



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

EMERGENCY BULLETIN



ALL IRELAND

UNITY

BEHIND THE
HUNGER STRIKERS
NOW ESSENTIAL

WITHDRAW

the anti - unionist councillors

from the northern councils.

EXPEL

the British ambassador.

BREAK

the Haughey / Thatcher talks.

PRODUCED BY PEOPLES' DEMOCRACY.

DITORIAL

NOW WE MUST WIN

Responsibility for the death of Bobby Sands M.P. rests entirely with the British Government. The cruel intransigence of Thatcher and Atkins, their rejection of national and international opinion represents a calculated insult to the whole of the Irish people and demonstrates the racist contempt in which the British ruling class holds the people of this country.

In extending our sorrowing condolence to the family and comrades of Bobby Sands, Peoples Democracy wishes to assure them of the fact that they do not mourn alone: the people of Ireland and all those who have known oppression by an imperial power are with them in this dark hour.

Bobby Sands is not the first martyr of the Irish struggle for freedom and national independence. His death, like those that went before him, does not humiliate or cower the resistance as our enemies hope but rather inspires us all to greater efforts to bring to a final end the struggle for the five just demands of the political prisoners.

In the immediate days ahead we must turn our efforts towards saving the lives of the other hunger strikers who are continuing with courage the fight for the five demands. There is not a single responsible voice in Ireland that denies the justice of these demands.

The unity of the Irish people which we began to build during the last few months must now be completed. Fianna Fail and the SDLP must bow to the demands of the nationalist people of Ireland. The British ambassador in Dublin must be sent home. All talks with the British government must be ended. All representatives of the nationalist people must withdraw from British government institutions.

Britain's murder of Bobby Sands represents a declaration of war against the Irish people. We must respond to this in a united and disciplined manner. Our strategy must be that of mass peaceful protests and, most importantly, industrial action against British firms and products.

Britain will increasingly be seen as the real criminal. We shall have political status for our political prisoners. WE shall smash the H-Blocks. Victory to the Hunger Strikers!

BRITISH

LABOUR'S SHAME

Few of the reactions to the death of Bobby Sands can have been as scandalous as that of the leader of the British Labour party, Michael Foot. At Westminster on Tuesday he gave full support to the intransigent position of the Tory Govt, repeating almost word for word the arguments put forward by Paisley on BBC radio earlier in the morning.

When Foot was elected to the leadership

of the parliamentary Labour party the Capitalist press ranted and raved about his "extreme socialism". Foot however, has proved himself a staunch supporter of imperialist oppression in Ireland, while being ready to denounce repression in El Salvador, the Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Foot's snivelling support for Thatcher was matched only by the silence of the Labour left. It was left to right-wing Labour M.P. Patrick Duffy to place responsibility for Bobby Sands death squarely on the shoulders of Thatcher's Govt. The British left must make the breaking of this 'Bipartisan policy' its main aim.

IMPERIALISM MURDERS BOBBY SANDS

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

The election of Bobby Sands as member of Parliament for Fermanagh/South Tyrone on the H-Block/Armagh political prisoner ticket was an important victory for the second hunger strike campaign. Against all the predictions of the press and T.V., despite the unprecedentedly vicious campaign of the SDLP urging anti-unionists to vote for Harry West, despite the arrogant protestations of Maggie Thatcher about the impossibility of the 5 demands ever being granted, Bobby Sands victory at the polls was an unmistakable sign that the campaign for political status was supported by the majority of the Irish people.

In these few days after April 9th, when the Tories dropped their attempts to unseat Sands as M.P., victory seemed within our grasp.

How is it possible now that Bobby Sands is dead? How did it happen that the movement could not prevent his death? And what does this say about the possibility of saving the lives of the other 3 hunger strikers and winning the 5 demands?

It is because this must now be our main concern that we have to look carefully at the weaknesses of the two campaigns so that mistakes are not repeated and the important lessons are learnt.

One of the most important lessons of the struggle around the 5 demands is what Maggie Thatcher represents. It is not any Govt. that can withstand the pressure directed at it by the Hunger strike campaign. It built massive mobilisations North and South - the biggest seen in Ireland since the early '70s. Internationally there was pressure from; the U.S.A., France, Portugal, Norway, Greece, Malta. In Ireland limited expressions of concern from the major Nationalist parties were given point by resolutions of support and strike action from Trades unionists throughout the 32 counties.

But this is no ordinary British Government. It is one of the most vicious right-wing Tory regimes ever seen in that country. It is a Govt. that plans to isolate, criminalise and defeat the anti-imperialist movement and in so doing humiliate the Irish people as a whole - a determination matched only by their determination to attack the British working class. In Britain as well as Ireland unemployment, cutbacks, poverty and misery have now become the order of the day. A defeat on the Irish question would throw the whole strategy of the Govt. into question and mark a major crisis for imperialism internationally.

The extremely reactionary nature of this Govt. and the central importance of political status is then the first lesson which we must firmly grasp. This itself points to the second lesson. There is absolutely no point in placing reliance on parties like Fainna Fail and the SDLP to uphold the democratic rights of the Irish people. Junior partners in imperialist exploitation is the game which these parties play. Unfortunately, far too many people still have confidence in their ability to find a solution to the hunger strike crisis. We have not succeeded in compelling these parties to throw their weight behind the forces of the hunger-strike campaign. This is why the demands:

WITHDRAW FROM THE COUNCILS
END THE HAUGHEY - THATCHER TALKS
EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR

are crucial now in the fight to build a movement that can save the lives of Francie Hughes, Ray McCreech and Patsy O'Hara.

The other lesson we must learn is the central importance of industrial action by the organised working class. We have made tremendous progress in building Trade union action often with few resources. The whole force of the campaign directed at workers can ensure victory for us.

ANSWERING THE SLANDER

Bobby Sands died a lone prisoner in a prison cell after 66 days of torture. Three times each day the British left food at his bedside even after the point where his body would have been able to absorb food. Even his last days were made unendurable by sanctimonious representatives of Church and state telling him that he, and not the massive state forces arrayed against him, was responsible for the violence. These lies have been repeated and used to justify his murder. They need to be answered.

Firstly Thatcher's inane statement that 'a crime is a crime'. The answer to that is quite simple. In the North of Ireland 'criminality' depends on whether you are a pro-imperialist or an anti-imperialist. The R.U.C. have defined support for H-Block and Armagh as a crime and will attack any supporters who dare to enter Belfast City centre. Meanwhile Paisley can attack Dublin councillors while they stand aside. Any defence movement by Catholics is automatically attacked while the U.D.A. organise without restriction. Bobby gets 14 years for possession of a gun while Loyalists walk free or get suspended sentences. The British army can murder youths in Derry without even the pretence of an enquiry. It's this unbridled imperialist violence that Thatcher and Foot are hypocritically defending.

The second line of defence is that Bobby committed suicide and that therefore the British had no responsibility for his death. Bobby Sands never wanted to die. He was however willing to die rather than bow the knee to British oppression. For five years he tried every other course open to him before resorting to the final tactic of the hunger strike. Massive numbers of Irish people demonstrated in his defence and a majority of the Fermanagh-South Tyrone electorate voted their support for his demands. When the British decided to defy all this they were deciding to

murder Bobby Sands.

The truth is that the hunger strike is enshrined in history as the final weapon of the oppressed and exploited. It is a final appeal to all those who are also oppressed to unit and to organise in the defence of the prisoners. This is the choice that faces all sections of Irish society. Are they on the side of the oppressed or on the side of the oppressors? The SDLP and Fainna Fail must come off the fence. The lives of the other hunger strikers can be saved, but we must let the Irish people know who are their allies and who are their enemies in this struggle.

DEVLIN CHALLENGED

Paddy Devlin, a councillor for the Andersonstown area of Belfast and Gerry Fitt's chief henchman, picked the 63rd day of Bobby Sand's hunger strike to denounce 'intimidation'. He didn't mean British intimidation of the Hunger strike campaign. He meant that the campaign was intimidating him by asking him to withdraw from the council until the prisoner's struggle was resolved.

In a reply John McAnulty, P.D. candidate in the area, pointed out that the campaign's activity was perfectly legitimate and that Devlin had lost all touch with the political opinions of his constituents. He noted that Devlin had not condemned the arrest of himself and seven other H-Block/Armagh militants on the Belfast May Day march - an example of real intimidation by the RUC. He went on to challenge Devlin to a debate.

So far we have had no reply. Perhaps Paddy has learnt wisdom from his old pal Gerry Fitt, who is now lying low after his earlier attacks on the prisoners. P.D. is standing candidates against both Fitt and Devlin to expose their ~~fake~~ socialists and throw their attacks on the prisoners back in their teeth. We again renew our call to all councillors and candidates to indicate their intention of withdrawing from the council.

HOW WE CAN WIN

The question facing us all is "What do we do now?" The immediate priority is to publicly show our sorrow at the death of Bobby Sands and our solidarity with the remaining three Hunger Strikers. Black flags should be flown and we can wear black armbands on Thursday, the National day of Mourning.

On the streets, local H. Block Committees can organise road blockings and mass pickets on barracks. These activities should be characterised by discipline and unity and can be used to involve as many people as possible in active opposition to the British.

There is the probability of R.U.C. and army raids on the districts to round up local activists. We can prevent this by barricading off side streets and ensuring that personnel are there to defend them at all times. This will not only provide effective protection for campaign activists but give an alternative activity for our Youth to involve themselves in, as opposed to the present unco-ordinated rioting. In the past, bin-lid bashing has proved a good militant response to incursions of any "free areas" that we set up.

Throughout this campaign we have pressurised the Trade Union Movement and the S.D.L.P. to take a positive stand on the 5 Demands. We must now demand that the unions implement their national policy which declares support for the prisoners. We must demand that our local councillors come off the councils till the Political Status issue is resolved. Pressure can be stepped up through picketing union offices and S.D.L.P. Head Quarters.

On a wider plane the electors of Fermanagh/S. Tyrone should organise a mass petition calling for another by-election for Bobby Sands seat and then stand another Hunger Striker which will afford us the opportunity

to consolidate the original victory and further isolate the S.D.L.P. leadership and discredit the British and Irish governments.

Already, appeals to the international labour movement to take industrial action against British concerns and have met with a good response. This action coupled with similar moves in Ireland could present the British with serious problems.

A crucial battle will be to end the Anglo/Irish talks and FreeState collaboration on the Border. In this Charles Haughey had the power to save Bobby Sands but refused to use it. An all-Ireland demonstration can be organised to march on Dublin with the demand that the Fianna Fail govt either take decisive action on the Hunger Strike or resign! The question has to be put to every Irish citizen, "Do you support the Prisoners or the British government".

We can win this campaign. We can save the lives of the three remaining Hunger Strikers. We must prove both to ourselves as well as to the British that we are not beaten and are prepared to fight on till we win.

JOIN
P.D.
FOR A
WORKERS
REPUBLIC