. No amount of handwringing or self-indulgent cries of despair from editorials or politicians is going to change that. What is needed is action to resolve the problem. To the extent that supporters of the hunger-strikers are work-

# CAN YOU BE A SOCIALIST AND OPPOSE THE FIVE DEMANDS?



James Connolly

Over the past months many prominent people who call the themselves "Socialists" have come out to attack the present campaign in support of the demands of the prisoners in the H-Blocks and in Armagh Prison. These figures include Joe Sherlock TD-spokesman for "Sinn Fein the Workers Party" and "Socialists against Nationalism" in addition to all the leaders of the Coalition's Labour Party - O'Leary and all. According to these people, the struggle being fought against the British Colonial State in the Northern six counties is "Sectarian" and "anti-working class" and that those involved in this struggle should be locked up and treated as common criminals. All one can say is that these "socialists" have the same opinion on this question as such "Champions of Socialism" as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and probably even the butchers that rule El Salvador.

ing for the removal of the injustices in the H-Blocks, they can be said to be working for the elimination of one of the causes of violence in our country.

Socialism is a grand word. Many devious people have taken it up only to deceive the mass of people as to what it really means. The "Labour" Party calls itself socialist in words, yet in practice they work in government with a most right-wing anti-working class Party-Fine Gael. Hitler called himself a "National Socialist" as did Mussolini and Franco, as they marched workers and trade unionists into concentration camps or the gallows. The present day rulers of Russia call themselves "Communists and Socialists" yet they trample on the rights of small nations like Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia etc. and subject them to wage slavery.

### WHO IS A SOCIALIST?

So who are the real Socialists? can they be judged by words? No, only by what they stand for - deeds, people like Lenin and Connolly; Lenin who actually organised the workers to overthrow the capitalists class and establish a Socialist state; and who militantly defended

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the right of nations to complete independence and freedom, and Connolly who died in his heroic effort to do the same. Neither of these great

leaders ever said the workers should stand aside and allow their brothers and sisters in another part of their country to be violently oppressed by a brutal colonial power. Nor do any of the classic theories of socialism say that the struggle of the working class for socialism should ever be separated from the struggle for liberation of colonies, in fact they stress that these two have to be fused into one and that it is the absolute duty of real socialists to support the right of nations to their genuine independence and freedom.

Still further there is nothing in the teachings of socialism to say that we should not support the right of prisoners, convicted of the so-called crime of taking part in the national struggle on the north, to be recognised as political prisoners, and not treated as mere criminals. In fact the only place you will find such a policy is in the police manuals of right-wing, anti-socialist states.

Strange bedfellows for our renowned "socialists".

## HUNGER STRIKE NEWS

days). Sentenced to 26 years after 17 months on remand.

### GERARD HODGINS

(Aged 21) from Belfast, joined the Hunger Strike on September 14th. (14 days). Sentenced to 14 years after 6 months on remand. Originally charged with murder and beaten and threatened.

### JIM DEVINE

(Aged 24) from Strabane, Co. Tyrone, joined the Hunger Strike last week. (Sept. 21st.) Born in Glasgow, his family returned to Northern Ireland and he became an apprentice electrician, and subsequently an I.R.A. volunteer. Arrested in September 1978, he was held on remand for 16 months and sentenced in January 1980 to 10 years in a non-jury Diplock court. Jim has been 'on the blanket' in the H-Blocks since he was first sentenced. If he had confessed he would have been due for release in two years time.

### PAT SHEEHAN

(Aged 23) from Belfast, joined the Hunger Strike on August 10th. (49 days). Serving 15 years.

### JACKIE McMULLAN

(Aged 25) from Belfast, joined the Hunger Strike on August 17th. (42 days). Serving life.

### HUGH CARVILLE

(Aged 25) from Green-castle, Co. Down. Sentenced in 1978 to 14 years after 18 months on remand. Joined the Hunger Strike on August 31st. (28 days).

### JOHN PICKERING

(Aged 25) from Belfast, joined the Hunger Strike on September 7th. (21

## CABRA MARCH

Initially members of the Gardai outnumbered those who were gathering. But as the evening light faded a sizeable crowd (over 150 people) set off from Ratoath Road roundabout. Their destination - Michael O'Leary's clinic at St. Peter's School in Phibsborough. The march was organised by Cabra H-Block /Armagh Action Group. As the march zig-zagged its way through the working-class housing estates of Cabra and Phibsborough (much to the annoyance of the Garda "meat wagon" that tried to follow it.) a large number of people looked on from their doorways and many joined in. The march ended with a

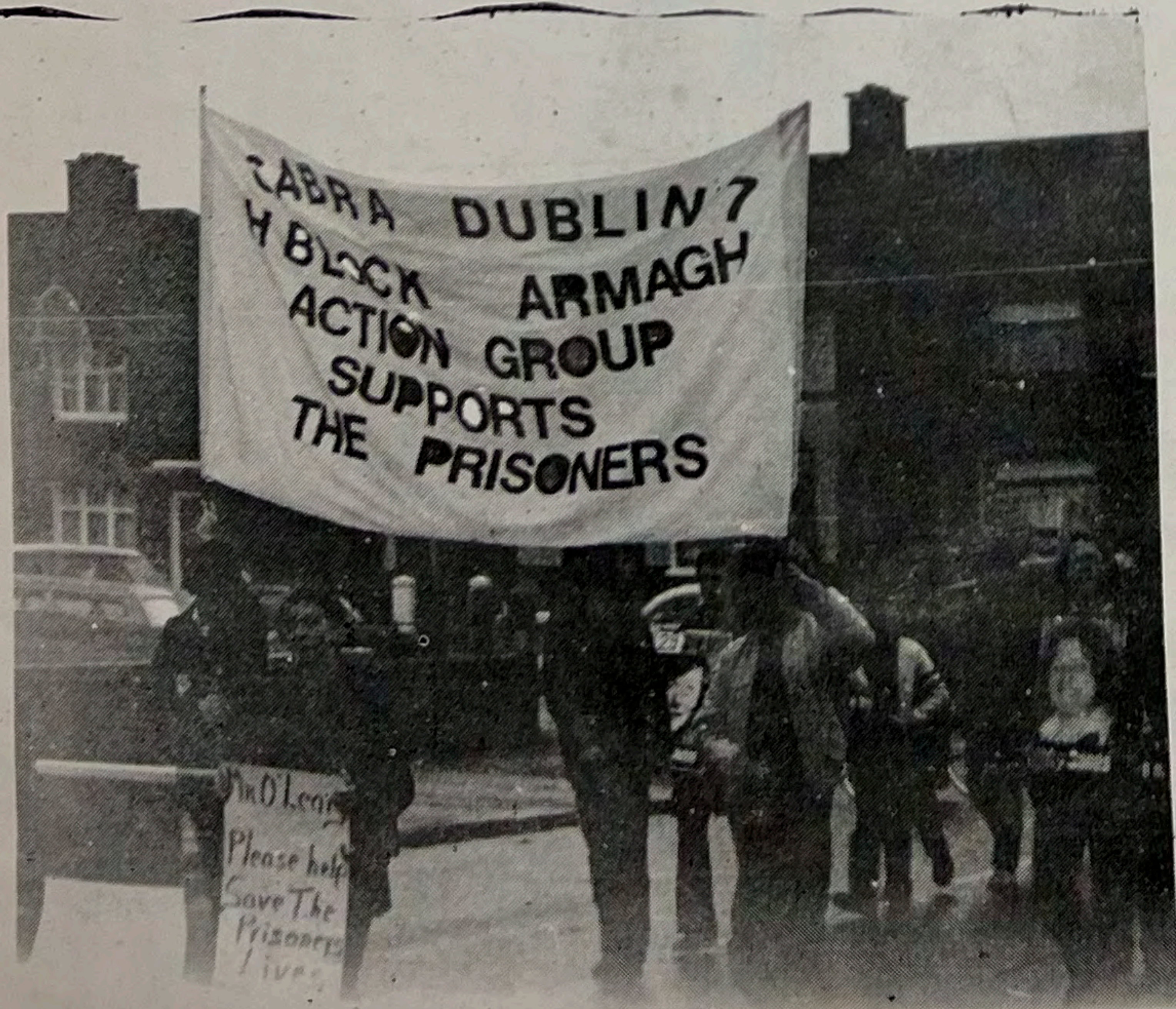


Photo shows a view of the march.

daily and speeches outside St. Peter's School under the watchful eye of the inevitable Special Branch contingent.

Needless to say, the crowd did not seem impressed by O'Leary's record on the Hunger Strike. This is entirely justified. The marchers' slogans called on him to "end his sil-

ence". His recent remarks about Mrs. Thatcher did not seriously question British policy in the H-Blocks and should be viewed in the light of his bandwagon-jumping careerism. Even this particular piece of "shape throwing" was too much for Garret Fitzgerald and O'Leary subsequently had his hand well-and-truely slapped!



view of the march.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

C.níC. from Drumcondra writes:- "I feel I must correct you on part of an article from your September 12th issue (Vol. 1 No. 4). The writer of this article stated that the H Block/ Armagh committee has a policy of abstentionism. This is misleading to anyone reading the article. The conference voted against drawing up a constitution so it is impossible to have a policy of that kind. There are organizations within the H-Block/Armagh movement who are non-absentionists and there are also organizations who are not. The

meaning of a broad front would be completely lost, if that was the position. The conference also passed a resolution stating that electoral policy would be decided by the National Committee in consultation with the Action Group in the area."

Editor's Note We are very grateful for the letter sent to us by C.níC. The article referred to was a report of the local public meeting held in the Crofton Airport Hotel on September 2nd. The point the article intended to put across was that at this meeting there was

as considerable criticism of the decisions of the National H-Block Committee to stand mainly absentionist candidates in the elections-(in fact all the candidates elected on the H-Block Armagh ticket have been absentionist)- We did not mean to imply that these decisions of the National Committee were in fact democratically decided issues of policy for the whole campaign.

## JOIN YOUR LOCAL ACTION GROUP!



Photos show some of the activities of the local Armagh/H-Block Action Group. If you wish to join in in our activities please contact this broadsheet at Peter Farrelly 8 Grattan Parade, Drumcondra Dublin 9.

This newsheet is produced by the Drumcondra/Whitehall Action Group. We are a non-party-political group campaigning to secure the five demands of the H-Block and Armagh prisoners. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide a counter to the deceptive and lying propaganda being organised by the state on the H-Block issue. It is also produced to answer the questions that many people have on the issue. We encourage people to contribute to the bulletin, both financially, and by sending in comments, questions and contributing articles cartoons etc. All contributions should be sent to - Peter Farrelly, 8 Grattan Parade, Drumcondra, Dub. 9.

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