

GRAPO Hungerstrike Ends

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PLN has reported previously on the progress of the hungerstrike in Spain by some 42 imprisoned members of GRAPO (Anti-Fascist Resistance Groups, First of October) and of the PCE(r) (Communist Party of Spain, reconstituted). The strike began on November 30, 1989, and ended February 2, 1991. This makes it one of the longest running hunger strikes in modern history.

Among the demands made by the prisoners was an end to isolation in control units, to be recognized as political prisoners and to be regrouped in one prison so as to continue their political education and maintain their identity. This was vigorously opposed by the Spanish government who holds a total of over 1,000 political prisoners. During the strike Jose Manuel Sevillano died of heart failure due to malnutrition. To prolong the hunger strike the government force-fed the prisoners. Several government officials, to include the head of prison medicine in charge of the force feeding, were executed during the strike by operational GRAPO units.

The hunger strike was seen as being of great importance in light of the planned European unification in 1992 which could set the guidelines for dealing with all political prisoners in Europe, i.e., isolation, psychological torture, etc. Demonstrations in support of the hunger strikers took place throughout Spain as well as across Europe, in the U.S., Canada, Japan and other countries.