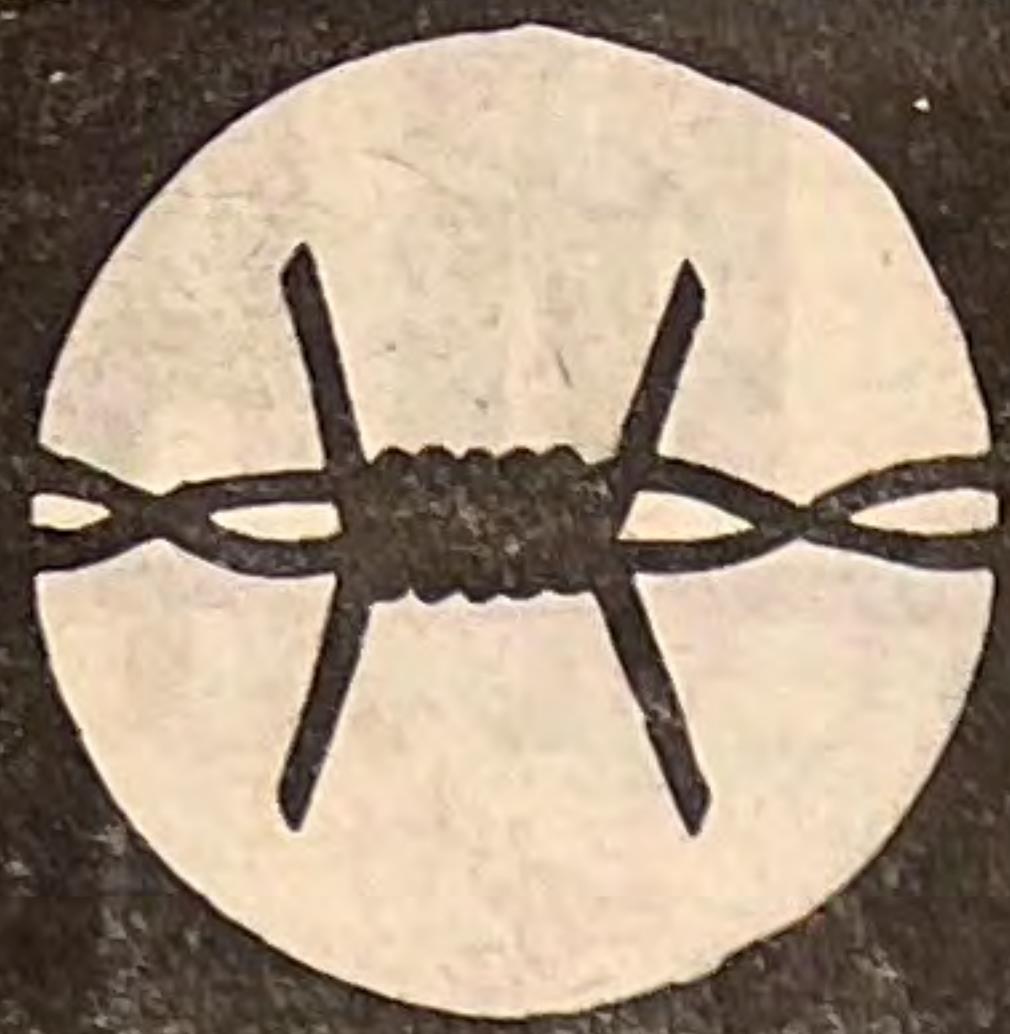
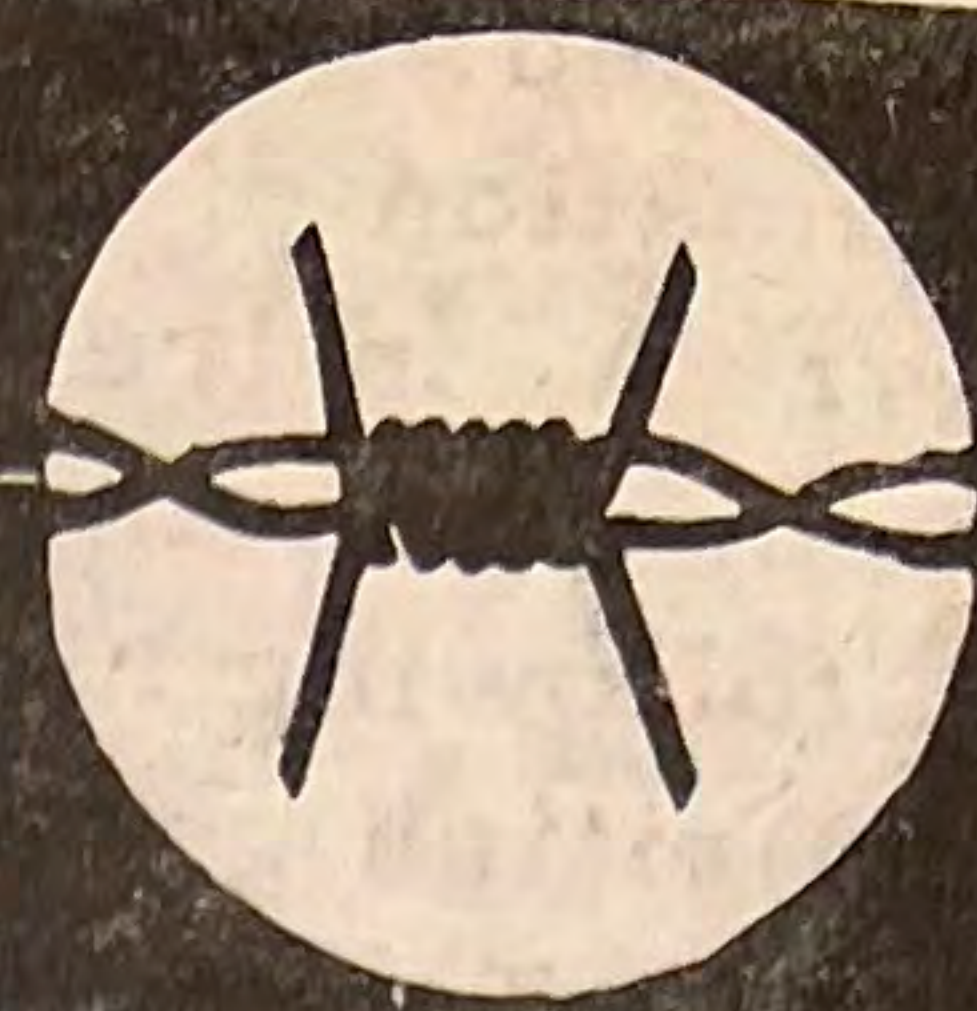




Drumcondra/Whitehall

H-BLOCK / ARMAGH NEWS



Vol. 1. No. 9

October 17th 1981

THE TEN H-BLOCK MARTYRS



■ BOBBY SANDS



■ FRANCIS HUGHES



■ RAYMOND McCREESH



■ PATSY O'HARA



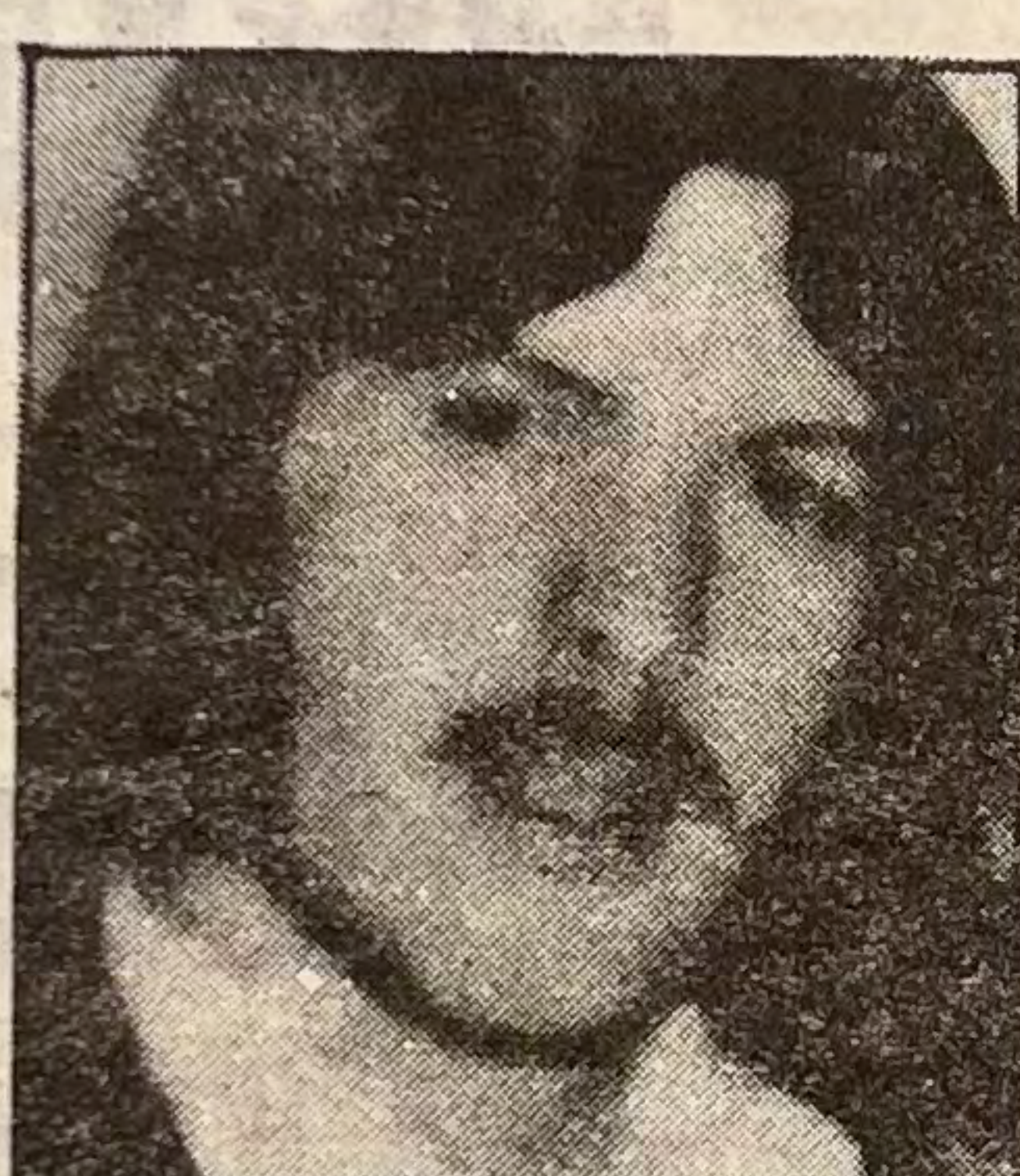
■ JOE McDONNELL



■ MARTIN HURSON



■ KEVIN LYNCH



■ KIERAN DOHERTY



■ THOMAS McELWEE



■ MICKY DEVINE

SALUTE THE PRISONERS

When the British Government precipitated the whole tragic crisis in the northern prisons by withdrawing Special Category Status, one of their main aims was to isolate the prisoners from the people by labelling them "Common Criminals" and probably more important, by defining the struggle in the north as a criminal conspiracy to quietly remove the whole conflict from world attention. Put simply, the "troubles" were to be depicted as an internal law and order issue.

Undoubtedly they were confident of success, especially since up to fairly recently the Irish conflict had all but vanished from the world's attention: it was a non-story.

The hunger strike changed all that - utterly.

Heroic Triumph

The hunger strikers and particularly the ten martyrs who died unvanquished, in a heroic triumph of the human spirit over its material surroundings,

transformed the prison protest into something much larger and rivetted world attention on the drama being played out. The ironic consequence of this for the British was that it was they who found themselves in the dock of international opinion. And virtually unanimously found guilty. What is more, not only has the name of the man who led the hunger strike - Bobby Sands - become better known throughout the world than that of any other Irishman who ever lived, the world knows what he died for. It knows too, that

he need not have died, were it not for the continuation of British colonial misrule in Ireland. Demonstrations in every major city in Europe, following his death, gave the British government their answer. The ordinary justice loving people all over the world were outraged by the fascist stand of the British government. This outrage was reflected also in the Indian Upper House which observed a two minute silence, the Portuguese Parliament which passed a motion of support for the hunger strikers, Lech Walesa the Polish trade union leader who praised the prisoners' stand etc., etc., etc..

Craven Antics

However, it is a sad reflection that no such tribute came from the Government which should have been most concerned of all, the craven and servile antics of Leinster House Politicians(Maggie Thatchers' good little boys and girls!) in their approach to the British throughout the hunger strike, must have shamed all with any pride in their nationality.

Shattered

By their sacrifices, the ten H-Block martyrs have not only shattered Britain's criminalisation policies, but have also loosened the deadman's grip of British imperialism from around the throat of our nation. History will accord them a place along with the best of those who have given their lives throughout the long and as yet unfinished struggle for Irish freedom.

Salute

It is fitting therefore, that the National H-Block /Armagh Committee is organising demonstrations for next weekend as a SALUTE TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS. We urge all who can, to show their support.

NATIONAL MARCH

OCT 25th

BELFAST

Buses leave from Parnell Square at 10.00am. (the details are to be finalised please contact your local Action Group for confirmation and Bookings.)

TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION

DUBLIN

Parnell Square October 23rd 8.00pm.

Seachtain ar an Blaincéid

Seo é an Leabhrán is déanaí atá eisithe as Gaeilge le fail o coiste na hBloc. Tá an leabhar scríofa ag Ruráí Ó Domhnaill ó béal aithris Noel Ó Casaide. Chaith Seisean 5 mbliana ar an bhlaincéid san Cheisfhada.

Tá cuntas mionn déanta aige ar na coinneíllacha a bhí ar na príosunaigh maireachtail futhu ar feadh na blianta, ar an blaincéid agus ar an agóid sailí.

Cuirtear síos ar an lá ón tam a éiríonn siad a luí, nuair nach bhfuil a gcearta sibhialta á fhail acu.

Bhíodh ranganna gaeilge, stair, tír-eolas, uimhríocht agus Fraincís acu. Chaithidís cuid eile den t-am ag déanamh aclaíocht san cillín no ina gcodladh.

Ta cur síos greannmhar déanta aige ar na béilí a bhfuair siad gí nach raibh siad so-ite ar chorr ar bith.

Fuair siad cuairt amháin sa mhí agus is iomaí uair a bhfuair siad droch-íde ag dul chuig agus ag teacht arais ó cuairt Ta alan eolais eile le fail faoi na Ceannteideal eagsula seo a leanas Stelladh Uisce, Coras Leighis, Anbás, An t-Aifreann, Lamh Laidir, Ceist Dhaonna agus Saoirse. Níl eolas san leabhrán ar gach a tharla le linn do ÓCaiside a bheith san Cheis Fhada ach tá leargas ann ar an fhulaingt a bhí agus ata fós ag na príosunaigh seo i lámha na nGall.

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TORTURE & COVER UP

The case of James Rafferty

By Eibhlin Ni Sheidhir

James Rafferty lived and worked part-time on his mother's 26 acre farm at Aughnagar near Dungannon in County Tyrone. He had not been interned and had never been in trouble with the police.

Just before dawn on Thursday 11th November 1976 police and British Army arrived at the Rafferty farmhouse when the family were asleep. The house was searched and James Rafferty arrested under Section 10 of the Emergency Provisions Act. He was taken to Omagh RUC Station where he was photographed, fingerprinted and medically examined. His mother had warned the police who arrested him that he suffered from epilepsy.

After some "soft approach" questioning about his family, two other detectives entered the room. One showed him a rifle they said belonged to him. Rafferty denied it. One of the detectives then hit him in the stomach with his fist. Again they said it was his gun. Again he denied it. He was then banged on the side of the head.

Rafferty alleged that the ill treatment then got worse. He was on two occasions put against the wall and beaten around the stomach. He lost all sense of time. He was confused and exhausted. He was made to strip to his underpants and made to perform continuous exercises. If he lost count he was forced to start again. He was made to run on the spot. He was exhausted. He alleged he had already been kicked around the room and hit with a closed fist. He had been pulled by the hair and knocked unconscious. After three days of interrogation and beatings he was examined by two doctors both of whom agreed he should receive urgent hospital treatment. He was released without charge by the RUC and admitted to the County Hospital in Omagh. The consultant reported that Rafferty was suffering from a degree of amnesia and had difficulty in maintaining his balance. There were "multiple dark black bruises on his upper abdomen" and a bruise and abrasion at the base of the spine. Three months later he was still suffering from the effects of a degree of concussion.

Rafferty's mother complained to independent Dungannon Councillor

Jack Hassard who was a member of the RUC Police Authority. He acted promptly calling upon the latter to set up a tribunal "into this alleged torture".

But the cover-up had already begun. Hassard was given wrong information by the RUC regarding where Rafferty was hospitalised. His tribunal proposal was deliberately delayed with suggestions that the Committee would discuss directly with RUC deputy chief Baillie. The RUC set up their own confidential internal enquiry. By mid January 1977 it was completed and the incriminating file sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) who did nothing with it, at least initially.

Although on the Police Authority as the trade union representative, Hassard had impeccable "Law and order" credentials as a former B-Special and World War II hero. Nevertheless he continued to push for the Rafferty affair to be brought out into the open. During one meeting of the Complaints Committee in March 1977 he was angered at being put out of the room while the matter was being discussed as he was an "interested person". In July, after sending two registered letters to the DPP he was eventually merely told that the DPP would consider the facts. By autumn there was still no word from the DPP and the Complaints Committee wrote to RUC chief Kenneth Newman who refused to explain what was going on, saying it was "confidential". In October 1977 it came to light that the Rafferty file had been returned to the RUC for further information - six months previously! The Complaints Committee had not been told of this. Baillie talked of a "breakdown in communication".

A conspiracy of silence existed between the RUC plainclothes men who had beaten Rafferty, uniformed RUC men who knew of this and other such and failed to pursue investigations or speak out, the highest police ranks who would not discuss it, the Police Authority who would not set up a tribunal, and its Complaints Committee who tried to gag Hassard, and the DPP who would not prosecute RUC men despite sufficient evidence and who "lost" correspondence and lied to safeguard the cover-up.

In December 1977, a full year after

his original proposal, Hassard unsuccessfully tabled a motion to the Police Authority demanding once again that a tribunal be set up to investigate Rafferty's maltreatment.

In February 1978 he complained of a "brush off" by the DPP and repeated his demand for a tribunal. In March RUC chief Newman refused to produce the report into the RUC's own investigation into Rafferty's complaint, although the Police Authority pointed out it had a legal right to see it under the 1970 Police Act, Section 15 (2).

In June 1978 the final showdown between Hassard and Newman at a Police Authority meeting led to Hassard's resignation from the Authority in July. Almost two years after his original demand the Police Authority had still not set up a tribunal. Hassard accused the Authority of being about as independent as a sausage without a skin.

At long last, in October 1978 the Authority announced its decision to set up a tribunal which was finally appointed in spring 1979. By summer 1980 it had not started its enquiries. Eventually it was held in December 1980 after the publication of broadcaster Peter Taylor's book "Beating the Terrorists? (Interrogation in Omagh, Gough and Castlereagh)" had highlighted the case. The tribunal collapsed almost immediately owing to lack of evidence from the RUC witnesses who walked out when their Counsel argued that they could incriminate themselves by appearing! Farcically a High Court Judge quashed an appeal High Court orders that a score or so RUC men must appear. The tribunal report was never published, but following the build-up of adverse publicity, four RUC men have eventually been charged and are awaiting trial for assaulting Rafferty during interrogation - four years after the DPP first received the Rafferty file.

But Rafferty was not the only one arrested in dawn raids in Tyrone in November 1976. Six other men were arrested with him two days previously. All seven were interrogated in Omagh barracks. All seven were systematically tortured by detectives of the newly formed Regional Crime Squad. James Rafferty and Peter Nugent were the lucky ones. They were released. The other five were charged and subsequently convicted by non-jury courts solely on the evidence of statements made under conditions for which - despite the cover-up attempt - four RUC men face criminal charges. One of the five convicted is now in the cages in Ling Kesh (ie has political status) three others are in the H-Blocks (denied political status). The fifth man is now dead. His name was Martin Hurson and he died on 13th July 1981 on the 46th day of his hungerstrike for five demands acknowledging that he was in jail as a result of the political oppression in his country.

Eibhlin NiSheidhir

HYPOCRISY & SLANDER IN THE UN

Once again during the past three weeks, we have been subjected to the imbecile rantings of a reactionary Irish Tory. Designate Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Dooge made attacks on the hunger striking Long Kesh prisoners during the general debate at the U.N. General Assembly.

Political Conditions

He condemned the political prisoners claim to the five demands (which would be a return to conditions which political prisoners had under "Special Category Status" prior to March 1976) as being false for the simple reason that the organisations which these men belong to outside the prison use violence. This is not a reason to dismiss the call for political status as not being legitimate. To do so is failing to recognize the political conditions which forced them to take up arms in the first place, against an unjust and undemocratic state imposed on the people. Dooge has also carefully ignored the British governments' own response to this conflict the special powers of arrest interrogation and trial by Diplock non-jury courts allowed under the Emergency Powers Act which states that "political offenders" will be legally subjected to these conditions.

'Security'

In his speech, Senator Dooge gives the impression of being concerned by the use of violence in the north. Yet he fails to point out the continued active support the Fine Gael-Labour

Government give to Britain's presence in Ireland through the 'security' co-operation which is employed on the border.

SAS MURDERS

He does not mention the 200 million pounds that the Irish taxpayers have to fork out for the 'security co-operation' mentioned above. This has given a free hand to the British armed forces - the RUC, UDR and British army to kill, maim and beat up the people who oppose the direct injustice of British rule on the streets of the north. A government who also employ a clandestine murder squad - the S.A.S. who have murdered unarmed and totally innocent people like John Boyle the 16 year old schoolboy shot in the back. All these so-called 'security forces' have been responsible for continued outrages assaults and atrocities against the nationally minded people who have dared to stand up against the sectarian rule of the northern state.

Baton & Bullet

Dooge wants everybody to just forget the recent history that shows that from the time the RUC first attacked a Civil Rights march on October 1968 right through to the present day with over seven people dead from the use of plastic bullets, the British state has attempted to keep the people of the north "quiet" through the use of baton and bullet.

No cries of indignation come from Mr. Dooge or his like at the thought of this "institutionalised violence" preferring instead to direct their attacks against the justice of the prisoners' demands. The leaders of the 26 county state of which Dooge is an "appointed" representative can be clearly seen to be siding with the repressive violence of the State both north and south. It is this violence which is the root cause of all political violence in this country.

PUBLIC MEETING

**"censoring our
selves - the media
& the north"**

Speakers include:-

Tom McGuirk

E. McCann

Vincent Browne

LIBERTY HALL

OCTOBER 21st 7.30pm.

This newsheet is produced by the Drumcondra/Whitehall Action Group. We welcome contributions and letters. If you have any queries about this newsheet or the activities of the Action Group, please write to Peter Farelly, No. 8, Grattan Parade Drumcondra.

Title: H-Block / Armagh News, Vol. 1, No. 9

Date: 1981

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