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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 July 1981

*[Handwritten signature]*

*Dear Clive,*

Overseas Information Effort on Northern Ireland

I attach a paper drawn up with the Northern Ireland Office which summarises the Government's information activities abroad in the last two months. We are continuing to examine what more can be done.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stephen Boys-Smith (Northern Ireland Office) and David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office).

*[Handwritten signature]*

*yours ever*

*Roderic Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

Clive Whitmore Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

*Prime Minister.*

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## GOVERNMENT INFORMATION EFFORT OVERSEAS ON NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Since Sands' death in the Maze Prison, Belfast, on 5 May, FCO posts have been sent a wide range of material including:-

(a) 13 Guidance telegrams containing up-to-date and factual information and arguments to deploy;

(b) 50 Retract and 11 Verbatim telegrams containing texts of Ministerial speeches, Parliamentary answers and messages;

(c) a paper containing favourable quotations from the overseas press (see also 2(b) below);

(d) a five-minute video film of PIRA bomb outrages produced by the COI for placing with local TV stations;

(e) profiles of all hunger strikers;

(f) the Paymaster-General's briefing note of points for Ministers to make;

(g) some COI feature articles.

2. Work in hand includes:-

(a) a revision of 'Points at Issue', a compendium of question and answer papers in loose-leaf folders last revised in September 1980 covering various aspects of the Northern Ireland policies;

(b) a second paper summarising overseas press comment;

(c) a 50-minute COI film aimed mainly at North American club gatherings but also worldwide and for TV;

(d) a five-minute video film showing conditions in the Maze prison;

(e) a two-page fact sheet for handing directly to MEPs and other interested foreign dignitaries;

(f) an eight-page paper covering the same ground but in more detail for the general enquirer.

3. In parallel, the NIO are preparing a further edition of 'What the Papers Say' (similar to the FCO summary of overseas press but including UK press comment) and a pamphlet on IRA atrocities. They have continued to brief resident foreign correspondents in London, as well as those visiting either London or Belfast for whom posts



have requested facilities. NIO officials also briefed the European Democratic Group of MEPs prior to the debate on Irish affairs at Strasbourg on 7 May, the outcome of which was satisfactory from our point of view.

4. In the United States and France, our posts have been specially active. For instance, since 22 April, our Embassy in Paris has received over 2,600 communications (letters, cards, petitions and telegrams, of which over 1,500 have been without addresses). Over 500 standard replies and dossiers have been issued. The Ambassador or the Counsellor (Information) have replied personally to over 100 Mayors, Senators, or Deputés, all of them known Communists or from a Communist area, and written frequently to editors. When Mr Butler, an NIO Minister of State, visited France for the Paris Air Show, the Embassy arranged for him to meet a number of key journalists; as a result, arrangements were made for a group of French journalists to visit the Maze and also to see at first hand the normality of life in Northern Ireland.

5. In the United States, six out of seven radio stations broadcast a COI interview by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland immediately after the death of Sands; CBS nationwide television also carried an interview with him. Since then, Mr Atkins has appeared in ABC's 'Good Morning, America', the top-rated US breakfast television show. The Ambassador, the Consul-General in New York and Chicago and the First Secretary in charge of BIS New York have also appeared on American television. Letters from the Consul-General setting the record straight have appeared in the 'New York Daily News', and the 'Philadelphia Daily News'. The British Information Services, New York, have handled over 600 letters written as part of successive campaigns in support of the prison protests in Northern Ireland.

6. Between 21 and 25 June, two senior NIO officials visited the United States to brief editors and other opinion-formers. Mr Alison, the Minister of State in the NIO responsible for prisons, is likely to visit the United States in July. (Washington would have difficulty in handling further visits at the moment but the series of all-party visits of MPs begun in December/January may be resumed later this year.)

7. In some countries, eg FRG, there has been little criticism to ~~compat.~~ Many other posts have been active, including:-

(1) Mexico City (the Ambassador has written letters, all of which were published, in response to ill-informed or hostile comment in six different newspapers; the Counsellor has given a number of press and radio interviews);

(2) Port of Spain (the High Commissioner has written to one paper to correct an article and given an interview to another);

(3) Sofia (the Ambassador called on the Head of the Press Department at the MFA to draw attention to occasions when comment had been notably biased);





(4) The Hague (the Ambassador has called on a number of political figures specifically to discuss Northern Ireland);

(5) East Berlin (the Ambassador has circulated a paper to editors and other appropriate officials);

(6) Wellington (the High Commissioner has written to the editor of the leading Roman Catholic journal to correct tendentious articles);

(7) Pretoria (the Ambassador has given an on-the-record interview to the 'Rand Daily Mail').

30 June 1981

Information Department



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Fuland 117 289  
Myr Stube

SUBJECT.

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cc: FCO  
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

2 July 1981

Dear Stephen,

MEETING WITH CARDINAL O'FIAICH

The Prime Minister held a meeting at 2015 yesterday evening with Cardinal O'Fiaich and Bishop Lennon. Your Secretary of State was present.

The Prime Minister said that she was sorry that she and the Cardinal had not been able to meet when she was last in Belfast. She had been especially anxious during her visit to convey to the community of Northern Ireland the message that the Government would do everything it could to ensure that the Province enjoyed a just, equitable and impartial rule of law, but that this was as much as the state could do. She had said during her visit that there was nothing she could do to make people kind, considerate and thoughtful to each other. There was no role for legislation here. She prized reason and fair play; but she recognised that reason could not always overcome deeply-held feelings. She hoped that the Cardinal would be able to tell her things about the feelings of the minority community that she was unaware of, or that he might be able to express to her in a more vivid way what she already knew about their feelings. To her it was appalling that people should go on hunger strike, and she was the first to want to see it ended. The conditions in the Maze would stand comparison with prison conditions anywhere else in the world, and she did not think that they could be the driving force behind the hunger strike. Perhaps the hunger strikers were protesting in this way because they had been ordered to do so by people outside.

Cardinal O'Fiaich said that he did not believe the hunger strikers were acting on external instructions. The impetus for their protests was coming from within the prison. He was at one with the Prime Minister in wanting to see an end to the hunger strike. He had felt a glimmer of hope when the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace had produced their statement a fortnight earlier. He thought that the prisoners might see the Commission as an independent group who were interested in their future and might therefore be ready to listen to them. But that would require them to be allowed access to the hunger strikers. He recognised that this request was difficult for the Government because it would look as though the Commission was becoming involved in negotiations between the Government and the prisoners, but he thought that it would be helpful if the

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Commission could see Mr. Michael Alison again and then visit the prisoners. He would like to suggest that Father Crilly, who was a relation of one of the hunger strikers, and one or two other members of the Commission should be allowed in. They would not be conducting a negotiation but they could explain to the hunger strikers what the position was. There would be trouble if the hunger strikers were allowed to die just because prison regulations said that certain types of person could not visit prisoners. The Government had, after all, allowed three members of the Dail to go into the Maze some weeks ago. He believed that there was just a hope that the Commission could find a solution and so he urged the Government to allow them access to the prisoners.

Your Secretary of State said that there was no problem about allowing Father Crilly to see the prisoners, whether as a priest or as a relative of one of them. But he could not let the Commission as a body go into the Maze. Otherwise a lot of other organisations would ask for the same facilities. There were many people who wanted to see the hunger strikers, and it was essential that the Government adhered to the practice of allowing access only to prisoners' relatives, lawyers and priests. In any case, if it was thought that the Government were negotiating with the strikers or were using the Commission as negotiators by proxy, this would be likely to produce a strong reaction in the Protestant community and thus put at risk Catholic inhabitants of Northern Ireland.

The Cardinal said that that argument could be pushed too far. He recognised that a balance had to be preserved vis-a-vis the hard line Protestants, but it should be remembered that there were Protestant prisoners in the Maze as well as Republicans. The central question was how he and the Prime Minister and Mr. Atkins could help each other to bring the hunger strike to the end which they all so much desired. The longer the strike went on, the more beneficial it was to the PIRA. The strike was undoubtedly bringing recruits to the PIRA. The middle ground in Northern Ireland was evaporating, as Mr. Fitt's defeat in the recent local elections had shown.

Bishop Lennon said that he had a number of nephews who had hitherto not been involved in the Republican movement. But he was distressed to see the shift of opinion among them since the hunger strike had started. Young people like this were put in an impossible position. If they criticised the PIRA, they were dubbed as Unionist quislings. If they criticised the British Army or the RUC, they were labelled as members of the PIRA. The problem of the hunger strike was too urgent to quibble about whether someone was allowed to see prisoners as a priest or as a relative or as a member of the ICJP. Replying to a question by the Prime Minister, Bishop Lennon added that the hunger strikers were taking the action they were because they felt - however misguidedly - that they and the community they came from were suffering injustices.

/ The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister said that she could not agree to sanctify crime by giving those on the protest political status, for to do so would be tantamount to saying that they had a licence to kill for political reasons. It was of course true that there were prisoners in the Maze who already had special status but that was for historical reasons and she could not change that situation.

Cardinal O'Fiaich said that he was not asking for special category status and he had made this clear in a telegram to the Prime Minister. But he wanted to draw her attention to the facts in the North as they were, whether we liked them or not. For example, some of the prisoners were very young when they began their sentences, and many of them were long term prisoners. He was not describing these points as special factors but he believed that they did make for a different situation. The prisoners were using that different situation in their own interests. We all wanted to bring the situation to an end, and he had offered many suggestions for doing so. He believed that we had had a solution in our grasp last year, a solution which he and Bishop Daly had brought about by working through the priests and the prisoners' relatives. The prisoners had wanted to get off the hook of the protest and so had the Government. If all prisoners in Northern Ireland had been allowed to wear their own clothes, the whole protest would have ended. He had thought that the Government were going to agree to this but of course what the Government had conceded was that the prisoners could wear civilian-type dress supplied by the prison authorities. If we could now only get back to that stage where a solution had been so close, everybody would be glad.

The Prime Minister said that she did not believe this was possible. The Government had decided, before last autumn's strike had started, that civilian-type clothing should be allowed. More generally, the Government had got into a position where the prison conditions were very good and were better, for example, than those in United States prisons. This position had then been made clear to the hunger strikers who had in due course called off their protest. There was no reason why the present hunger strikers should seek better conditions.

Cardinal O'Fiaich agreed that the conditions in the Maze were potentially among the best in the world. But the fact was that the atmosphere in the Maze was one of very deep hostility between the prison staff and the inmates. This contrasted sharply with Magilligan and Armagh.

Your Secretary of State said that the prisoners were not on strike against the atmosphere in the Maze. They were on strike to win special category status and not to secure a change in the prison conditions. The ICJP had offered some ideas for resolving the situation, but the PIRA's reaction had been negative.

/ Bishop Lennon

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Bishop Lennon said that the decision to go on a hunger strike was a very difficult one to take. The strikers were young and did not want to die. They did not embark upon this course lightly. But he was not saying they were forced to take it.

The Prime Minister said that she doubted whether the hunger strikers understood the prison regime which was on offer. They were chosen to go on the hunger strike and had to carry the cross for the cause. They dared not refuse to do so.

Cardinal O'Fiaich repeated that the hunger strike must be brought to an end. He did not know what special category or political status was. To him it meant nothing. One could take any five conditions and call them political status. He accepted that the Government had many constraints on the action open to them. The Church similarly had very little room for manoeuvre, though he wished to point out that it had condemned the use of violence consistently. The ICJP had made proposals for bringing the situation to an end and he would like to know what alternative way forward there was. If the present situation was allowed to continue indefinitely, moderate people would become hostile to the Government. If another hunger striker died, tension would build up again; and if eight died, there would be chaos in Northern Ireland. It was essential to establish what the hunger strikers would come off their protest for: what it was they went on the protest for was now irrelevant.

The Prime Minister said that she believed that the hunger strike could be brought to an end tomorrow if those taking part in it were given the necessary orders. She was not prepared to barter. She could not accept the prisoners' argument that their crimes were committed for political reasons and were therefore different from ordinary offences. Murder was murder, whatever its motive. All criminals, whatever their religion or political beliefs, had to be treated in the same way in prison. The law was the same for everybody. It had to be applied justly and impartially to all sections of the community.

Bishop Lennon said that there was a strong feeling amongst the young Catholics in Northern Ireland that the law was not applied fairly, and there was a great deal of resentment of which the hunger strike was only a part. The Catholic community's sense of injustice went back for many many years. They had been treated unjustly by the Stormont regime, and Westminster had done nothing about it. This was the background against which the hunger strike had to be seen.

The Prime Minister said that if the Republican community really believed that what it was fighting against was the accumulated wrongs of 400 years, she had to make it clear that there was nothing she could do about it. But she doubted whether this was really so.

/ Cardinal O'Fiaich



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Cardinal O'Fiaich said that much of Northern Ireland's problems sprang from the fact that the Border was the most artificial division ever created. The whole of Northern Ireland was a lie from start to finish. At root what the hunger strikers believed they were striking for was a united Ireland.

Bishop Lennon added that he thought that we were seeing the beginnings of an eventual solution to the problem. What was required was a British declaration of intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland, though he accepted that withdrawal could not be immediate and that no timetable should be attached to such a declaration.

Your Secretary of State said that this was to ignore the one million Protestants who formed the majority. The people of Northern Ireland must seek to solve their problems by persuasion and not by violence, whether against others or, as with the hunger strikers, against oneself. The Republicans should try to persuade the Protestants that the unification of Ireland was a desirable objective. The people of Northern Ireland should sit down and work out their own future. In the meantime all the British Government could do was to maintain the absolute impartiality of the law.

Cardinal O'Fiaich asked when the time would come when the British Government would say that its presence in Northern Ireland was divisive - as it was. The Catholic community did not regard itself as British and did not want British government. There was no hope for British policy if the Government believed that the ordinary people of Fermanagh thought of themselves as being as British as the people of Yorkshire did. Rather, British policy for the future should be stated as a strong desire to bring together all sections of the Northern Ireland community in peace and harmony as a step to bringing all parts of Ireland together in peace and harmony. The only solution was to bring together all the Irish people under a government of Irishmen, whether in a federal or a unitary state.

The Prime Minister said that the course advocated by the Cardinal could not become the policy of the British Government because it was not acceptable to the majority of the population of Northern Ireland. There was no point in complaining about partition: the border was a fact and she could not change that fact. She wanted to see the United Kingdom, of which Northern Ireland was just as much a part as was England or Scotland or Wales, live in peace and cooperation with the Republic. Those who sought a united island of Ireland must learn that what could not be won by persuasion would not be won by force.

Bishop Lennon said that he did not believe that the hunger strikers would be persuaded to give up their protest. Prison conditions were irrelevant. The prisoners were not on hunger

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strike because of physical conditions. They had embarked on the strike because they believed - rightly or wrongly - that they were being treated unjustly.

The Prime Minister said that their discussion had been valuable because it had been frank. She felt that they understood one another better as a result. She regarded the meeting as a private one and she did not intend to reveal that it had taken place. But if it leaked, she would not be able to deny that there had been a meeting. In that event she proposed to say that they had had a wide-ranging and very open discussion of the situation in Northern Ireland.

Cardinal O'Fiaich agreed to proceed in this way. He did not want the meeting to become public knowledge. He thought it only good that they had all spoken so bluntly and openly.

The Prime Minister's visitors left at 2150.

I am sending copies of this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely,*

*Blair Whitman.*

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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PRIME MINISTER

Northern Ireland: the Hunger Strike

Introduction

1. I have considered in the light of our discussion at Cabinet this morning whether we could find some way of resolving the situation in the Maze Prison before any further deaths of hunger strikers occur (McDonnell, the prisoner who has fasted longest, will probably reach a critical point early next week), or at least of vindicating our present stand.

2. When OD discussed the prisons situation on 18 June (OD(81)12th Meeting, item 2) we came down against action which, while appealing to the Catholic community, would appear to be a weakening of the Government's resolve to resist the prisoners' demands for political status. I therefore issued a long and carefully considered statement of the Government's position ... only two days ago (a copy of the key final paragraph is attached) making clear that, while we were prepared to make improvements in the general prison regime for all prisoners, this could not be done while we were under the duress of the hunger strike. While the pressure of Catholic opinion in Northern Ireland, in the Republic, in GB and in the US favours some concession by the Government, any move of that kind will provoke a strong adverse reaction among Northern Ireland Protestants, who will read it as the beginning of a sell-out. This reaction would only matter if the move failed to bring an end to the strike.

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3. Colleagues will be aware that the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP) have put forward publicly certain compromise proposals for ending the strike. These have been endorsed by the Irish Catholic bishops and others, but have been rejected by the prisoners. In our response we have rejected the five demands, but that has not been taken by Catholic opinion as a sign of obduracy. The Commission is at present due to see Mr Alison again tomorrow in Belfast. The line he will take will of course depend upon the outcome of our meeting tomorrow.

4. In the Provisionals' camp a combination of signs of weakening resolve among some of the hunger strikers, a desire among the moderate Catholics to see a reasonable settlement related to the ICJP proposals, and a reaction to manipulation of the families, is creating its own pressure on the leadership.

Nature of policy change needed

5. Unless the hunger strikers lose their nerve, we shall only resolve the impasse by shifting our ground in the hope of inducing the strikers to give up, even against the will of the Provisionals. There is no reason to believe that the ICJP proposals alone would do the trick as regards the Provisional leadership. On present evidence, only the granting of the five demands, in full, could be certain of doing that. Lesser moves would involve a change of stance for HMG if declared before the hunger strike ended. We have so far followed a very hard line, arguing that any weakening could only encourage the strikers to hold out for their full demands. A move by us now would be seen - in Northern Ireland by Protestants and Provisionals - as a signal that we were cracking.

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### Risks

6. If we go for a compromise, there are two further risks we run:

- (i) The prisoners - or those who control them - could accept the concessions offered, end the strike, and three months later repeat it to get the rest of their demands.
- (ii) They could reject them and hold out for their full demands. In that event we shall be seen - depending on the point of view - either as having weakened to no useful effect, or as having made a reasonable offer and thus put the prisoners clearly in the wrong. Some moderate Catholic opinion, eg in the States, may tend to the latter; but it could be a high price to pay for a PR gain.

### The Options

7. In considering how a resolution of the hunger strike might be achieved we have three broad options available to us:

- (a) We can continue to stand firm and make no concessions, in which case we would be accepting the consequences of further deaths and relying on the hunger strikers' nerve breaking to avoid them.
- (b) We can call in some outside body of standing (eg The International Committee of the Red Cross) to look at our prison regime and say whether it is not - as we believe - humane and reasonable, (in which case we shall be powerfully placed to counter hostile propaganda).

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- (c) We could ourselves exploit the general commitment we are already on record as having given, to maintain and improve the prison regime.

8. If we wish to pursue the third of these three options (para 7(c)) we can proceed by direct negotiations with the Provisionals or the prisoners. I reject this. If my colleagues agree, there are four possible channels open to us. These are listed below but I am clear that, given the time constraint under which we may need to operate,

(a) is the only practical one:

- (a) We could use the ICPJ. They have the merit that they are active and on the doorstep. They could be allowed to see the strikers and would willingly act as mediators if we wished. As a Catholic body they are likely to be trusted by the prisoners (but per contra to use them would be suspect among the Protestants).
- (b) We could revive the idea, rejected by OD, that a suitably prestigious Committee (which we shall need to set up before long anyway to advise us on some medium and long term problems we face in NI prisons) should be set up now and charged additionally and as a matter of urgency to examine and report on the current regimes for all prisoners, conforming and protesting, and on the scales of punishment appropriate for persistent breaches of prison rules. Since this body does not yet exist, it would not be possible for it to operate immediately - it would take some time to set it up.
- (c) We could invite the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - who have already indicated their willingness to do so - to undertake the task at (b). The ICRC has



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the merit - as against the ICJP - of being an international and non-sectarian body; but it is connected in the public mind with P-O-W camps. However, it has a well-established role in dealing with civil unrest, and has previously been involved in Northern Ireland at the invitation of Unionist Governments.

- (d) We could without difficulty resuscitate the interest of the European Commission on Human Rights (ECHR), whose procedures under Article 28 of the Convention to arrive at a "friendly settlement" are still available. This would however take time.

More details are in the Annex.

9. If we are prepared to contemplate some further movement, it would be only sensible to do this before McDonnell dies - which could be within a week or even less. The ICJP is the only readily available independent channel of communication with the strikers, and we could instruct Michael Alison to engage with them tomorrow on the possibility of resolving the issue on the basis of his previous discussions with them as summarised in his letter to them and as reflected in last ... Tuesday's statement (copies of both are attached). However, I think we must recognise that it may be necessary for him to be more specific about measures and timing than in his letter if the hunger strikers are to be persuaded that they can safely abandon their protest.

One further point: whatever course we pursue, there would be some serious disadvantages in bringing to an end the current dialogue with the ICJP. They are on the stage; they are trusted by the prisoners; their support is valuable. Any other organisation would be viewed by the prisoners with great reserve.

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10. A hard line statement issued yesterday on behalf of the protesting prisoners generally (but not by the strikers themselves who appear to be more amenable) suggests that they are no longer insisting on a differentiated regime for terrorist prisoners, but would be content if their five demands were conceded for all prisoners. That would mean we had surrendered control to all prisoners: we must instead look for an outcome which does not infringe the principle that we cannot concede control over how the prisons are run to groups of prisoners.

11. In addition:

(i) If we are to move quickly we may well have to concede via the ICJP something specific "on account" to be introduced as soon as the hunger strike ended (eg restoration of more lost remission; the right to wear own clothes all the time) while further exchanges about the continuing regime continue. We should not assume that a mere promise to consider, eg, the ICJP proposals (which would need very detailed examination in the light of practicalities) without something on account would bring them off.

12. (ii) Once a process of this kind has been authorised, I shall need to follow it through and our spokesman must have wide discretion about a final settlement.

12. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Home Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Leader of the House, and Lord Privy Seal.

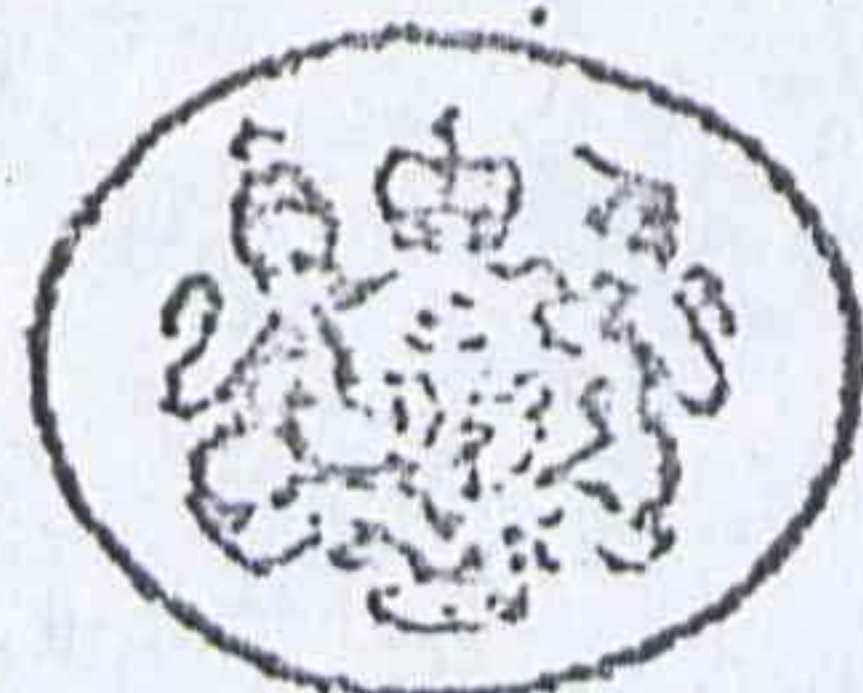
H.A.

2 July 1981

(Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State in his absence)

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Minister of State

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
STORMONT CASTLE  
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast 2232, 63011  
Telex 74472

The Most Reverend Dermot O'Mahoney  
President  
Irish Commission for Justice and Peace  
169 Booterstown Avenue  
Blackrock  
DUBLIN

30 June 1981

*My dear Bishop,*

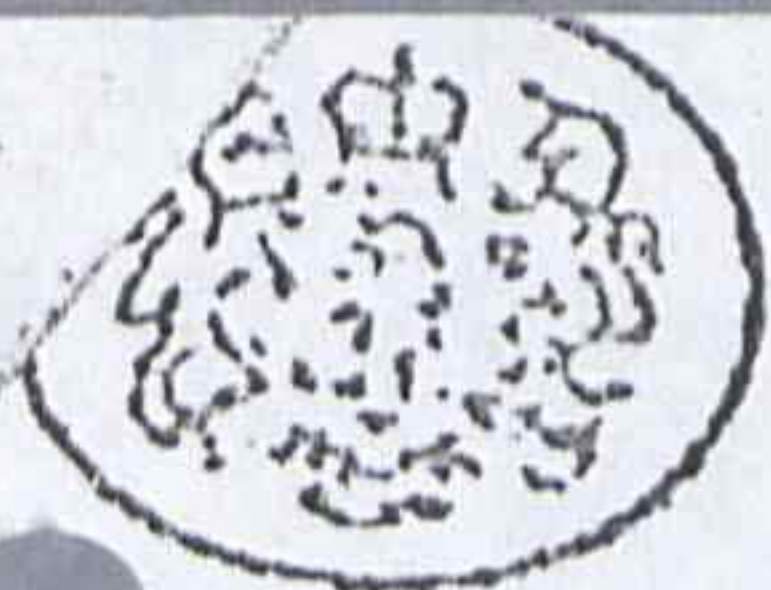
I was, as I said at our meetings on 23 and 26 June, glad to have the chance to talk to you and your fellow Members of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace about the Commission's statement of 3 June.

The Government are grateful to the Commission for the efforts which it has made and continues to make to secure a resolution of the hunger strike at the Maze Prison. The Government for its part fully shares the concern which the Commission has like many men of goodwill expressed, that the hunger strike should end.

At our meeting we had a constructive discussion of the changes which you suggested might reasonably be made to the regime at the Maze Prison for prisoners who are prepared to accept the authority of the Prison Governor were the hunger strike and associated protest to end. From our side the discussion was on the basis that the Government will not concede to anyone other than the Prison Authorities control over what happens in the Prison, nor grant any group of prisoners a specially privileged status on the basis of the motives they claim for the acts which brought them to Prison in the first place. I understood you to accept that that was the Government's position. I believe the Commission also understand that, in our view, the so-called five demands are intended to secure precisely what we cannot give.

The three specific suggestions concerning clothing, association and prison work made in the Commission's statement of 3 June do not in the





form in which they are expressed conflict with the Government's principles. But equally the Commission's expressed proposals might be interpreted as embracing in full the corresponding demands of the prisoners. It is therefore of vital importance that there should be no ambiguity in the Government's position, all the more so as the prisoners are alleged twice in the past ten days to have said that the Commission's proposals fall short of what would bring the protest to an end; we must be clear that what we are talking about is the bringing to an end of the protest and not merely the hunger strike.

It is for this reason that the Secretary of State is once again making the Government's position in general clear in a statement today, of .... which I enclose a copy.

A comparison of the Government's position with the statements attributed to the prisoners on 19 June and again on 26 June shows clearly that these attitudes cannot be reconciled. This is why the Government believes it would be wrong to make moves in advance of the ending of the hunger strike and simply in the hope that they would have this effect. In other words the Government is not prepared to give the protesters something on account in the hope that they would not present the rest of the bill later.

The Government would nevertheless like to set down for the record the specific questions you put to us in the two meetings to which I have referred, and our answers.

Segregation:

The Government cannot concede the principle that prisoners should decide with whom they mix or that they be segregated according to religious denomination or other factors. In practice common sense will dictate how the Prison Authorities will deploy prisoners day to day. It will be for them to decide what at any time will be the overriding consideration.



Controlled Association:

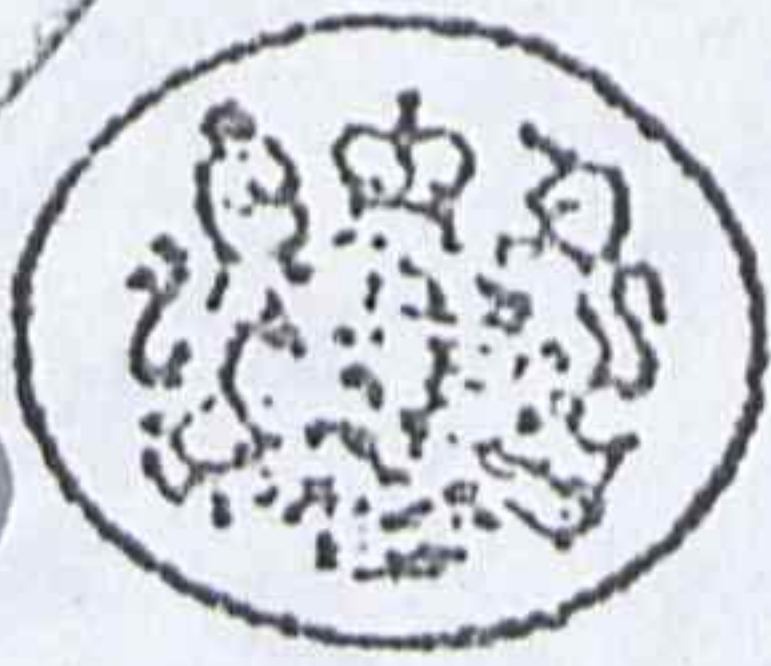
You asked whether, subject to the necessary considerations of control and security, prisoners in adjacent wings might be allowed to associate together during the period when association is normally permitted to non-protesting prisoners in the evenings and at weekends and during recreation in the exercise yard. This does present practical problems of controlling and supervising more movement, and larger groups, of prisoners: and the considerations mentioned would mean that such movement could not be through the central control areas of a block. Otherwise, the problems need not be overriding in the situation of normality which we assumed as the context of our discussions. But this assumption is important, since there is obvious scope for misuse of the increased association involved.

You also asked whether it would be possible from unlock to lock-up normally to leave cell doors unlocked. I have considered this and have to say that we would not find this possible in view of the men we are dealing with and the need to protect prison officers. In addition, many prisoners prefer the privacy afforded by the present arrangements.

Work:

You asked whether ex-protestors would be required to contribute in the same way as presently non-protesting prisoners to orderly work in the blocks and to analogous duties in the central facilities (such as kitchens and laundries) which serve the whole prison. You also asked whether ex-protestors would in practice have to engage in 'productive' work in prison industry. In principle we regard all prisoners as liable to allocation by the Prison Authorities to some prison activity. But I went on to explain that prison activities embraced a spectrum from the essential functions needed to maintain the prison through 'productive' activities and activities which benefit primarily the prisoners, and that there are areas where the one shades into the other. There are obvious attractions in increasing the proportion of time which prisoners spend in useful activities that are also congenial to them, and to offering the widest practicable choice. But we cannot





agree that any group of prisoners should as of right opt out of a particular form of activity, since what matters to us is that in practice the Prison Authorities decide what prisoners actually do.

Remission:

The Government is prepared, in accordance with its previous statement to be generous about restoring lost remission on an individual basis and subject to continuing good conduct in circumstances in which the whole protest has come to an end. But it would be wrong to imagine that that restoration would immediately be total or be given without an appropriate period of evidence of continuing good behaviour.

Clothing:

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Yours sincerely  
Michael Allison

MICHAEL ALLISON



EXTRACT FROM SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT  
OF 30 JUNE 1951

Conclusion

18. The so-called "five demands" represent a regime which would differentiate those seeking it from other prisoners, give them control over their lives in prison and enable them to claim the status of political prisoner and all that that implies. If this is indeed what is being sought by, or in the name of, the hunger strikers it is being sought in vain. It has been suggested that changes should be made now in the areas of work, clothing and association as a gesture in the hope of ending the hunger strike. The Government does listen to the views of responsible people. The great difficulty about such a move is that it would encourage the hope that political status based on the so-called "five demands" could still be achieved.

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## POSSIBLE VEHICLES FOR SEEKING A RESOLUTION OF THE PRISONS CRISIS

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2. The ICJP has concerned itself with the NI prisons problems for some time, and intensively since its published statement of 3 June in which it rejected "political status" but suggested that the problem might be resolved by changes (with safeguards) in certain aspects of the regime - working activity, association and clothing. The ICJP has twice met the Minister of State (Mr. Alison), and its members have been in touch with the prisoners' families etc. (and with some individual prisoners). Discussions with Mr. Alison have centred on details of the possible changes of regime which the ICJP is advocating. It has been made clear to the ICJP that we are not negotiating with the prisoners through it. Since HMG's statement on 30 June the ICJP has pressed for another urgent meeting, and for access to the hunger strikers. A meeting has been arranged for Friday 3 July in Belfast. On present policy HMG's object then would be merely to explain the statement. Access to the hunger strikers would be allowed to enable that message to be passed on; but, in order to prevent any appearance of negotiation, there would be no ensuing meeting between the ICJP and HMG.
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B. European Commission of Human Rights

The Commission (ECHR) is an international body of formally recognised standing in this and other fields. It operates within a set framework of complaints from individuals who assert an infringement of their rights under the Convention (or from Member States asserting infringements). As we have learned, it is reluctant to step outside that role.

2. The ECHR is currently on stage because it recently decided to activate, by declaring admissible, the outstanding parts of the complaint brought in 1978 by 4 Maze prisoners (McFeeley et al). These remaining grounds of complaint (rights of correspondence; lack of effective domestic remedy) are marginal at best to the "five demands". But the ECHR's standard procedure, which they are currently following, is to invite each side to make proposals for a "friendly settlement" - and these need not be confined to the specific grounds of complaint under investigation. Thus, HMG could make "friendly settlement" proposals that related to work, clothing etc. Ministers decided against doing so, and what was passed to the ECHR (on 3 June, in Strasbourg), and has been transmitted to the other side, was a statement of HMG's position. The other side has still not reacted, and perhaps does not intend to do so. But our understanding is that the whistle has not yet been blown on the "friendly settlement" stage: so it is still open to HMG to make proposals to the Commission, which would of course be put to the other side.



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3. There are great advantages in making any move through an independent body of status. Use of the ECHR as an intermediary ought to ensure that, before we made any concessions publicly known, we would know that they would be accepted by the other side. And concessions thus arrived at would stand a better chance of being tolerated by Protestant opinion. Because of the line the Commission has taken on "political status" - and, indeed, on prison work - it is not well regarded in PIRA circles. The Commission, on past form, could move pretty fast but whether fast enough to save McDonnell must be doubtful.

CONFIDENTIAL



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C. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC is an international body of standing. It is connected in the popular mind with prisoners-of-war, but its range of interest in fact goes wider. It was invited in the early '70s to inspect the conditions of NI internees and detainees. It has from time to time, including quite recently, made known its readiness to be invited to help in resolving the present crisis. If we lacked any other international body, it would be worth turning to. But it is second best to the ECHR, both because it would start "from cold" and because of its "Pol<sup>W</sup>" aura - which the PIRA would no doubt exploit. Its methods and findings might be more unpredictable than those of the ECHR.

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D: HMG's own Committee of Inquiry

In paper OD(81)33 the Secretary of State set out the case for setting up an independent review body of high standing which would consider both the immediate and the longer term problems of the NI prisons. Ministers decided that, to avoid any suggestion that HMG was planning concessions, such a body should not be appointed yet, and when appointed should concern itself only with the longer term. It would still be possible to revive the earlier idea, in the hope that its announcement, and the expectation that it would urgently propose changes in prison regime, would persuade the hunger strikers to call off, or at least suspend, their protest. Choice of membership would be crucial if the inquiry was to be seen to carry the necessary weight and independence.



NORTHERN IRELAND: ADVANCE COPIES

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		SIR R ARMSTRONG
		DIO

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OO FCO DESKBY 01:1600Z

OO NIO (BELFAST) DESKBY 01:1600Z

OO TFCRELAY

GRPS 240

K O N F I D E N T I A L

FM DUBLIN 01:1515Z JULY 1981

TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 01:1600Z FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 223 OF 1 JULY 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE DESKBY 01:1600Z NIO(BELFAST)

MY TELNO 221: HUNGER STRIKE

1. THE TAOISEACH SUMMONED ME AT 3.10PM THIS AFTERNOON. THE TANAISTE MR O'LEARY WAS ALSO PRESENT.

2. DR FITZGERALD SPOKE IN MUCH THE SAME TERMS AS BISHOP O'MAHONY. HE SAID THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS NOW AT A VERY CRITICAL STAGE AND THERE WAS PROBABLY NO BETTER MOMENT TO SOLVE IT. THE FAMILIES WERE STANDING UP WELL AGAINST IRA PRESSURE. WE SIMPLY MUST GIVE THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE WHAT HELP WE COULD. HE ASKED US MOST EARNESTLY TO SEE THAT THEY MET AGAIN WITH MR ALLISON WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE DELAY AND THEN HAD ACCESS TO THE STRIKERS AND PRISONERS.

3. HE ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT THE STRIKERS WERE WELL AWARE OF WHAT THEY REGARDED AS BRINKMANSHIP ON OUR PART WHEN THE LAST



3. HE ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT THE STRIKERS WERE WELL AWARE OF WHAT THEY REGARDED AS BRINKMANSHIP ON OUR PART WHEN THE LAST STRIKE ENDED. WE MUST GET THE COMMISSION MOVING AGAIN BEFORE MCDONNELL DETERIORATED MUCH FURTHER. HE MADE TWO FURTHER POINTS OF INTEREST. FIRST, THAT THE STATEMENT BY PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN THAT MR ATKIN'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY WAS INSUFFICIENT DID NOT REFLECT THE PRISONERS' VIEWS. SECOND, THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT GERRY ADAMS SHOULD REMAIN ON THE SCENE FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS (THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS WAS NOT EXPLAINED).

4. DR FITZGERALD HAS MADE A VERY STRONG APPROACH TO US ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION. WHILE WE MAY NOT AGREE WITH HIM ABOUT THEIR IMPORTANCE WE SHOULD NOT REFUSE WHAT HE ASKS. IF WE TURN DOWN HIS REQUEST WE SHALL GET OFF TO A BAD START HERE.

FIGG

NNNNN

**IMMEDIATE**

SENT/RECD JAT 01:1536Z CB/MCH



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SIR K STOWE  
MR MORIATY  
MR MARSHALL  
MR BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE - SIR R ARMSTRONG  
DIO

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

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FROM DUBLIN 010800Z JULY  
TO IMMEDIATE F C O  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 221 OF 01 JULY 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (B)

1. BISHOP O'MAHONY OF THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE TELEPHONED ME LATE LAST NIGHT. FOLLOWING MR ATKINS' STATEMENT THE COMMISSION WANTED A VERY EARLY MEETING WITH MR ALLISON TO CLARIFY CERTAIN POINTS. IN VIEW OF MC DONNELL'S DETERIORATING CONDITION THEY WANTED TO MOVE QUICKLY AND THE BISHOP WAS DISMAYED THAT MR ALLISON COULD NOT SEE THEM BEFORE FRIDAY. HE ASKED MY SUPPORT TO ARRANGE AN EARLIER MEETING.

2. I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS NO MORE THAT WE WISH TO SAY TO THE COMMISSION AT THE MOMENT. BUT THEY ARE SUCH A WELL KNOWN AND ESTEEMED BODY THAT I THINK THERE IS A STRONG CASE FOR SEEING THEM QUICKLY, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO STONEWALL. IT WOULD SURELY BE AGAINST OUR INTERESTS, ESPECIALLY WITH A NEW GOVERNMENT HERE, IF A STORY GOT AROUND THAT WE WERE NOW REFUSING TO SEE THE COMMISSION.

FIGG.



**CONFIDENTIAL**  
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*Ireland*



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

/ July, 1981

William Rickett, Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

*Dear Willie,*

You will by now have received the brief for the Prime Minister's meeting this evening with Cardinal O Fiaich.

You will be interested to know that we have received a brief account from Mr Waite at Lambeth Palace of the meeting this morning between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal O Fiaich. This was apparently extremely cordial, and the foundation was laid for a friendly continuing relationship. Apparently the Cardinal expressed a positive reaction to yesterday's statement on prisons, seeing in it a sign of hope and the opportunity for further movement.

*Yours sincerely,  
Noel Cornick*

NOEL CORNICK



E.R.

BRIEF FOR MEETING OF PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND WITH CARDINAL O FIAICH

Background: Recent Events

1. When the Prime Minister visited Northern Ireland on 28 May it was hoped that Cardinal O Fiaich would be among those that she met. But the shortness of the notice, compounded by inhibitions (for security reasons) about disclosing the visit in advance, meant that the Cardinal was unable to attend. These events produced at the time some feeling in his part that he had been discourteously treated. The Prime Minister wrote to him at the time and he, replying on 2 June, suggested a meeting during his visit to London to take part in ceremonies to commemorate the tricentenary of the execution of his predecessor, St Oliver Plunkett.
2. On 3 June the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace issued a statement about the prisons crisis which rejected "political status" but suggested that the problem might be resolved by changes (with safeguards) in certain aspects of the regime - working activity, association and clothing.
3. On 17 June the Irish Catholic Bishops put out a statement expressing their concern about the situation and endorsing the ICJP approach. Mr Atkins wrote to the Cardinal welcoming this statement; in reply, the Cardinal pressed for a Government reaction to the ICJP's statement.
4. On 30 June HMG issued a statement on NI prison regimes, related in part to the ICJP's proposals. Mr Alison has twice met the ICJP (records of the meetings are with No 10). Mr Alison has also sent a letter to the Commission (copy attached) which reflects HMG's public statement. It is to be agreed between us and the ICJP when that letter is to be published.



E.R.

Subjects of Meeting

The under-lying thought is that if the hunger strike leads to more deaths and therefore to renewed violence, the ability of the security forces to control the situation, and our ability to counter the increasing influence and strength of the PIRA, will depend upon the lead given by the leaders of moderate Catholic opinion. In this process, the Cardinal and the hierarchy play a crucial role. Against that background the suggested objects of the meeting are:

1. To assure the Cardinal, and through him his fellow-bishops and priests and the Catholic community, of HMG's continuing care and concern for that community, especially at a time when it is subject to stress resulting from the prisons crisis.
2. To express appreciation of the efforts of the Cardinal and other leaders to rally and reassure moderate Catholic opinion, especially as regards the hunger strike and PIRA violence generally, and to urge the continuance of those efforts.
3. To welcome the constructive approach to the hunger strike of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace - and the Bishops' Conference, and to explain HMG's position.
4. To assert that HMG is not wholly preoccupied with the prisons crisis. It is concerned also with political development in NI; with the development of the "unique relationship" with Dublin; and with making economic and social provision for NI on a healthy foundation. In pursuing all these policies, HMG is at pains to be even-handed as between the two parts of the community.



Speaking Note

1. Sorry a meeting in Belfast did not prove practicable and glad it has now proved possible to arrange one.
2. Providing good government for the divided community is a heavy responsibility on HMG. Contact at all levels with the leaders of the Catholic community (and, similarly, on the Protestant side) is important to HMG.
3. HMG anxious to assure Catholic community of its care and concern, especially at the present difficult time. We are fully aware of the pressures, and risk of alienation, arising from the prisons crisis. Object of PM's visit at the end of May was to bring reassurance. The lead given to the Catholic community by moderate and balanced church leaders is highly valued.
4. As regards the prisons, HMG faces a difficult problem. We have much appreciated the efforts of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace to understand all sides of the issue and to put forward in good faith suggestions for resolving it. We also warmly welcomed the statement of the Irish Bishops, about which Mr Atkins wrote to the Cardinal.
5. Recognise that Cardinal and others may be disappointed that HMG's statement on 30 June did not announce any changes, but was confined to restating position. But HMG's position needs to be made clear:



E.R.

- (a) No. conferring of "political status", in name or in fact - eg by conferring a preferential regime; no ceding to prisoners of control over prisons.
- (b) As regards the details of the regime, HMG has been flexible in the past and remains so. The present regime is a reasonable and in many respects generous one, as the detail of the statement brings out. And "there is scope for yet further development". But changes cannot be made overnight, or under duress.
- (c) The difficulty, for HMG in the ICJP's suggestions lies in their ambiguity. Seen in one light, they could be adopted without doing violence to the Government's principles. Seen in another light, they would take the protesting prisoners much of the way towards their "five demands" and, so, to being able to claim "political status", and to having secured control over what goes on in the prisons.



(d) As regards the specific demands of the protesters, the point about both prison work and association is that conceding what they ask would give them control over what they did and with whom. This point does not apply to the demand to be able to wear their own clothing all the time. The point there is two fold. First, to make that concession would create practical problems in the prison in terms of identifying prisoners and controlling their movements; and secondly, to give way on this point under duress would encourage the protesters to seek for more.

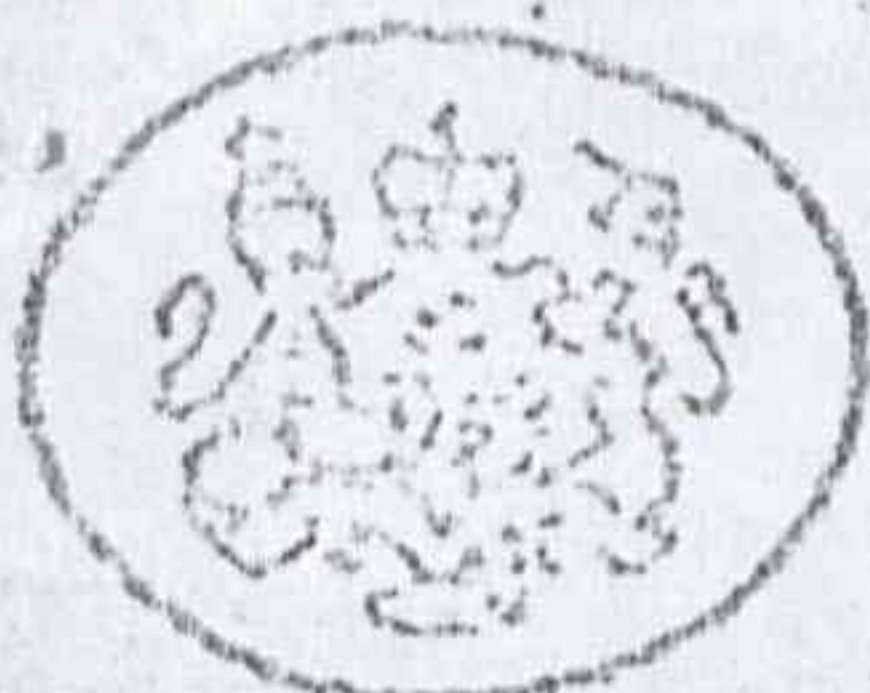
(e) There is no reason to believe that the prisoners' own expressed demands would be satisfied by adjustments of regime within the framework of HMG's basic principles. Hence there would be a grave risk, if changes were made while the hunger strike continued, that they would be seen as a weakening of the Government's resolve and would encourage the strikers to continue in the hope of obtaining all their demands.



(f) As regards the timing of the statement, HMG has been anxious for some time (and others have urged this on us) to restate its position on prison regimes during the "lull" in the deaths of hunger strikers. The dialogue with the ICJP has inevitably imposed a constraint. But what made it necessary to issue something now was the need to make an early response to Mr Haughey's recent statement.

6. HMG's concern for NI not limited to the prisons crisis. There is a need for political development - much thought has gone in to finding a way ahead. Social and economic policies important - a lot of resources go into NI. Dublin initiative will continue. In all these policies, HMG recognises need to be even-handed between two parts of community.





Minister of State

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
STORMONT CASTLE  
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast 2222, 63011  
Telex 74472

The Most Reverend Dermot O'Mahoney  
President  
Irish Commission for Justice and Peace  
169 Booterstown Avenue  
Blackrock  
DUBLIN

30 June 1981

My dear Bishop,

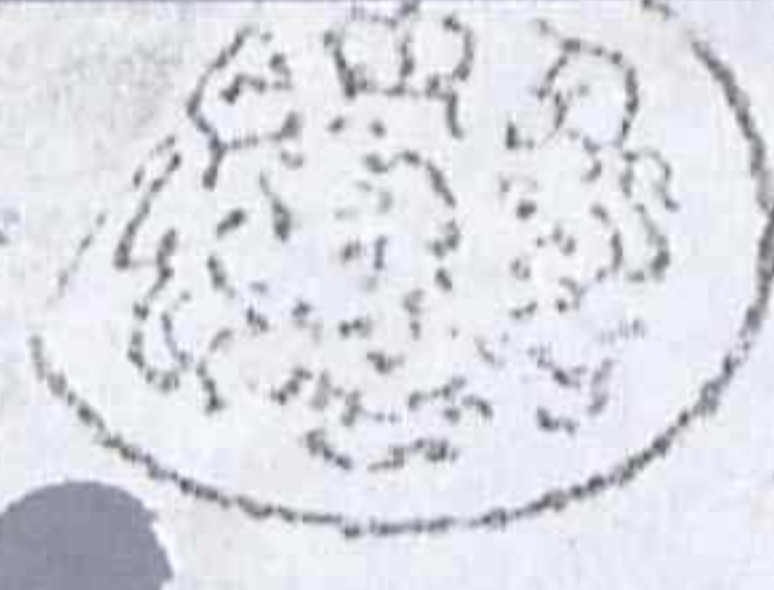
I was, as I said at our meetings on 23 and 26 June, glad to have the chance to talk to you and your fellow Members of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace about the Commission's statement of 3 June.

The Government are grateful to the Commission for the efforts which it has made and continues to make to secure a resolution of the hunger strike at the Maze Prison. The Government for its part fully shares the concern which the Commission has like many men of goodwill expressed, that the hunger strike should end.

At our meeting we had a constructive discussion of the changes which you suggested might reasonably be made to the regime at the Maze Prison for prisoners who are prepared to accept the authority of the Prison Governor were the hunger strike and associated protest to end. From our side the discussion was on the basis that the Government will not concede to anyone other than the Prison Authorities control over what happens in the Prison, nor grant any group of prisoners a special privileged status on the basis of the motives they claim for the acts which brought them to Prison in the first place. I understood you to accept that that was the Government's position. I believe the Commission also understand that, in our view, the so-called five demands are intended to secure precisely what we cannot give.

The three specific suggestions concerning clothing, association and prison work made in the Commission's statement of 3 June do not in the





form in which they are expressed conflict with the Government's principles. But equally the Commission's expressed proposals might be interpreted as embracing in full the corresponding demands of the prisoners. It is therefore of vital importance that there should be no ambiguity in the Government's position, all the more so as the prisoners are alleged twice in the past ten days to have said that the Commission's proposals fall short of what would bring the protest to an end; we must be clear that what we are talking about is the bringing to an end of the protest and not merely the hunger strike.

It is for this reason that the Secretary of State is once again making the Government's position in general clear in a statement today, of .... which I enclose a copy.

A comparison of the Government's position with the statements attributed to the prisoners on 19 June and again on 26 June shows clearly that these attitudes cannot be reconciled. This is why the Government believes it would be wrong to make moves in advance of the ending of the hunger strike and simply in the hope that they would have this effect. In other words the Government is not prepared to give the protesters something on account in the hope that they would not present the rest of the bill later.

The Government would nevertheless like to set down for the record the specific questions you put to us in the two meetings to which I have referred, and our answers.

Segregation:

The Government cannot concede the principle that prisoners should decide with whom they mix or that they be segregated according to religious denomination or other factors. In practice common sense will dictate how the Prison Authorities will deploy prisoners day to day. It will be for them to decide what at any time will be the overriding consideration.



### Controlled Association:

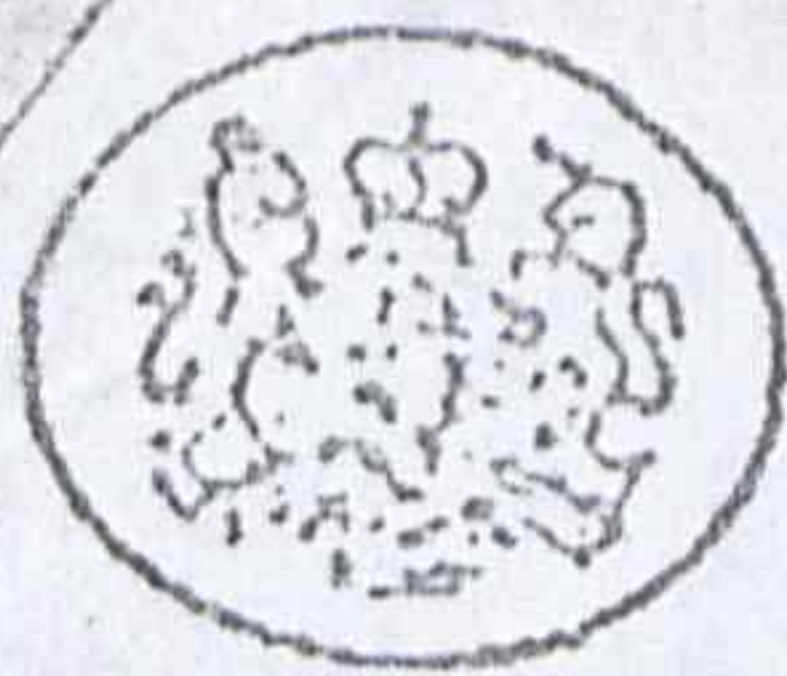
You asked whether, subject to the necessary considerations of control and security, prisoners in adjacent wings might be allowed to associate together during the period when association is normally permitted to non-protesting prisoners in the evenings and at weekends and during recreation in the exercise yard. This does present practical problems of controlling and supervising more movement, and larger groups, of prisoners: and the considerations mentioned would mean that such movement could not be through the central control areas of a block. Otherwise, the problems need not be overriding in the situation of normality which we assumed as the context of our discussions. But this assumption is important, since there is obvious scope for misuse of the increased association involved.

You also asked whether it would be possible from unlock to lock-up normally to leave cell doors unlocked. I have considered this and have to say that we would not find this possible in view of the men we are dealing with and the need to protect prison officers. In addition, many prisoners prefer the privacy afforded by the present arrangements.

### Work:

You asked whether ex-protestors would be required to contribute in the same way as presently non-protesting prisoners to orderly work in the blocks and to analogous duties in the central facilities (such as kitchens and laundries) which serve the whole prison. You also asked whether ex-protestors would in practice have to engage in 'productive' work in prison industry. In principle we regard all prisoners as liable to allocation by the Prison Authorities to some prison activity. But I went on to explain that prison activities embraced a spectrum from the essential functions needed to maintain the prison through 'productive' activities and activities which benefit primarily the prisoners, and that there are areas where the one shades into the other. There are obvious attractions in increasing the proportion of time which prisoners spend in useful activities that are also congenial to them, and to offering the widest practicable choice. But we cannot





agree that any group of prisoners should as of right opt out of a particular form of activity, since what matters to us is that in practice the Prison Authorities decide what prisoners actually do.

#### Remission:

The Government is prepared, in accordance with its previous statement to be generous about restoring lost remission on an individual basis and subject to continuing good conduct in circumstances in which the whole protest has come to an end. But it would be wrong to imagine that that restoration would immediately be total or be given without an appropriate period of evidence of continuing good behaviour.

#### Clothing:

The problems involved in letting the prisoners wear their own clothes all the time relate to security and control. As such they are of a different order from those considered under the other heads above in that they are not, in the Government's perception, problems of the prisoners' status or the day-to-day authority of the Prison Governor.

I do urge you to study closely the Secretary of State's statement and particularly the closing two paragraphs. I am also sending you, in . . . . you do not have it, a copy of the document on the NI Prison Regime. I wanted to draw your attention to those other aspects of the regime mentioned in it and not perhaps so widely known: it is possible, for example, for prisoners to keep closely in touch with what is going on outside the prison through their access to TV, radio and to periodic and books - I see no difficulty over the Irish Bible which you mention. The arrangements for leave, both compassionate and at particular periods of the year, are also generous and above all, of interest to the families of the men as well as the men themselves.

Yours sincerely  
Michael Allison

MICHAEL ALLISON



EXTRACT FROM SECRETARY OF STATE'S STATEMENT  
OF 30 JUNE 1951

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B. European Commission of Human Rights

The Commission (ECHR) is an international body of formally recognised standing in this and other fields. It operates within a set framework of complaints from individuals who assert an infringement of their rights under the Convention (or from Member States asserting infringements). As we have learned, it is reluctant to step outside that role.

2. The ECHR is currently on stage because it recently decided to activate, by declaring admissible, the outstanding parts of the complaint brought in 1978 by 4 Maze prisoners (McFeeley et al). These remaining grounds of complaint (rights of correspondence; lack of effective domestic remedy) are marginal at best to the "five demands". But the ECHR's standard procedure, which they are currently following, is to invite each side to make proposals for a "friendly settlement" - and these need not be confined to the specific grounds of complaint under investigation. Thus, HMG could make "friendly settlement" proposals that related to work, clothing etc. Ministers decided against doing so, and what was passed to the ECHR (on 3 June, in Strasbourg), and has been transmitted to the other side, was a statement of HMG's position. The other side has still not reacted, and perhaps does not intend to do so. But our understanding is that the whistle has not yet been blown on the "friendly settlement" stage: so it is still open to HMG to make proposals to the Commission, which would of course be put to the other side.

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3. There are great advantages in making any move through an independent body of status. Use of the ECHR as an intermediary ought to ensure that, before we made any concessions publicly known, we would know that they would be accepted by the other side. And concessions thus arrived at would stand a better chance of being tolerated by Protestant opinion. • Because of the line the Commission has taken on "political status" - and, indeed, on prison work - it is not well regarded in PIRA circles. The Commission, on past form, could move pretty fast but whether fast enough to save McDonnell must be doubtful.

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C. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC is an international body of standing. It is connected in the popular mind with prisoners-of-war, but its range of interest in fact goes wider. It was invited in the early '70s to inspect the conditions of NI internees and detainees. It has from time to time, including quite recently, made known its readiness to be invited to help in resolving the present crisis. If we lacked any other international body, it would be worth turning to. But it is second best to the ECHR, both because it would start "from cold" and because of its "Polish" aura - which the PIRA would no doubt exploit. Its methods and findings might be more unpredictable than those of the ECHR.

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D: HMG's own Committee of Inquiry

In paper OD(81)33 the Secretary of State set out the case for setting up an independent review body of high standing which would consider both the immediate and the longer term problems of the NI prisons. Ministers decided that, to avoid any suggestion that HMG was planning concessions, such a body should not be appointed yet, and when appointed should concern itself only with the longer term. It would still be possible to revive the earlier idea, in the hope that its announcement, and the expectation that it would urgently propose changes in prison regime, would persuade the hunger strikers to call off, or at least suspend, their protest. Choice of membership would be crucial if the inquiry was to be seen to carry the necessary weight and independence.

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PRIME MINISTER

You have a meeting tomorrow evening at 2015 with Cardinal O'Fiaich. He will be accompanied by Bishop James Lennon, Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh and Secretary to the Cardinal. Mr. Atkins will be present. Cardinal Hume is at present discussing with Cardinal O'Fiaich whether he also should be present.

The Northern Ireland Office say that their brief is likely to cover three areas. First, it will congratulate Cardinal O'Fiaich on the initiative taken by the Conference of Irish Bishops. Second, it will explain the background to, and the meaning of the statement which Mr. Atkins made this afternoon. Third, it will assess the response to the statement.

The Northern Ireland Office need more time to assess the response to Mr. Atkins' statement, and will therefore be unable to get the brief to us until noon tomorrow. In the meantime, you may wish to see a copy of Cardinal O'Fiaich's original letter, and Mr. Atkins' statement. These are attached.

*CWJ*

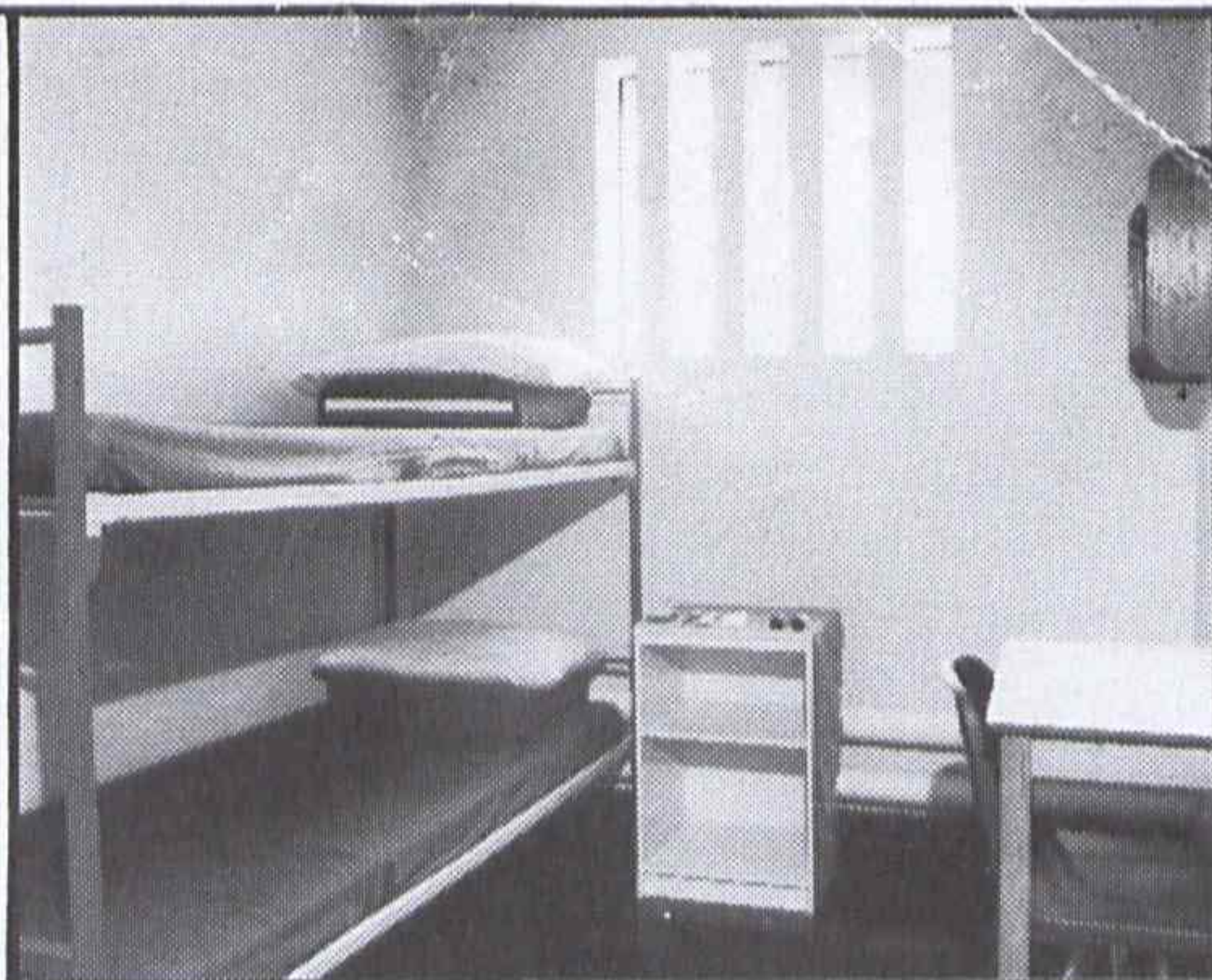
30 June, 1981.



# **Hoblocks**

## **The**

### **facts**



**Prisoners' rights  
and privileges in  
Northern Ireland.**

**Statement by the  
Secretary of State  
for Northern Ireland,  
Rt Hon  
Humphrey Atkins M.P.**



CONCERN has been expressed on humanitarian grounds about conditions in the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland. I set out below the real facts about the living conditions which are open to all prisoners in Northern Ireland; and explain the special measures which have already been taken on humanitarian grounds in respect of the living conditions of the protesting prisoners.

The ten prisoners in Northern Ireland are on hunger strike in support of a demand that all protesting prisoners be granted "political status", which would be intended to differentiate them from all other prisoners. The Government will not concede that demand.

The specific demands by the male protestors are for five changes in their prison regime. They are the right:

- (i) to wear their own clothes;
- (ii) to refrain from prison work;
- (iii) to associate freely with one another;
- (iv) to organise recreational facilities and to have one letter, visit and parcel a week;
- (v) to have lost remission fully restored.

Such changes would go far to give, and are intended to give, the protesting prisoners control over their lives in prison, and could not be agreed to by the Government, since to do so would be to legitimise and encourage terrorist activity. What the Government *is* committed to is to ensure that, for *all* prisoners, the regime is as enlightened and humane as possible. This statement clarifies, in relation to the protestors' demands, how far this has already been achieved.

Under Prison Rules, prescribed under statute by the Secretary of State, prisoners are entitled to certain rights and may, if they conform with the Rules, enjoy certain privileges. *Rights* may not

be withheld — although prisoners can — and the protestors do — choose not to take them up. *Privileges*, on the other hand, may be withheld if a prisoner is in breach of the Rules. If prisoners abide by the Rules, then the privileges are accorded as a matter of course. The rights and privileges compare with the protestors' demands as follows:—

- (a) *Clothing*: the protestors want the right to wear their own clothing at all times. Prison Rules require prisoners to wear prison-issue clothing (or special clothes appropriate to their work) during normal working hours on week-days (7.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.). But, as a privilege, prisoners may, unless they are engaged on orderly duties, wear their own clothing for the rest of the evening during the week, and, throughout the weekend. They may also wear their own clothing when receiving visits. For security reasons, colour and design of prisoners' own clothing is subject to the discretion of the Governor.

It will thus be seen that a prisoner conforming with the rules may wear his own clothing for almost half the time he would expect to be outside his cell. For the remainder of the time, the Government's decision of 23 October means that conforming prisoners will be wearing civilian clothing issued by the prison authorities.

- (b) *Work*: The protesting prisoners seek the right to refrain from prison work. Prison Rules require convicted prisoners to "engage in useful work", and four main types of such work are undertaken. *First* some prisoners undertake domestic tasks in the kitchens, dining



areas, ablutions and wings. *Second*, an extensive range of industrial employment is provided in prison workshops. *Third*, vocational training is available to teach a wide range of skills. Courses have been developed to the requirements of the skills testing service of the City and Guilds of London Institute. *Fourth*, education classes are provided *during working hours* (from 2 to 20 hours a week) to cover a wide range of prisoners' needs from remedial education to Open University courses. Classes in craft theory are given to complement the vocational training side whilst tuition is provided in a wide range of subjects enabling prisoners to study for RSA, City and Guilds Literacy and Numeracy certificates, GCE 'O' and 'A' level certificates.

In brief, while Prison Rules require a prisoner to "engage in useful work", work is interpreted to include orderly duties, industrial employment, vocational training, and education.

- (c) *Association*: the protestors want the right to associate freely with one another. The Prison Rules provide, as a privilege, that each week-day evening for 3 hours and throughout the day at weekends, prisoners have "association" during which, within each 25-cell wing they may watch TV, play indoor games, follow hobbies and exercise in the yard attached to each wing, and attend education classes. A wide range of evening classes is provided and there is some dove-tailing with daytime courses. Apart from text books the NI Education and Library Boards provide well-stocked libraries. Books and newspapers may be taken to be read in cells.

In short, there is *already*, as a privilege, association within each wing outside normal week-day working hours.

- (d) *Recreation*: the protestors demand the right to organise recreational facilities. The prison regime already provides for the use of gymnasias and playing pitches in addition to the statutory exercise period of not less than one hour each day in the open air when practicable. During association periods, prisoners may use the Hobbies Room for supervised handicraft and artistic activities.

- (e) *Visits, letters and parcels*: the protestors demand one visit, one parcel and one letter each week.

Under Prison Rules, each prisoner enjoys *as of right* one letter and one visit per month. The Rules provide, *as a privilege*, seven additional letters per month at the expense of the prison, three additional visits, and a weekly parcel. Special parcels are also allowed at Christmas, Easter and Halloween.

Thus the existing privileges are already more generous than the protestors' demand.

- (f) *Remission*: the prisoners are demanding the restoration in full of the remission that they have lost while engaged in the protest. Prison Rules provide that a prisoner serving a term of more than one month receives remission, subject to good conduct, up to one-half of his sentence. This is a more generous rate of remission than is available elsewhere in the UK. Remission may be forfeited as a punishment for breach of Prison Rules; but it may be restored after subsequent good behaviour.



The protestors have lost one day's remission for each day they have been in breach of Prison Rules. The opportunity to regain lost remission already exists.

The above deals briefly with certain aspects of the regime; this regime is evidence of the Government's commitment to maintain and develop humane and enlightened conditions for all prisoners in its care in Northern Ireland. A fuller account is being deposited in the Library of the House.

The protestors have forfeited a substantial part of the regime described above. Nevertheless, the Government, acknowledging the injunction of the European Commission of Human Rights to keep under constant review their reaction to the protestors, has in the course of this year taken the following steps:

- (i) On 26 March the protesting prisoners who by their failure to conform with Prison Rules have forfeited the privileges afforded to conforming prisoners were nevertheless offered exercise in sports gear, 3 letters in and out each month in addition to their statutory monthly letter, and 2 visits a month instead of 1.
- (ii) Since the late summer the protesting prisoners have been offered.
  - (a) an hour's physical exercise a week;
  - (b) one evening association a week in prison uniform;
  - (c) access to books and newspapers (which are available in the cell blocks but not taken) in the rooms where masses are held on Sundays;
  - (d) "closed" visits (ie in which the prisoner is physically separated from his visitor) as an alternative to a body search;

- (e) compassionate home leave on the same basis as conforming prisoners.

- (iii) The protesting prisoners have never been denied their daily hour's exercise.

Thus the Government has shown itself ready, despite the protest, to deal with the humanitarian aspects of the conditions that the protesting prisoners have imposed upon themselves.

The Government takes no pleasure in the sight of young men and women inflicting suffering on themselves and their families. We agree with the European Commission of Human Rights that while there can be no question of their having political status, we should be ready nevertheless to deal with the humanitarian aspects of the conditions in the prisons arising from the protest.

It is a matter of very great regret that changes made by the Government in response to the Commission have been rejected. We have always been and still are willing to discuss the humanitarian aspects of the prison administration in Northern Ireland with anyone who shares our concern about it.

The Government remains determined that, subject always to the requirements of security and within the resources available, the progress achieved in recent years in the administration of Northern Ireland prisons should be continued to meet the legitimate needs of all concerned.

*(Mr Atkins' statement was made in reply to a Parliamentary Question in the House of Commons at Westminster from Mr Paul Marland MP who asked if the Secretary of State was satisfied that all the rights and privileges available to prisoners in Northern Ireland were fully understood by the prisoners and by the public.)*



# Day to day life in Northern Ireland prisons

THIS booklet describes what has been achieved in providing modern penal regimes in Northern Ireland prisons, without neglecting society's first requirement that prisoners should be held in secure custody.

The picture is not a static one. Future developments already planned will further improve the quality of the regimes. New workshops are planned to open at Maze and Magilligan prisons this year. More significantly, new male and female prisons, now under construction at Maghaberry, Co. Antrim, will open in 1982. These are being built to the high standards associated with modern prisons and will contain extensive industrial, vocational training and educational facilities.

This maintenance and development of a progressive regime reflects the Government's commitment to run a humane and flexible prison system under the Prison Rules. Such a regime benefits prisoners, and also society – both directly in that prisoners are productively employed, and indirectly in giving prisoners an opportunity to develop skills and interests which will be of help when they return to society.

Notwithstanding the difficulties faced, every effort has been, and will continue to be, made to ensure that Northern Ireland prison regimes are both humane and progressive.



# CONTENTS

## NOTE:

In early March prisoners at the Maze and Armagh prisons stopped their "dirty protest" (see p. 11) by beginning to wash, use the toilets and keep their cells clean. The prisoners, however, continue to protest in support of their demand for political status by refusing to work. Prisoners at the Maze are also refusing to wear prison-issue civilian clothes.

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*DESPITE* a concentration of interest in Northern land prisons in recent years, too little is known about what actually goes on inside the prisons, in which 2,500 prisoners are currently held; what prisoners do from day to day, at the week-ends and in the evenings; and what there is by way of opportunity to improve themselves educationally, to prepare for a job on release, to keep fit and to develop hobbies and interests.

The object of this booklet is to fill some of the gaps in knowledge, with particular emphasis on the Maze Prison and also Armagh Prison.

## Aims and legal basis of prison regimes

THE AIM of prison regimes in Northern Ireland is as set out for the whole of the United Kingdom in the May Report,\* which commended the principle of 'positive custody' – 'That is, it (custody) has to be secure and it must carry out all the intentions of the courts and society, in that respect.

'On the other hand, penal establishments must also as far as possible be hopeful and purposive communities and not be allowed to degenerate into mere uncaring institutions dulled by their own unimaginative and unenterprising routines.' (Report, paragraph 4.46.)

Their legal basis is to be found in the Prison Act (NI) 1953, which in section 13 specifies that 'the Secretary of State may make rules to be styled "prison rules" for the administration, regulation and management of prisons' and lays down the broad categories of regime to be covered. The Prison Rules (NI) 1954 accordingly pro-

\*Report of a Committee of Inquiry into the United Kingdom Prison Services (Cmnd 7673, 1979). This major review of the UK prison system covered almost every aspect of prison life including regimes and has been accepted by the Government as the basis for future prison development.



vide the detailed legal framework for the regime described below.

The Rules, which have the force of law, cover prisoners rights, duties and privileges as well as the rights and duties of prison officers, chaplains, medical officers, governors and the Secretary of State. The making of Prison Rules is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who must lay them before Parliament.

One aspect of prison regimes which is not well understood is that which separates prisoners' 'rights' from their 'privileges'.

The rights are normally described as 'statutory' since they derive from the statutory Prison Rules. 'Privileges' are approved by the Secretary of State and controlled by governors.

They are normally given as a matter of course to all prisoners so long as they abide by the Rules; they include such matters as extra letters, visits and parcels, handicrafts, evening association, purchases from the prison tuck shop and special leave to prepare for release.

Privileges may be withdrawn as a punishment under the Rules, but only to such an extent as the Rules allow. Such punishments are given by the governor or, in more serious cases, by the Board of Visitors.\*

Confusion of the difference between the two facets of the regime has been fostered by the prisoners who have been carrying out protests. These prisoners have, for the most part, refused the privileges and even some of their statutory rights. The Board of Visitors has not been involved in dealing with the punishments arising from protest behaviour.

*\*Under the Prison Act (NI) 1952, section 10, the Secretary of State must appoint a Board of Visitors to every prison to oversee its working and carry out adjudications (i.e. punishment proceedings) as necessary. Boards are independent and their membership is drawn from all sections of the community. They can and do comment freely to the Governor and the Secretary of State on any aspect of the regime. The Secretary of State, on being asked by the Governor, normally asks the Board to adjudicate on the more serious offences against Prison Rules, for example attacks on other prisoners or staff.*

One particular feature of the prison regime to which attention needs to be drawn is provision for remission of part of the sentence. Under Section 13(7) of the Prison Act (NI) 1953, all prisoners in Northern Ireland, except those serving the shortest sentences (one month or less), are granted remission of sentence. The amount given, laid down by Prison Rule 25, is one half of the effective sentence – that is the court sentence less any time spent in custody before sentence.

If a prisoner commits an offence against the Rules the governor or the Board of Visitors may take away remission to the extent permitted by Prison Rules (governor – up to 28 days maximum; Board of Visitors – up to six months maximum). A prisoner may ask the Governor or the Board of Visitors, as appropriate, for restoration of remission lost in this way, or may petition the Secretary of State.

It is clearly vital that prisoners should understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to prison regimes. Prison Rule 15 requires that 'Arrangements shall be made to ensure that every prisoner on reception is provided with an Abstract of the Rules governing the treatment of prisoners . . . including those relating to . . . privileges, to the proper methods of submitting petitions to the Secretary of State . . . and to the disciplinary requirements of the prison.'

*It is the governor's responsibility to ensure that this is done, and on entering the prison system after sentence all prisoners are given these details in the form of an information sheet and must sign to confirm that it has been received. Further information sheets, covering various aspects of the regime, are given on request by a prison officer specially deputed for this purpose in every prison wing or compound.*

Any prisoner may also ask this officer or a governor to explain any point which is not clear to him. In connection with punishment proceedings, Prison Rule 28 also requires that the prisoner *must* be told of his rights, and he will be given any help he needs to prepare his case, before taking part in the proceedings.



# The prison working week

ALTHOUGH for convenience the prison regime has been divided into two, between the working day and 'free time', it is not possible, or desirable, to draw a rigid line in practice. Thus there is, in fact, considerable overlap between these two main elements of the prison timetable.

The most popular day for visits, for example, is a Saturday, but visits may be received during normal week-day working hours if the prisoner wishes.

Orderly duties – which count as work and are essential to the running of the prison – must be carried out over weekends as well as during the week. Young prisoners (those under 21) are also given extra recreation – PT and games – during the working day as a matter of course.

It is an objective shared by prisons throughout the United Kingdom, and one which most people would accept, that prisoners should be fully employed either in orderly duties to help run the prison or in directly productive work.

It is important for prisoners that work experience and training inside prison will help them get and keep jobs on

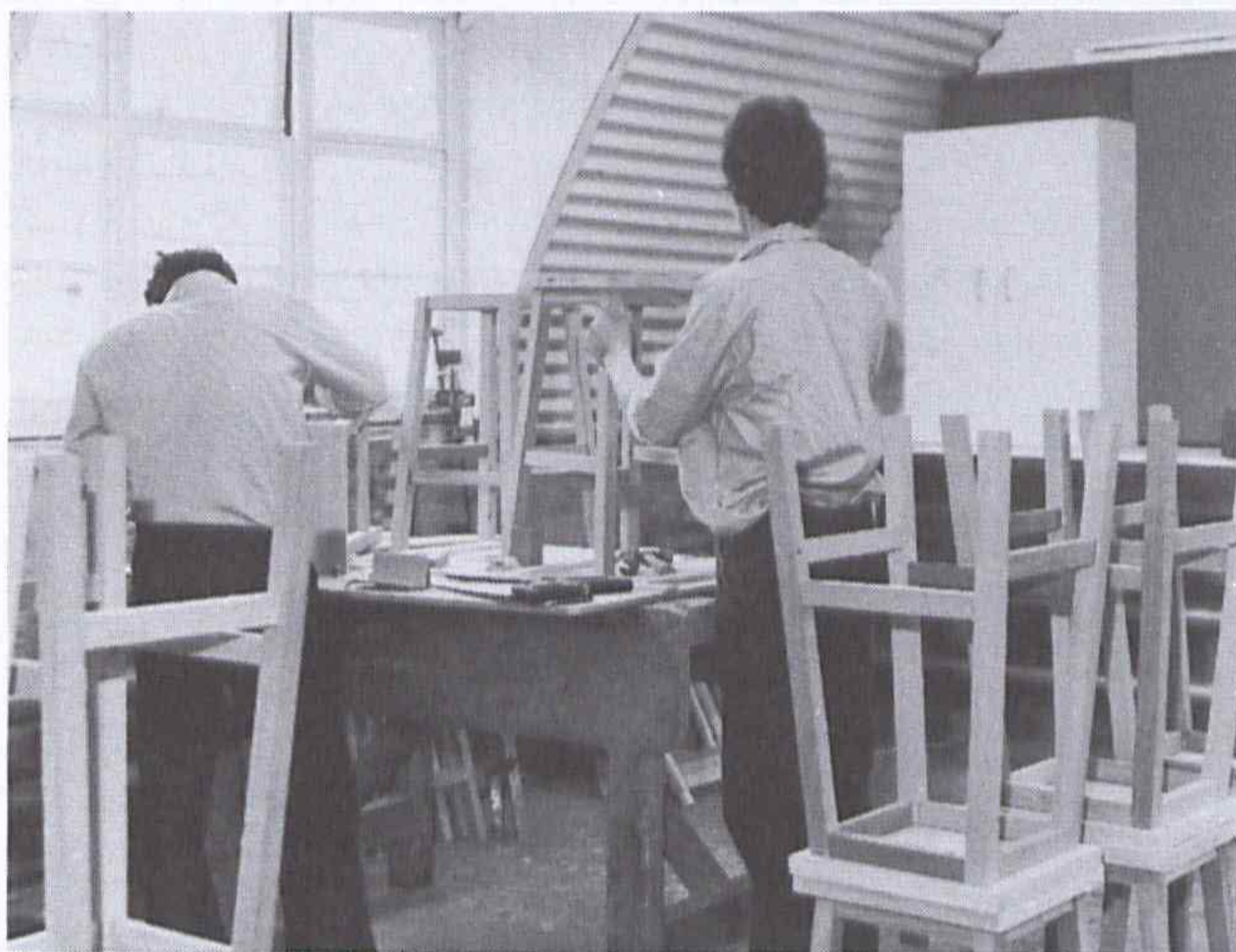
discharge. Work is also valuable in providing an outlet for their physical and mental energies and so aids the maintenance of good order and morale in the prisons.

In Northern Ireland prisons work plays a central role in the regime – Prison Rule 44 requires prisoners to engage in useful work – and great strides have been made in recent years to provide a range of industries and training of high quality. Nor is 'work' interpreted narrowly – it may include education, for those whom the governor and education officer consider suitable or who need remedial teaching. If for any reason a prisoner or group of prisoners cannot be employed on a particular day, they may be given extra PT, games or handicraft/study time instead.

To give the reader the flavour of a typical day in prison, the table on page 16 sets out the regime for a prisoner at Maze. This pattern is broadly repeated in all the establishments housing *sentenced* prisoners (other than those in the 'special category';\* *unsentenced* prisoners are not required to work. It will be seen that the routine in many respects reflects life outside the prison walls.

Prisoners are paid earnings for their compulsory work. As in most European countries, the earnings are no more than a token payment. In Northern Ireland the amount, excluding overtime and special bonuses, does not exceed £2.05 a week, a figure in line with practice elsewhere in United Kingdom prisons. The amount earned depends on the nature of the job and the effort and standard of performance of the prisoner.

Four main types of work are provided in Northern Ireland prisons. Although the Secretary of State has overall responsibility for prison regimes, allocation of prisoners to the various kinds of work is best left to local



Prisoners making seats in the woodwork prison industry at Maze prison.

*\*Special category status was introduced in June 1972 for a number of sentenced prisoners who were not required to work and could wear their own clothes in addition to other privileges. New admissions to special category have been ended progressively since March 1976, although there are still a number of such prisoners. All male prisoners live in separate compound accommodation in Maze with women prisoners housed in Armagh.*



administration and is carried out by the governor of each prison.

In allocating prisoners the governors take account, so far as possible, not only of the needs of the prison administration but also of the recommendations by professional, technical and educational staff and, of course, the wishes and aptitudes of the prisoners. Prisoners are told by a member of staff or the governor which alternative employments are available.

Whether or not it is possible to give the prisoner his choice will depend on such factors as his previous employment, degree of motivation, behaviour in prison, security rating, and the existence of a vacancy in the workshop or course requested.

Each prison needs its own quota of prisoners to undertake domestic tasks in the kitchens, dining areas, ablutions and corridors. These tasks include cooking, cleaning, moving stores, washing, polishing and all the many jobs which must be done to ensure that prison life retains the order and cleanliness so necessary when prisoners live and work in such close proximity. In this way a significant contribution is also made to reducing the cost of running the institution.

At any given time some 500 prisoners – out of a sentenced population currently around 1,500 (excluding special category prisoners) – will be engaged in these duties. Those taking part are normally 'trusties' or low risk\* prisoners; a few may be serving long sentences but most are serving under four years. Some orderly duties are particularly suited to petty habitual offenders, who may be employed in this way for much of their sentences (which are often relatively short). Other orderly duties may suit a particular person – for example former cooks or butchers can usefully be employed in running the kitchens. Many prisoners do some orderly duties for a time before moving on to other work.

The extensive range of industrial employment provided at present and planned to come into operation in the near future, together with the type of goods produced is shown on page 13. New modern workshops are now

*\*'Low-risk' simply means that from the nature of a prisoner's offence and his behaviour in prison there is a low risk of his trying to escape or of becoming violent. It is a measure of his danger to the prison and to society outside.*

available at Maze and Magilligan. The workshop facilities at Belfast and Armagh have also been improved and fitted with up-to-date equipment. Clearly the work experience gained here is of help in promoting the work habit and in improving job prospects on release.

Before being allocated to an industrial workshop at Maze, all prisoners are given a thorough course of training in basic skills, machine use, and health and safety at work. This is similar to the training provided by Government training centres, modified to suit the work and machinery available in the workshop.

Vocational training is designed to give prisoners training in a wide range of skills which they may not have had time or opportunity to learn outside. The courses are run to a high standard and in the last few years have been developed to the requirements of the skills testing service of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

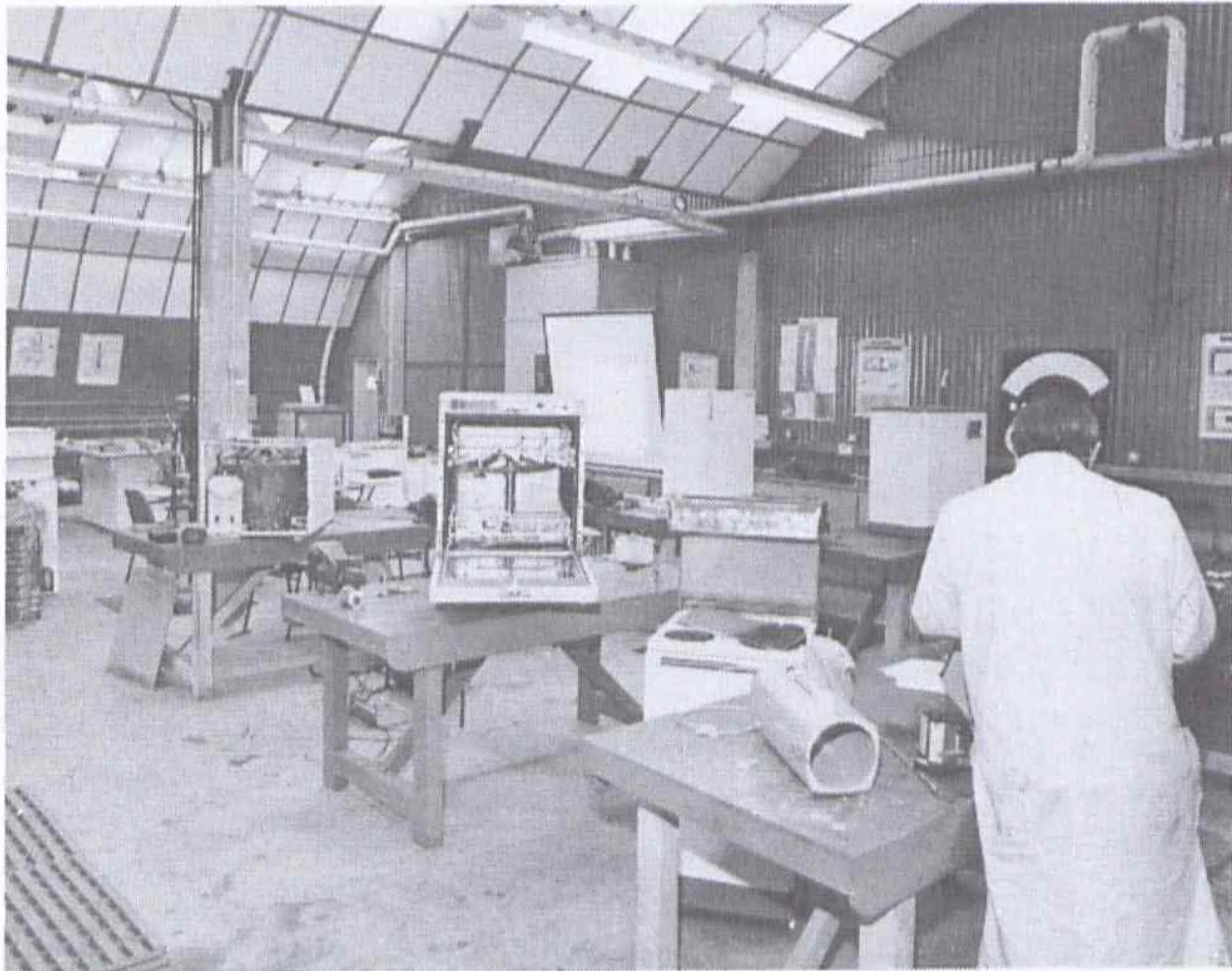
The first certificates were awarded in 1977 and since then over 300 vocational trainees have gained them. Promising trainees are either encouraged to proceed further inside the prison or given help and advice on how to continue outside.

There are now 382 places on these courses. The range of courses available to prisoners is explained to them by prison staff and is also displayed in central locations; prisoners are invited to make applications to enrol. Some courses, such as painting and decorating, are particularly popular and are fully booked: others may have vacancies at any given time.

Whether or not a prisoner can be enrolled on a course depends on a number of factors. First, his own wish to attend; secondly, he must have sufficient time to complete the course – this means he should not be near the end of his sentence (prisoners serving under six months are not normally considered as with allowance made for one-half remission of sentence they will in fact serve under three months). Acceptance also depends on the prisoner's suitability for the job based on assessment by prison staff and the education officer; 'Trainability' tests may be given to determine aptitude for training.

Courses are conducted in spacious workshops of modern design, under the supervision of full-time instructors who have the appropriate craft or professional qualifications. They provide a sound basis for a prisoner





*The domestic electrical appliance vocational training course at Maze prison.*

to return to society better qualified than on entering the prison; a number of former trainees have gone on to successful employment on release.

A remarkable performance was achieved by one young prisoner undergoing training in the painting and decorating course at Magilligan Prison during 1979. He gained three distinctions in the City and Guilds of London Institute craft examinations and subsequently was awarded 1st prize (bronze medal, vellum and a cash sum of £30) by the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers of London. His performance was achieved in competition with 1,518 other candidates throughout the United Kingdom.

Classes are provided during working hours to cover a wide range of prisoners' needs – from remedial education for those who require it to Open University courses. Periods of study range from 2–20 hours a week, depending on the subject. Classes in craft theory are given to complement the practical side of vocational training, and tuition is provided in a wide range of subjects enabling prisoners to study for RSA, City and Guilds

literary and numeracy certificates, and GCE 'O' and 'A' level certificates.

In addition, self-study courses – with tutorial support as necessary – are provided for such subjects as English language, English literature and Mathematics and also for the 21 prisoners currently following Open University Courses. Prisoners who have the benefit of study time during the day also frequently make use of their leisure time to continue their studies.

On release, prisoners who show academic promise and wish to pursue further study are put in touch with the educational guidance service for adults, with which close links have been established.

The total full-time education staff comprises seven education officers and 16 teachers. (There are also 80 part-time teachers employed almost exclusively for evening classes.)

The Prison Education Service is represented on the Council for Continuing Education in the Province and plays an active part in the work of its specialist group panels.

The education officer interviews all prisoners entering the establishment, explaining to them what educational facilities are available. If a prisoner shows an interest in a particular course or courses, the officer assesses his needs and may at this or subsequent interviews give him a series of recognised educational tests of the type formulated by the National Federation for Educational Research. Subject to this assessment the prisoner will then be enrolled on the course, whether for evening or daytime attendance.

Notices are displayed prominently within the prisons giving details of courses and new developments. During the period of his sentence a prisoner may readily ask the education officer for details of courses and apply to join them. Classes are regularly set up during the day on this basis for remedial education; the more advanced courses of the type already mentioned are also from time to time (according to demand) arranged during the day. In all cases attendance at courses is undertaken with the Governor's agreement.



# Leisure and Recreation

This part of the paper sets out the arrangements made for the occupation of prisoners at a time when they are not required to work: evenings, weekends and public holidays. Examples are drawn from Maze, though the other establishments are very similar in what they offer.

Between 5.30 pm and 8.30 pm each weekday prisoners have three hours 'association'. This simply means that they may associate with each other and occupy themselves as they wish, within their cell wing or in the adjacent education room or exercise yard, subject to the maintenance of prison security. Association is also allowed all day on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays; the mornings, however, include an exercise period\* and on Saturdays many prisoners receive their visits. On Sunday morning a high proportion of prisoners attend church services – these are entirely voluntary.

At Maze the following areas and activities are available for use during this time:

Dining Halls	TV, table tennis, snooker (small tables), darts, cards, table games (monopoly, draughts, etc.)
Education Rooms	classes most nights
Handicraft Rooms	hobbies
Exercise Yards	while daylight lasts prisoners may spend their association period, or part of it, in the exercise yard.

A very wide range of evening classes is provided for prisoners and there is some overlap with courses provided during the day. The subjects offered vary from one institution to another since they depend on demand. But the following range was covered in 1980 and has continued this year:

*English, Mathematics, Geography, History, Sociology, Irish*

*\*All prisoners must be given the daily hour's exercise required by Prison Rule 58. This is taken in the open air whenever possible.*

*Language, Art, Music, Technical Drawing, Typing, Handicrafts, Braille Translation, Foreign Languages, Current Affairs, Physical Education Theory, Remedial and Basic Education, Social and Life Skills classes (both independently and in support of pre-release courses).*

The level attained in these courses is shown by the fact that, during 1980, prisoners were entered for 31 'A' level subjects, 160 'O' level subjects, and 80 Royal Society of Arts subjects. The 13 Open University students (now increased to 21) qualified for the next stage of their studies; this included the first OU student in Northern Ireland to complete a course whilst in custody and graduate with a BA Degree.\*

Text-books are supplied by the prison. In addition the Education and Library Boards provide well-stocked libraries at all establishments and prisoners may draw books from them to read in their cells. Periodicals and newspapers are also provided. Book stocks are shown in round figures below:

	<i>Library Books</i>	<i>Text Books</i>
Belfast	4,000	1,500
Maze	18,500*	3,000
Armagh	3,000	1,500
Magilligan	11,000	1,000
YOC (Millisle)	3,000	3,800
YOC (Hydebank)	4,700	1,000

\*supplied by mobile library

Weekly film shows are a normal feature of association. At Maze, if prisoners express a wish to see programmes – for example football matches – screened after 8.30 pm, video recordings are now shown. Prisoners serving over two years may keep a personal radio set in their cells. Physical education and football are also available, chiefly at weekends but at times during the week as well.

*\*These figures refer to both day classes and evening classes: the two cannot be separated.*



# Clothing for male prisoners



*The denim uniform previously worn by prisoners.*

MALE convicted prisoners are required to wear prison-issue clothing from 7.30 am to 5.00 pm; this requirement is based on Prison Rule 63 which states that 'Every convicted prisoner shall be provided with clothing sufficient for warmth and health in accordance with a scale approved by the Secretary of State, and shall, except as otherwise approved by him, be required to wear such clothing.'

This clothing originally comprised a two-piece denim suit and a blue and white striped shirt. However, following the Government's decision announced on 23 October 1980 this has been replaced by a range of patterns and colours of civilian-type clothing, comprising trousers, pullovers and shirts. Underwear and socks continue to be issued by the authorities as before.

The normal issue of clothing is supplemented for use in certain jobs. For example, heavy duty waterproof clothing is given to prisoners engaged in outdoor work; and overalls and protective clothing are supplied for work, for example in kitchens, prison industries or vocational training courses, which involves a greater element of dirty or noisy activities.

Only approximately a quarter of the week has to be spent wearing prison issue clothing. Prisoners other than those engaged in orderly duties may wear their own clothes during evening association, at weekends and when taking visits. (Orderlies are given time off in lieu for work done during leisure hours.) This clothing of their own which they are allowed to have comprises:

- 1 pair of shoes*
  - 1 pair of trousers*
  - 1 jacket or cardigan*
  - 1 pullover*
  - 2 shirts*
- } or a suit

These are kept in a locker in the prisoner's cell, or beside his bed in hutted accommodation. Their colour and design are, for security reasons, subject to the discretion of the governor in charge. None of these arrangements for prisoners' own clothing has been affected by the Government's decision on prison-issued clothing to be worn during the working day.

The arrangements described here are more generous to prisoners than those not only in the rest of the United Kingdom but also in many other European countries where, in dealing with the more serious offender, the wearing of a prison uniform is normal throughout the week.





*A model wearing the new prison issue clothing, with a display showing the range of clothing available to each prisoner.*



# Contacts with the outside world

To ASSIST prisoners in preparing for their eventual return to society, considerable efforts are made to ensure that they keep up contacts with friends and relatives.

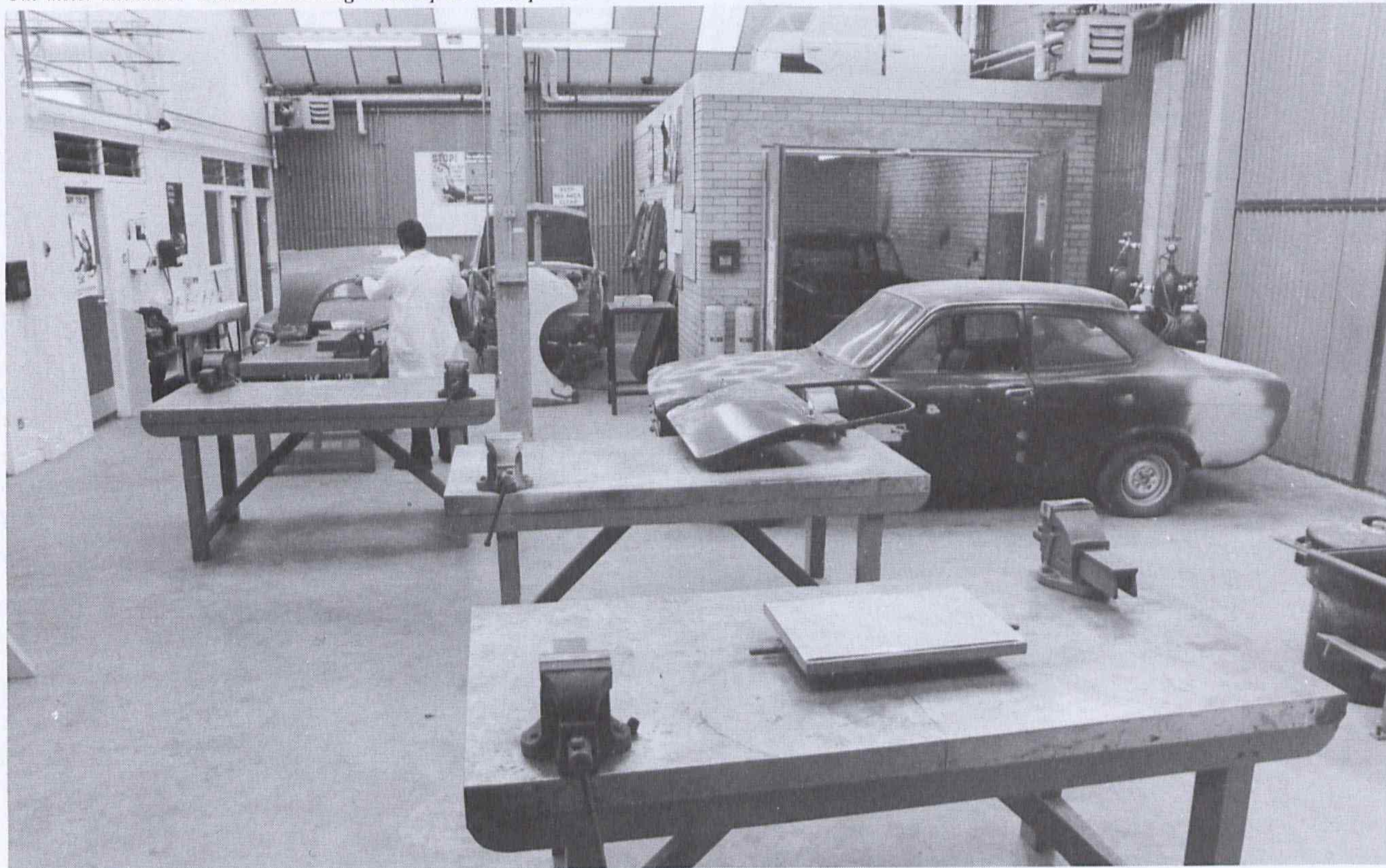
A prisoner may have a total of four 30 minute visits with relatives, friends or others nominated by the prisoner each month. The visits normally take place in open-plan visiting rooms, with the prisoner and his visitors seated together at a separate table. The visits are supervised by prison staff, but the supervision is intended to give the prisoner and his visitors the maximum privacy compatible with security.

Eight letters, paid for by the prison, may be sent out

each month by a prisoner. A prisoner may also send out three letters a week at his own expense. A similar number of letters may be received. Cards (birthday, Christmas, wedding anniversary) are not normally counted as part of the letter entitlement.

Prisoners are allowed a weekly parcel which may contain up to four lbs. of fruit and such items as toilet requisites and reading material. (Other items including tobacco and cigarettes may be purchased from the prison tuck shop out of earnings from prison work and private cash subject to a total weekly limit of expenditure of £3.00.) Special parcels are allowed at Christmas, Easter and Hallowe'en.

*The motor mechanics' vocational training workshop at Maze prison.*





# Armagh

Much of the description already given applies on a broad basis to Armagh prison, which, apart from 12 male orderlies who carry out heavy duties, is entirely devoted to housing female prisoners, whose numbers are small. Although the range of facilities which it is possible to provide is constrained by the very limited numbers, the high standards found in the male prisons are repeated.

The regime for sentenced female prisoners, though based on the regime for males, has traditionally been more relaxed in view of the small numbers and the lesser threat to security.

For example, association is freer, and each wing has a mini-kitchen in which prisoners can prepare snacks, including tea and coffee. Weekly parcels may contain

more than the usual amount of foodstuffs and a wider range of personal belongings may be kept. Many cells are decorated through the use of curtains, posters and ornaments.

The main difference between the male and female regimes is that since 1972 female prisoners have been allowed to wear their own clothing at all times. This change was introduced following a similar move in Great Britain several years earlier. As no significant problems had emerged there, it was extended to Northern Ireland. The rationale for this move was the view that it was much more likely to have a positive effect on the rehabilitation of female offenders.

## Protesting prisoners

So far this booklet has described the regime for the majority of sentenced prisoners, who abide by the normal requirements of prison life as laid down by Prison Rules. This part briefly describes the situation of those who do not.

The prisoners engaged in what is described as the 'dirty protest' refuse to work, to wear prison clothing and to co-operate with the prison authorities – whether the governor or any of the welfare, medical or other prison services. To these actions they have added the destruction of all cell contents and the smearing of excrement around the cells.

For these gross breaches of Prison Rules the prisoners have been punished by the governor under the Prison Rules. These punishments first included the loss of privileges but a significant number of these have been restored in the last year. It should be borne in mind that the 'statutory' element has never been denied though prisoners have refused to take up a considerable part of it. The extra privileges have by and large also not been

taken up as part of the same campaign.

Since February 1980 female prisoners at Armagh have also been carrying out a 'dirty protest', after a prolonged period in which their protest had been 'clean' – that is, had merely involved the refusal to work and had been carried out with much less overt confrontation than at Maze.

The punishments awarded were correspondingly less – letters were not restricted and association was not lost to the same extent. Despite the protest and the deliberate attempt to bring about a deterioration in the regime, there has been no increase in the punishments given (this was also true after the male 'dirty protest' began in March 1978).

With the exception of association, which could no longer be free, owing to the prisoners' aggressive behaviour, there has been no change in the regime other than that self-imposed by the prisoners.

See pages 14 and 15.



# Range of vocational courses available

Prison	Courses	Training Places	Duration of Courses (Weeks)
Belfast	Catering	6	48
	Industrial Cleaning	12	12
Maze	Bricklaying	12	20
	Painting and Decorating	12	20
	General Construction Operatives	12	16
	Motor Vehicle Maintenance	12	26
	Horticulture (I)	12	48
	Horticulture (II)	10	20
	Electric Appliance Repair	12	26
	Motor Body Repair and Painting	12	26
	Welding	12	26
	Plastering	12	26
	Furniture Craft Practice	12	48
	Building Operatives	16	16
Magilligan	Bricklaying	12	20
	Plastering	12	20
	General Construction Operatives	12	16
	Motor Vehicle Maintenance	12	26
	Painting and Decorating	12	20
	Joinery	12	20
	Building Operatives	12	20
	YOOC Hydebank	Catering	6
Industrial Cleaning	6	10	
Sheetmetal Work and Welding	10	20	
Motor Vehicle Maintenance	12	26	
General Construction Operatives	12	16	
Bricklaying (1)	12	20	
Joinery	12	20	
Bricklaying (2)	12	20	
Mechanical Engineering (1)	12	12	
Painting and Decorating	12	20	
Mechanical Engineering (2)	12	12	
Youthways	8	12	
Youthways	8	12	
		382	



# ● Prison industries and typical products

Location	Industry	Typical Products
<b>Armagh</b>	Laundry	Prisoners' clothing, bedclothes, limited work for local welfare bodies
	Tailoring	Prisoners' clothing and boiler suits, seat covers (outside contract).
<b>Belfast</b>	Joinery	Prison furniture, dog-kennels, wooden toys (contract work).
	Tailoring	Prisoners' clothing (incl. overalls).
	Horticulture	Vegetables, pot plants, flowers.
	Laundry	Prisoners' clothing and bedding, local welfare work.
	Firewood	Sticks, blocks.
	Matmaking	Coir mats.
<b>Maze</b>	Joinery and Woodworking	<i>Prison Service supplies:</i> Furniture, storage racks etc.  <i>Outside contracts:</i> Desks, stools, wooden toys, art boxes, sub-contract work on domestic furniture.
	Tailoring	Prisoners' clothing (incl. overalls), instructors' coats, towels etc.
	Metalwork	Storage bins, bench seats, tubular furniture, handling trucks, storage racking
	Laundry	Prisoners' clothing, bed linen, laundering for Training Schools.
	*Cement products	Concrete blocks, kerbing, paving slabs etc. for prison contract.
	*Metal Fabrication	Beds, metal cupboards, tubular furniture, pressings.
<b>YOC Hydebank Wood</b>	Horticulture	Vegetables and flowers.
<b>Magilligan</b>	Horticulture	Vegetables.
	*Knitting	Interlock material for making-up into prisoners' underwear, pullovers and socks.
	*Tailoring	Prisoners' shirts.
	*Metalwork	Repair of metal furniture.
	*Leather industry	Shoes for inmates, leather goods.

*Note:* \* Industries planned to open March 1981 onwards.



# PRIVILEGES

## Rules for conforming prisoners

One statutory and seven additional letters out per month paid for by the prison; further letters at prisoners' own expense. The receipt of letters in reasonable proportion to those sent.

One statutory and three additional visits a month.

A weekly parcel of reading material, fruit and toilet articles. Special parcels at Christmas, Easter and Halloween.

A variety of civilian-type clothing supplied by the prison authorities. In addition non-prison clothing of an approved type may be worn for visits, and evening and weekend association.

The use of the gymnasium and/or playing pitch for about three hours a week at exercise periods, in addition to normal exercise; statutory exercise period of one hour a day.

Three hours association every evening (to watch television, play indoor games, etc); there is also association during the day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Prisoners serving over two years may keep a personal radio set in their cells.

## Rules for 'dirty' protesting prisoners at Maze

### Letters

One letter in and out a month (the letter out paid for by the prison). One additional letter in and out in lieu of the monthly statutory visit if this is not taken. Three additional privilege letters in and out a month permitted since March 1980.)

### Visits

One statutory and since March 1980 one privilege visit a month.

### Parcels

None.

### Clothing

A variety of civilian-type clothing supplied by the prison authorities. The alternative for certain purposes is to wear the underwear or part of the clothing provided. Towels may be worn inside the wings.

### Exercise

Not less than one hour's exercise per day in the open air, weather permitting. Protesting prisoners refuse to take this, although they may now use sportswear provided for the purpose. An hour's additional recreation (PT) per week has been on offer since September 1980; again sportswear is available.

### Association

Evening association has been offered on a limited basis since September 1980; each prisoner may expect to have one period of such association a week. (There are of course other occasions when association takes place – during work, dining and exercise periods, for example – but the protesters refuse these opportunities.)

### Radio

None.



# OF PRISONERS

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## Rules for conforming prisoners

*(continued)*

## Rules for 'dirty' protesting prisoners at Maze

*(As regards 'clean' protesters and Armagh see below)*

### Newspapers and reading material

Access to newspapers supplied by the prison, also use of the prison library and books received in parcels.

A selection of books and newspapers are available in each Wing during weekdays and in the room where the prisoners attend Mass on Sundays. The protesting prisoners can collect a book or paper without putting on prison uniform.

### Use of Earnings

Prisoners may use their earnings from prison work and an equivalent amount of their own funds to make purchases in the prison tuck shop and elsewhere, up to £3.00 per week.

May not make purchases.

### Leave

For certain classes of prisoners short periods of home leave are available at Christmas, in the summer, and towards the end of sentence. Short periods of compassionate leave may also be given in certain circumstances.

Home leave is not available but compassionate leave has been offered since August 1980, subject to the same conditions as apply to conforming prisoners.

### Remission

A prisoner serving a term of more than one month may be granted remission, on the ground of his good conduct, up to one-half of his sentence. Remission may be lost as a disciplinary award, but it is possible for this to be restored after subsequent good behaviour.

Protesting prisoners lose one day's remission for each day they are in breach of Prison Rules. Some protesting prisoners who have subsequently abandoned the protest have had lost remission restored.

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## Rules for protesting women prisoners at Armagh

AT ARMAGH, protest behaviour initially involved only refusal to work (clothing was not an issue as the prisoners already wear their own clothes); and there was little overt confrontation. In consequence the level of punishments imposed – in the form of loss of privileges – has been somewhat less than at Maze. The main differences from the protesting prisoners at the Maze have related to letters, which were not restricted, and association, which has been lost only during the evenings at weekends. The protesters also receive monthly clothing parcels, and since June 1980 have been offered a special monthly parcel but have refused to take advantage of

this. Until February 1980, the women took their statutory rights (which are the same as for men) and the privileges given; since then however they, like the male prisoners, have engaged in self deprivation.














### 'Clean' protesting prisoners

IN JANUARY 1981 some privileges were restored for those prisoners protesting by refusing to work or wear prison clothing, but who were not fouling their cells.

This means that such prisoners can have a monthly parcel containing reading material, fruit and toilet articles. Also available is an extra hour's exercise daily. Loss of remission has also been effectively halved i.e. one day is lost for each two on protest.



## TYPICAL WORKING DAY (MON.-FRI.) IN 'CONFORMING' MAZE H-BLOCK

7.30 am		Unlock, prisoners requests (e.g. welfare and medical matters) are taken by prison staff. Ablutions, bed making and cell cleaning.
8.15 am.		Breakfast in dining room.
8.40 am		Movement to industrial and vocational training workshops commences (because of distances involved, and consequential security implications, most prisoners have to be bussed to and from work). A number of prisoners will take their visits during this, or the afternoon work period. Others may be attending education classes during the same periods.
12.15 pm		Prisoners return to H-blocks from workshops. They are locked briefly in their cells.
12.25 pm		Lunch in dining room.
1.00 p.m.		Exercise in open if weather permits, otherwise prisoners are allowed association in the dining room.
2.00 p.m.		Prisoners return to cells for numbers check.
2.05 pm		Return to workshops.
4.15 pm		Prisoners return to H-blocks from workshops. They are locked briefly in their cells.
4.30 pm		Tea in dining room.
5.00 p.m.		Prisoners return to their cells.
5.30 pm		Association in dining room, or handicraft room, or education room, or, if a prisoner prefers, in his own cell. In the summer months evening association may also be spent in the exercise yard.
8.30 p.m.		Prisoners locked up.

During Saturday and Sunday, and many public holidays, prison workshops are closed, although domestic duties in the prison continue. During the weekends sporting facilities – including two full sized games pitches and a fully equipped modern gym – are used by adult prisoners. During weekdays prisoners under 21 years are given priority in the use of these facilities, in accordance with Prison Rules. However, adult prisoners also have some use of the facilities during the week.



# **H-blocks**

**The facts**



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## The Background to the Protests

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IN Northern Ireland in June 1972, in the face of a hunger strike involving a number of prisoners, the Government of the day introduced "special category" status for those involved with Republican and Loyalist paramilitary organisations who had been sentenced to more than nine months' imprisonment for offences related to the civil disturbances in Northern Ireland.

Such prisoners were not to be required to work, could wear their own clothes and were allowed additional privileges including extra visits and food parcels. Because of the large numbers of prisoners involved and the shortage of normal cell accommodation, special category prisoners were housed in compounds.

Special category status is often incorrectly referred to as "political" status for, as the Secretary of State of the day (Mr Whitelaw) said in the House of Commons on 6 July 1972: "I have made it perfectly clear that the status of political prisoner was not being granted".

The use of compound accommodation

gave rise to serious problems of control and administration. The whole question of a special category status for certain convicted prisoners, and the use of compound accommodation, was closely examined by the Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Gardiner (the former Lord Chancellor), which reported in January 1975\*.

The report recommended that the earliest opportunity should be taken to end special category and that the first priority should be to stop admitting new prisoners to it.

In November 1975, the Secretary of State, Mr Rees, announced the Government's intention to start phasing out special category status. The process began on 1 March 1976 and no prisoner convicted of an offence committed on or after that date has been granted special category treatment, regardless of the nature of his offence. The final stage of stopping all new admissions began on 1 April 1980; no prisoner charged with an offence on or after this date will be admitted to special category, no matter when the offence was committed.

At the end of February 1976 there were more than 1,500 special category prisoners. Since then the number has fallen steadily, mainly as a result of the release of those who have completed their sentences. By 1 January 1980 it had dropped to 464 and since then has

further declined to 387 (on 28 September 1980).

At one time 30 compounds were needed to house the special category male prisoners, now only seven — all at Maze — are needed for this purpose. This has enabled the former compounds to be converted to other constructive uses, in particular to accommodate the modern facilities for industrial work and vocational training.

All prisoners who would formerly have been given special category have been placed in cells, mostly at Maze Prison, where eight new blocks of 100 cells each have been constructed. These are the blocks which are known as "H-blocks" because of their design in the shape of a letter H.

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## The Protest Campaigns

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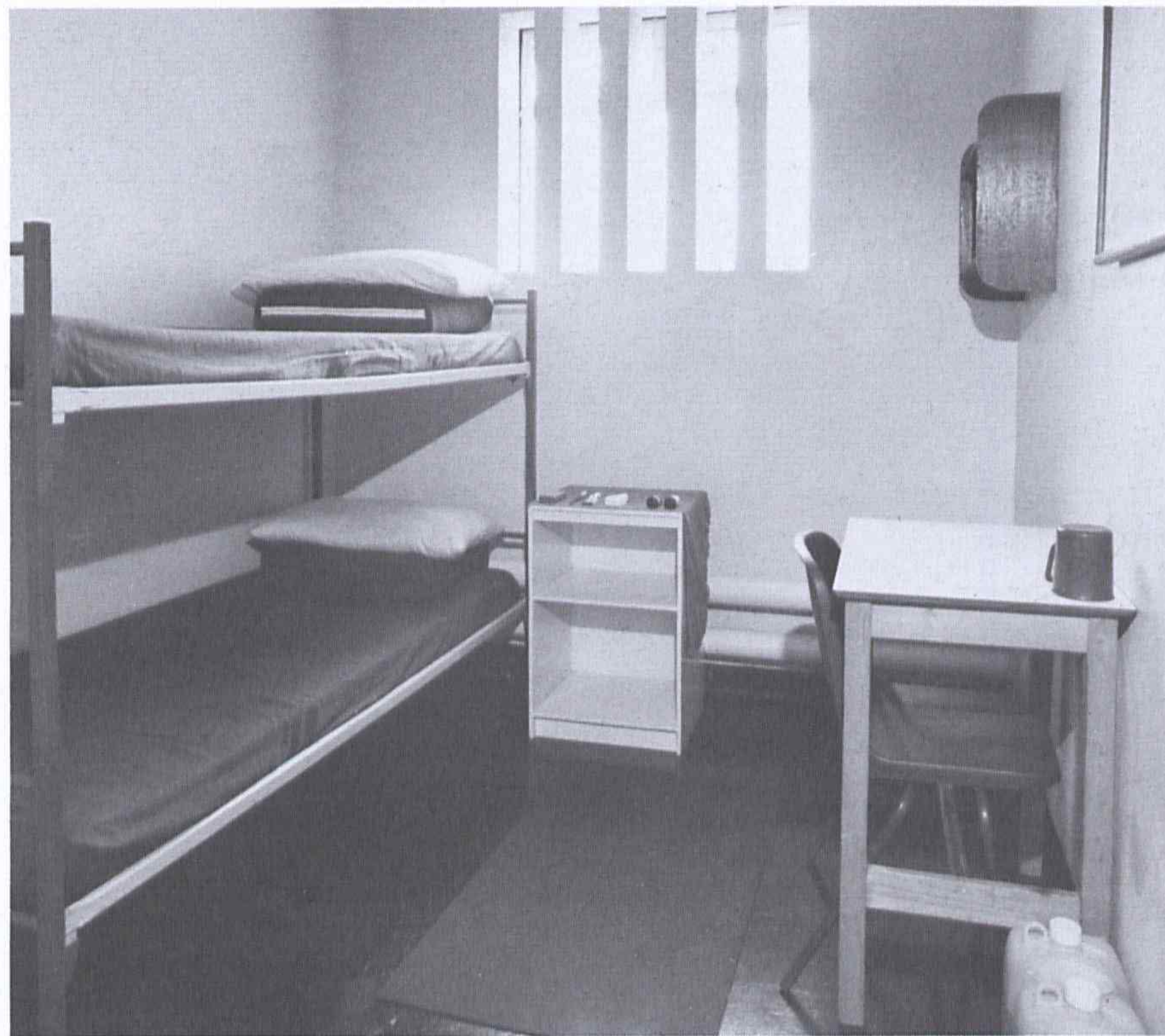
IN SEPTEMBER 1976 the first prisoners sentenced for offences committed after 1 March 1976 refused to work or to wear prison clothing; these are the prisoners said to be "on protest" or "on the blanket". Their action is a clear breach of prison discipline and as such is punishable under the Prison Rules (Northern Ireland) 1954; all the prisoners concerned have been dealt with under the disciplinary procedures laid down in these rules.

The chief disciplinary awards made against the protesting prisoners involve loss of remission, normally one day for each day of protesting, and loss of certain privileges. Although originally these prisoners lost all privileges, a number of relaxations have been introduced during 1980 for humanitarian reasons.

Thus it was to encourage contact with relatives that the Secretary of State announced on 26 March 1980 that four letters a month could in future be sent and received, while an extra visit a month would be allowed; previously these prisoners had been limited to their statutory monthly visits and letters. Sympathetic consideration would be given to any request for additional visits on compassionate grounds.

\* Report of a Committee to consider in the context of civil liberties and human rights measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland: CMND 5847.

How most of the cells in the Maze look.





Until October 1980 only two prisoners on the dirty protest had taken advantage of the extra visits, though most continue to take a monthly visit with relatives and friends; none has yet sent any letters. In fact these prisoners have not written to their relatives since April 1978 though all they have to do is, in their cells, ask for pen and paper and these will be given to them.

From August 1980 a number of further changes in regime have been introduced including the offer of limited evening association, of closed visit facilities if the prisoner does not wish to undergo the close body search, and of an hour's recreation a week to take place in sports wear (that is, in addition to exercise). These prisoners will also be considered for compassionate home leave in the case of death or serious illness of a close relative under the same conditions as apply to other inmates.

A major change affecting all male convicted prisoners (including the protesters) was announced in October 1980 — the abolition of prison uniform and its replacement by a variety of civilian-type clothing.

Contrary to some reports, these prisoners have all along been allowed normal medical facilities, exercise, normal meals and the use of toilets and washing facilities; books and newspapers have been provided in each wing. Exercise has always been available as required by the Prison Rules and could originally be taken in prison clothes, or in suitable weather conditions in prison underwear or naked.

Since it is very much in the prisoners' interest to take outside exercise (in addition to any they may take in their cells), sportswear has since April 1980 been offered to all protesting prisoners for this purpose. None has yet taken advantage of it. On page 8 is set out in detail the privileges available to all sentenced prisoners at Maze and compares these with the allowances to which any prisoner — including one who has lost privileges — is entitled and will receive if he chooses to take them.

The prisoners taking part in the protest campaign are not in any form of solitary confinement but are held mostly two to a cell. Virtually all the dirty protesters attend Mass weekly and most of them take their monthly visits with relatives and friends. A large number also make use of legal visits for the purposes of appeals, civil litigation and other legal matters. Finally, prisoners change their cells at intervals of 7-10 days.

The cell blocks at Maze in which the protest is taking place have only recently been built and provide prison accom-

modation on a par with the best in Western Europe. Each block cost over £1m. Good recreational facilities, including a £100,000 sports hall and two all-weather sports pitches, have been specially provided for the use of the inmates in the Cellular Prison.

Each block also has its own classroom, medical examination room, library, and each wing has its own dining hall. The central heating system in the blocks maintains a minimum temperature of about 65°F (18°C).

Women prisoners in Northern Ireland are not required to wear prison clothing. They, too, began to protest at an early date and for long this simply involved refusal to work. As their degree of protest was of a less serious or confrontational nature, the level of punishment imposed was less. Similarly the prisoners did not wilfully deprive themselves of the facilities available.

Since early February 1980, however, the female protesters have decided to embark on their own version of the dirty protest. As with the intensified protest by male protesters, there has been no increase in the punishments awarded for this marked departure from normal civilised behaviour.

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## Intensification of the Protests

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SINCE 13 March 1978 the protesting prisoners (apart from a few Loyalist prisoners) at Maze have intensified their protest by refusing to clean their cells, to use the toilets or empty their chamber pots. They have deliberately damaged the contents and fittings of their cells and at one time were pouring urine and excreta out into the corridors through the observation slots in the cell doors, which they had broken. They also broke up their beds and other cell furniture.

In view of this deliberate damage, and since pieces of the beds and furniture could be used as weapons against prison officers, the Governor was obliged to order the removal of beds and all other furniture. This means that the prisoners are now sleeping on their mattresses;

*The protesters' cells are regularly cleaned.*





they also have a pillow and blankets. The corridors are no longer being fouled to the same extent, but only because the apertures in the doors have been modified by staff.

The protesting prisoners are still pouring their urine under the cell doors and continue to smear their own excrement extensively on the walls, doors and window frames along with any items of food which they can attach by this means. They tear pieces off the mattresses to do this, with the consequence that these must be replaced regularly.

The cells which the prisoners are fouling in this way are being regularly cleaned by prison staff using modern steam-cleaning equipment; every cell is normally cleaned every ten days or so. As a further means of ameliorating the conditions which the prisoners have created, cells are now repainted after every fourth cleaning.

Whilst these operations are in progress the prisoners are transferred to another (cleaned) wing of the block, which they immediately start to foul. On being returned to the original cleaned or renovated cells the same behaviour is repeated and the cycle begins again.

As part of the intensified protest the prisoners broke all their cell windows so that they could throw out excrement, food and any other material which came to hand. Various types of window and window covering were then tried but all proved vulnerable and were duly broken or burnt by the prisoners.

Finally, a combination of internal and external coverings was developed and this resisted destruction for some time. It consists of an external weathershield constructed from perspex and corrugated translucent material with a steel mesh grille on the inside of the window.

In addition to providing weather proofing, these also permit an adequate supply of light and fresh air to enter the cells. Excluding labour, the cost of making good this first episode of window destruction was some £20,000.

Although the window coverings remained undamaged for a year or so, most were broken during the night of 30 November 1979. Earlier on that day the Governor had issued chairs, one to each prisoner, with the object of making some improvement in the prisoners' conditions. However, later that evening the inmates of H.3, 4 and 5 acted in concert to destroy the great majority of chairs.

Furthermore, they then used the broken pieces of chair as weapons to destroy firstly the internal metal window grilles and then the outer translucent sheeting.

Altogether 179 grilles and windows were destroyed along with 90 of the wooden window covering frames.

*It should be noted that only a minority of male prisoners are taking part in the dirty protest — those housed in H.3, 4 and 5, three of the eight cell blocks at Maze. The majority of prisoners in the cell blocks are conforming to Prison Rules and this includes many convicted of terrorist offences. These prisoners, totalling 672 on 6 October, are not protesting and so benefit from the full range of facilities at the prison.*

*In fact, since the phasing out of special category began, over 1,000 male prisoners with paramilitary affiliations have conformed from the start of their imprisonment or have conformed after abandoning their protest.*

*The number of conforming prisoners at present includes some 193 who have given up their protest action; this reflects the numbers who have been coming off protest since the beginning of the campaign, the average during 1979 and so far in 1980 having been approximately 7 a month.*

Following the holding of a parade by female protesters at Armagh a cell search was carried out at the beginning of February 1980 while the prisoners were collecting their lunch. A large quantity

of prohibited items was recovered. While this was taking place a militant section of the prisoners threatened disruption and all were escorted or taken to the association room.

The search was carried out by female officers assisted by male trades staff from the prison; no officers were brought in from elsewhere, nor was any more force than strictly necessary employed. A few prisoners and staff had minor bruising but nothing more.

The female protesters then used this search as the excuse for starting their own form of the dirty protest. They now refuse to use the toilets and smear excrement on the walls; they have broken furniture and used it to damage cells; they have sent out of the prison their changes of clothing and personal effects and destroyed items of personal hygiene; they refuse to use the educational or library facilities.

None of these are being denied to them as has been claimed — they can have all the items sent out returned at any time and no one is preventing them from washing, using the toilets or taking association. A special monthly parcel was introduced in June 1980 but has been rejected out of hand. At present 28 prisoners are indulging in this dirty protest.

*The sports hall in the Maze prison.*





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## Medical Aspects

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ALL prisoners in Northern Ireland have access to medical facilities equivalent to those available to the general population. Medical staff are attached to the prisons and can also call in consultants to give specialised advice and treatment as required, or refer prisoners to outside hospitals for outpatient treatment or for admission.

The doctors concerned with prisoners' health observe the same professional ethical principles as apply to the treatment of any other patients. In particular, treatment indicated in a prisoner's own interest is not forced on him against his will. While prisoners can therefore deny themselves medical care by refusing to co-operate with the medical staff, medical care is never denied a prisoner on disciplinary grounds.

The current protest involves the creation of disgusting and unhygienic conditions, apparently with total disregard of consequent risks to health. To contain the health risk created, a number of special measures were introduced, such

as the special cleaning programme already referred to.

The full range of medical services is available to the protesting prisoners, with daily sick parades and with a medical officer and prison hospital officers available day and night. It is, however, part of the campaign that these prisoners do not co-operate with prison officers or clinical staff.

A medical officer visits the cells at least once a week to monitor and observe the internal conditions, personal hygiene standards and inmates' health so far as this is practicable. It is not possible to maintain the same standards of care for prisoners who reject it as for the majority who co-operate in measures designed for their own welfare.

If the action of individual prisoners should cause an unacceptable health hazard to other inmates, staff or the community, such measures as may be necessary will be taken to counter the risk; but it is not the practice, or the intention, to force medical care upon any prisoner for his own individual benefit.

This accords with the ethical and legal position in the general community, where measures to protect the individual's health are not forced on him against his will, but the law provides for compulsory exam-

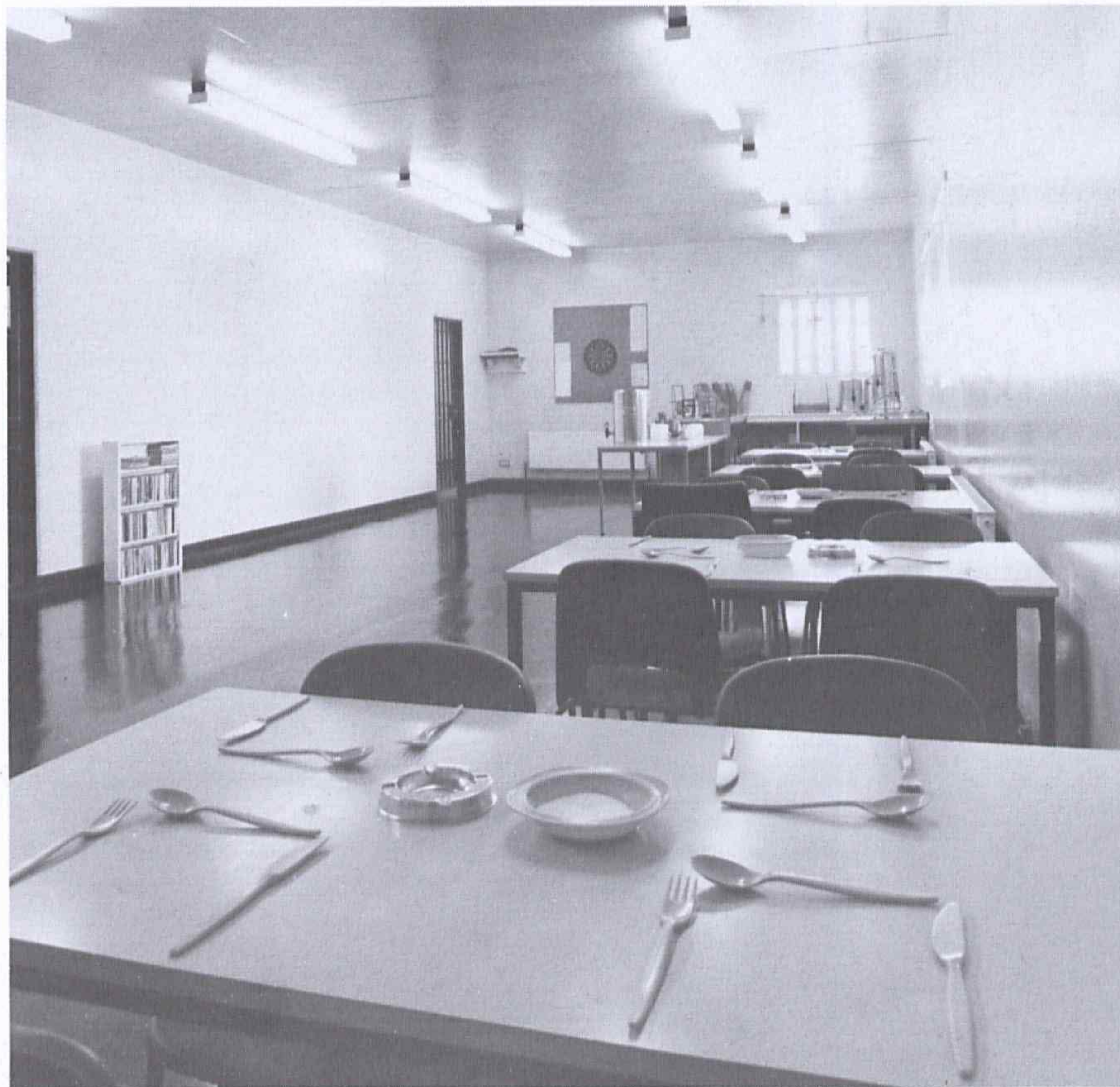
ination and isolation in the case of an infectious disease hazard.

There have been occasions when prisoners have refused to wash to facilitate medical procedures, for example, admission to an outside hospital for investigation of non-acute complaints. Such refusal to comply with the established requirements of medical hygiene can effectively limit the giving of health care to the prisoner.

*Despite the conditions which the protesting prisoners have been creating since March 1978, there has so far been no evidence of any resulting illness. Prisoners who reject normal hygiene standards of behaviour and who refuse to co-operate in medical examination or treatment indicated for their individual welfare, do so at their own risk, and the consequences are entirely their own responsibility.*

Allegations have been made that the food given to prisoners is not adequate. This is wholly untrue; the food is prepared in accordance with medically approved scales and the same meals are given in the same quantities to all prisoners, including the protesters. There is no question whatever of malnutrition.

*Each H-block has four dining/recreation rooms.*



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## Treatment of the Protesters by Prison Staff

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THE GOVERNORS and their staffs have acted with great restraint in the face of this prolonged and most provocative form of protest action. There is no doubt that one of the objectives of the current protests has been to harass and provoke staff, but the prison officers have continued to carry out their duties responsibly and indeed with compassion and understanding.

This restraint is all the more commendable when it is remembered that 19 prison officers have been murdered by terrorists; this number includes Mr Miles, who, as deputy Governor, was in charge of the Cellular Maze Prison. Republican terrorist organisations have repeatedly linked the murder of prison officers to the protest campaign.

There is no truth whatever in allegations that prison staff have indulged in systematic brutality against the protesting prisoners. The Prison Governors



would not condone rough treatment of prisoners, of whatever nature, by staff. Prison officers know that any complaints by prisoners of ill-treatment are thoroughly and promptly investigated, and if substantiated will lead to disciplinary action.

A variety of allegations have also been made about the searching of male prisoners. Searches are necessary because of frequent attempts to smuggle articles into the prison. Razor blades and other potentially dangerous objects have been found in the course of searches, and the usual place of concealment is in a pouch hidden in the rectum.

When a prisoner is searched only an external visual examination of the rectum is made by prison officers using a floor mirror. If it should be necessary to conduct any kind of physical examination, this would only be done by the prison medical officer with the prisoner's witnessed consent. Female prisoners do **not** undergo this close body search procedure.

*Perhaps the most telling comment on the treatment and condition of these prisoners has been provided by those released. Although 21 dirty protesters have now left the H-blocks on completion of their sentences, not one has borne any physical evidence or produced any*

*credible verification of the allegations which have been made.*

During 1979 four Republican prisoners taking part in the dirty protest lodged an application with the European Commission of Human Rights in which they alleged that their treatment by the prison authorities had breached a number of articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. Among these were supposed violations of: Article 3, which forbids torture, cruel or degrading treatment; Article 9 relating to freedom of conscience and belief, which the prisoners sought to invoke because the prison authorities wished to apply to them the normal prison regime; Article 6 relating to the conduct of judicial proceedings, which the prisoners considered prison disciplinary proceedings to be; Article 8 dealing with respect for privacy, family life and correspondence; Article 10 relating to freedom of expression; Article 11 covering the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and Article 14 debarring discrimination on any grounds.

*In June the European Commission published its ruling on the admissibility of these complaints, that is, whether or not they should be considered further*

*by the Commission for possible breach of the European Convention. All the alleged violations relating directly to the protest were rejected by the Commission.*

*In finding against the complaints under Article 9 they stated that 'the right to . . . preferential status for a certain category of prisoner is not amongst the rights guaranteed by the Convention or by Article 9 in particular'. Furthermore, in rejecting the complaints under Article 3 the Commission added that 'the applicants are seeking to achieve a status of political prisoners which they are not entitled to under national law or under the Convention' nor can this status 'be derived from existing norms of international law'. 'Their protest cannot derive any legitimacy or justification from the Convention and cannot be attributed to any positive action on behalf of the respondent government.' [In reaching their view] the Commission had regard to the fact that the protest campaign was designed and co-ordinated by the prisoners to create the maximum publicity and enlist public sympathy and support for their political aims. That such a strategy involved self-inflicted debasement and humiliation to an almost sub-human degree must be taken into account.'*

In considering the prison regime, the Commission again found against the protesters. 'An award of loss of remission does not constitute inhuman or degrading treatment.' 'The fact that they [the protesters] chose not to avail themselves of the above opportunities [to use the various facilities] to leave their cells is plainly their own responsibility.' ' . . . these conditions are self-imposed by the applicants as part of their protest . . . and were they motivated to improve them, could be eliminated almost immediately.' ' . . . it cannot be deduced that exercise is being denied them. In reality they chose not to take advantage of the opportunities for exercise rather than compromise their protest. A similar situation exists in relation to the use of library facilities . . . ' . . . any inadequacy in the medical attention they received or are receiving as a result of such behaviour is attributable to their own actions in furtherance of the protest.'

Similar observations and arguments were employed by the Commission in rejecting the other allegations made. Only two aspects remain for decision — prisoners' correspondence and the right to an effective remedy before a national authority. Both of these are matters which affect the whole United Kingdom and are not specific to the protests in Northern Ireland prisons.

*A corridor inside a wing of an H-block.*





Although the Commission did feel that the Government might have shown more flexibility in its response to some aspects of the protest, this does not detract from their rejecting the protesters' case and, by extension, that of their propagandists. The Government has now considered the Commission's comments within the normal process of review covering regimes for all prisoners.

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## The Boards of Visitors

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AS IN all prisons, the Maze and Armagh have independent Boards of Visitors, members of which are drawn from all sectors of the community. Under the Prison Rules members of the Boards have free access to all parts of the prisons, including the areas housing the protesting prisoners, at all times.

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## The Government's Attitude to the Protests

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THE GOVERNMENT is seeking, in the face of a prolonged terrorist campaign in which more than 2,000 people have been killed and over 23,000 injured, to maintain the rule of law. It is an essential element of the Government's approach that those found guilty after due process of law shall, if they are sent to prison by the courts, serve out their sentences in prison conditions which are as fair and humane as possible. Any such prison system must rest upon compliance with a set of rules which apply to all convicted prisoners, not just to some of them.

*The declared objective of the protesting prisoners and those who support them is to secure the restoration of a form of special treatment for certain offences. The prisoners concerned, however, are in no sense political prisoners detained for what they believe (no prisoner in Northern Ireland prisons is held there because of his political convictions); their claim to be "political" stems from the supposed motives for their crimes.*

*On examining these offences it can be seen that this claim is false; of the*

*346 prisoners taking part in the dirty protest on 24 September 1980, 54 had been convicted of murder, 33 attempted murder, 77 of firearms offences and 102 of explosive offences.*

The motive for the protest campaign is the belief that once the Government has agreed to grant special status it will ultimately also grant an amnesty to such prisoners at the end of their campaign of violence. This would allow the terrorist organisations to tell their members that they can murder with impunity and would be a vital aid to recruitment. The Government has made it clear that there will be no amnesty for terrorists.

It is sometimes argued that those prisoners who have been convicted by non-jury or "Diplock" courts ought to be treated specially because they have been tried without juries under the various procedures laid down in the Emergency Provisions Act. The suspension of jury trials in terrorist cases — which has been approved by Parliament — was not undertaken lightly; the step was recommended by the Diplock Commission for the reasons fully set out in Chapter 5 of its Report published in December 1972\*.

*\*Report of the Commission to consider legal procedures to deal with terrorist activities in Northern Ireland: CMND 5185.*

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## Public Access to the Maze Prison

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MAZE Prison is a maximum security institution, housing a large number of highly dangerous criminals; security grounds therefore preclude any extensive visiting by those not directly concerned in running the institution. The Government is, however, mindful of public and Parliamentary interest in events at the prison. Accordingly, on 18 January 1979, a delegation of three Members of Parliament representing the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Parties saw round all parts of Maze and spoke with a number of the inmates.

In addition to all-party visits by Members of Parliament, special provision is made for individual political parties represented at Westminster. Subject to a maximum of four MPs in each party's delegation, any party represented at Westminster may have a yearly general interest visit to each prison in Northern Ireland; independent MPs count as individual parties. These visits include all parts of

the prisons which the MPs request to see.

Following considerable press interest in the protest, a visit to the prison was arranged for a widely-representative group of journalists. This took place on 15 March 1979 and included media representatives from Northern Ireland, Great Britain, the Irish Republic and overseas. The reporters were able to see both 'clean' and 'dirty' cell blocks; the cells visited were chosen completely at random by the reporters themselves. Further similar visits took place during the year and have continued in 1980. Visits have also from time to time been undertaken by church leaders.

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## Summary and Conclusion

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THE GOVERNMENT has made it plain on repeated occasions that it will not be deflected from its policy of phasing out special treatment for prisoners, no matter what protests are made inside or outside the prisons. Nor is there any scope for compromise by the introduction of some form of separate classification, such as "emergency status", for certain sentenced prisoners. No matter what name might be used, this would essentially be a return to special category with an implication of amnesty in due course.

It is not the Government's wish that the protesting prisoners should continue to endure their present conditions, conditions which they themselves have created. But the choice rests with them, and perhaps even more with those who influence them and their families from outside prison. So long as the protest continues the prisoners will go on being treated as humanely as possible.

It is perhaps particularly unfortunate that the publicity given to activities by the protesting prisoners — who constitute less than 20% of the non-special category convicted prisoners — has drawn attention away from the notable progress which has been made in Northern Ireland during the last few years in establishing a modern prison system with first-class facilities for work, vocational training, education and recreation.

The arrangements in Northern Ireland in regard to such matters as visits, parcels, remission of sentence and wearing by prisoners of their own clothing during leisure periods are more generous than those in the rest of the United Kingdom.



# PRISONERS' PRIVILEGES

RULE 5 of the Prison Rules (Northern Ireland) 1954 requires that there is to be established in every prison, in the interest of good conduct and training, a system, or systems, of privileges. Protesting prisoners in HM Prison, Maze, have lost certain privileges which are normally allowed to sentenced prisoners. Statutory minimum requirements regarding such matters as exercise, visits and letters are laid down in the Prison Rules and these cannot be withdrawn by the prison authorities.

## Rules for conforming prisoners

### LETTERS

One statutory and seven additional letters out per month paid for by the prison; further letters at his own expense. The receipt of letters in reasonable proportion to those sent.

### VISITS

One statutory and three additional visits a month.

### PARCELS

A weekly parcel of reading material, fruit and toilet articles. Special parcels at Christmas, Easter and Hallowe'en.

### CLOTHING

A variety of civilian-type clothing supplied by the prison authorities. In addition non-prison clothing of an approved type may be worn for visits, and evening and week-end association.

### EXERCISE

The use of the gymnasium and/or playing pitch for about three hours a week at exercise periods, in addition to normal exercise.

### ASSOCIATION

Three hours' association every evening (to watch television, play indoor games, etc); there is also association during the day on Saturdays and Sundays.

### NEWSPAPERS AND READING MATERIAL

Access to newspapers supplied by the prison, also use of the prison library and books received in parcels.

### USE OF EARNINGS

Prisoners may use their earnings from prison work and an equivalent amount of their own funds to make purchases in the prison tuck shop and elsewhere, up to £2.50 per week.

### RADIO

Prisoners serving over 2 years may keep a personal radio set in their cells.

### LEAVE

For certain classes of prisoners short periods of home leave are available at Christmas, in the summer, and towards the end of sentence. Short periods of compassionate leave may also be given in certain circumstances.

### REMISSION

A prisoner serving a term of more than one month may be granted remission, on the ground of his good conduct, up to one-half of his sentence. Remission may be lost as a disciplinary award, but it is possible for this to be restored after subsequent good behaviour.

## Rules for protesting prisoners

One letter in and out a month (the letter out paid for by the prison). One additional letter in and out in lieu of the monthly statutory visit if this is not taken. Three additional privilege letters in and out a month permitted since March 1980.

One statutory and since March 1980 one privilege visit a month.

None.

A variety of civilian-type clothing supplied by the prison authorities. The alternative for certain purposes is to wear the underwear or part of the clothing provided. Towels may be worn inside the wings.

Not less than one hour's exercise per day in the open air, weather permitting. Protesting prisoners refuse to take this, although they may now use sportswear provided for the purpose. An hour's additional recreation (PT) has been on offer since September 1980; again sportswear is available.

Evening association has been offered on a limited basis since September 1980; each prisoner may expect to have one period of such association a week. (There are of course other occasions when association takes place — during work, dining and exercise periods, for example — but the protesters refuse these opportunities.)

A selection of books and newspapers are available in each Wing during weekdays and in the room where the prisoners attend Mass on Sundays. The protesting prisoners can collect a book or paper without putting on prison uniform.

May not make purchases.

None.

Home leave is not available but compassionate leave has been offered since August 1980, subject to the same conditions as apply to conforming prisoners.

Protesting prisoners lose one day's remission for each day they are in breach of Prison Rules. Some protesting prisoners, who have subsequently abandoned the protest, have had lost remission restored.



# **H-blocks**

**Major  
improvements  
rejected by  
prisoners**



## Government's measures to improve prison conditions

REPUBLICAN prisoners in the Maze Prison who have been indulging in the 'blanket' and 'dirty' protests and who – more recently – have refused to eat in pursuit of their aims, have made it clear time and again that their objective is to achieve recognition as 'political' prisoners.

The Government has consistently emphasised that it cannot make any concessions whatever on the principle of political status for prisoners who claim such a motive for their crimes. All have been convicted of criminal acts by due process of law.

### No political status

This stance has been supported by the European Commission of Human Rights which, in its ruling on an application by four prisoners in the Maze Prison, held that they were not entitled to the status of political prisoner under either national or international law, or under the terms of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Neither, the Commission held, was the right guaranteed by the European Convention to a 'special category status' whereby prisoners would be entitled to wear their own clothes and be relieved of the requirement of prison work; nor did an obligation exist under the Convention for the Government to accept the demands of prisoners not to wear prison uniform or to work.

The Commission further did not consider there to be anything degrading or objectionable about the requirement to wear a prison uniform or to work.

While finding that the prisoners alone must bear responsibility for the choice they had made in deciding not to take advantage of the opportunities for exercise rather than compromise their protest, the Commission nevertheless said that for humanitarian reasons the authorities should have made efforts to ensure that protesting prisoners could take regular exercise in some form of clothing other than prison clothing. It also held that the Convention required the prison authorities to keep under constant review their reaction to 'recalcitrant prisoners engaged in a developing and protracted protest'.

The Government naturally considered very carefully the comments made by the Commission, and sub-

sequently a number of additional privileges were made available to the protesting prisoners during the course of last year. These included:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| * <i>Plimsolls, vests and shorts for exercise</i>  | <b>REJECTED</b>         |
| * <i>Weekly letter in and out instead of monthly</i>   | <b>REJECTED</b>         |
| * <i>Two visits per month instead of one</i>   | <b>ACCEPTED BY MOST</b> |
| * <i>An extra hour's physical recreation each week</i>   | <b>REJECTED</b>         |
| * <i>One evening's association per week</i>  | <b>REJECTED</b>         |
| * <i>Availability of 'closed' visits to prisoners who refuse to be searched</i>  | <b>REJECTED</b>         |
| * <i>Books and newspapers (normally available in cell blocks but not taken) made available in rooms where Masses are said on Sundays</i> | <b>REJECTED</b>         |
| * <i>Compassionate home leave made available on the same basis as is available for conforming prisoners</i>                              | <b>ACCEPTED</b>         |

The Government announced in October that, in the context of its continuing review of all aspects of prisoners' living and working conditions, it had decided to abolish prison uniform as such, and to substitute prison-issue civilian-style clothing instead.

### Humanitarian approach

This new garb of sweater, shirt and slacks would be worn by prisoners at times when they had previously worn denim uniform. Conforming prisoners would continue to be allowed the privilege of wearing their own clothing during visits and at evening and weekend association.

Through such advances the Government has consistently shown itself ready to deal with the humanitarian aspects of the conditions that the protesting prisoners have imposed upon themselves.

It again showed its willingness to try to solve the problems of the 'dirty' protest in the aftermath of a pre-Christmas hunger strike when it was hoped that all other protests might be brought to an end.



## Steps taken by the prison authorities are listed

Below are listed the steps taken by the prison authorities:

19 Dec. *EXPLAINED* to protesters due to move into clean accommodation (as part of normal cleaning cycle) that if they did not foul cells, they would be provided with furniture and bedding on next day.

Prisoners proceeded to foul cleaned cells.

23 Dec.  
24 Dec.  
29 Dec.  
30 Dec.  
31 Dec.  
1 Jan.  
2 Jan.  
4 Jan.  
Jan.

*MOVED* groups of protesting prisoners to cleaned cells on each of these days. All immediately proceeded to foul their cleaned cells.

5 Jan. *SPELLED OUT* to prisoners due for transfer to clean cells that if they did not foul them, furniture and bedding would be supplied on the following day.

Prisoners again fouled clean cells.

9 Jan. *ANNOUNCED* that all conforming prisoners in Maze Cellular Prison had now been given new civilian-style clothing. Denim uniform was a 'thing of the past' at Maze, and shortly would be so in all other N.I. Prisons.

*ACKNOWLEDGED* that those conforming included 34 who had ceased their 'dirty' protest since hunger strike ended on December 18 and had returned to a normal prison regime. All of these had, in accordance with Secretary of State's statement of December 19, been:

- moved to clean furnished cells
- given new civilian-type clothing
- allowed to send for their own leisure clothing to wear out of working hours
- given the privileges of association, visits, letters and parcels available to all conforming prisoners
- and were no longer losing remission and qualify for a review of lost remission

*MADE CLEAR* that all protesting prisoners had now been transferred to clean cells at least once since the end of hunger strike, but they persisted in smearing excrement on the walls and fouling their cells with excess food.

*POINTED OUT* that a further group of Maze protesters would shortly be moved into clean cells, some of which – as further evidence of the Government's sincerity – would be fully furnished. It was hoped that this would encourage prisoners not to foul their cells, and it was made clear that if they did not, then the remainder of those in these clean cells would be given furniture, and all the group would be offered new prison issue civilian clothing.

12 Jan. *ISSUED* 22 protesting prisoners with furniture and bedding when they were moved to clean cells in B-Wing of H5. A further 25 prisoners were moved into clean unfurnished cells in the same wing.

All of these 47 occupants of B-Wing refrained from fouling their cells, and began to use the toilets and to slop out.

13 Jan. *COMPLETED* furnishing of B-Wing of H5 as none of the occupants had fouled their cells.

14 Jan. *INFORMED* all protesters of the situation in B-Wing of H5, and that a further complete wing of prisoners would be moved into furnished accommodation the following day. Made clear that any prisoner who had been allocated a clean furnished cell would, on request, be supplied with the new official issue civilian clothing. Prisoners who came off the protest altogether and agreed to conform with prison rules could avail themselves of:

- clean furnished cells
- new official issue civilian-type clothing
- permission to write out to relatives for their own leisure clothing to wear outside working hours
- immediate entitlement to the privileges of association, visits, letters and parcels
- a review of lost remission subject to good behaviour

15 Jan. *TRANSFERRED* a further 49 protesting prisoners to clean furnished cells in B-Wing of



NOTE:

In early March prisoners at the Maze and Armagh prisons stopped their "dirty protest" by beginning to wash, use the toilets and keep their cells clean. The prisoners, however, continue to protest in support of their demand for political status by refusing to work. Prisoners at the Maze are also refusing to wear prison-issue civilian clothes.

H3. They refrained from fouling their cells, and began to use the toilets and to slop out.

21  
Jan. *ADVISED* all prisoners that the 96 non-conforming prisoners in clean furnished cells in H3 and H5 were being awarded a reduced scale of punishment in which loss of remission was being reduced by 50% and one parcel per man per month was being made available.

*UNDERTOOK* that transfers of prisoners into clean cells would continue as part of the normal cleaning cycle and, if by the day following any of these moves prisoners had refrained from fouling their cells and had slopped out they would be provided with furniture and bedding and would qualify for the reduced scale of punishment.

*REITERATED* that official issue civilian clothing would be made available on request to any prisoner in a furnished cell who was keeping it clean; and that if prisoners conformed with prison rules, they could avail themselves of all the privileges available to conforming prisoners including the wearing of their own leisure clothing outside working hours.

23  
Jan. *OFFERED* to move 20 prisoners – ten from each of the clean furnished wings in H3 and H5 – to a block containing conforming prisoners after they indicated that they were prepared to wash, shave and have their hair cut. They refused, however, to move to a conforming block, and to take part in work other than that of cleaning their own cells and receiving full-time education. They also refused the offer of civilian-type clothing supplied by the prison, saying that they were not prepared to wear prison issue civilian clothing unless their own leisure clothing was provided at the same time.

*RE-EMPHASISED* to the prisoners that the full range of privileges – including that of wearing their own leisure clothing – was available only to those who conformed fully with the prison regime.

*ACCEPTED* a quantity of leisure clothing intended for this group of prisoners to be held

ready for issue to prisoners when they decided to conform.

*ACKNOWLEDGED* that by this date 53 prisoners, who had formerly been protesting had, since the hunger strike ended, decided to cease their protest altogether, and all were enjoying the full range of privileges including the wearing of their own leisure clothing outside working hours.

27  
Jan. *REMOVED* all 96 protesting prisoners from their clean furnished accommodation in H3 and H5 after they began to smash their furniture and to damage the fabric of their cells. They were moved at night to the nearest available empty cells in each of their two respective blocks. Some of these cells had still not been cleaned after their previous occupancy. All prisoners moved to the empty cells without resistance.

28  
Jan. *TRANSFERRED* all 96 in daylight to the nearest group of clean empty cells in H6 – some ¼ mile from their locations in H3 and H5. They immediately began to foul these clean cells and refused to use the toilets and to slop out.

Following this sequence the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon. Humphrey Atkins MP said in a Parliamentary written answer: "I regret that the successive steps taken in January have not led, as I hoped, to the ending of the 'dirty' protest. The Government believes that the normal prisons regime, the privileges that go with it, and the steps by which the protesting prisoners could have secured those privileges by progressively accepting the normal regime have been fully and clearly explained. We shall continue our efforts to bring an end to the protest on this basis.

"The principles by which the Government has stood in the face of the protests in the Maze and Armagh prisons still stand. It will not concede that it should now establish within the normal Northern Ireland prison regime a special set of conditions for particular groups of prisoners. It will not surrender control of what goes on in the prisons to a particular group of prisoners. It will not concede the demand for political status or recognise that murder and violence are less culpable because they are claimed to be committed for political motives."





# H-BLOCKS

The  
reality





*A corridor in a wing of an H-block.*





## The Maze Prison and the protest

THE CELLULAR Maze Prison, one of the most modern in Western Europe, is located on the outskirts of Belfast.

It is here that a minority group of prisoners has been carrying out the so-called "dirty protest" since 1978 in order to stir up, and maintain, a propaganda campaign, as part and parcel of the overall terrorist activities of the Provisional IRA.

Many of these prisoners have been convicted of the most vicious crimes, including murder and bombings.

They foul their cells. They have smashed furniture. They have refused to wear prison clothing, or its substitute, civilian-type clothing. They refuse to work.

This is done to try to force the Government to grant them "special status"; in other words to establish that their murders, their bombings are in some way special and that they should be treated more favourably. Yet the prison rules these prisoners will not follow are the same as apply throughout the United Kingdom — and are the rules with which the overwhelming majority of prisoners in Northern Ireland's prisons comply.

It is the Government's view that murder is murder and that special status is totally unjustified — a view supported by the European Commission of Human Rights.

As part of the propaganda campaign the prisoners have sought to claim that the Government is responsible for the conditions in which these prisoners live; that normal facilities and basic needs are being denied them.

The fact is that the prisoners have imposed the conditions upon themselves. It is they who have chosen to create squalor. They who have chosen to deny themselves the use of the extensive facilities and privileges which the majority of the Maze prisoners have been enjoying.

The controversy has clouded the truth about the administration of the Maze and the eight H-blocks, three of which have housed the protesting prisoners.

The prison is in fact most comprehensive in the facilities it provides and independent observers have accepted that it is administered in humanitarian fashion. This will continue despite efforts by the protesters to frustrate and disrupt the smooth running of the prison.

It is the Government's determination to continue to keep the prison regime in Northern Ireland under constant review and in the forefront of modern prison practice.





## The protest campaign

THE MAZE prison has extensive facilities and modern living accommodation, yet the protesting prisoners have carried out a campaign which involves:—

FOULING their cells

SMEARING excreta on the cell walls

POURING urine into the corridors.

They have:

DESTROYED cell furniture

BROKEN their beds

SMASHED original and replacement cell windows

DEFACED religious magazines and Bibles.

*How most of the cells in the Maze prison look.*





*Inside the cell of a prisoner on the "dirty protest".*

*The protesters' cells are regularly cleaned.*





# The facts and the fantasy

THERE ARE a number of myths about the "dirty" campaign and the Maze Prison.

- Protesters claim they are in prison because of their political beliefs. The fact is that they are there following conviction in open court for criminal offences.

Almost 100 of them have been convicted of murder or attempted murder, and a similar number for explosive offences, including bomb attacks on busy shopping precincts.

- The prisoners imply that the blame for the filthy conditions lies with the prison authorities.

The fact is the prisoners refuse to:—

- wash
- use the toilets
- shower

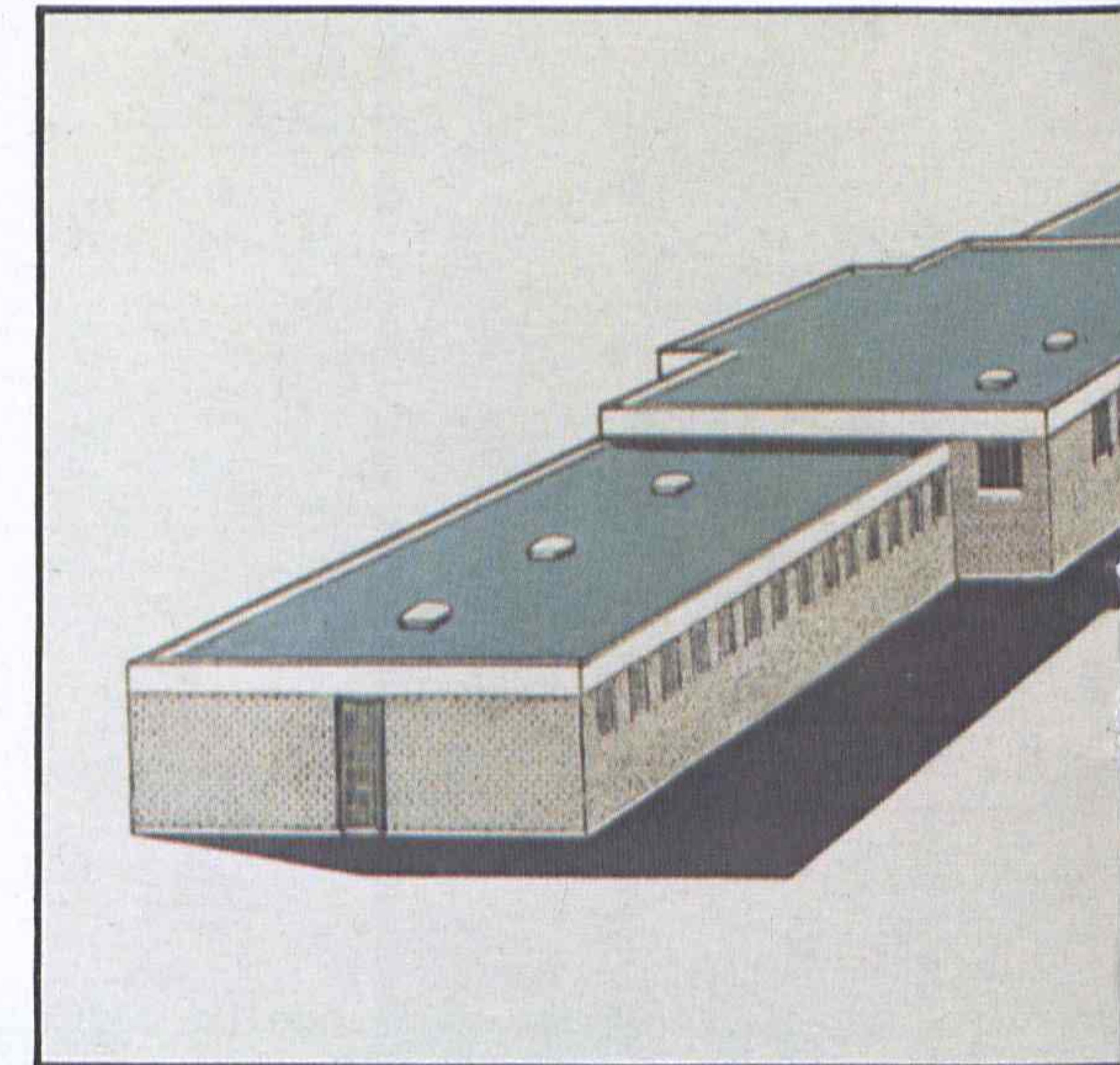
All of which they can do within a matter of yards from their cells.

- Daily exercise in the open is available. It is the prisoners who refuse to participate, even though sports wear is available.

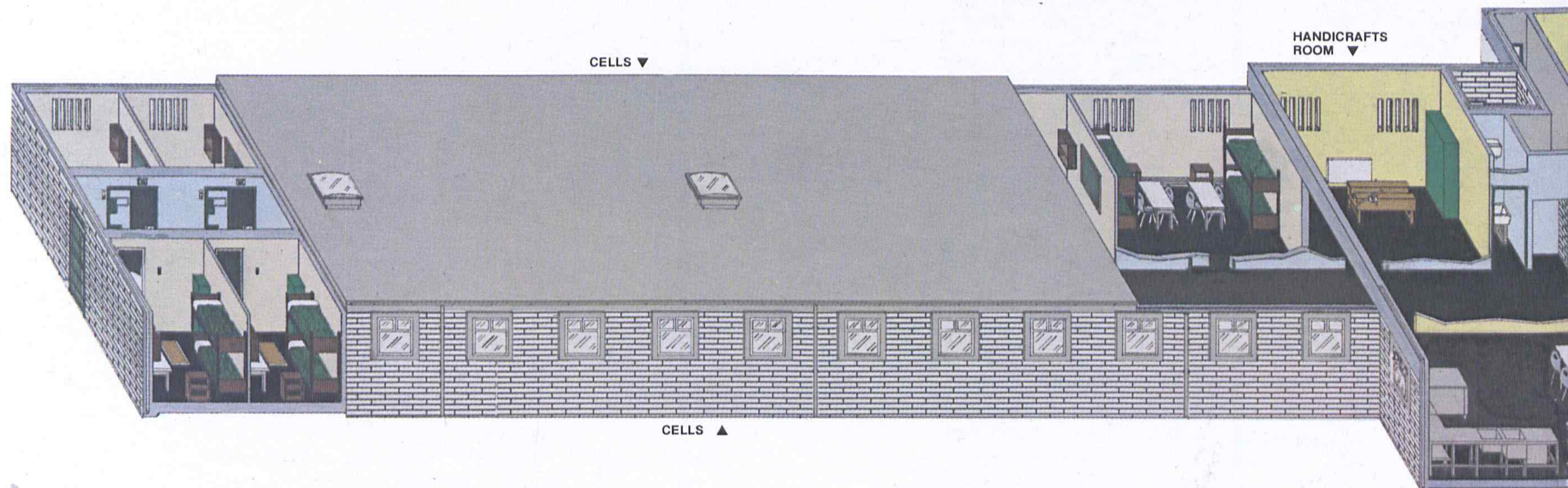
- A good selection of books and newspapers is provided in each wing. The protesting prisoners refuse to use them.

- Food is prepared to medically approved standards and is of good quality.

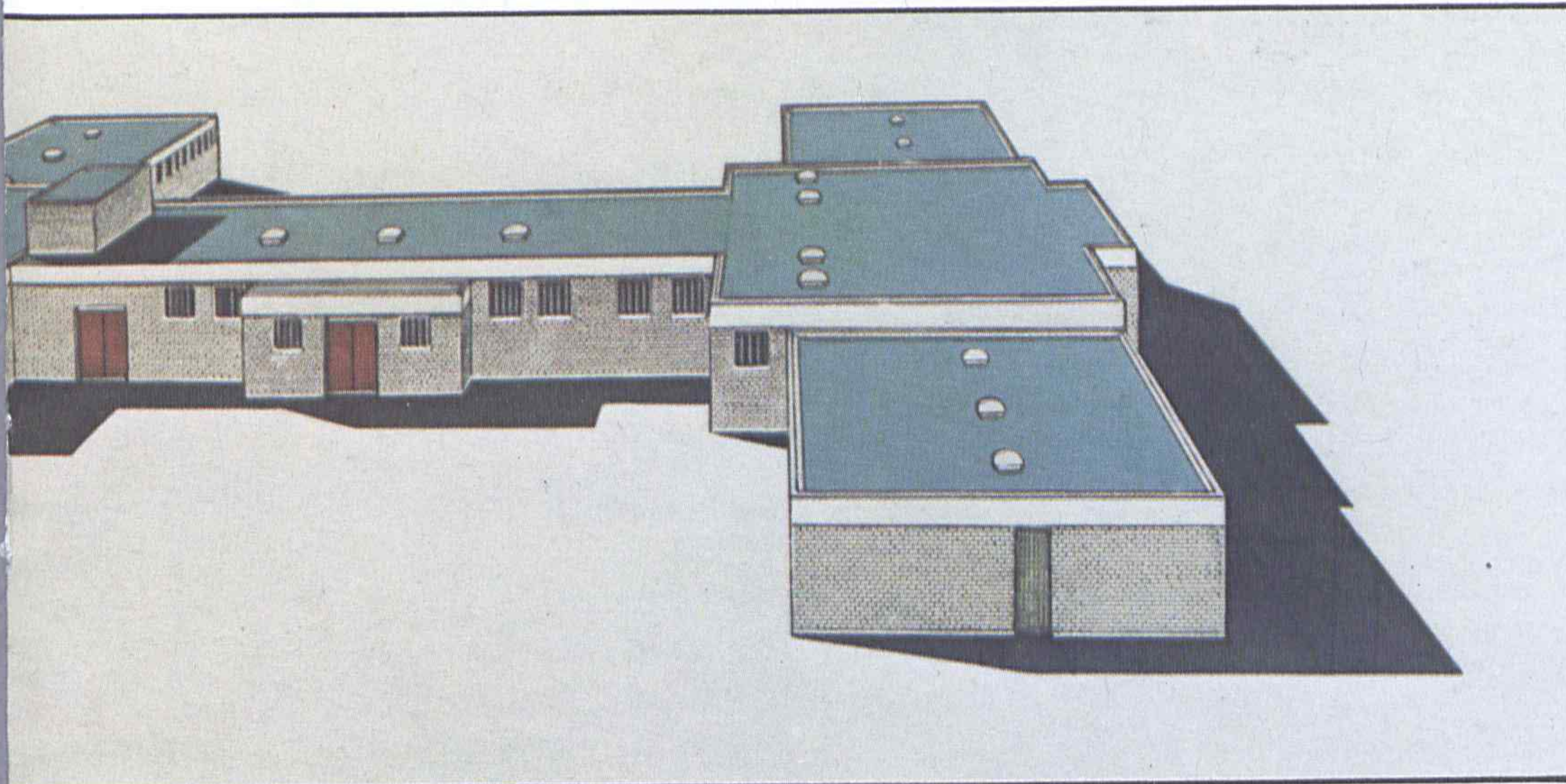
- Physical examination of prisoners is made only by a prison medical officer.



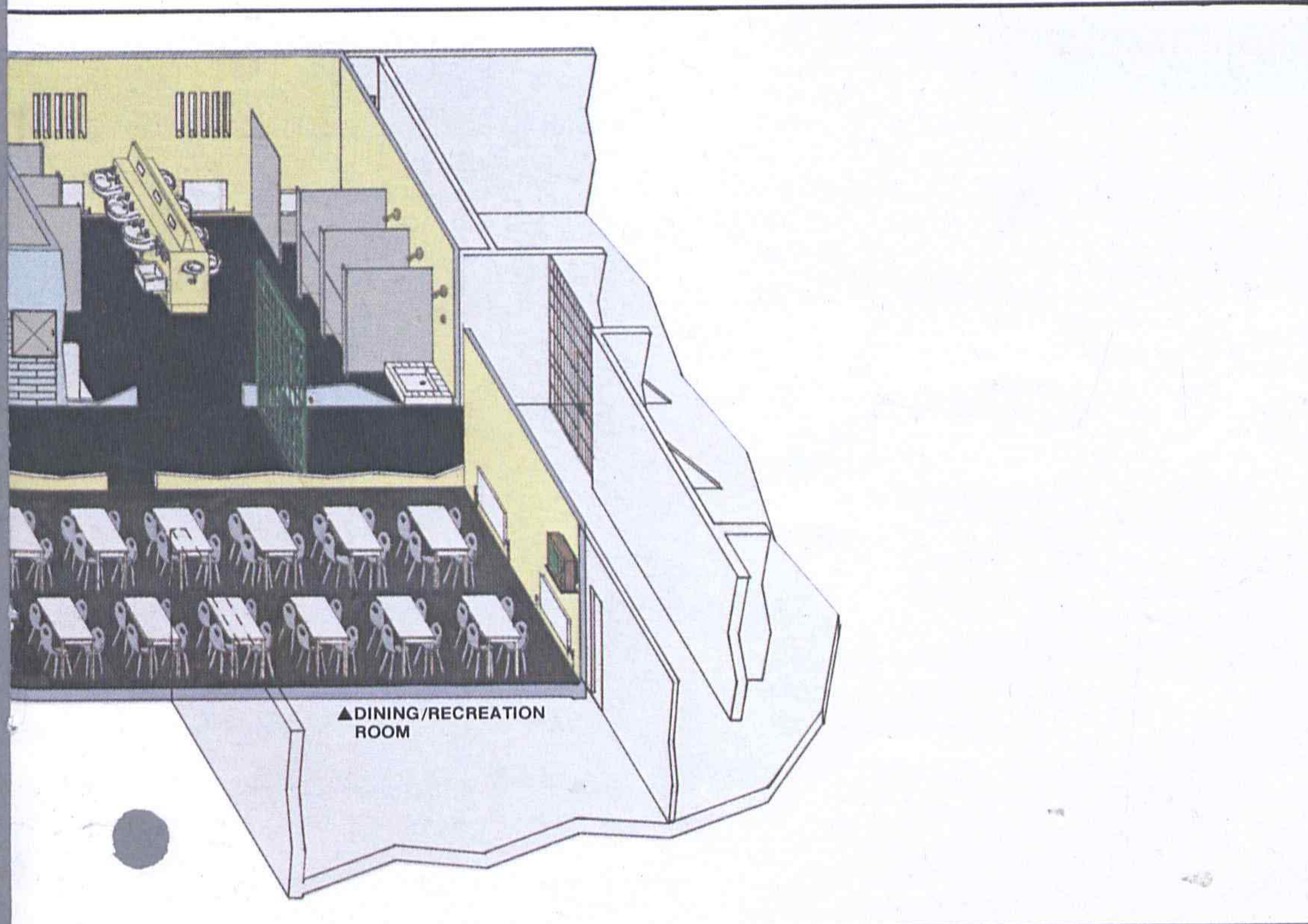
An H-block from the outside . . .







... and a detailed cutaway drawing of the interior of an H-block.



## The European Commission of Human Rights

DURING 1979 four protesting prisoners applied to the European Commission of Human Rights. They alleged that their treatment by the prison authorities had breached a number of articles of the European Convention on Human Rights.

All alleged violations relating directly to the protest were rejected by the Commission, which said:

- "... the applicants are attempting to achieve a status of political prisoner which they are not entitled to under national law or under the Convention."
- "... their protest cannot derive any legitimacy or justification from the Convention and cannot be attributed to any positive action on behalf of the respondent (British) government."
- "... The protest campaign was designed and co-ordinated by the prisoners to create the maximum publicity and enlist public sympathy and support for their political aims. That such a strategy involved self-inflicted debasement and humiliation to an almost sub-human degree must be taken into account."
- "... these conditions are self-imposed by the applicants as part of their protest ... and were they motivated to improve them, could be eliminated almost immediately."
- "... it cannot be deduced that exercise is being denied them. In reality they choose not to take advantage of the opportunities for exercise rather than compromise their protest. A similar situation exists in relation to the use of library facilities ..."





# The H-blocks — what they offer

THE H-BLOCK is so called because of its shape. In Maze Prison there are eight such blocks all built within the past few years at a cost of over £1m each. These provide accommodation on a par with the best in Europe.

## Each block

- is centrally heated
- has its own classroom and medical examination room
- has four 25-cell wings, with dining hall, handicrafts room, washing, showering and toilet facilities, and exercise yard.

## Central recreational facilities include

- two all weather sports pitches and a hall for such sports as basketball, volleyball, badminton and weight training.

Vocational training courses are also provided. These lead to formal qualifications, and include welding, car body repair, electrical appliance repair, furniture manufacture, bricklaying, etc.

There are also modern prison industries, such as furniture manufacture, as well as garment and shoe making. The aim: to give a man a reasonable day doing productive work.

A wide variety of educational courses up to and including University standard is provided.

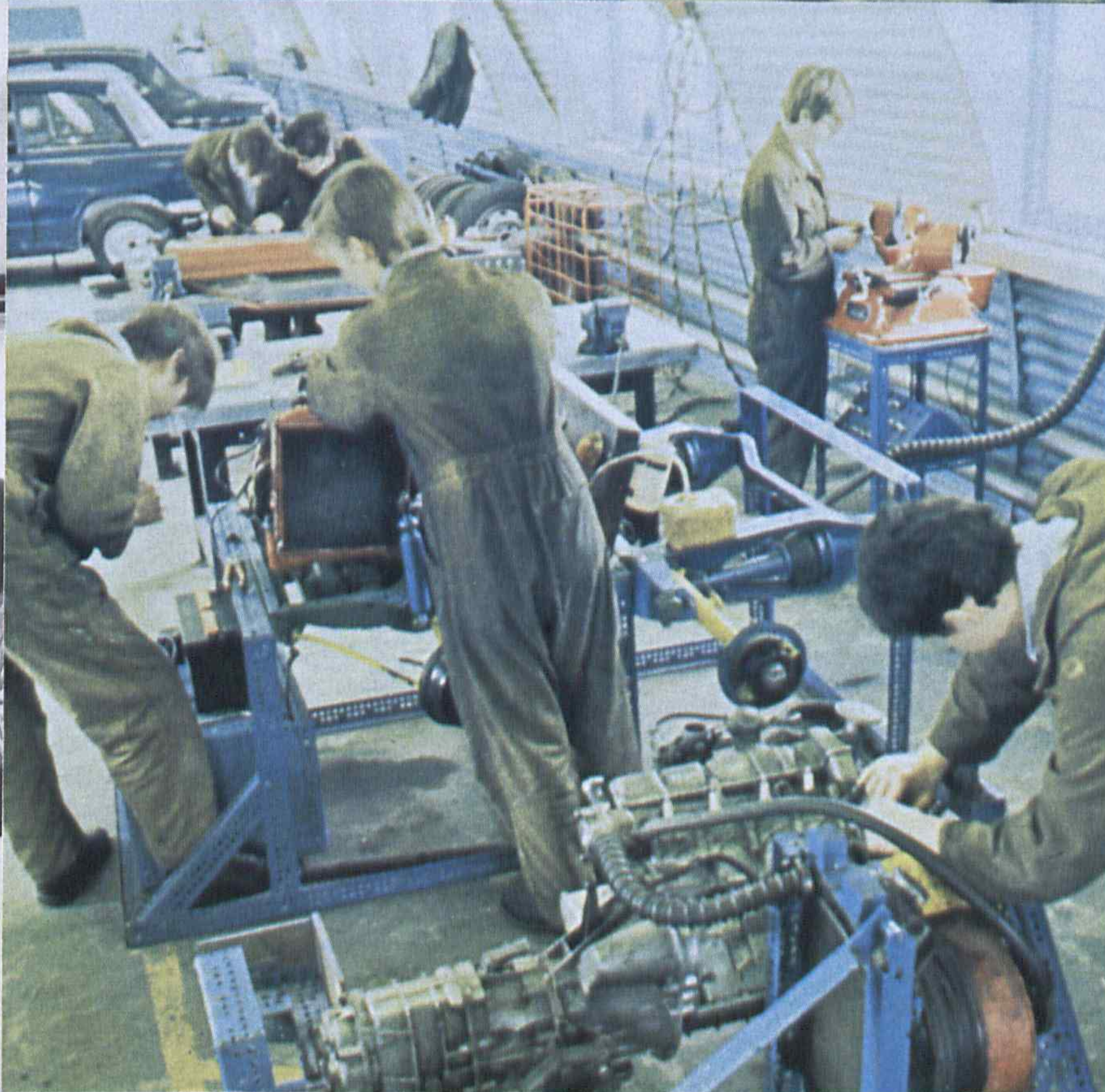
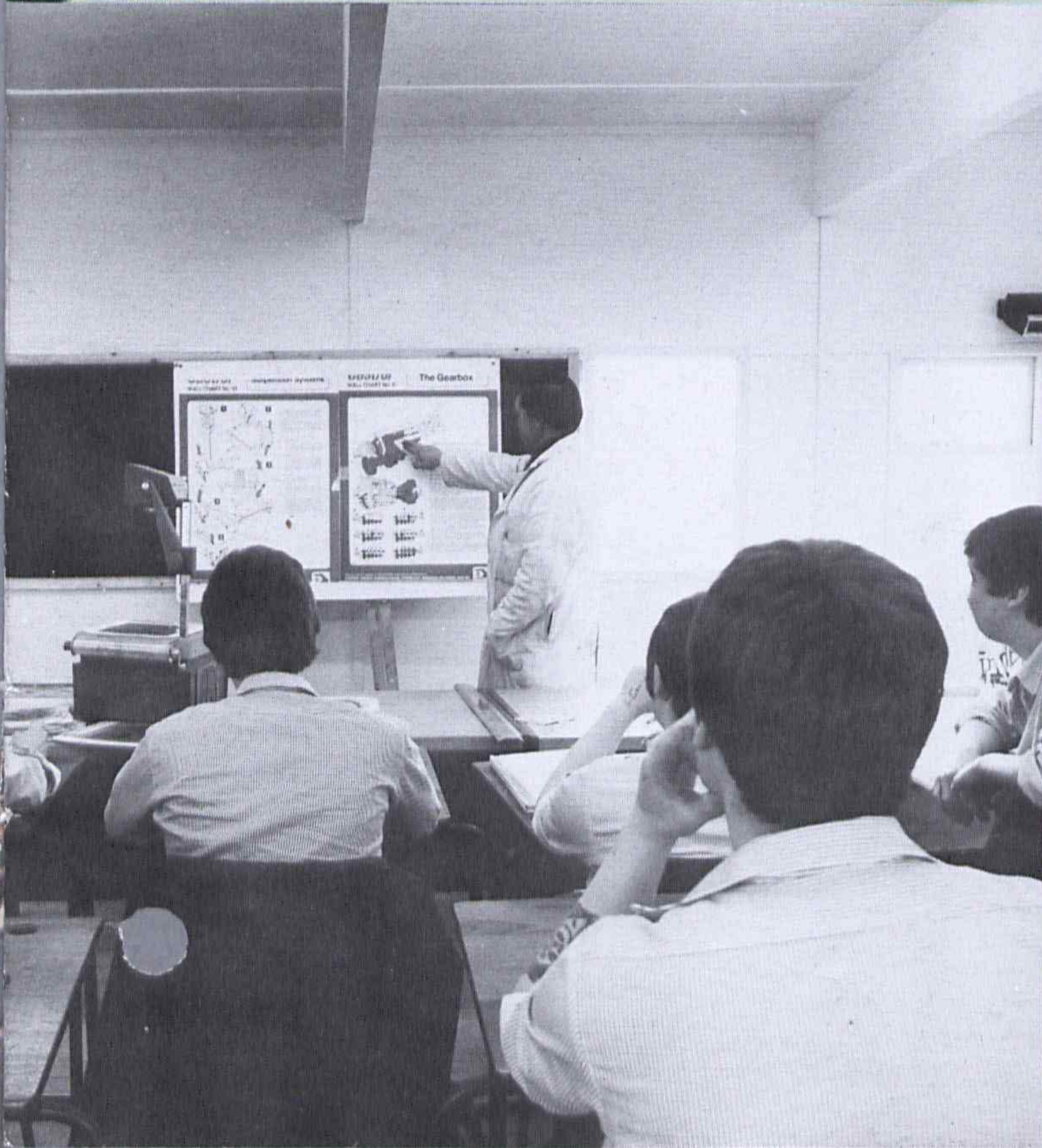


top — The sports hall at Maze prison.

left — Each H-block has four dining-recreation rooms.

right — There are two classrooms like this in every H-block.





# Humane policy

GOVERNMENT POLICY is to maintain a prison system in which the necessary discipline is applied according to acceptable and humane principles.

This policy is applied in prisons throughout Northern Ireland. In fact, some privileges, for prisoners conforming to prison rules, are much more generous than in the rest of the United Kingdom.

It is the Government's policy to continue improvement of conditions in prisons both for "conforming" prisoners and for protesters. During 1980 a number of relaxations have been introduced on humanitarian grounds for those on the "dirty protest".

These are:

- four letters a month, instead of one, can be sent and received.

- an extra visit a month in addition to the statutory monthly visit.

- sympathetic consideration to requests for additional visits on compassionate grounds.

- sports wear can be worn during recreation time and recreation time has been extended.

- opportunity for association with other prisoners in the evening.

- the availability of compassionate home leave on the same basis as for other sentenced prisoners.

In addition, for all male convicted prisoners (including the protesters) a major change was announced in October 1980 — the abolition of prison uniform and its replacement by a variety of civilian-type clothing.

These measures are in line with the Government's resolve to be progressive and compassionate in its approach to prison administration while remaining firmly set against "special" status.

top left — Handicraft articles made by prisoners in education classes at the Maze.

top right — Prisoners working in the garment making workshops.

left — Learning the theory in the motor mechanics vocational training course . . .

right — . . . and putting it into practice on the same course.

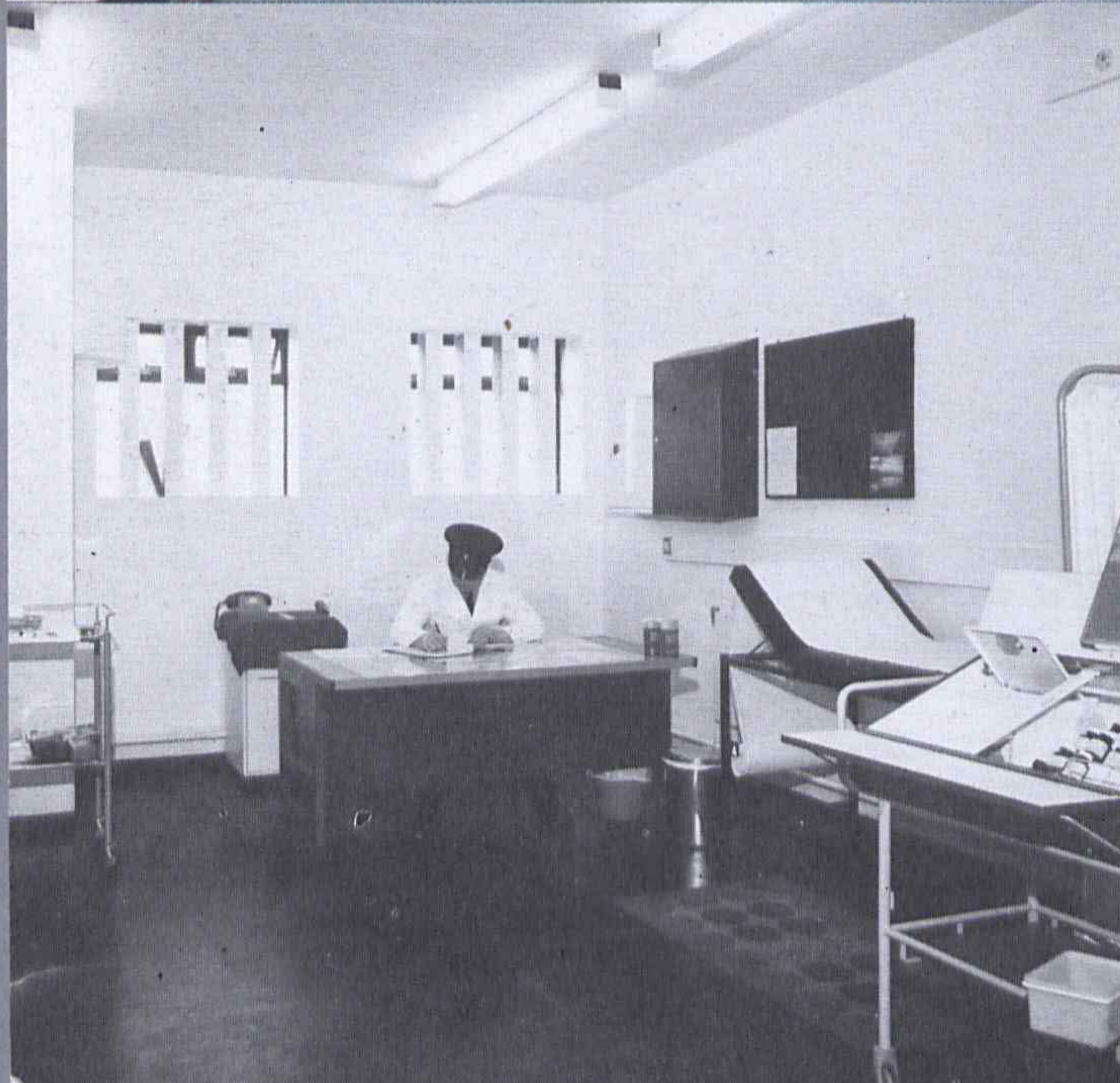


## Hygiene and health

THE AUTHORITIES have gone to considerable lengths to minimise the effects of the conditions the protesting prisoners inflict upon themselves. The fouled cells are regularly cleaned with steam-cleaning equipment and prisoners moved to a clean cell every ten days or so. Each cell is repainted regularly.

Protesting prisoners have access to a full range of medical services, daily sick parades, with a medical officer and prison hospital officers available day and night. A medical officer visits the cells at least once a week to monitor and observe the internal conditions, personal hygiene standards and inmates' health.

Despite the conditions which the protesting prisoners have been creating, there has so far been no evidence of any resulting illness.



top — *The fully equipped dental surgery in the prison hospital.*

left — *There is a medical inspection room in each H-block.*

right — *One of the wards in the prison hospital.*



## What the papers said

### **NEWS LETTER**

"The Northern Ireland Office has reiterated its determination to make conditions in the prisons of the highest standard and in fact impartial visitors have paid tribute to the way the inmates are treated."

### **Belfast Telegraph**

"The Government's attitude, throughout, has been firm and fair, as it has to be. 'There will be no compromise on the principle of political status,' it states. In this it is not only speaking for itself but the vast majority of Northern Ireland citizens. The Pope said it himself, 'Murder is Murder' and the European Human Rights Commission agreed that there was no justification for putting terrorist convicts in a special category."

### **THE Sun**

"The behaviour of the IRA men is to refuse to wash, to cover their cells in their own filth, to resist wearing their prison clothes and at every stage to defy authority."

"All this is done to further their outrageous claim that they are political prisoners — as if blowing up innocent shoppers, including young children, was an acceptable form of protest!"

### **THE SUNDAY TIMES**

The Government's change in the rules of dress at the Maze "is the best decision available. Plain clothes will not in themselves turn Republicans into prisoners of conscience, since the same small privilege is extended to every convicted criminal in Northern Ireland."



E.R.

5/8

Covering

CONFIDENTIAL

*of P...  
M...  
American*

*Desk by 11:45 am*

PUS

- cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - M
- PS/Mr Alison (L&B) - M
- Mr W E Bell
- Mr Blelloch
- Mr Marshall
- Mr Moriarty - M
- Mr Doyne-Ditmas
- Mr Gilliland
- Mr Palmer
- Mr Harrington - M
- Mr Blatherwick
- Mr Corbett - M

I attach a final version of the proposed statement as approved by the Prime Minister in Luxembourg last night.

*[Handwritten signature]*

of R. L. SMITH  
PS/PUS

30 June 1981

Covering

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1050  
30 JUN 1981  
MUFAX ROOM  
STORMONT HOUSE AN114



## STATEMENT ON NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON REGIMES

1. The hunger strikes in the Maze Prison are not of the United Kingdom Government's making, and it is not within our power to bring them to an end. That is up to the hunger-strikers and protesters themselves, and those who support and advise them.
2. We have done everything that the ECHR have suggested.
3. No further complaints have been made about conditions in the prisons in Northern Ireland, which will bear comparison with conditions in any other prison system in the world.
4. We share Mr Haughey's concern about the effects of the hunger strikes and we hope the hunger strikers will decide to give up their protest and conform to the prison regime.
5. We also share the concern recently expressed by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, in their statement issued on 17 June, and by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP).
6. In dealing with this situation, from long before the first hunger strike, the Government has stood firm on two matters of principle.
7. First, HMG cannot as a responsible government confer on any class of prisoner "political status", either directly or by giving prisoners the right to a particular regime or set of privileges that would segregate or otherwise differentiate them from others. The European Commission of Human Rights (ECHR), in its ruling last year on an application by four prisoners in the Maze prison, upheld the Government's position on this, declaring that the right to a preferential status for a certain category of prisoner is not among the rights guaranteed by the Convention.

B./



8. Secondly, the prison authorities must retain control over how the prisons are run and how life goes on in them. Like any enlightened prison authority, the Government recognises that prisons run best where there is a degree of mutual tolerance and acceptance between staff and inmates; but that is a far cry from handing over, to prisoners who reject the whole of the authority under which they are imprisoned, control over (for example) how they shall pass the time and with whom they shall associate. It is true that something like that situation arose in 1972, a time of large-scale civil disorder in Northern Ireland: prisoners convicted at that time were accommodated under a regime which was and remains different from the normal regime. The fundamental objections to that arrangement quickly became apparent, and it was condemned in the Report of a Committee of Inquiry in 1975 presided over by Lord Gardiner. The Committee's recommendation, followed by governments since, was that this regime should be phased out as soon as possible.

9. Subject to these principles the Government is committed to maintaining and, as proves practical and as resources allow, further improving an enlightened and humane regime with flexibility in its administration. In a statement made on 23 October 1980, when the first hunger strike was threatened, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, after reiterating the Government's principles,

"acknowledged the ECHR's injunction that the requirement on the Government to exercise their authority to safeguard the health and well-being of all prisoners, including protesters, makes it necessary for the prison authorities to keep under constant review their reaction to recalcitrant prisoners engaged in a developing and protracted protest".

The/



The statement went on to declare the Government's anxiety "to ensure that conditions for all prisoners in Northern Ireland prisons are enlightened and humane".

10. The Government sets out below the position regarding prison regimes in Northern Ireland, in particular the three aspects which feature in the recent ICJP statement, namely that prisoners at the Maze should be allowed to wear their own clothes at all times; that opportunities for association should be increased; and that the type of work required of prisoners should be reviewed.

#### Prison Activity

11. It is generally accepted in enlightened prison systems, and has been upheld by the ECHR, that people in prison should spend part of the day in useful activity. First, prisons are not hotels: the domestic life of the establishment has to go on, under the direction of the prison authorities, and it is reasonable that prisoners should play a part in maintaining it rather than expect others to do that for them. But it is also right that prisoners should contribute, through productive work, to recompensing the society/



society whose interests, individual and collective, they have damaged; and that educational activity, both vocational and more general, should occupy part of the time of all prisoners and a large part of the occupational time of some prisoners. Each of these three kinds of occupation can be amply justified, as reflecting the demands and opportunities of normal life outside prison - and this approximation to normality is itself a valuable objective of penal practice and one with a genuinely rehabilitative aspect. All three are well provided for in Northern Ireland prisons. A balance has to be struck among them, in the interests of prison management, as well as the needs and wishes of individual inmates.

12. The Government said in its statement on 19 December 1980, and now re-affirms, that the aim is to work out for each prisoner the kinds of available activity which are judged to suit him best. There should be no obstacle to devising worthwhile occupational programmes for prisoners who are prepared to accept - as most do - the broad and flexible framework set out above. If however, a prisoner declares himself unavailable for allocation to any particular kind of prison activity, notwithstanding the broad and flexible framework, he should not expect to receive the same privileges as prisoners who do accept the framework. What the Government cannot do is to hand over to prisoners, individually or in groups, the right to decide what should be the normal regime of the prison: that is a basic element of prison management.

#### Association

13. It is a common feature of modern prisons to provide time, in the evenings and at weekends, in which prisoners can relax in one another's company, subject to the requirements of prison security, which means that supervision is necessary so as to maintain control and good order, to ensure that the opportunity is not misused, and to protect prisoners from each other. That is what/



what distinguishes association in prison, from what is referred to as "free association". The latter term implies association that would be unsupervised, and would be unrestricted by the authorities as regards the range of activities permitted and the choice of associate. What it would mean in practice is that large numbers of prisoners - up to 100 or even more - could pass the time as they chose with fellow-members of their own paramilitary grouping, in pursuits related to the terrorist activities which have brought them into prison. This would clearly involve a loss of control which no prudent prison authority could tolerate. Subject to that important distinction, provision for association in Northern Ireland prisons is generous and is not immutable. Association in wings is allowed for three hours each evening and also all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Prisoners also mix with one another at various other times - for example during exercise, physical education, games and meal times. A wide range of recreational facilities - games, hobbies, classes, television - is available for use during periods of association: particulars were given in the detailed description of Northern Ireland prison regimes published in December 1980.

#### Clothing

14. As part of its flexible approach to prison management the Government has already substituted, for conventional prison uniform, ordinary shirts, trousers and pullovers purchased in Northern Ireland. These are retained by a prisoner as his personal clothing. Wearing of this clothing is required only during the working part of the day (though many prisoners are content to wear it all the time). During association periods and at weekends, prisoners may wear their own clothing.

#### Visits, Letters etc, and Remission

15. In addition to the three aspects of prison regime dealt with above, the protesting prisoners also demand one letter, one parcel and one visit each week. What is available to prisoners not engaged in the protests already matches or exceeds this. They can at present send up to 8 letters a month at the authorities/



authorities' expense, receive 4 visits a month, and receive a weekly parcel of reading material, fruit and toilet articles. These allowances are liberal by the standards of many prison administrations. Some limit has to be set to what can be permitted in these respects, not for punitive reasons but because of the demands that the supervision etc required - especially in conditions of high security - places upon the staff and other resources of the prison.

16. Finally, the Northern Ireland prison system, in common with a number of others, grants prisoners remission of part of their sentence subject to good conduct. The proportion of sentence remitted was increased from one-third to one-half some years ago. Remission can be forfeited for misconduct, and has been forfeited in considerable quantities by protesting prisoners on account of their breaches of prison rules. Prisoners who took part in the "dirty protest" lost a full day's remission for every day on protest. However, when that form of protest ended, the authorities responded promptly by halving the rate of remission being forfeited by protesting prisoners.

17. Remission forfeited for misconduct can be restored at the discretion of the disciplinary authority, after subsequent good behaviour. Prisoners who have abandoned their protest have had up to one-fifth of the remission lost for non-violent protest action restored to them.

#### Conclusion

18. The so-called "five demands" represent a regime which would differentiate those seeking it from other prisoners, give them control over their lives in prison and enable them to claim the status of political prisoner and all that that implies. If this is indeed what is being sought by, or in the name of, the hunger strikers it is being sought in vain. It has been suggested that changes should be made now in the areas of work, clothing and association as a gesture in the hope of ending the hunger strike. The Government does listen to the views of responsible people. The great difficulty about such a move is that it would encourage the hope that political status

based/



based on the so-called "five demands" could still be achieved.

19. Improvements in the general prison regime are a different matter. As the paragraphs above demonstrate, in the 3 aspects picked out by the ICJP, and in other aspects, the Northern Ireland prison regime is generous, and has been and will be administered flexibly by the authorities. There is scope for yet further development. It may be that the protesting prisoners are reluctant to abandon their protest because they do not trust the Government's commitment to continue to improve the prison regime. For them, the guarantee is that our commitment is declared in this and similar statements, and is there for all to see. What we said publicly in December would happen to those giving up their protests has happened to the 89 who have since done so. But it must be emphasised that this <sup>improvement</sup> is not something that can all be accomplished overnight. Prisons are complex institutions. The requirements of security, and the particular characteristics of the inmate population, add to their complexity. They are run by staff doing a difficult and hazardous job, whose interests must be given proper consideration. All this means that proposals for change must be fully and carefully weighed, and their implications explored, before they are adopted. This process cannot proceed further while the hunger strike places the authorities under duress.



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*file wa 30/6*



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London  
S W 1

29 June 1981

*Dear Michael,*

... I attach the record of Mr Alison's meeting last Friday with members of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace at Hillsborough Castle.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Roderic Lyne (F.C.O) and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely,  
Noel Cornick*

NOEL CORNICK

SD



E.R.

CONFIDENTIAL

cc · PS/Secretary of State (L&B)  
PS/Mr Alison (B)  
PS/PUS (L&B)  
Mr Blelloch  
Mr Marshall  
Mr Wyatt  
Mr Moriarty  
Mr Palmer  
Mr Ranson  
Mr Harrington  
Mr Jackson  
Mr Corbett  
Mr Blatherwick  
Mr Templeton

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

FURTHER MEETING WITH THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR  
JUSTICE AND PEACE - FRIDAY 26 JUNE 1981

Mr Alison had a second meeting with representatives of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace - once again at their request - on Friday 26 June at Hillsborough Castle. The members of the Commission present were Mr Hugh Logue, Bishop O'Mahoney, Mr Brian Gallagher, Father Oliver Crilly and Mr Jerome Connolly. Mr Alison was accompanied by Mr Blelloch, Mr Wyatt and Mr Palmer.

2. The Commission explained that they had sought a further meeting because they required clarification of some of the matters discussed at the previous meeting, on 23 June. Their view that a mood existed which favoured the prospect of a resolution of the prisons protest had in the meantime been reinforced, and they felt that there were some hopes now of finding a solution on the basis of the changes which the Minister had suggested might be made to the regime for conforming prisoners.

Association

3. The Commission asked for further information about how in practice some mixing of prisoners from different wings of the H-Block could be arranged. Mr Palmer showed the delegation a plan of a block and explained in detail the facilities available during evening and weekend association, the provisions for educational classes, sports and exercise, and the degree to which there was already association between prisoners from different wings (in classrooms, during work and training and in the sports hall). Mr Logue, while accepting that the prison authorities must have overall control, wanted to know why prisoners from one wing should

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not mix with those from another in the same block during association periods, effectively making two recreational areas interchangeable. Mr Alison explained the operational problems which might arise from larger numbers of prisoners moving about. He would need to refer this suggestion to the Prison Governor since he himself could not speak authoritatively on its operational feasibility.

4. Mr Logue also suggested that the exercise yard of each wing might be extended so that two yards were adjacent to one another, and wondered if an interchange between wings, similar to what he had proposed for recreation inside the wings, might be possible for outdoor exercise. He wanted to know why it was necessary to lock cell doors at certain times of the day; this was only done for short periods and there was a considerable psychological difference between a locked door and an unlocked one. Mr Logue did not envisage that what he was proposing would increase the problems of security, and felt that this could have a significant effect on the prisoners.

5. Mr Alison was not at all sure that the structural changes implied by these proposals would be feasible. It was made clear to the Commission that H-Blocks had been designed to prevent prisoners from escaping; additional prison officers would be required if larger numbers of prisoners were together within one area (there could be up to 50 prisoners in one wing alone). Prisoners could not be left to wander freely. The men in the cells were young and active and had every reason for trying to escape. Mr Alison reiterated the doubts which he had expressed at the meeting on 23 June. Small adjustments to the arrangements for association within the cellular system seemed to him to be a very long way from what the hunger strikers were seeking. He was quite prepared to have the suggestions investigated by people who had the necessary operational expertise, but he did not feel convinced that 'nuts and bolts' issues such as these were likely to lead anywhere. The Commission said they attached great significance to these details. They believed the prisoners' relatives might be persuaded that they amounted to reasonable proposals. Feelings in the community and the attitudes of the families led them to hope that there could be a solution based on such detailed issues, but there was very little time because the opportunity would be



completely lost once another hunger striker had died. They hoped the Government would be able to offer that -

- (i) during normal exercise and during recreation there might be association between wings; and
- (ii) except for security checks and counts, cell doors might be left open.

Mr Alison said that without commitment these matters could be looked at fairly quickly.

#### Segregation

6. The Commission wanted to know if segregation could continue. Mr Alison explained that this had arisen because of the protest and would not normally be acceptable in the cellular prison. The Government could not concede the principle that no attention is paid to the background and religious persuasion of individual prisoners and that the prison authorities must be able to control the disposition of prisoners within the prison. Integration was an essential part of conformity. The Commission thought that this issue could be a real stumbling block. They suggested that the de facto situation arising from the protest could be maintained, at least for a time, after prisoners were conforming in other respects -- perhaps until Maghaberry was available. In the interests of everyone they felt that it would be worth overlooking this principle, in the light of the prospect of a dramatic new situation. From the authorities' point of view, given the antipathy between prisoners of different persuasions, surely the exercise of control would be easier if segregation persisted.

7. Mr Alison told the Commission that he was fully aware of the potential difficulties of integrating former protestors, but the principle was that a 'compound' situation could not be allowed to operate in the cells - with the opportunities it presented for a prisoner 'command' structure. He also reminded the delegation of the loss of privileges - in particular loss of remission - which must result if prisoners insist on protesting.



Clothes

8. The Commission referred briefly to the discussion on this at the earlier meeting. They felt that a requirement to wear clothes which did not resemble prison officers' uniforms or paramilitary uniforms and which were not outlandish would be accepted as reasonable.

Work

9. The Commission accepted that it was reasonable to expect prisoners to do 'orderly' work, for example cleaning cells, cleaning the wings, distributing food. They suggested that a clarifying formula might be devised indicating that prisoners must do orderly duties of this type, that a rota should be established for this purpose in each wing and that 'in the last analysis' the prison authorities should approve it. Mr Alison pointed out that within this type of 'orderly' work there was an element of what prisoners might interpret as 'demeaning' work. Similarly, in the two other main areas of work - the 'industrial' and 'intellectual' types - there were potential difficulties over the sort of thing which prisoners felt disposed to do, even though attempts would always be made to resolve any differences to mutual satisfaction. Mr Wyatt also referred to sensitivities which could arise in work outside blocks (eg in the kitchens) for the benefit of all prisoners. Republican prisoners might object to doing work which benefitted UDA prisoners, prison officers etc. It was necessary to be realistic. Mr Alison drew a distinction between routine, day-to-day work essential to the running of the prison, and other types of work, while pointing out that the dividing line between these two areas was blurred. The Commission thought that the former type was not likely to create difficulties. Mr Logue suggested that the word "work" might be replaced by "activity".

10. Mr Alison pointed out that in all liberal prison regimes, prisoners were required to engage in useful and constructive work. They received a trivial sum by way of payment and the product of their work benefitted the rest of the community. However, it was possible that some prisoners would object to doing work which contributed to a system which they found objectionable. It may



therefore be necessary at times to penalise prisoners who were not co-operating. It must be the prison authorities who had the final decision.

11. It was agreed that the most likely sticking point was in the area of 'industrial' work. Father Crilly thought that prisoners on long sentences would have little incentive to do this type of work and might resist it simply because of the element of compulsion. He regarded choice as an important factor. Mr Logue wondered if an avenue could be found by distinguishing between work which was paid and work which was not. He suggested a formula along the following lines -

- (i) all prisoners should be required to engage in useful activities;
- (ii) prisoners may opt for work for which there was payment;
- (iii) prisoners' activities would be determined by their abilities, aptitudes and the length of their sentences;
- (iv) although prisoners' preferences would be observed as far as possible, resources and the availability of different types of work would have to be taken into account.

Father Crilly thought that the distinction between 'essential' work (ie work necessary for the running of the prison) and 'non-essential' work could be the key to a resolution of the difficulty. Mr Bielloch pointed out that there were 'grey' areas between these two types, which in a general atmosphere of conformity would not be a problem, but the prisoners in question were not accustomed to conformity.

#### Remission

12. Mr Alison explained the present system whereby prisoners who ceased protesting could have some of their lost remission restored, and assured the Commission that the Government would continue to seek a generous and imaginative response to prisoners who gave up the protest. However, the authorities had to reserve the right to award penalties where appropriate. Father Crilly asked for a "dramatic" response in a situation where 400 prisoners might abandon



the protest. The particular configuration of the attitudes of prisoners' families and the community generally at this time indicated that the prisoners might be prepared to accept that an H-Block could never be a compound, and this change in attitude required a very magnanimous response. He envisaged full remission.

13. Mr Alison reminded Father Crilly that the existing remission arrangements were already generous, and may well have prevented the protest developing on a larger scale than it had. It had to be remembered that the last few years had been a period of great stress for the prison authorities. To give the protesters half-remission as soon as they ceased protesting would be seen as a betrayal to others - outside and inside the prison. It was quite inconceivable to give back all their lost remission straight away. Father Crilly repeated his view that the scale of what could be achieved - ie 400 protesters ceasing to protest - needed to be matched proportionately by the Government. Mr Alison repeated that a response to such a situation would be imaginative, but there were many factors to take into consideration.

#### Books

14. There was some discussion of the books available in the prison library; the Commission felt that there was perhaps too much 'censorship'. They accepted that books on eg military training could not be provided and that there were resource limitations, but they particularly asked that a new translation of the Bible in Irish should be made available. They thought that the prisoners were likely to press for this, and it could have symbolic significance. Mr Alison did not think there would be any difficulty about providing this book.

#### Presentation

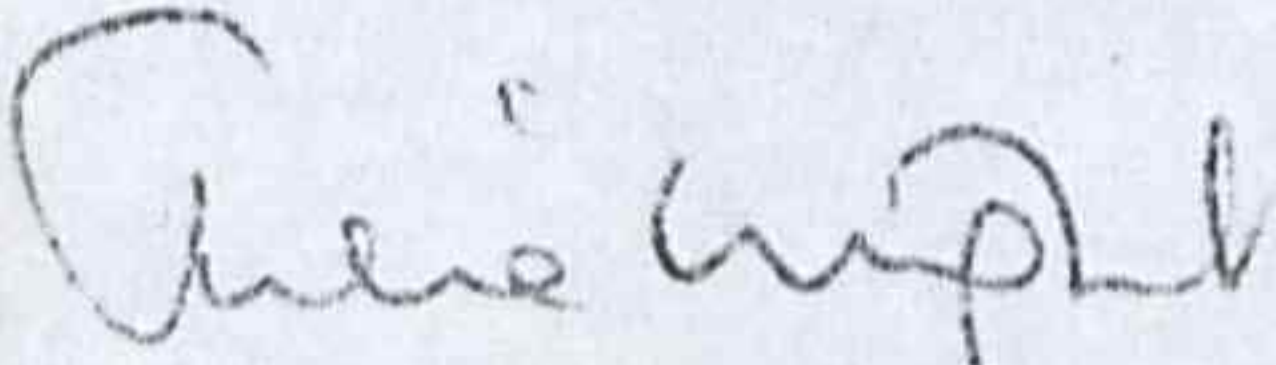
15. The Commission were concerned about the distrust which existed because of the alleged breach of faith at the end of the last hunger strike. They thought that, to dispel this distrust, whatever was on offer to the prisoners would need to be implemented as soon



as a hunger striker requested sustenance. Mr Alison agreed that distrust had arisen previously and should be avoided, but in his judgment there had been no breach of good faith in December. He emphasised that this meeting must not be regarded as negotiation; it was a discussion of what was, or might be, realistic. He was inclined to think that the time was ripe for the Government to make a considered public statement about its response to the proposals put forward by the ICJP. He did not think anything could be said about remission, however. There would need to be another means of communicating the more detailed information on 'nuts and bolts' issues. Mr Logue thought that it might be necessary for the Governor to communicate with the prisoners, and also suggested that the Government should write to the ICJP. If there was to be such a letter, it was important that parallels could not be drawn with the 'five demands' and he therefore suggested including in it some general information on leave, privileges, recreation etc.

16. Mr Alison thought there might be a public statement followed by an open letter to the ICJP providing a more elaborate commentary, but he would reflect on this. Bishop O'Mahoney said that if a solution was found, the Church would create an atmosphere of profound thanksgiving. The Commission thought that this was important and might detract from political claims of victory.

17. The meeting, which lasted slightly less than 4 hours, was conducted, like the last meeting, in a frank and friendly atmosphere.

  
J M WRIGHT (Miss)  
PS/Mr Alison  
27 June 1981



OUT TELEGRAM

		Classification and Caveats <b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	Precedence/Deskby <b>IMMEDIATE</b>
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ZCZC	1	ZCZC
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CLASS	3	CONFIDENTIAL
CAVEATS	4	
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TEL NO	8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
	9	REPEATED FOR INFO : IMMEDIATE LUXEMBOURG, IMMEDIATE NIO BELFAST
	10	TELECON HMA/EYERS : HUNGER STRIKE
	11	1. Following is text of speaking note <sup>which you should</sup> <del>for</del> use when handing over <sup>on timing</sup>
	12	Mr Atkins' statement on hunger strike. Instructions follow.
	13	BEGINS
	14	"You reported what the Taoiseach told you on Saturday
	15	27 June about his concern over the way the hunger strike
	16	issue is now developing in the Republic. The Prime Minister
	17	and her colleagues fully recognise the importance of the
	18	issues at stake. They know the pressures brought upon
	19	democratic governments if hunger strikers die after getting
	20	themselves elected: they had to face up to them in the case
	21	of Sands.
///	22	2. The British Government <sup>fully understand</sup> <del>are clear</del> that if further deaths
//	23	of hunger strikers occur this will be bad for legitimate
/	24	politics in Northern Ireland and Great Britain and in the
	25	Republic. But they <sup>remain convinced</sup> <del>are also wholly clear</del> that to give in

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Telephone number 233 3994			
Authorised for despatch <i>4 29/6</i>			
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OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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to the IRA will have <sup>even</sup> graver effects for them and for the Irish Government. There is no evidence of a desire on the part of the prisoners and those who control them to end the hunger strike except on the terms which they have set and maintained ever since October last. All the evidence available to the Government, and there is a great deal of all kinds, confirms that they are faced with a stark choice between accepting the possibility of further deaths and conceding the five demands.

3. The Government have found their discussions with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace useful in establishing what changes in a conforming prison regime might seem reasonable to reasonable men as a way of ending the protests. *most recently in public in response to the ICJP's efforts,* But as the prisoners themselves have said, this is not what the prisoners are looking for.

4. The Prime Minister would greatly regret it if were to appear that any substantial difference existed between us on this issue of principle. That could only help the common enemy."

ENDS

CARRINGTON

NNNN



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TELEGRAM NUMBER 62 OF 29 JUNE

INFO IMMEDIATE DUBLIN

NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS PROTEST

FOLLOWING FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY TO PRIME MINISTER

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF MR HAUGHEY'S STATEMENT ISSUED EARLIER TODAY.

BEGINS

'1. THE HUNGER STRIKES IN THE MAZE PRISON ARE A CONTINUING SOURCE OF TENSION AND DANGER THROUGHOUT THIS ISLAND. THEY ARE WIDENING AND DEEPENING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THEY AFFECT NOT ONLY THOSE IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED BUT ALSO THEIR FAMILIES AND THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF WHICH THEY ARE A PART.

2. THERE IS A NEW URGENT AND COMPELLING NEED FOR ALL THOSE CONCERNED TO MAKE AN EARNEST ATTEMPT TO SEEK OUT A WAY TO BRING THIS TRAGIC SITUATION TO AN END. IN MY VIEW A PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY RESTS ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO MAKE AN IMMEDIATE EFFORT TO FIND A SOLUTION, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND BUT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THE CONSEQUENCES OF FURTHER DEATHS ARE SO SERIOUS AND FAR REACHING THAT A SOLUTION WHICH WILL PREVENT THEM OCCURRING MUST BE FOUND AND I AM CONVINCED THAT THE TIME TO FIND SUCH A SOLUTION IS NOW.'

ENDS

2. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT WHICH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD LIKE TO ISSUE TOMORROW (TUESDAY). HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR AN EARLY INDICATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS CONTENT WITH THE STATEMENT, WHICH WILL BE PASSED TO THE IRISH SHORTLY BEFORE ISSUE.

BEGINS

'THE PRESENT PRISON PROTESTS EVOKE WIDESPREAD CONCERN FROM PEOPLE OF GOODWILL IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND ELSEWHERE. THIS CONCERN OFTEN TAKES THE FORM OF ASSERTIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TAKING AN INFLEXIBLE ATTITUDE AND THAT A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO MINOR MATTERS OF PRISON REGIME, WITHOUT FLOUTING ANY IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE, WOULD BRING THE PROTEST TO AN END - OR, EVEN IF IT DID NOT DO THAT, WOULD REASSURE THOSE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT THE HANDLING OF THE DISPUTE BY HMG. ONE PARTICULAR EXPRESSION OF SUCH CONCERN HAS RECENTLY COME FROM THE IRISH CATHOLIC

Cleared  
too long, short subject  
+ annex. Spk to Stove  
gave him short bit  
then now on.



TO AN END - OR, EVEN IF IT DID NOT DO THAT, WOULD REASSURE THOSE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT THE HANDLING OF THE DISPUTE BY HMG. ONE PARTICULAR EXPRESSION OF SUCH CONCERN HAS RECENTLY COME FROM THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE, IN THEIR STATEMENT ISSUED ON 17 JUNE. ANOTHER (TO WHICH THE BISHOPS' STATEMENT ITSELF REFERRED) HAS COME FROM THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE (ICJP): THEY HAVE SUGGESTED THAT PRISONERS AT THE MAZE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO WEAR THEIR OWN CLOTHES AT ALL TIMES: THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASSOCIATION SHOULD BE INCREASED: AND THAT THE TYPE OF WORK REQUIRED OF PRISONERS SHOULD BE REVIEWED.

2. AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR ONCE AGAIN WHERE IT STANDS, NOT SIMPLY IN RESPONSE TO THOSE RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE URGING THE NEED FOR ACTION BUT ALSO IN RECOGNITION OF THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION THAT THE PRESENT HUNGER STRIKE HAS CREATED. SINCE 1 MARCH WHEN THE PRESENT HUNGER STRIKE BEGAN, FOUR YOUNG MEN HAVE DIED IN PRISON. 39 PEOPLE HAVE DIED OUTSIDE AND MANY HAVE BEEN INJURED: PROPERTY HAS BEEN DAMAGED: YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE: AND, AS EVER, THE INNOCENT HAVE SUFFERED HEAVILY. ONLY THE MEN OF VIOLENCE HAVE GAINED.

3. THE GOVERNMENT FULLY UNDERSTANDS AND SYMPATHISES WITH THOSE WHO FEEL HUMANITARIAN CONCERN ABOUT THE PRISON PROTEST. NONE OF US SHOULD BE INDIFFERENT TO YOUNG MEN STARVING THEMSELVES TO DEATH. THAT CONCERN EXTENDS TO THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS - TORN BY A CRUEL CONFLICT OF LOYALTIES - AND TO ALL WHO ARE CAUGHT UP IN ANY WAY IN THE WIDER PROTESTS AND DISORDERS OUTSIDE THE PRISONS. IT EXTENDS ABOVE ALL TO THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND DISORDER AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THOSE SERVING IN THE SECURITY FORCES AND PRISON SERVICE, WHO IN DIFFERENT WAYS HAVE TO BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, OF THE PRISON PROTEST AND THE CAMPAIGN OF WHICH IT FORMS A PART. IN DECIDING HOW TO HANDLE THE PRISON PROTEST OUR CONCERN MUST EMBRACE ALL THESE INTERESTS. AND WE MUST NOT RESPOND TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO CREATE A NEW AND MORE DIFFICULT ONE.

4. IN DEALING WITH THIS SITUATION, FROM LONG BEFORE THE FIRST HUNGER STRIKE, THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECT HAS BEEN TO STAND FIRM ON TWO MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE.

5. FIRST, HMG CANNOT AS A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT CONFER ON ANY CLASS OF PRISONER 'POLITICAL STATUS', EITHER DIRECTLY OR BY GIVING PRISONERS THE RIGHT TO A PARTICULAR REGIME OR SET OF PRIVILEGES THAT WOULD SEGREGATE OR OTHERWISE DIFFERENTIATE THEM FROM OTHERS. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ECHR), IN ITS RULING LAST YEAR ON AN APPLICATION BY FOUR PRISONERS IN THE MAZE PRISON, UPHELD THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THIS, DECLARING THAT THE RIGHT TO A PREFERENTIAL STATUS FOR A CERTAIN CATEGORY OF PRISONER IS NOT AMONG THE RIGHTS GUARANTEED BY THE CONVENTION.

6. SECONDLY, THE PRISON AUTHORITIES MUST RETAIN CONTROL OVER HOW THE PRISONS ARE RUN AND HOW LIFE GOES ON IN THEM. LIKE ANY ENLIGHTENED PRISON AUTHORITY, THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THAT PRISONS RUN BEST WHERE THERE IS A DEGREE OF MUTUAL TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE BETWEEN STAFF AND INMATES: BUT THAT IS A FAR CRY FROM HANDING OVER, TO PRISONERS WHO REJECT THE WHOLE AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH THEY ARE IMPRISONED, CONTROL OVER (FOR EXAMPLE) HOW THEY SHALL PASS THE TIME AND WITH



TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE BETWEEN STAFF AND INMATES: BUT THAT IS A FAR CRY FROM HANDING OVER, TO PRISONERS WHO REJECT THE WHOLE AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH THEY ARE IMPRISONED, CONTROL OVER (FOR EXAMPLE) HOW THEY SHALL PASS THE TIME AND WITH WHOM THEY SHALL ASSOCIATE. IT IS TRUE THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT SITUATION AROSE IN 1972, A TIME OF LARGE-SCALE CIVIL DISORDER IN NORTHERN IRELAND: PRISONERS CONVICTED AT THAT TIME WERE ACCOMMODATED UNDER A REGIME WHICH WAS AND REMAINS DIFFERENT FROM THE NORMAL REGIME. THE FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIONS TO THAT ARRANGEMENT QUICKLY BECAME APPARENT, AND IT WAS CONDEMNED IN THE REPORT OF A COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY IN 1975 PRESIDED OVER BY LORD GARDINER. THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION, FOLLOWED BY GOVERNMENTS SINCE, WAS THAT THIS REGIME SHOULD BE PHASED OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

7. SUBJECT TO THESE PRINCIPLES THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING AND, AS PROVES PRACTICAL AND AS RESOURCES ALLOW, FURTHER IMPROVING AN ENLIGHTENED AND HUMANE REGIME WITH FLEXIBILITY IN ITS ADMINISTRATION. IN A STATEMENT MADE ON 23 OCTOBER 1980, WHEN THE FIRST HUNGER STRIKE WAS THREATENED, THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, AFTER REITERATING THE GOVERNMENT'S PRINCIPLES,

'ACKNOWLEDGED THE ECHR'S INJUNCTION THAT THE REQUIREMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT TO EXERCISE THEIR AUTHORITY TO SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL PRISONERS, INCLUDING PROTESTERS, MAKES IT NECESSARY FOR THE PRISON AUTHORITIES TO KEEP UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW THEIR REACTION TO RECALCITRANT PRISONERS ENGAGED IN A DEVELOPING AND PROTRACTED PROTEST'.

THE STATEMENT WENT ON TO DECLARE THE GOVERNMENT'S ANXIETY 'TO ENSURE THAT CONDITIONS FOR (NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) ALL PRISONERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS ARE ENLIGHTENED AND HUMANE'.

8. THE GOVERNMENT SETS OUT BELOW THE POSITION REGARDING PRISON REGIMES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, IN PARTICULAR THE THREE ASPECTS WHICH FEATURE IN THE RECENT ICJP STATEMENT.  
PRISON ACTIVITY (UNDERLINED)

9. IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED IN ENLIGHTENED PRISON SYSTEMS, AND HAS BEEN UPHOLDEN BY THE ECHR, THAT PEOPLE IN PRISON SHOULD SPEND PART OF THE DAY IN USEFUL ACTIVITY. FIRST, PRISONS ARE NOT HOTELS: THE DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT HAS TO GO ON, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PRISON AUTHORITIES, AND IT IS REASONABLE THAT PRISONERS SHOULD PLAY A PART IN MAINTAINING IT RATHER THAN EXPECT OTHERS TO DO THAT FOR THEM. BUT IT IS ALSO RIGHT THAT PRISONERS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE, THROUGH PRODUCTIVE WORK, TO RECOMPENSING THE SOCIETY WHOSE INTERESTS, INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE THEY HAVE DAMAGED: AND THAT EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY, BOTH VOCATIONAL AND MORE GENERAL, SHOULD OCCUPY PART OF THE TIME OF ALL PRISONERS AND A LARGE PART OF THE OCCUPATIONAL TIME OF SOME PRISONERS. EACH OF THOSE THREE KINDS OF OCCUPATION CAN BE AMPLY JUSTIFIED, AS REFLECTING THE DEMANDS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF NORMAL LIFE OUTSIDE PRISON - AND THIS APPROXIMATION TO NORMALITY IS ITSELF A VALUABLE OBJECTIVE OF PENAL PRACTICE AND ONE WITH A GENUINELY REHABILITATIVE ASPECT. ALL THREE ARE WELL PROVIDED FOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS. A BALANCE HAS TO BE STRUCK AMONG THEM, IN THE INTERESTS OF PRISON MANAGEMENT, AS WELL AS THE NEEDS AND WISHES OF INDIVIDUAL INMATES.

10. THE GOVERNMENT SAID IN ITS STATEMENT ON 19 DECEMBER 1980, AND NOW RE-AFFIRM, THAT THE AIM IS TO WORK OUT FOR EACH PRISONER THE KINDS OF AVAILABLE ACTIVITY WHICH ARE JUDGED TO SUIT HIM BEST. THERE SHOULD BE NO OBSTACLE TO DESIGNING WORTHWHILE OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR PRISONERS WHO ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT - AS MOST DO - THE BROAD AND



1980, AND NOW RE-AFFIRM, THAT THE AIM IS TO WORK OUT FOR EACH PRISONER THE KINDS OF AVAILABLE ACTIVITY WHICH ARE JUDGED TO SUIT HIM BEST. THERE SHOULD BE NO OBSTACLE TO DEISING WORTHWHILE OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMMES FOR PRISONERS WHO ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT - AS MOST DO - THE BROAD AND FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK SET OUT ABOVE. IF HOWEVER, A PRISONER DECLARES HIMSELF UNAVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION TO ANY PARTICULAR KIND OF PRISON ACTIVITY, NOTWITHSZANDING THE BROAD AND FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK, HE SHOULD NOT EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE SAME PRIVILEGES AS PRISONERS WHO DO ACCEPT THE FRAMEWORK. WHAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT DO IS TO HAND OVER TO PRISONERS, INDIVIDUALLY OR IN GROUPS, THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT SHOULD BE THE NORMAL REGIME OFSTHE PRISON: THAT IS A BASIC ELEMENT OF PRISON MANAGEMENT.

ASSOCIATION (UNDERLINED)

11. IT IS A COMMON FEATURE OF MODERN PRISONS TO PROVIDE TIME, IN THE EVENINGSSAND AT WEEKENDS, IN WHICH PRISONERS CAN RELAX IN ONE ANOTHER'S COMPANY, SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF PRISON SECURITY, WHICH MEANS THAT SUPERVISION IS NECESSARY SO AS TO MAINTAIN CONTROL AND GOOD ORDER, TO ENSURE THAT THE OPPORTUNITY IS NOT MISUSED, AND TO PROTECT PRISONERS FROM EACH OTHER. THAT IS WHAT DISTINGUISHES ASSOCIATION IN PRISON, FROM WHAT IS REFERRED TO AS 'FREE ASSOCIATION'. THE LATTER TERM IMPLIES ASSOCIATION THAT WOULD BE UNSUPERVISED, AND WOULD BE UNRESTRICTED BY THE AUTHORITIES AS REGARDS THE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES PERMITTED AND THE CHOICE OF ASSOCIATE. WHAT IT WOULD MEAN IN PRACTICE IS THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF PRISONERS - UP TO 100 OR EVEN MORE - COULD PASS THESTIME AS THEY CHOSE WITH FELLOW-MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN PARAMILITARY GROUPING, IN PURSUITS RELATED TO THE TERRORIST ACTIVITIES WHICH HAE BROUGHT THEM INTO PRISBN. THIS WOULD CLEARLY INVOLVE A LOSS OF CONTROL WHICH NO PRUDENT PRISON AUTHRORITY COULD TOLERATE. SUBJECT TO THAT IMPORTANT DISTINCTION, PROVISION FOR ASSOCIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND PRISONS IS GENEROUS AND IS NOT IMMUTABLE. ASSOCIATION IN WINGS IS ALLOWED FOR THREE HOURS EACH EVENING AND ALSO ALL DAY ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS. PRISONERS ALSO MIX WITH ONE ANOTHER AT VARIOUS OTHER TIMES - FOR EXAMPLE DURING EXERCISE, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, GAMES AND MEAL TIMES. A WIDE RANGE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES - GAMES% HOBBIES, CLASSES, TELEVISION - IS AVAILABLE FOR USE DURING PERIODS OF ASSOCIATION: PARTICULARS WERE GIVEN IN THE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON REGIMES PUBLISHED IN DECEMBER 1980.

CLOTHING (UNDERLINED)

12. AS PART OF ITS FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO PRISON MANAGEMENT THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY SUBSTITUTED, FOR CONVENTIONAL PRISON UNIFORM, ORDINARY SHIRTS, TROUSERS AND PULLOVERS PURCHASED IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THESE ARE RETAINED BY A PRISONER AS HIS PEJSONAL CLOTHING. WEARING OFSTHIS CLOTHING IS REQUIRED ONLY DURING THE WORKING PART OF THE DAY (THOUGH MANY PRISONERS ARE CONTENT TO WEAR IT ALL THE TIME). DURING ASSOCIATION PERIODS AND AT WEEKENDS, PRISONERS MAY WEAR THEIR OWN CLOTHING.

VISITS, LETTERS ETC, AND REMISSION (UNDERLINED)

13. IN ADDITION TO THE THREE ASPECTS OF PRISON REGIME DEALT WITH ABOVE, THE PROTESTING PRISONERS ALSO DEMAFD ONE LETTER, ONE PARCEL AND ONE VISIT EACH WEEK. WHAT IS AVAIL- ABLE TO PRISONERS NOT ENGAGED IN THE PROTESTS ALREADY MATCHES OR EXCEEDS THIS. THEY CAN AT PRESENT SEND UP TO 8 LETTERS A MONTH AT THE AUTHORITIES' EXPENSE. RECEIVE 4 VISITS A

Ireland  
Wings



LETTER, ONE PARCEL AND ONE VISIT FROM HOME  
ABLE TO PRISONERS NOT ENGAGED IN THE PROTESTS ALREADY MATCHES OR EXCEEDS THIS. THEY CAN AT PRESENT SEND UP TO 8 LETTERS A MONTH AT THE AUTHORITIES' EXPENSE, RECEIVE 4 VISITS A MONTH, AND RECEIVE A WEEKLY PARCEL OF READING MATERIAL, FRUIT AND TOILET ARTICLES. THESE ALLOWANCES ARE LIBERAL BY THE STANDARDS OF MANY PRISON ADMINISTRATIONS. SOME LIMIT HAS TO BE SET TO WHAT CAN BE PERMITTED IN THESE RESPECTS, NOT FOR PUNITIVE REASONS BUT BECAUSE OF THE DEMANDS THAT THE SUPERVISION ETC REQUIRED - ESPECIALLY IN CONDITIONS OF HIGH SECURITY - PLACES UPON THE STAFF AND OTHER RESOURCES OF THE PRISON.

14. FINALLY, THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SYSTEM, IN COMMON WITH A NUMBER OF OTHERS, GRANTS PRISONERS REMISSION OF PART OF THEIR SENTENCE SUBJECT TO GOOD CONDUCT. THE PROPORTION OF SENTENCE REMITTED WAS INCREASED FROM ONE-THIRD TO ONE-HALF SOME YEARS AGO. REMISSION CAN BE FORFEITED FOR MISCONDUCT, AND HAS BEEN FORFEITED IN CONSIDERABLE QUANTITIES BY PROTESTING PRISONERS ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR BREACHES OF PRISON RULES. PRISONERS WHO TOOK PART IN THE 'DIRTY PROTEST' LOST A FULL DAY'S REMISSION FOR EVERY DAYSON PROTEST. HOWEVER, WHEN THAT FORM OF PROTEST ENDED, THE AUTHORITIES RESPONDED PROMPTLY BY HALVING THE RATES OF REMISSION BEING FORFEITED BY PROTESTING PRISONERS.

15. REMISSION FORFEITED FOR MISCONDUCT CAN BE RESTORED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY, AFTER SUBSEQUENT GOOD BEHAVIOUR. PRISONERS WHO HAVE ABANDONED THEIR PROTEST HAVE HAD UP TO ONE-FIFTH OF THE REMISSION LOST FOR NON-VIOLENT PROTEST ACTION RESTORED TO THEM.  
CONCLUSION

16. IF THE PROTESTING PRISONERS ARE SEEKING A REGIME WHICH DIFFERENTIATES THEM FROM OTHER PRISONERS, GIVES THEM CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES IN PRISON AND ENABLES THEM TO CLAIM THE STATUS OF POLITICAL PRISONER AND ALL THAT THAT IMPLIES, THEN THEY WILL SEEK IN VAIN. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE NOW IN THE AREAS OF WORK, CLOTHING AND ASSOCIATION AS A GESTURE IN THE HOPES OF ENDING THE HUNGER STRIKE. THE GOVERNMENT DOES LISTEN TO THE VIEWS OF RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE. THE GREAT DIFFICULTY ABOUT SUCH A MOVE IS THAT IT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE HOPE THAT POLITICAL STATUS BASED ON THE SO-CALLED 5 DEMANDS COULD STILL BE ACHIEVED.

17. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE GENERAL PRISON REGIME ARE A DIFFERENT MATTER. AS THE PARAGRAPHS ABOVE DEMONSTRATE, IN THE 3 ASPECTS PICKED OUT BY THE ICJP, AND IN OTHER ASPECTS, THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON REGIME IS GENEROUS, AND HAS BEEN AND WILL BE ADMINISTERED FLEXIBLY BY THE AUTHORITIES. THERE (NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) IS SCOPE FOR YET FURTHER DEVELOPMENT. IT MAY BE THAT THE PROTESTING PRISONERS ARE RELUCTANT TO ABANDON THEIR PROTEST BECAUSE THEY DO NOT TRUST THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE PRISON REGIME. FOR THEM, THE GUARANTEE IS THAT OUR COMMITMENT IS DECLARED IN THIS AND SIMILAR STATEMENTS, AND IS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE. WHAT WE SAID PUBLICLY WOULD HAPPEN TO THOSE GIVING UP THEIR PROTESTS HAS HAPPENED TO THE (SQUARE BRACKETSON - GAP - SQUARE BRACKETS OFF) WHO HAVE DONE SO. (NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) BUT IT MUST BE EMPHASISED THAT THIS IMPROVEMENT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN ALL BE ACCOMPLISHED OVERNIGHT. PRISONS ARE COMPLEX INSTITUTIONS. THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECURITY, AND THE PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INMATE POPULATION, ADD TO THEIR COMPLEXITY. THEY ARE RUN BY STAFF DOING A DIFFICULT AND HAZARDOUS JOB, WHOSE INTERESTS MUST BE GIVEN PROPER CONSIDERATION. ALL THIS MEANS THAT PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE MUST BE FULLY AND CAREFULLY WEIGHED, AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS EXPLORED, BEFORE THEY ARE ADOPTED. THIS PROCESS CANNOT PROCEED FURTHER WHILE THE HUNGER STRIKE PLACES THE AUTHORITIES UNDER DURESS.'

ENDS



CONFIDENTIAL



Prime Minister 2  
for info

W  
29/6

MS

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1

29 June 1981

*The Humphreys,*

You may remember that a meeting at No 10 about a month ago, I raised the possibility of feeding the hunger strikers intra-venously.

We can not make concessions to the demands of the IRA and their sympathisers, since to do so would almost certainly lead to further demands. All that a concession would probably do would be to bring us closer to granting political status. On the other hand any more deaths will do great damage both in Ireland and abroad, with consequences that can not be fully foreseen. Hence a continuation of the hunger strike carries considerable dangers for us in Ulster and elsewhere, yet any concessions to bring it to an end are impossible.

The only way out of this impasse, it seems to me, is to stop the hunger strikers from killing themselves. This could be done either by intra-venous feeding or by further restrictions on those whom the strikers are allowed to see, a point which I raised at Cabinet last week. Indeed a combination of these things would probably be necessary since any relations and priests allowed in might well be fanatical enough to wrench out 'the drip' and smash the equipment. Forced feeding was abandoned, as I remember, partly because it was dangerous and repulsive, and partly because it was thought that if people wanted to die they should be allowed to do so.

/These

The Rt Hon Humphrey Atkins MP  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland  
Great George Street  
London SW1

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These reasons have now lost their force. Intra-venous feeding is not repulsive - many of us have undergone it - nor I think is it dangerous; and the avowed political objectives of these hunger strikers remove their cases from the realm of purely personal decision. The Irish Roman Catholic Bishops referred to 'those who direct them' and to the 'contempt for human life, the incitement to revenge, the exploitation of the hunger strikers to further a campaign of murder, the intimidation of the innocent'. To interfere with the (partly) self-imposed martyrdom of these people would not infringe any principle that I know of despite the so-called Tokyo Declaration of 1975.

The IRA would certainly be enraged by our stopping their supply of martyrs, and would undoubtedly cause trouble in the prisons and outside. But I think that any such trouble would be far less than the difficulties caused by a further succession of deaths in prison, renewed violence and greatly increased tension on both sides of the border. And the decision could be easily justified as the logical extension of our present policy : we have been thoroughly reasonable throughout and have produced a remarkably liberal prison regime; but, as this has had no effect on the intransigence of the IRA, we have no alternative but to stop the strikers dying. In doing so we would surely have the support of the Irish Bishops and most other reasonable people.

Of course if the relatives of the present strikers really are more sensible than their predecessors and you are able to reach an agreement with them, none of this will be necessary. Or there may be insuperable technical objections, in which case I apologise for intruding. But, if no such agreement is likely and the technical difficulties can be overcome, then I think what I have suggested is preferable both to surrender, which is unthinkable, and to a continuing series of deaths, which will be highly dangerous.

/I am



I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and to the Attorney-General.

*Yours* ✓  
*lan*

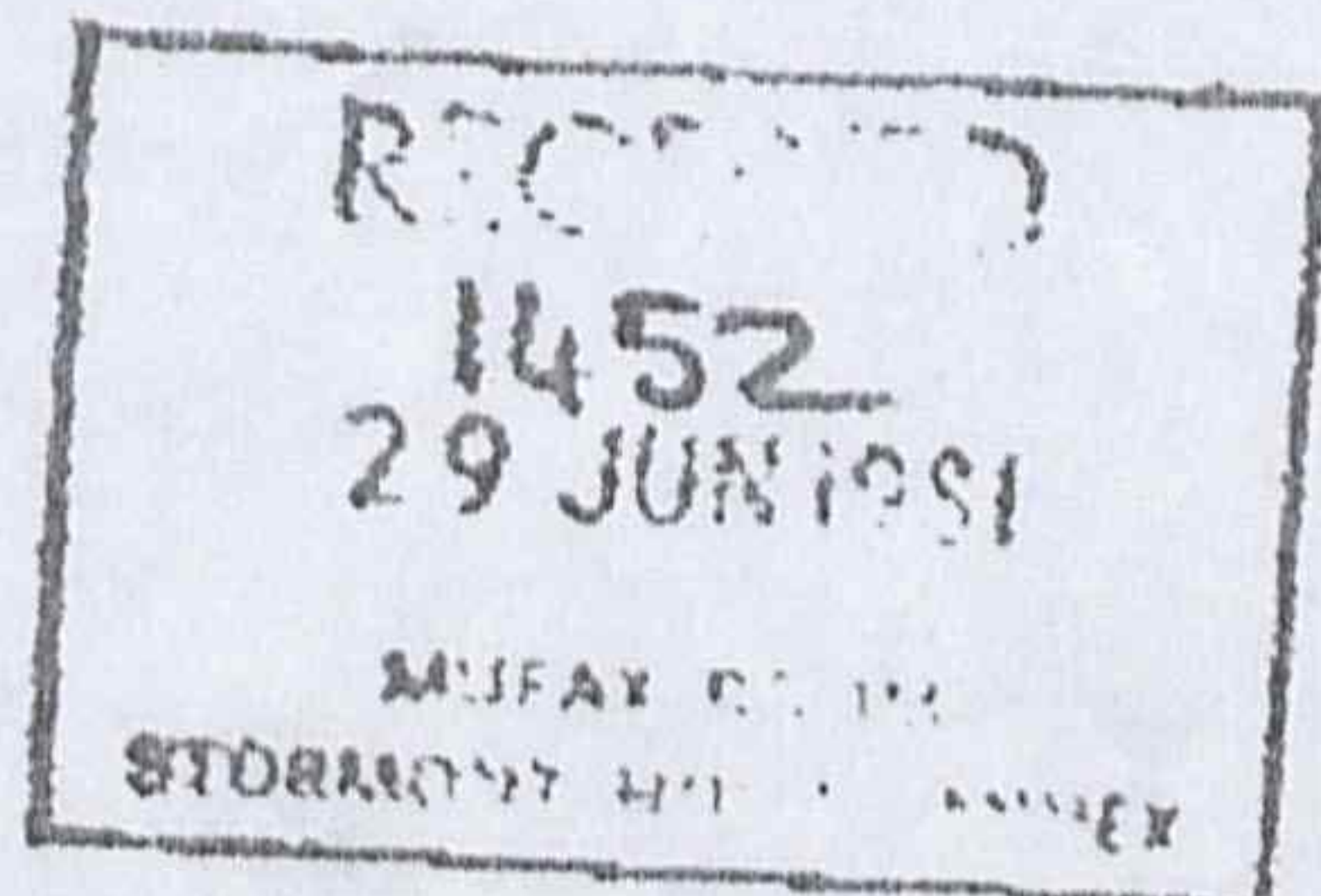


TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH ~~DAVID SMITH~~

18/58/5(L)  
(Mr Connors)

STATEMENT MADE BY THE TAOISEACH - 29/6/81

1. The hunger strikes in the Maze Prison are a continuing source of tension and danger throughout this island. They are widening and deepening the divide between communities in Northern Ireland. They affect not only those immediately involved but also their families and the whole community of which they are a part.
2. There is a new urgent and compelling need for all those concerned to make an earnest attempt to seek out a way to bring this tragic situation to an end. In my view a primary responsibility rests on the British Government to make an immediate effort to find a solution, not only because of the situation in Northern Ireland but in the interests of the future relations between our two countries. The consequences of further deaths are so serious and far reaching that a solution which will prevent them occurring must be found and I am convinced that the time to find such a solution is now.





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Prime Minister to see

Neill Mitchell  
Duty Clerk  
27/6/81

GROUPS 340  
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FROM DUBLIN 271148Z JUNE 1981  
TO IMMEDIATE F C O  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 214 OF 27 JUNE  
AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O BELFAST

1. THE TAOISEACH ASKED ME TO CALL AT HIS HOUSE THIS MORNING WITH MR NALLY PRESENT. HE SAID THAT FROM WHAT THE LATTER HAD TOLD HIM OF HIS TALK WITH SIR R ARMSTRONG HE ( HAUGHEY ) WANTED TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO ME THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS SIMPLY NOT SHOWING THE SENSE OF URGENCY REQUIRED TO END THE HUNGER STRIKE. A STATEMENT BY MR ATKINS ON MONDAY AND POSSIBLY A REHASH OF THE DOCUMENT GIVEN TO THE PRISONERS LAST DECEMBER SEEMED TO HIM QUITE INADEQUATE.
2. THE SANDS DEATH HAD BEEN A TURNING POINT AND THE RECENT ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC SHOWED HOW THE DESTABILISATION OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS WAS DEVELOPING. THE PROSPECT OF A MEMBER OF THE DAIL DYING (KIERAN DOHERTY) WAS MOST WORRYING. HE FELT HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF SOME KIND FOLLOWING HIS RECENT MEETINGS WITH THE STRIKERS FAMILIES. HE HADN'T DECIDED YET WHAT TO SAY BUT HE WOULD PROBABLY EXPLAIN THAT ANGLO-IRISH RELATIONS WOULD DEPEND ON HMG'S FUTURE HANDLING OF THE STRIKE.



3. I SAID THAT WE HAD SHOWN A READY WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO RESPONSIBLE OPINION AND WERE NOW DISCUSSING THE STRIKE WITH THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE. MR HAUGHEY SAID TH<sup>AT</sup> WHILE THE COMMISSION MIGHT PLAY SOME MARGINAL ROLE WE SHOULD NOT BELIEVE THAT ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FAMILIES AND THE IRA WOULD BE OF HELP. NATURALLY THE FAMILIES DID NOT WANT THEIR RELATIVES TO DIE BUT THEY HAD NO INFLUENCE ON THEM. IT WAS THE PRISONERS WHO IN THE END INFLUENCED THE FAMILIES.

4. ON THE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PRISONERS MR HAUGHEY AND MR NALLY BOTH SAID THAT IF MR HILDITCH WAS STILL GOVERNOR HE WOULD NOT BE TRUSTED BY THE PRISONERS. THEY CONSIDERED HE HAD LET THEM DOWN AT THE END OF THE LAST STRIKE IN DECEMBER. WE SHOULD THINK AGAIN ABOUT THIS.

5. MR HAUGHEY WAS ANXIOUS FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS NOT MAKING ANY POLITICAL POINTS. HE INDICATED THAT HE MIGHT NOT BE IN OFFICE MUCH LONGER. BUT FOR THE SAKE OF THE STATE AND WHOEVER WAS TAOISEACH NEXT WEEK HE WANTED TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR TO US THE DANGERS OF THE STRIKE CONTINUING WITH MORE DEATHS. IT WOULD BE BOUND TO EFFECT OUR RELATIONS AND ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SAY SO I HAVE THE FEELING THAT HE MAY HAVE HAD SECURITY COOPERATION IN MIND.

6. I SAID I WOULD REPORT WHAT HE HAD SAID.

FIGG.

NNNNNN

SENT/RECD AT 271240Z HMT/MBI



M. O'D. B. Alexander, Esq.



With the Compliments  
of the  
Private Secretary  
to the  
Secretary of the Cabinet

Cabinet Office,  
London, S.W.1.



CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. A05176

*Since overtaken by  
Mr Haughey's statement  
on 29/6. WJ  
29/6*

NOTE FOR RECORD

cc Mr. Alexander (No. 10)  
Mr. Burns (FCO)  
Mr. Smith (NIO)

Conversation with Mr. Nally

Following the telephone call from Mr. Nally yesterday evening (and the receipt of Sir Kenneth Stowe's letter of today's date), Sir Robert Armstrong telephoned Mr. Nally at 5.00 pm this evening.

2. Sir Robert said that he had conveyed the Taoiseach's message to the Prime Minister, who had been grateful for it and would ensure that it was carefully considered. Sir Robert explained our preliminary reaction on the six points made in the message (drawing on the line in Sir Kenneth Stowe's letter). He said that:

- (a) We were fully seized of the present situation and of the significance of the present lull.
- (b) We accepted that in practical terms it was the prisoners themselves who had the final choice. But others still exerted influence on them and their decisions.
- (c) As for the channel of communication, there already was an effective channel to the prisoners through the Governor. This had proved successful so far on a number of other matters. This remained the most natural channel to use and it would avoid any confusion. But we were of course prepared to be in touch with any responsible body which wished to put views to us.
- (d) The Government would be making a statement on Monday (almost certainly the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) containing a restatement of what was currently available to prisoners and Her Majesty's Government's commitment to a humanitarian regime. It would be on the lines of the 18th December statement. It would be shown to the Irish in advance (early on Monday) through the normal channels. It would also be circulated to the prisoners.

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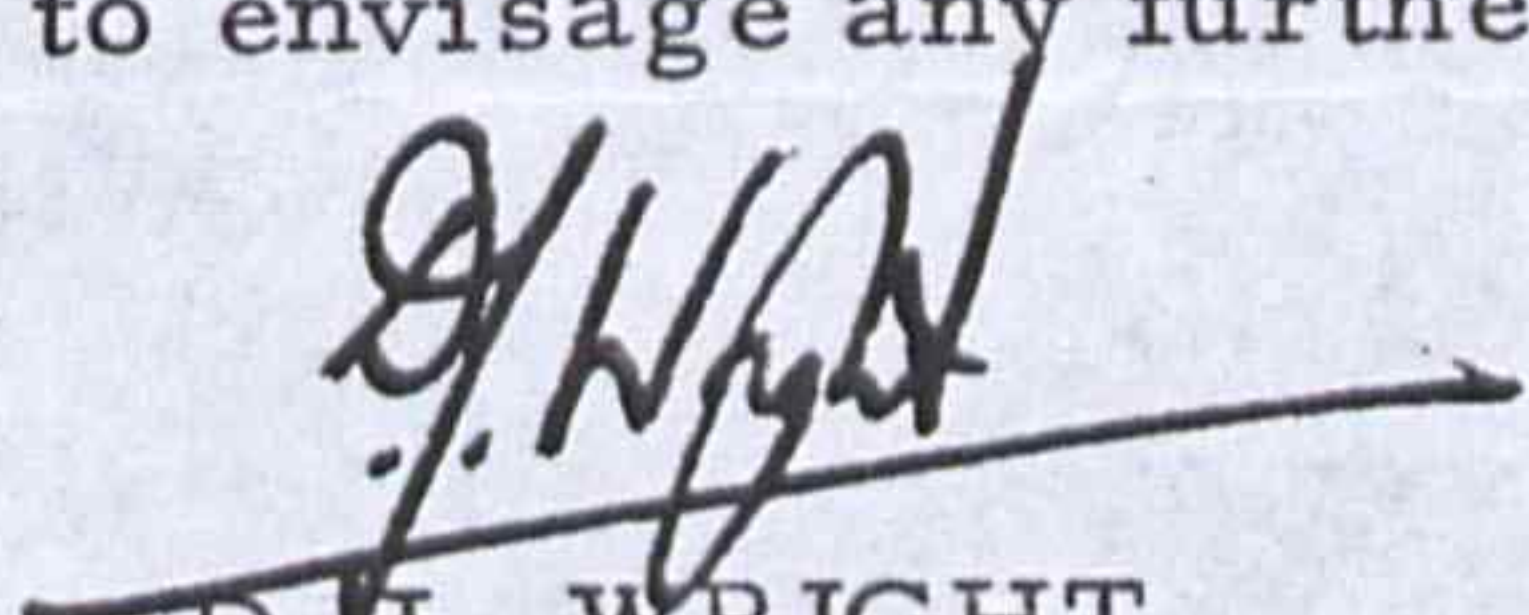
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(e) On the suggestion of a settlement phased over six months, perhaps involving guarantors, Sir Robert said that he had no wish to leave any doubts in Mr. Nally's mind. We were not looking for a method to concede the five demands surreptitiously. We welcomed the recognition that any changes inevitably take time. We believed that if there were changes, the question of guarantors would be less relevant since any changes would be self-policing.

(f) Sir Robert said that as for the search for a "final settlement", we would be glad to see progress now if it could be made. We remained committed to a humanitarian regime in the prisons. The Government could not change its position on the basic principles: no differentiation in the conforming prison regime and no loss of control. We were pleased the Irish were not asking for this and were willing to go on talking.

3. Mr. Nally said that he was grateful for this response. He would of course now have to see what reaction there was to the Secretary of State's statement (which he would show to the Taoiseach as soon as he received it). But he thought that what Sir Robert Armstrong had told him "looked slightly hopeful".

4. Sir Robert emphasised that it was important not to overstate Her Majesty's Government's room for manoeuvre. We had already gone a very long way and it was difficult to see how much further we could go without compromising our basic principles. Mr. Nally thought that the process of setting down clearly on paper what was currently on offer would be a great help: it would demonstrate that there was little between what was being demanded and what was already on offer. Mr. Nally added, however, that he thought it was now a question of "percentages". If there could be some slight movement - not a major step - that would help to resolve the problem. Sir Robert Armstrong replied that he would see what scope there was for a further move, but it would be idle to pretend that it was not difficult for us to envisage any further movement.

  
D.J. WRIGHT

26th June, 1981

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DIO

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TELEGRAM NUMBER 1959 OF 25 JUNE

INFO NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, BIS NEW YORK, DUBLIN

MY TELNOS 1930 AND 1931: NORTHERN IRELAND:

MEETING WITH THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND

1. I REALISE THE ANNOYANCE THAT INTERFERENCE BY AMERICAN POLITICIANS IN OUR AFFAIRS CAUSES IN LONDON AND BELFAST, WHERE WE ARE HAVING TO DEAL WITH THE VERY REAL AND SERIOUS PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE HUNGER STRIKE. THE IGNORANT AND PARTISAN NATURE OF A LOT OF AMERICAN COMMENT IS A FURTHER AGGRAVATION AND ONE IS TEMPTED TO ARGUE THAT, WHILE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO INFLUENCE OPINION HERE, WE SHOULD NOT EVEN CONSIDER ALLOWING POSITIONS ADOPTED IN THE UNITED STATES TO INFLUENCE OUR POLICY DECISIONS.



UNITED STATES TO INFLUENCE OUR POLICY DECISIONS.

2. I CERTAINLY DO NOT TAKE AT FACE VALUE EVERYTHING THAT WAS SAID YESTERDAY BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND, WHO HAPPEN TO BE FEELING THE HEAT IN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES. IF MORE HUNGER STRIKERS DIE, I WOULD EXPECT SOME HARSH THINGS TO BE SAID ABOUT US IN PUBLIC, EVEN BY MODERATE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. BUT THOSE SAME MEMBERS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF APPEARING TO ENDORSE TERRORISM AND WILL BE WARY OF GOING TOO FAR. FOR ITS PART, THE US GOVERNMENT, WHILE UNDOUBTEDLY HOPING THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING TO MAKE THE PROBLEM GO AWAY, WILL ALSO BE CAREFUL TO AVOID SAYING ANYTHING WHICH COULD SMACK OF INTERFERENCE IN OUR AFFAIRS OR RUN COUNTER TO THEIR STRONG OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT, IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY WILL SAY NOTHING AT ALL. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY THE WHITE HOUSE THAT THE PRESIDENT, WITH HIS IRISH AMERICAN BACKGROUND, IS TAKING AN INTEREST IN THE HUNGER STRIKE AND IS REGULARLY BRIEFED ON DEVELOPMENTS.

3. THE IMPORTANT POINT ABOUT AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROVISIONAL IRA RELIES UPON AMERICAN SUPPORT, BOTH POPULAR AND FINANCIAL. THE FACT THAT AMERICA IS THE PROVISIONALS' LARGEST SINGLE SOURCE OF MODERN WEAPONS IS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF THIS SUPPORT. WITHOUT AMERICAN SUPPORT, THE PIRA WOULD COLLAPSE. FOR THAT REASON, WE CANNOT DISMISS AMERICAN VIEWS AS OF NO CONSEQUENCE. IF WE ARE FACED WITH MORE HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS NOR AID WILL, WITH INCREASING SUCCESS EXPLOIT THE LATENT ATAVISM OF THE IRISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY. WE MUST ALSO BEAR IN MIND THE DAMAGING IMPACT ON US INVESTMENT OF THE SCENES OF VIOLENCE IN BELFAST AND LONDONDERRY WHICH HAVE AND WILL AGAIN BE SHOWN ON AMERICAN TELEVISION. WE KNOW OF US COMPANIES WHO HAVE BEEN FRIGHTENED AWAY FROM POTENTIAL INVESTMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND DURING THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

4. NO RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN LEADER IS ASKING US TO CONCEDE POLITICAL STATUS. NOR DO IRISH AMERICANS LEADERS SEEM CONCERNED AT PRESENT ABOUT LONG-TERM POLICY ON THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH. WHAT THEY ARE SUGGESTING IS THAT IF WE ARE TO AVOID PERMANENT DAMAGE TO THE MODERATE CAUSE WE MUST DO ENOUGH BY WAY OF CHANGES IN PRISON RULES TO ENABLE THEM AND US TO UNDERCUT THE EXTREMISTS AND TO CONVINCED THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO GIVE US THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT THAT WE HAVE GONE AS FAR AS LEGITIMATELY POSSIBLE TO PREVENT MEN FROM GOING TO THEIR DEATHS.

5. TWO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN PUT TO US: THE FIRST, FROM SENATOR KENNEDY'S STAFF, IS THAT WE GET TOGETHER WITH THOSE, LIKE THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE WHO



HAVE GONE AS FAR AS LEGITIMATELY POSSIBLE TO PREVENT MEN FROM GOING TO THEIR DEATHS.

5. TWO SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN PUT TO US: THE FIRST, FROM SENATOR KENNEDY'S STAFF, IS THAT WE GET TOGETHER WITH THOSE, LIKE THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE WHO HAVE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE PRISON REGIME FALLING SHORT OF THE 5 DEMANDS, AND PERSUADE THEM TO AGREE TO SUPPORT A PACKAGE OF CHANGES WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY NOT AMOUNT TO POLITICAL STATUS BUT WHICH WOULD MEET GENUINE HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS. OUR CONDITION FOR INTRODUCING THESE CHANGES WOULD BE THE UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE INDEPENDENT GROUPS THAT HAD ASKED FOR THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, WE WOULD EXPECT THOSE GROUPS TO STATE PUBLICLY THAT THE CHANGES WHICH WE HAD MADE WERE AS FAR AS WE COULD REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO GO ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, THAT THERE WAS NO CASE FOR FURTHER CHANGES AND NO CONCEIVABLE GROUND FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE HUNGER STRIKE. IF WE SUCCEEDED, THE STRONG SUPPORT OF GROUPS LIKE THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE WOULD BE A POWERFUL WEAPON IN UNDERCUTTING SUPPORT FOR THE HUNGER STRIKE. IF WE FAILED, WE COULD AT LEAST ARGUE CREDIBLY THAT WE HAD GONE THE LAST MILE AND THAT WE HAD DEMONSTRATED THAT, AS WE HAD ALWAYS FEARED, WE WERE REALLY THE SUBJECT OF SALAMI TACTICS, ON THE PART OF PEOPLE WHO, WHILE PROTESTING THE CONTRARY, WERE PUSHING US DOWN A ROAD WHICH WOULD LEAD INEXORABLY TO GRANTING OF THE 5 DEMANDS AMOUNTING TO POLITICAL STATUS. IF YOU CONSIDERED SUCH A WAY FORWARD WORTH PURSING, IT MIGHT ALSO BE WORTH WHILE TO APPROACH SOME OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND ON A SIMILAR BASIS AND FOR SIMILAR REASONS. AT THE VERY LEAST, WE WOULD SMOKE THEM OUT.

6. THE SECOND SUGGESTION, WHICH HAS BEEN MADE TO US ON AN INFORMAL AND PERSONAL BASIS BY A SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL, IS THAT WE SHOULD REVIEW OUR POLICY ON FORCE FEEDING. FORCE FEEDING IS USED IN US PRISONS AND THE ARGUMENT RUNS THAT IT IS NO MORE ACCEPTABLE TO ALLOW A PRISONER TO STARVE HIMSELF TO DEATH THAN IT IS TO ALLOW HIM TO HANG HIMSELF OR TO JUMP OUT OF A SIXTH FLOOR WINDOW. THE ARGUMENT GOES ON THAT, WITH MODERN MEDICAL TECHNIQUES, FORCE FEEDING WHICH IF NECESSARY IS DONE HERE INTRAVENIOUSLY IS NOT AS ETHICALLY OBJECTIONABLE AS IT ONCE WAS AND THAT, WHILE IT WOULD PROVOKE A STORM OF PROTEST, THAT WOULD BE INFINITELY PREFERABLE TO A WHOLE SERIES OF HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS, PARTICULARLY AS FAR AS AMERICAN OPINION IS CONCERNED.

7. I PASS ON THESE SUGGESTIONS, NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE BLINDINGLY ORIGINAL, BUT BECAUSE THEY SHOW AMERICAN CONCERN HERE THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING WHICH COULD HELP THEM TO UNDERCUT PIRA AND THEIR AGENTS.

Already  
reached



ORIGINAL, BUT BECAUSE THEY SHOW AMERICAN CONCERN HERE THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING WHICH COULD HELP THEM TO UNDERCUT PIRA AND THEIR AGENTS.

8. I SHALL BE IN LONDON NEXT WEEK AND WILL OF COURSE BE AVAILABLE FOR DISCUSSION ON THIS IF YOU WISH.

HENDERSON

NNNN



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

① Mrs Stephens : Is appointment  
confirmed? If so

② GR : Type for  
PR's signature

25 June 1981

Cardinal O Fiaich wrote to the Prime Minister on 2 June in reply to her invitation to him to call on her in London. Cardinal O Fiaich expressed some reservations about the timing of the visit but it has now been agreed that he should call on the Prime Minister on 1 July at the conclusion of a two day visit he is paying to London. He will be accompanied by Cardinal Hume.

Since the Cardinal wrote to the Prime Minister the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (a Commission of the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference) and more recently the Conference of Irish Bishops itself which has been meeting in Maynooth have made helpful appeals to the hunger strikers and their supporters.

Mr Atkins wrote to the Cardinal earlier this week saying of the Conference's statement how much he welcomed it.

... The Prime Minister may wish to write to the Cardinal confirming their meeting and a draft letter is attached for this purpose. I am copying this to Roderic Lyne (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

S W BOYS SMITH



DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
His Eminence Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of all Ireland Ara Coeli Armagh		PS/Mr Atkins  <i>Hume ?</i>
(Full Postal Address)		(Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY ..... **PRIME MINISTER** .....  
(Name of Signatory)

Thank you for your letter of 2 June in which you say it would be possible for you to call on me at Downing Street at 7pm on Wednesday 1 July. I understand that Cardinal Hume will be accompanying you.

I welcome the initiative taken in the statement you and your colleagues made at the Conference of Irish Bishops last week about the hunger strike in Maze Prison. I know that Humphrey Atkins has already written to you saying how he also admired the statement. I earnestly hope that your appeal and that made earlier this month by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace to those supporting the hunger strikers will prompt both the hunger strikers and those who direct them to reflect on the consequences of their actions.

I feel sure that our common concern for the situation in Northern Ireland and determination to work for its settlement will make our meeting a helpful one.

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PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Nally rang up at 4.30 pm this afternoon with a further message from the Taoiseach. The Taoiseach has been discussing matters with a considerable number of people over the last day or two, and this message represents a considered view and suggestion in the light of these discussions.

2. The message is as follows:-

- (i) There is now a need for a major serious effort to resolve the crisis in Northern Ireland prisons before further hunger strikers die and before 12th July.
- (ii) The prisoners alone will have the final voice in deciding whether the crisis is resolved: not their families nor anyone outside the prisons.
- (iii) Any discussions should be between a nominee of the prisoners and a high level representative of Her Majesty's Government. In order to avoid direct contact perhaps this could best be done by using as an intermediary one of those who are regular visitors to the prison. Arrangements of this kind would have a very fair chance of a successful result.
- (iv) Though the prisoners are insisting on their five demands, there is in fact room for manoeuvre. It is suggested that we should put on the table a document restating, on the lines of the document of 18th December, the conditions now available to conforming prisoners.
- (v) Any settlement need not be implemented immediately, but could be phased in over a period of, say, 6 months. In that event there would need to be guarantors of implementation. When I asked Mr. Nally what that meant, he shuffled and began to withdraw. He said that it might well be <sup>that</sup> any agreement would be self-implementing and would not need guarantors.

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CONFIDENTIAL

(vi) There is now a movement in favour of a settlement, and a settlement could be of a final nature: this is not "salami tactics".

3. Mr. Nally went on to say that, in view of the political events to occur in Dublin next week, the Taoiseach would like an early response to this message: tomorrow if at all possible. From his point of view it would be sufficient, even if the response only said that you had received his message and were seriously considering it.

4. I am sending copies of this minute to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. I have given an advance notice of the message to Sir Kenneth Stowe and have asked him for urgent advice about a reply. His first reaction was that the nature of the message suggested a close contact between the Taoiseach and elements in the PIRA. It seems possible that the object of the exercise is to intensify the pressure, to see whether there is any possibility of movement and a "settlement" before the hunger strike deaths begin again. Though the PIRA have gained in propaganda terms up to now, they must be apprehensive lest, if the succession of deaths is resumed, public opinion could swing against them and they might lose what they have gained.

REA

(Robert Armstrong)

25th June, 1981



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

CONFIDENTIAL

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ



Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

*L. Munt*

(2)

*Bonnie Minister*

24 June 1981

*You will infer from this, or also from the exchange of correspondence with Cardinal O'Fiaich & from Mr Humphrey's message, that there is a lot of pressure on the Secretary of State to respond in some way to the ICJP proposals.*

*Dear Michael,*

*Prints 24/6*

*Flags AB+C*

You asked for a report on the latest developments on the prison front and in particular on Mr Alison's meeting with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP) and the subsequent report of a reference to the Commission by the hunger striker McIlwee. By way of background I think you ought to have copies of a statement the ICJP made last August, before the start of the first hunger strike, of the second statement that they issued earlier this month, and of the reply to the latter made on behalf of the hunger strikers. These three documents are all attached.

The meeting was at the ICJP's request. In seeking it they said that their own information was that some of the families of the hunger strikers and of the prisoners also were "anxious to settle" on the basis of the ICJP's second statement. Our own intelligence supports this judgment, in that there is evidence of strain between some of the families and the Provisionals seeking to manipulate and control them.

In agreeing to the meeting, we had three objectives in mind. First, to be seen to be honouring the Government's public commitment to listen to responsible voices, particularly ones whose message has, as in this case, moved perceptibly nearer the Government's position. Second, by so doing, to help our friends in the Catholic community and so to check the process of alienation to which my Secretary of State has referred elsewhere. Third, to try to block the Provisionals' attempts to keep the families under control by denying them the chance of pointing to a refusal by the Government to listen to responsible people (in contrast to their own rigid stance).

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Flag ✓ I attach a copy of the record of the meeting. Of the three objectives we think that the first was secured: it is much too early to be able to tell how much bearing the exchange had on the second and third. For the time being the Commission remains firmly on our side. As you will see, Mr Alison made very clear our own scepticism about whether rational discussion of this kind had much to do with the real objectives of the Provisionals and the hunger strikers: and we believe that the ICJP got the message very clearly that there was no question of any inducement being offered in order to end the hunger strike. The Commission have asked to see Mr Alison again. No decision will be taken on this request until after tomorrow's Cabinet meeting.

Today's papers carried a statement attributed to McIlwee to the effect that the prisoners "were still available and prepared to talk about prison conditions" and referring also to a visit from a priest representing the Commission. This was almost certainly Father Crilly whose comments, during the course of the meeting, about the prisoners' attitudes were notably realistic.

I will keep you informed of any further developments.

Yours sincerely,  
Noel Cornick

NOEL CORNICK



A (2)

*The Irish Commission for Justice & Peace*

169 BOOTERSTOWN AVE., CO. DUBLIN PHONE 885021

27th August, 1980

Rt. Hon. H. Atkins,  
Secretary of State,  
Stormont Castle,  
Stormont,  
Belfast,  
Northern Ireland.



Dear Mr. Atkins,

In the light of requests which it has received from a number of quarters the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, a Commission of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, has for some time past been looking at the issues involved in the H-Block protest in the Maze Prison.

In an effort to contribute, however indirectly, towards a solution of the conflict, the Commission has put in the form of a statement a number of what it believes are important points bearing on the issues involved.

We know that the matter is being actively considered by you at the moment, and we therefore think it opportune to send you the statement in the belief that it may be helpful. We are in the first instance circulating the statement to you, as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, as a private communication only and would be grateful for your response to the points contained therein.

Pending receipt of your reply we do not envisage circulating the statement to anyone outside the Commission, although we would reserve the right eventually to publish or to circulate it more widely, should the present impasse show no sign of being resolved.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the I.C.J.P.,

*+ Dermot O'Mahony* (President)  
Bishop Dermot O'Mahony, Auxiliary  
Bishop of Dublin.

*Brian Gallagher* (Chairman)  
Brian Gallagher



STATEMENT ON H-BLOCK  
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1. The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace has received many requests that it should try to help in resolving the situation which has arisen particularly in the Maze Prison. Conscious of its role as a body whose task is to defend human rights and to foster peace, the Commission wishes to make the following points:
  
2. The most fundamental human right is the right to life. The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace in no way condones crimes, like those of which many prisoners in the Maze have been convicted, which violate or endanger that right. It regards the murder of prison officers as no less a violation of that right. It pleads for the cessation of all such acts.
  
3. The Commission cannot, however, be indifferent to the conditions in which the prisoners "on the blanket" are living, nor to the effect of those conditions not only on the prisoners but on their families, on the prison officers, on the community at large and on the prospects for peace. Conditions which so degrade human beings and so endanger mental and physical well-being must concern everybody who believes in human dignity. Neither the seriousness of the crimes of which some of these prisoners have been convicted nor the fact that their situation is largely self-inflicted would justify a failure to seek ways of resolving the impasse. The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace must express, like the European Commission on Human Rights, its concern at the "*inflexible approach*" of the state authorities, who are described in the recent <sup>(1)</sup> decision of the European Commission as "*being concerned more to punish offenders against prison discipline than to explore ways of resolving such a serious deadlock*" (par. 64). It is the deprivation of liberty itself implied in judicially imposed sentences which is the debt prisoners are asked to pay. There would be no justification for



regarding additional humiliation, restriction and suffering with complacency.

4. The conviction and imprisonment of prisoners for crimes which they claim were politically motivated creates a situation which differs in many respects from the normal prison. The rehabilitative role of the prison does not exist in the same way, since the "broad agreement about the good society" on which such a role depends is absent.<sup>2</sup> The enforcement of prison discipline raises new questions because "the standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of the Council of Europe and the Prison Rules were prepared on the assumption that the vast majority of prisoners most of the time conform ... They were never designed to face a situation such as the one in H-Block and the Prison Authorities have been placed in a situation without precedent".<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, "Though in a few cases there has been an underlying criminal intent beneath the individual's offence, in the main the ordinary categories we tend to employ in thinking about criminals and society's response to them are inappropriate".<sup>4</sup>  
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5. "Nothing whatever is gained by permitting correctional institutions to function as mere fortresses within which self-hatred and embitterment thrive. Confined offenders .. are fellow human beings, most of whom will one day move freely in our midst, either better or worse for their prison experience".<sup>5</sup> The situation, therefore, requires constructive and courageous action so that human dignity can be protected and the adverse effects on the community minimised. Not alone does the present suffering increase tension and provide material for IRA propaganda, it also gives every reason to fear that it will result in the release, after their sentences are completed, of people whose commitment to violent activities will have been hardened and intensified.
6. The difficulties in Northern Ireland have been compounded by the tendency of people on all sides to elevate particular demands and positions into non-negotiable "principles".



7. If there is to be movement towards peace, there must be a recognition that, in many such instances, no absolute principle is involved and that compromise with honour is possible.
8. In the light of the ruling of the European Commission on Human Rights that there is no entitlement to "political status" in this case, the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace calls on the prisoners and those who have influence with them, particularly their relatives and the leaders of the Provisional IRA, to de-escalate the protest. Those who have the interests of the prisoners at heart should concern themselves not with the labels by which their "status" is described but with achieving actual improvements in their conditions, step by step if necessary.
9. It is incumbent on the British Government, as the authority responsible for the Maze Prison, to seek ways of bringing the present situation to an end. The European Commission on Human Rights, as has been mentioned above (par. 3), asks no less of them.
10. The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace would hope that if the British Government were to allow prisoners throughout the entire Northern Ireland prison service to wear their own clothes, to engage in educational or other cultural activities as a substitute for ordinary prison work, to enjoy reasonable freedom of association, to have recreational facilities, regular visits, parcels, and full remission, this would be sufficient to end the protest. Even if the protest were not to end it would in these circumstances be clearly seen to be concerned with propagandist rather than humanitarian purposes.
11. These changes would amount to no more than is normal in many prison systems<sup>6</sup> including the Republic of Ireland, where the holding of hundreds of prisoners who claim to be politically motivated has not led to the sort of con-



ditions which have developed in the Maze Prison.

- Irish Commission for Justice and Peace

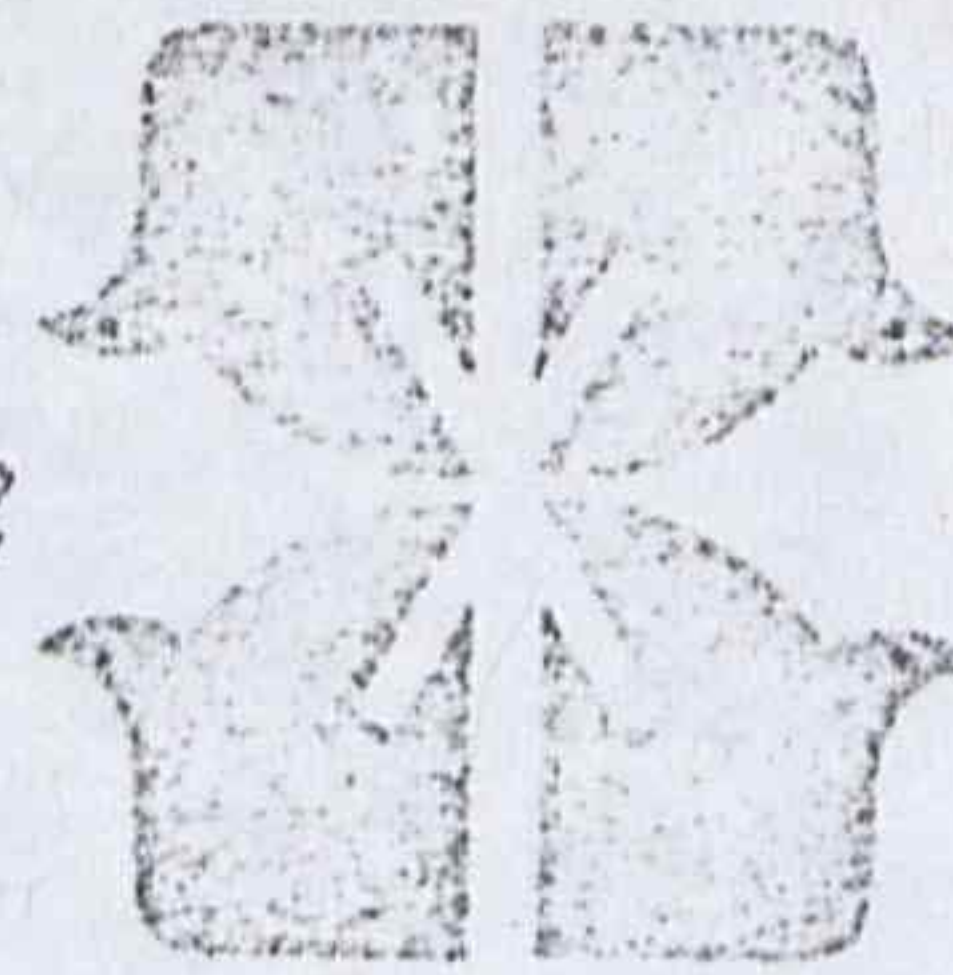
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- (1) May 1980
- (2) Prisons and Prisoners in England Today, A Report of the Board for Social Responsibility, Church Information Office, 1978, pp. 104-105
- (3) The H-Block Issue, An Interim Study, The Advisory Forum on Human Rights of the Irish Council of Churches, 1980, (8), p.2
- (4) Prisons and Prisoners in England Today, p.2
- (5) The Reform of Correctional Institutions in the 1970's, United States Catholic Conference, 1973
- (6) E.g. Spain and the Scandinavian countries, etc.

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*Irish Commission for Justice & Peace*



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169 BOOTERSTOWN AVE., CO. DUBLIN PHONE 885021

3rd June, 1981

His Excellency Mr. L.C.W. Figg,  
British Ambassador,  
Chancery,  
33 Merrion Road,  
Dublin 4.

Your Excellency,

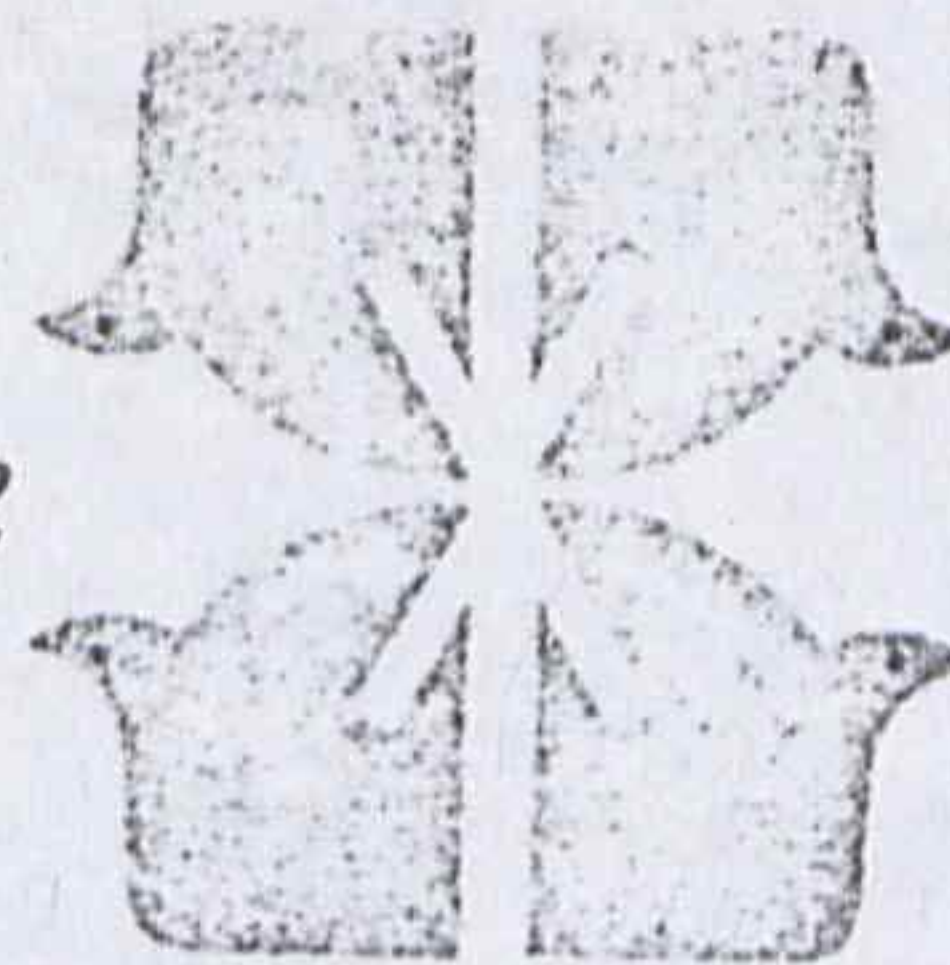
I enclose herewith a copy of a statement on the hunger strike in the Maze Prison which was issued today by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. I would be very grateful if you would forward it as a matter of urgency to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr. Humphrey Atkins, Q.C.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Gaynor

Carmel Gaynor  
Secretary to Mr. Jerome Connolly,  
Executive Secretary, I.C.J.P.





PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 3rd June, 1981

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT ON HUNGER STRIKE IN THE MAZE PRISON  
\*\*\*\*\*

NORTHERN IRELAND  
\*\*\*\*\*

The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, a Commission of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, is concerned about the threat to peace arising from the hunger strike in the Maze Prison and its effects in the community.

We are concerned particularly at the growing resentment in the nationalist community giving rise to increased alienation from the government and creating a climate for recruitment by paramilitary organisations particularly among the young. We are also concerned at the evidence of increased polarisation throughout the community.

There can be no resolution of this conflict without a readiness to hear other points of view. We urge all sections to listen to those with whom they are in disagreement. The listening process so vital to a peaceful resolution of this issue has broken down.

The failure of government to heed responsible leaders contains the potential for an eventual undermining of the authority of responsible leadership.

...../



We reiterate our steadfast opposition to violence, and it is because of our fear that the present situation contributes to polarisation and to the increase of violence that we are calling upon all parties to seek to defuse it. We recall Pope John Paul II's appeal in Drogheda:

*"Violence only delays the day of justice. Violence destroys the work of justice. Further violence in Ireland will only drag down to ruin the land you claim to love and the values you claim to cherish ...."*

*To all who bear political responsibility for the affairs of Ireland, I want to speak with the same urgency and intensity with which I have spoken to the men of violence. Do not cause or condone or tolerate conditions which give excuse or pretext to men of violence".*

We appeal to the British Government to look at the situation in the light of their statement of October 23rd 1980 that, *"all aspects of prisoners' living and working conditions within a common regime will continue to be kept under review, guided by a humane and responsive approach"*.

We suggest:

- (i) that prisoners in the Maze, who are at present permitted to wear their own clothes for a great part of the time should, like the prisoners in Armagh, be allowed to do so at all times;
- (ii) that some moves might be made to increase opportunities for association while making it clear that military training, or any other activity which would be illegal in society at large, would not be tolerated in the prisons, and
- (iii) that the question of prison work should be reviewed both in order to ensure that the work is of the greatest possible

...../



cultural and educational value and that no work of a demeaning nature is demanded.

If these reforms were implemented throughout the Northern Ireland prison system, this would not constitute the granting of "political status", to which the Commission has already indicated that it would be opposed. Even if these reforms did not result in the ending of the hunger strike they would certainly satisfy many people of good will who resent the failure of the Governemnt to show flexibility on issues where no matter of principle is at stake.

We call on the prisoners to contribute towards the resolution of this issue by making it clear that the proposals on clothing, association and work which we have outlined would, if implemented, provide the avenue for a solution. We call on those who claim to support the hunger strikers to refrain from expressing demands in terms which it is impossible for the British Government to accept. Statements to the effect that nothing less than "political status" will be acceptable can only result in further deaths in the Maze Prison and in the community.

While the Commission recognises that polarisation in the community, among loyalists as well as nationalists, makes it more difficult to move towards a solution, we are convinced that the growing divisions make movement all the more urgent.

\*/\*\*/\*\*/\*\*/\*\*/\*\*/\*\*/\*\*

For further information contact: Fr. Donal Murray

Tel: 375103

or the Commission's office - Tel: 885021



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~~Amos~~

2 June 1981

The Most Reverend Dermot O'Mahoney  
President  
Irish Commission for Justice and  
Peace  
169 Booterstown Avenue  
Blackrock  
Co. Dublin

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has asked me to thank you for your letter of 12 May and to reply on his behalf.

The British Government shares your deep concern over current events in Northern Ireland and appreciates the sincerity with which you have put forward your suggestions for a resolution of the difficulties. I was pleased to note your agreement that political status should not be granted.

There is however little doubt that the prisoners on hunger strike are not interested in any improvements in the existing regime in Northern Ireland prisons which would add up to anything less than full political status. As they said in their statement of 5 February this year in which they announced that a second hunger strike would begin on 1 March, "We are demanding to be treated as political prisoners". If offered certain concessions on certain of their demands, there is every indication that not only would the protesting prisoners not be satisfied, but that they would ask for more. Throughout the prisoners' protest, the Government has maintained a flexible and humanitarian approach to the prison regime in Northern Ireland. As you know, last year all prisoners in Northern Ireland were issued with civilian-type clothing instead of prison uniform. But on the question of political status the Government's position is firm and unequivocal. To concede this demand would be to concede the principle that those who have killed and wounded, destroyed property and caused untold distress to innocent, law-abiding people for what they claim are "political" motives are not culpable in the way that murderers, arsonists and other violent men and women are ordinarily regarded as culpable by society.

The Government remains committed to maintain in Northern Ireland an enlightened and humanitarian prison regime - indeed, the regime enjoyed by conforming prisoners, and available to all who put an end to their protest action, is amongst the most liberal.

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in Western Europe. They may wear their own clothing out of working hours, send up to eight letters a month at the prison's expense, receive a monthly parcel and have up to four visits per month. The Government will listen to representations from any responsible quarter on any aspect of the prison environment for those prisoners who are prepared to conform. But the Government cannot concede that under any circumstances those who claim a political motive for the crimes of which they have been convicted should be treated differently from other convicted prisoners in Northern Ireland.

D E Tatham  
Chargé d'Affaires



## Group raps call by Hume

The National H Blocks/Armagh Committee said yesterday that John Hume's call on H Block prisoners to make a response to the recent statement of the Irish Commission of Justice and Peace must be seen as an attempt to divert attention away from the prisoners' participation in the 26-County election, and the absolute and unequivocal support being sought from the election for the prisoners' five just and reasonable demands.

"Against a background of clear responses by H Block prisoners particularly the ending of the pre-Christmas hunger strike and the curtailment of the no-wash protest on March 1, the British Government has maintained an 'inflexible approach' condemned both by the Irish Commission of Justice and Peace and the European Commission for Human Rights," says the statement.

"The call on the British Government by the Commission in October 1980 to allow prisoners throughout the entire NI Prison Service to wear their own clothes, to engage in educational and other cultural activities as a substitute for ordinary prison work, to enjoy reasonable freedom of association, to have recreational facilities, regular visits, parcels and full remission' was flatly ignored by the British Government."

Prisoners had died as a result of such British inflexibility.

"It is to the British Government and not the prisoners that John Hume should direct his plea for a response, if he is sincere in wishing to save further lives in the H Blocks," the statement added.

"He should go further and encourage the electorate of the 26 Counties to support the H Block candidates and so force the incoming Government there to use the lever of the Anglo-Irish talks to make Mrs Thatcher concede the five demands."



E.R.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B) - M  
PS/Mr Alison (B) - M  
PS/PUS (L&B) - M  
Mr Blelloch - M  
Mr Moriarty  
Mr Ranson - M  
Mr Palmer - M  
Mr Wyatt - M  
Mr Harrington  
Mr Corbett  
Mr Blatherwick - M  
Mr Templeton - M  
Miss MacGlashan - M

MEETING WITH THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE - TUESDAY 23 JUNE 1981

A delegation from the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace called at their request to see Mr Alison in Stormont Castle at 12 noon yesterday. The delegation consisted of Bishop O'Mahoney, Mr Jerome Connolly (Secretary), Mr Brian Gallagher (Chairman), Father Oliver Crilly and Mr Hugh Logue. Mr Alison was accompanied by Mr Blelloch, Mr Wyatt and Mr Palmer.

Mr Alison welcomed the opportunity to exchange views with the Commission. Mr Gallagher explained that the ICJP had asked for this meeting in the context of their statements of last October and this June, and of the Government's statement of 23 October 1980 in which HMG had undertaken to keep prison conditions under review. Bishop O'Mahoney said that the Commission was seriously concerned about the deteriorating situation, and the prospect of hunger strikers dying during the "marching" season; while it had made clear that it did not support political status, it was anxious to facilitate the bringing together of the two 'sides' in a spirit of justice and peace, and it called on the prisoners and the Government to consider its recommendations as a possible way forward.

2. Mr Alison told the delegation that in his view there were certain concessions which a responsible Government, pursuing justice dispassionately, could not make; it could not surrender responsibility for seeing that the rule of law was, in the fullest sense, upheld without negating the principle of government. The three areas - clothes, association and work - which the ICJP had identified as offering prospects for adaptation in the prison regime were areas where the Government had already made much progress; it already ran a more advanced regime than in the rest of the UK, and than in many other countries in the Western world.

3. Mr Logue said that the resolution of the impasse would require substantial movement on prison regimes. Until recently he had had the impression that neither side wished to indicate any sign of movement because each feared that any sign of

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



weakening would encourage the other side to "tighten the screws". But he now sensed among various groups, particularly the prisoners' relatives, a real desire to resolve the situation before any more deaths occurred. Time was therefore very short. He outlined what he saw as the 'triangle' of the prisoners, their friends and relatives outside the prison, and the "propagandists".

4. A long discussion on the details of the three proposals put forward by the ICJP then followed. Mr Alison explained what opportunities were available in all three areas to those prisoners who conformed - opportunities of which the protesters were not availing themselves. Dealing first with association, he pointed out the loss of control which would result from prisoners being allowed complete free association in the wings, let alone the blocks which might contain up to 200 men, many convicted of serious crimes of violence. It was possible to envisage that the existing hours of association which in a sense mirror the pattern of outside life with a working day and evening and weekend recreation - and which were already generous - might be extended to a degree, but this would not happen within a predictable timescale. Mr Logue thought that any progress on this front would have to be made in the very near future (7-8 days) if it was to contribute to a resolution of the current dispute. He and Bishop O'Mahoney suggested that association within the whole of the H-block, rather than in each wing, might be a significant factor. Mr Alison was willing to consider the possibility of more association between wings within a block, on the present supervised basis of association, for conforming prisoners but this was a technical point, and no dramatic change - of the sort that might dissuade a man from starving himself to death - was likely to emerge. Mr Blelloch warned that there were serious risks in effectively opening up an H-block to free movement. There had to be supervision during periods of association.

5. On the question of work, the existing types of prison work were outlined and Mr Alison assured the delegation that there were no circumstances in which prisoners were made to work for prison officers. It was not clear exactly what the ICJP meant by "work of a demeaning nature"; as in any community, there would always be certain chores and 'orderly' duties which had to be done (eg. cleaning cells and work in the kitchens). In the other areas of work, eg industrial, vocational and educational training, the preferences of the individual prisoners were taken into account as far as possible within the limitations imposed by resources and availability. But it was essential that the prison authorities should ultimately decide who should do what work. The authorities could not surrender control. Mr Alison emphasised that any reform in this area would have to apply to all prisoners, and not to particular groups. Public opinion would not tolerate a situation in which



a select group of prisoners was in effect being maintained by the rest.

6. On clothing, Mr Alison drew attention to the Government's record of flexibility, but pointed out the practical difficulties of prisoners wearing their own clothes all the time. Apart from the fact that some prisoners may not want to wear their own clothes, there was a serious question of maintaining security within working hours when large numbers of prisoners were moving about. It was not a question of principle, but of practicality.

7. Mr Logue summed up his understanding of the position set out by Mr Alison as follows:

- (i) On association, for conforming prisoners there might perhaps be scope for investigating ways of providing longer periods, and wider movement within the blocks;
- (ii) On work, a certain amount of cleaning etc had to be done, but prisoners had some discretion over what courses or types of work they pursued; however, because of the logistical problems, the ultimate decision would lie with the authorities;
- (iii) On clothing, there would be no objection in principle to all conforming prisoners wearing their own clothes all the time provided that they dressed in a manner that the authorities approved. ?

8. Father Crilly felt that in present circumstances, as a particularly tense time of the year was approaching, there would be justification for a 'quite extraordinary' effort to resolve the current situation. His impression was that, although the prisoners wanted to reach a solution, they were determined to die on hunger strike if nothing acceptable to them was put forward. He thought that there was no likelihood of a resolution of the problem on the basis of telling prisoners what would be available to them if they conformed. This had not worked in the past and it would take something very radical to achieve anything now. However, Mr Logue and Father Crilly felt that now was a better time than ever before - in terms of the attitude of the families of the prisoners - to try and resolve the issue. If this opportunity were missed, the propagandists would take a much firmer hold on the families.

9. Mr Alison reminded the Commission representatives that this meeting was not



a negotiating forum; he could not lead the delegation to believe that they should convey messages back to the 'other side'. The delegation accepted this fully.

10. It was agreed that the foregoing discussion of the prison regime had been based on the presupposition that prisoners conformed to the regime. Mr Alison said that, while it had been of value to have a discussion of the Commission's statement and the prison regime as between reasonable and responsible people, that discussion had nevertheless been unreal. He did not believe that men who had committed dreadful crimes outside prison had then inflicted years of suffering on themselves in prison and ultimately committed suicide in pursuit of changes in the prison regime which Government could make. They were after bigger game. What was at issue was a challenge to the authority of the State. He hoped he was wrong, but he did not believe so.

11. It was agreed that the NIO and the Commission would say publicly that the meeting had taken place, and no more.

12. In answer to a question from the Commission about a further meeting, Mr Alison said that this would be possible, although he could not guarantee that his other commitments would make it certain he was available.

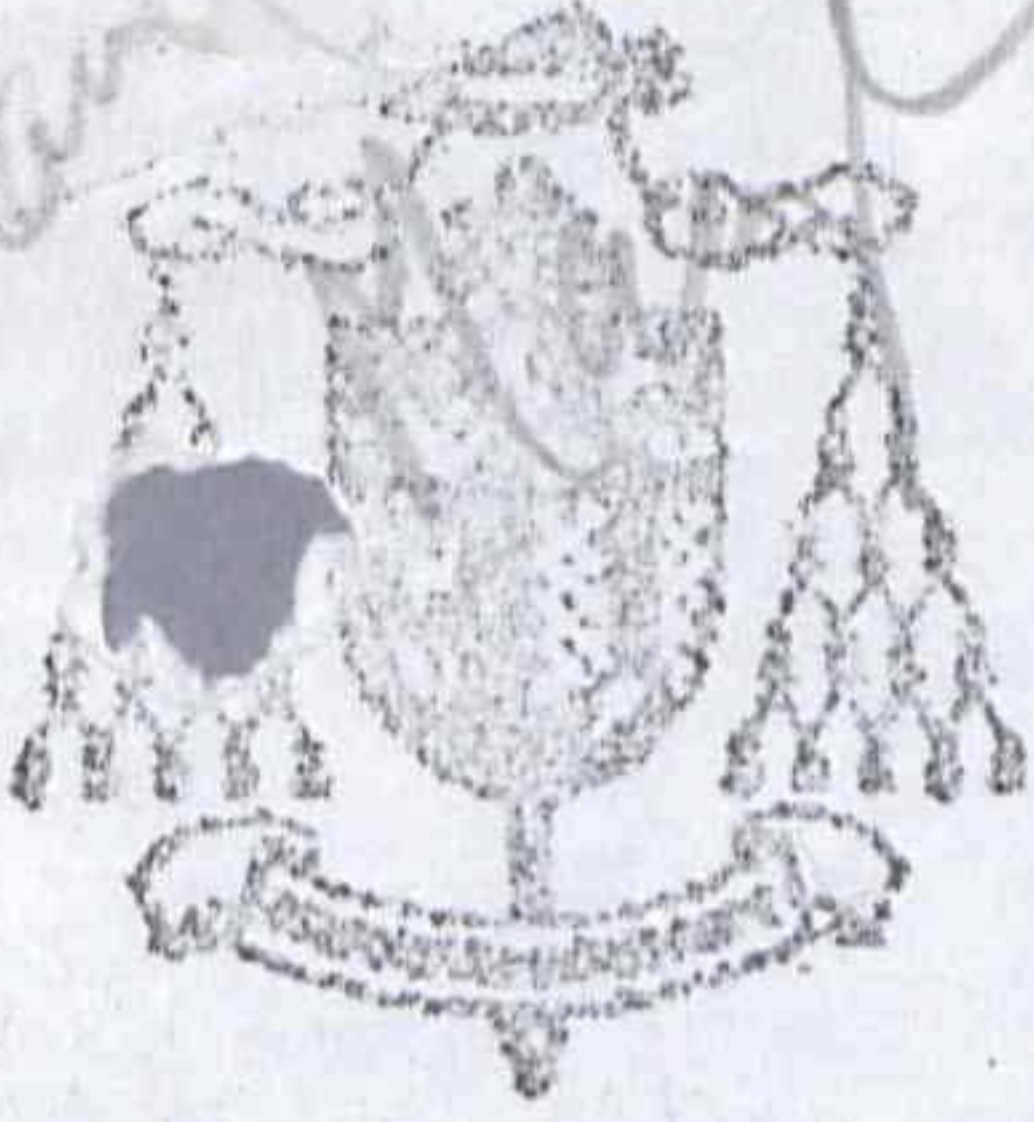
13. Before the Commission left they were given copies of the Secretary of State's letter to Cardinal O'Fiaich, as Chairman of the Conference of Irish bishops, which reinforced the point that "the next step must be for the hunger strike to end".

14. Mr Alison concluded by thanking the Commission for coming to see him. The meeting lasted about 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  hours and the atmosphere was friendly and constructive throughout.

*J M Wright*  
J M WRIGHT (MISS)  
PS/Mr Alison

24 June 1981.





*Primi Punite* <sup>to</sup> *Punt* (2)

Ara Coeli  
Ard Mhacha, Armagh

24th June, 1981.

*You will want to be  
aware of this exchange -*

*Dear Secretary of State,*

Thank you for your letter of 22nd instant in reference to the Bishops' statement of 17th June. I trust our words will make a notable contribution towards the restoration of peace and particularly towards the resolution of the prison deadlock.

I am gratified that you are impressed by the compassion, urgency and directness of the Bishops' statement. You will recall that after speaking forthrightly to the hunger-strikers it addressed itself to those in authority by

- (1) quoting the words of Our Holy Father at Drogheda 'to all who bear political responsibility for the affairs of Ireland';
- (2) commending the recent proposals of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace on clothing, association and work, with a request that the Government should show openness on these issues.

The Bishops believe that the proposals of the Commission for Justice and Peace would provide the avenue for a solution. To achieve this it is essential therefore that there should be movement from both sides.

Since your letter made no reference to this part of the Bishops' statement of 17th June, may I express the hope that it will be given serious consideration without delay?

*As your letter to me was released  
to the Press, it is my intention to make the  
text of this letter available to the media later  
this evening.*

*Yours very sincerely,  
Thomas Francis*

Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh

The Rt. Hon. Humphrey Atkins, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,  
Northern Ireland Office,  
Stormont Castle,  
BELFAST,  
BT4 3ST.



GPS 1000

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FM WASHINGTON 241915Z

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELNO 1930 OF 24 JUNE 1981,

INFO NIO BELFAST, NIO LONDON, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK,

INFO SAVING ALL CONSULS GENERAL IN THE USA.

*Prime Minister*  
CONFIDENTIAL This telegram from Sir Nicholas Henderson reports the meeting with the Friends of Ireland joint Congressional committee which he mentioned when he saw you last Friday. It is worth reading in full, as is the second telegram below which contains the text of a letter from Speaker O'Neill to President Reagan.

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NORTHERN IRELAND: MEETING WITH FRIENDS OF IRELAND

1. AT THEIR REQUEST, I HAD A MEETING THIS MORNING WITH THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND, THE NEW GROUP IN CONGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN FORMED TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR MODERATE IRISH AMERICAN VIEWS ON THE HILL. I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MARSHALL AND GILLILAND (NIO). THE MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY CONGRESSMAN FOLEY, THE HOUSE MAJORITY WHIP, AND ATTENDED BY SENATOR KENNEDY AND ABOUT 15 OTHER CONGRESSMEN.

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3. ALL THOSE PRESENT BELIEVED THAT THEIR POSITION WAS BEING SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED BY THE SUCCESSES OF THE PROVISIONAL IRA IN WINNING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE AS A RESULT OF THE HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS. THEY ALL FELT THE PRESSURE OF THIS POLARISATION WITHIN THEIR CONSTITUENCIES. NORAID, WHICH HAD BEEN A DIMINISHING FORCE, HAD ONCE AGAIN COME TO THE FORE, ECLIPSING EVEN SUCH TROUBLEMAKERS AS THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS. FUND-RAISING FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRA HAD INCREASED DRAMATICALLY AND THE TRUE AIMS OF THE PROVISIONALS HAD BEEN CONCEALED, EVEN FROM THE SOPHISTICATED MEDIA, BY NORAID'S SUCCESSES IN PRESENTING THE HUNGER STRIKERS AS SUFFERERS IN A HUMANITARIAN CAUSE.



4. KENNEDY AND THE OTHERS ALL SAID THAT THEY DID NOT SUPPORT THE DEMAND FOR POLITICAL STATUS. BUT THEY ALL FOUND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT BRITAIN WAS SHOWING THE FLEXIBILITY NECESSARY TO AVOID LOSING THE PROPAGANDA WAR. IF THERE WERE MORE HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS, AND PARTICULARLY A SUCCESSION OF WEEKLY DEATHS, PRESSURES ON MODERATE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BOTH TO SUPPORT THE AIMS OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS AND TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WOULD BECOME ENORMOUS. WAS THERE, THEY ASKED, NO WAY IN WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD USE THE

PRESENT LULL TO MAKE SOME CHANGES IN PRISON ADMINISTRATION OF THE KIND THAT HAD BEEN PUT FORWARD EG BY THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE? THEY RECOGNISED THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS MIGHT SIMPLY SWALLOW THOSE CHANGES AS CONCESSIONS AND PRESS HARDER STILL. BUT IF THEY, AS CONGRESSMEN, COULD HELP US TO UNDERMINE SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRA BY BEING ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD MOVED AS FAR AS IT COULD AND THAT THE HUMANITARIAN ISSUE WAS SIMPLY A DISGUISE FOR UNACCEPTABLE DEMANDS, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE SOME CHANCE OF WINNING THE ARGUMENT AND STEMMING THE TIDE OF SUPPORT FOR PIRA. IF WE WERE NOT ABLE TO MAKE SUCH CHANGES, THEN, HOWEVER VALID OUR CASE MIGHT BE, WE WOULD LOSE THE SUPPORT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND TURN BACK THE CLOCK IN TERMS OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONALS TO THE DARK DAYS OF INTERNMENT.

5. I SAID THAT WE VIEWED THE CREATION OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND AS AN IMPORTANT AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. WE UNDERSTOOD WHY SO MANY IN THE UNITED STATES FELT INVOLVED IN AND CONCERNED ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND. WE WERE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AMERICAN DIMENSION AND RECOGNISED THE SIGNIFICANCE WHICH THE PROVISIONAL IRA ATTACHED TO WINNING AMERICAN SUPPORT, BOTH POPULAR AND FINANCIAL. I THEREFORE HAD TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY WHAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND HAD TOLD ME ABOUT THEIR DIFFICULTY IN STEMMING THE GROWING TIDE OF SUPPORT FOR THE HUNGER STRIKERS.

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BUT, AS THEY RECOGNISED, WHAT WAS AT ISSUE WAS NOT PRISON REFORM AS SUCH, BUT THE DEMAND BY A CRIMINAL, TERRORIST ORGANISATION THAT ITS CONVICTED MEMBERS BE TREATED IN A WAY WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM THE STATUS OF POLITICIANS AND THEIR CRIMES A RESPECTABILITY WHICH COULD NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY DEMOCRACY. NO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WORTHY OF THE NAME COULD BE COERCED INTO DIGNIFYING VIOLENCE BY GIVING ITS PERPRETRATORS THE TITLE OF POLITICIANS. NO GOVERNMENT AND NO RESPONSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION HAD ENDORSED THE PRISONERS' CLAIMS. SUCH RECOMMENDATIONS AS HAD BEEN MADE TO US BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAD BEEN IMPLEMENTED, ALONG WITH OTHER CHANGES, NONE OF WHICH HAD HAD THE SLIGHTEST EFFECT ON THE PROTESTING PRISONERS. THERE WAS EVERY INDICATION THAT IF WE WERE TO MAKE FURTHER CHANGES NOW THE PROVISIONAL IRA WOULD SIMPLY TAKE THEM AS A SIGN THAT THEY WERE WINNING AND PUSH ON WITH THE HUNGER STRIKE, JUST AS THE CHANGES THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE WERE NOW TAKEN FOR GRANTED OR FORGOTTEN BY THOSE WHO WERE ASKING US TO MAKE CONCESSIONS, SO, IN A FEW WEEKS TIME, ANY NEW CONCESSIONS WOULD BE SWEEP AWAY AS WE FACED MORE, SUPERFICIALLY REASONABLE, DEMANDS TO MOVE JUST A LITTLE BIT FURTHER TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES.

6. I WAS STRUCK BY THE ALMOST TOTAL PREOCCUPATION OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WITH THIS IMMEDIATE ISSUE. WITH ONE EXCEPTION, NOBODY MENTIONED THE QUESTION OF REUNIFICATION AND EVEN THEN IT WAS POINTED OUT BY TOM FOLEY THAT THE NEWLY PROMULGATED CHARTER OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND STATES CLEARLY THAT IRISH UNITY CAN BE REACHED ONLY WITH THE FREE CONSENT OF A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, A STATEMENT WHICH HAS APPARENTLY DETERRED SOME CONGRESSMEN FROM JOINING THE GROUP.

The FEO.  
are getting  
the text of  
the charter  
itself and  
will let us  
have a copy.

7. INSOFAR AS THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION, AND OF AMERICAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRA, MUST WEIGH IN THE BALANCE IN OUR HANDLING OF THE HUNGER STRIKE. I THINK THAT THE ONE POINT MADE BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WHICH WE MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY IS THEIR ESTIMATE OF NORAID'S SUCCESS AND THE CONSEQUENT RESURGENCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NORAID. ALSO EXPLICIT IN WHAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WERE SAYING IS THAT, IF THERE ARE FURTHER DEATHS IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MOVE AT ALL BY US, THE CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO ANGLO/US RELATIONS WILL EXTEND BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. THIS IS VERY MUCH THE MESSAGE OF A LETTER WHICH SPEAKER O'NEILL HAS SENT TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, OF WHICH THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE SENT ME A COPY IN CONFIDENCE. TEXT IS IN MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM (NOT TO ALL)

HENDERSON



CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 241922Z

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELNO 1931 OF 24 JUNE 1981,

INFO NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN.

MIPT: NORTHERN IRELAND: MEETING WITH THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF SPEAKER O'NEILL'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, DATED 19 MAY:

BEGINS:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

THE CURRENT CRISIS IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS A PROFOUNDLY DISTURBING DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO AS A RESULT OF UNPRECEDENTED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MRS. THATCHER AND MR. HAUGHEY REGARDING NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH BEGAN THIS YEAR WITH REAL HOPE OF POLITICAL PROGRESS.

NOW AS A RESULT OF THE I.R.A. HUNGER STRIKE AND A SUCCESSION OF HUNGER STRIKERS' DEATHS, THE SECTARIAN DIVISIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE INTENSIFIED, ANGLO-IRISH POLITICAL DIALOGUE HAS CEASED AND THE MODERATE POLITICAL LEADERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE BEEN PREEMPTED BY THE EXTREMIST PARAMILITARY GROUPS.

IN ADDITION, INTENSE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE HUNGER STRIKE IN THE UNITED STATES HAS DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED THE IMAGE OF THE PROVISIONAL I.R.A. AMONG THIRTY MILLION IRISH-AMERICANS AND REVERSED A FIVE YEAR TREND OF DECLINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE I.R.A. THIS IS MOST UNFORTUNATE AND DEEPLY UPSETS ME.

SENATORS KENNEDY AND MOYNIHAN, GOVERNOR CAREY AND I SENT MRS. THATCHER A TELEGRAM RECENTLY ASKING THAT SHE TAKE A MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION REGARDING THE PRISON RULES THE STRIKERS ARE PROTESTING. MRS. THATCHER INCORRECTLY INTERPRETED THIS AS SEEKING POLITICAL STATUS FOR THE STRIKERS: SOMETHING WE DO NOT SEEK.

MEMBERS OF THE I.R.A. ARE TERRORISTS AND SHOULD BE TREATED AS SUCH. BUT BY REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE REGARDING PRISON RULES, MRS. THATCHER IS PERMITTING THE TERRORISTS TO UNDO SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PROGRESS MADE AS A RESULT OF HER RECENT TALKS WITH MR. HAUGHEY, AND THE STRIKE IS RAPIDLY ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. NINETEEN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THIS LATEST ROUND OF VIOLENCE.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS OUR MOST TRUSTED AND FAITHFUL ALLY. WE JUST CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS ONE WHICH THREATENS TO MEASURABLY DAMAGE THE IMAGE OF BRITAIN AMONG MANY AMERICANS AND WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RAISE A NUMBER OF SENSITIVE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES BETWEEN TWO OLD AND CLOSE ALLIES.



I AM FULLY AWARE OF YOUR COMMITMENT TO COMBAT TERRORISM AND I SHARE IT AS WELL. I AM ALSO AWARE OF MRS. THATCHER'S DEEP SENSITIVITY REGARDING PROVISIONAL I.R.A. VIOLENCE AND NORTHERN IRELAND'S STATUS AS PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. HOWEVER, I AM CONVINCED THAT A PRIVATE AND DISCREET EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BY YOU AND SECRETARY HAIG CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD HELP DIRECT HER TOWARDS A POSTURE THAT WOULD END THE CURRENT IMPASSE. I ASSURE YOU THAT IF YOU AGREE TO ADDRESS THE MATTER WITH HER I WILL TREAT IT WITH THE UTMOST CONFIDENTIALITY.

THERE ARE STEPS, SHORT OF GRANTING POLITICAL STATUS TO THE PRISONER THAT CAN BE TAKEN THAT MIGHT BRING AN END TO THIS CURRENT STRIKE. TO ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO IS TO ACCEPT AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN A COMMUNITY, THE NATURE OF WHOSE CONFLICT, ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION AND UNFORTUNATELY THE INDIRECT PARTICIPATION OF A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

I AM WITNESSING YEARS OF MY EFFORTS TO DRAW IRISH AMERICAN SUPPORT AWAY FROM THE MEN OF VIOLENCE BEING NEGATED BY THE CURRENT STRIKE. THERE IS AND HAS BEEN FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AN 'AMERICAN DIMENSION' TO THE IRISH PROBLEM. ON SOME OCCASIONS IT HAS NOT BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE; ON OTHERS IT HAS BEEN. I AM SURE THAT IN THIS INSTANCE IT WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND THE PEOPLE OF THAT TROUBLED LAND WOULD BENEFIT GREATLY.

ENDS.

HENDERSON

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

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TO PRIORITY F C O

TELNO 1930 OF 24 JUNE 1981,

INFO NIO BELFAST, NIO LONDON, DUBLIN, BIS NEW YORK,  
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4. KENNEDY AND THE OTHERS ALL SAID THAT THEY DID NOT SUPPORT THE DEMAND FOR POLITICAL STATUS. BUT THEY ALL FOUND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT BRITAIN WAS SHOWING THE FLEXIBILITY NECESSARY TO AVOID LOSING THE PROPAGANDA WAR. IF THERE WERE MORE HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS, AND PARTICULARLY A SUCCESSION OF WEEKLY DEATHS, PRESSURES ON MODERATE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BOTH TO SUPPORT THE AIMS OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS AND TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WOULD BECOME ENORMOUS. WAS THERE, THEY ASKED, NO WAY IN WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD USE THE PRESENT LULL TO MAKE SOME CHANGES IN PRISON ADMINISTRATION OF THE KIND THAT HAD BEEN PUT FORWARD EG BY THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE? THEY RECOGNISED THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS MIGHT SIMPLY SWALLOW THOSE CHANGES AS CONSESSIONS AND PRESS HARDER STILL. BUT IF THEY, AS CONGRESSMEN, COULD HELP US TO UNDERMINE SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRA BY BEING ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE TO THEIR CONSTITUENTS THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD MOVED AS FAR AS IT COULD AND THAT THE HUMANITARIAN ISSUE WAS SIMPLY A DISGUISE FOR UNACCEPTABLE DEMANDS, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE SOME CHANCE OF WINNING THE ARGUMENT AND STEMMING THE TIDE OF SUPPORT FOR PIRA. IF WE WERE NOT ABLE TO MAKE SUCH CHANGES, THEN, HOWEVER VALID OUR CASE MIGHT BE, WE WOULD LOSE THE SUPPORT OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND TURN BACK THE CLOCK IN TERMS OF AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONALS TO THE DARK DAYS OF INTERNMENT.

5. I SAID THAT WE VIEWED THE CREATION OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND AS AN IMPORTANT AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. WE UNDERSTOOD WHY SO MANY IN THE UNITED STATES FELT INVOLVED IN AND CONCERNED ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND. WE WERE VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AMERICAN DIMENSION AND RECOGNISED THE SIGNIFICANCE WHICH THE PROVISIONAL IRA ATTACHED TO WINNING AMERICAN SUPPORT, BOTH POPULAR AND FINANCIAL. I THEREFORE HAD TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY WHAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND HAD TOLD ME ABOUT THEIR DIFFICULTY IN STEMMING THE GROWING TIDE OF SUPPORT FOR THE HUNGER STRIKERS. BUT, AS THEY RECOGNISED, WHAT WAS AT ISSUE WAS NOT PRISON REFORM OR SUCH BUT THE DEMAND BY A CRIMINAL TERRORIST ORGANISATION THAT



ITS CONVICTED MEMBERS BE TREATED IN A WAY WHICH WOULD GIVE THEM THE STATUS OF POLITICIANS AND THEIR CRIMES A RESPECTABILITY WHICH COULD NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY DEMOCRACY. NO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WORTHY OF THE NAME COULD BE COERCED INTO DIGNIFYING VIOLENCE BY GIVING ITS PERPRETRATORS THE TITLE OF POLITICIANS. NO GOVERNMENT AND NO RESPONSIBLE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION HAD ENDORSED THE PRISONERS' CLAIMS. SUCH RECOMMENDATIONS AS HAD BEEN MADE TO US BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAD BEEN IMPLEMENTED, ALONG WITH OTHER CHANGES, NONE OF WHICH HAD HAD THE SLIGHTEST EFFECT ON THE PROTESTING PRISONERS. THERE WAS EVERY INDICATION THAT IF WE WERE TO MAKE FURTHER CHANGES NOW THE PROVISIONAL IRA WOULD SIMPLY TAKE THEM AS A SIGN THAT THEY WERE WINNING AND PUSH ON WITH THE HUNGER STRIKE. JUST AS THE CHANGES THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE WERE NOW TAKEN FOR GRANTED OR FORGOTTEN BY THOSE WHO WERE ASKING US TO MAKE CONCESSIONS, SO, IN A FEW WEEKS TIME, ANY NEW CONCESSIONS WOULD BE SWEEP AWAY AS WE FACED MORE, SUPERFICIALLY REASONABLE, DEMANDS TO MOVE JUST A LITTLE BIT FURTHER TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES.

6. I WAS STRUCK BY THE ALMOST TOTAL PREOCCUPATION OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WITH THIS IMMEDIATE ISSUE. WITH ONE EXCEPTION, NOBODY MENTIONED THE QUESTION OF REUNIFICATION AND EVEN THEN IT WAS POINTED OUT BY TOM FOLEY THAT THE NEWLY PROMULGATED CHARTER OF THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND STATES CLEARLY THAT IRISH UNITY CAN BE REACHED ONLY WITH THE FREE CONSENT OF A MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE. IN NORTHERN IRELAND, A STATEMENT WHICH HAS APPARENTLY DETERRED SOME CONGRESSMEN FROM JOINING THE GROUP.

7. INsofar AS THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION, AND OF AMERICAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROVISIONAL IRA, MUST WEIGH IN THE BALANCE IN OUR HANDLING OF THE HUNGER STRIKE. I THINK THAT THE ONE POINT MADE BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WHICH WE MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY IS THEIR ESTIMATE OF NORAIID'S SUCCESS AND THE CONSEQUENT RESURGENCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NORAIID. ALSO EXPLICIT IN WHAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND WERE SAYING IS THAT, IF THERE ARE FURTHER DEATHS IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MOVE AT ALL BY US, THE CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO ANGLO/US RELATIONS WILL EXTEND BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. THIS IS VERY MUCH THE MESSAGE OF A LETTER WHICH SPEAKER O'NEILL HAS SENT TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, OF WHICH THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE SENT ME A COPY IN CONFIDENCE. TEXT IS IN MY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELEGRAM (NOT TO ALL)

HENDERSON



PS N IRELAND OFFICE - PS TO SEC OF STATE  
RM 66 A/2 GGS

PS/LPS

PS/PUS

N IRELAND OFFICE [4 copies]

MR BULLARD

MR FERGUSSON

HD/RID

HD/PUSD (2)

HD/IPD

HD/NEWS DEPT

SIR K STOWE

MR MORIATY

MR MARSHALL

MR BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE - SIR R ARMSTRONG  
DIO

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

... ..  
... ..

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 241922Z

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELNO 1931 OF 24 JUNE 1981,

INFO NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST, DUBLIN.

MIPT: NORTHERN IRELAND: MEETING WITH THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF SPEAKER O'NEILL'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, DATED 19 MAY:

BEGINS:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

THE CURRENT CRISIS IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS A PROFOUNDLY DISTURBING DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO AS A RESULT OF UNPRECEDENTED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MRS. THATCHER AND MR. HAUGHEY REGARDING NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH BEGAN THIS YEAR WITH REAL HOPE OF POLITICAL PROGRESS.

NOW AS A RESULT OF THE I.R.A. HUNGER STRIKE AND A SUCCESSION OF HUNGER STRIKERS' DEATHS, THE SECTARIAN DIVISIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE INTENSIFIED, ANGLO-IRISH POLITICAL DIALOGUE HAS CEASED AND THE MODERATE POLITICAL LEADERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE BEEN PREEMPTED BY THE EXTREMIST PARAMILITARY GROUPS.

IN ADDITION, INTENSE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE HUNGER STRIKE IN THE UNITED STATES HAS DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED THE IMAGE OF THE PROVISIONAL I.R.A. AMONG THIRTY MILLION IRISH-AMERICANS AND REVERSED A FIVE YEAR TREND OF DECLINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE I.R.A. THIS IS MOST UNFORTUNATE AND DEEPLY UPSETS ME.

SENATORS KENNEDY AND MOYNIHAN, GOVERNOR CAREY AND I SENT MRS. THATCHER A TELEGRAM RECENTLY ASKING THAT SHE TAKE A MORE



FLEXIBLE POSITION REGARDING THE PRISON RULES THE STRIKERS ARE PROTESTING. MRS. THATCHER INCORRECTLY INTERPRETED THIS AS SEEKING POLITICAL STATUS FOR THE STRIKERS: SOMETHING WE DO NOT SEEK.

MEMBERS OF THE I.R.A. ARE TERRORISTS AND SHOULD BE TREATED AS SUCH. BUT BY REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE REGARDING PRISON RULES, MRS. THATCHER IS PERMITTING THE TERRORISTS TO UNDO SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PROGRESS MADE AS A RESULT OF HER RECENT TALKS WITH MR. HAUGHEY, AND THE STRIKE IS RAPIDLY ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND. NINETEEN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THIS LATEST ROUND OF VIOLENCE.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS OUR MOST TRUSTED AND FAITHFUL ALLY. WE JUST CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE A SITUATION SUCH AS THIS ONE WHICH THREATENS TO MEASURABLY DAMAGE THE IMAGE OF BRITAIN AMONG MANY AMERICANS AND WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RAISE A NUMBER OF SENSITIVE PROBLEMS AND ISSUES BETWEEN TWO OLD AND CLOSE ALLIES.

I AM FULLY AWARE OF YOUR COMMITMENT TO COMBAT TERRORISM AND I SHARE IT AS WELL. I AM ALSO AWARE OF MRS. THATCHER'S DEEP SENSITIVITY REGARDING PROVISIONAL I.R.A. VIOLENCE AND NORTHERN IRELAND'S STATUS AS PART OF THE UNITED KINGDOM. HOWEVER, I AM CONVINCED THAT A PRIVATE AND DISCREET EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BY YOU AND SECRETARY HAIG CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND WOULD HELP DIRECT HER TOWARDS A POSTURE THAT WOULD END THE CURRENT IMPASSE. I ASSURE YOU THAT IF YOU AGREE TO ADDRESS THE MATTER WITH HER I WILL TREAT IT WITH THE UTMOST CONFIDENTIALITY.

THERE ARE STEPS, SHORT OF GRANTING POLITICAL STATUS TO THE PRISONER THAT CAN BE TAKEN THAT MIGHT BRING AN END TO THIS CURRENT STRIKE. TO ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO IS TO ACCEPT AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN A COMMUNITY, THE NATURE OF WHOSE CONFLICT, ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION AND UNFORTUNATELY THE INDIRECT PARTICIPATION OF A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

I AM WITNESSING YEARS OF MY EFFORTS TO DRAW IRISH AMERICAN SUPPORT AWAY FROM THE MEN OF VIOLENCE BEING NEGATED BY THE CURRENT STRIKE. THERE IS AND HAS BEEN FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AN "AMERICAN DIMENSION" TO THE IRISH PROBLEM. ON SOME OCCASIONS IT HAS NOT BEEN CONSTRUCTIVE: ON OTHERS IT HAS BEEN. I AM SURE THAT IN THIS INSTANCE IT WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND THE PEOPLE OF THAT TROUBLED LAND WOULD BENEFIT GREATLY.

ENDS.

HENDERSON

NNNN



*Ireland  
Hunger*

*Top copy  
Ireland Situation*

Ref: A05145

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Northern Ireland: Prisons and Politics

*See Ireland — (C(81) 36)  
Situation*

BACKGROUND

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has circulated this memorandum in accordance with the conclusions reached by OD at their meeting on 18th June. Since that discussion he has consulted the Home Secretary about his proposal for an advisory body on the special problems of Northern Irish prisons and I understand that the Home Secretary is content that he should defer the establishment of the Committee for the time being, but continue with the preparatory work so as to be in a position to move quickly if and when the opportunity arises.

2. Although the Cabinet have received regular oral reports from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland about the developing situation in Ulster, these reports have mainly concerned day-to-day events. This memorandum offers non-OD members of the Cabinet an opportunity to consider the political problems in Northern Ireland against a wider perspective.

3. When OD discussed the proposed advisory body on Northern Irish prisons, they agreed that it was important that the body should not be given terms of reference which would suggest any weakening in the Government's resolve to resist the demands of IRA prisoners for political status. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has now taken this thinking a stage further in C(81) 36 and proposes not to set up the advisory body at all at the present time; to set it up with terms of reference that covered the problems of the hunger strikers could be interpreted as weakness and could encourage the PIRA and alienate the Protestants, while to set it up with terms of reference that excluded the problems of the hunger strikers could exacerbate moderate opinion in the world generally, and increase the alienation of Catholics in Northern Ireland. There is still a need for the advisory body in the longer term, and preparatory work will go ahead to establish it.

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4. In his minute to you of 12th June, which was circulated to OD, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland argued that there had to be a parallel move on both the prison situation and the question of a more general political initiative. Following the OD discussion on 18th June, only the more general political initiative is proposed for immediate action. The essential question for the Cabinet is whether this is better or worse than nothing.

5. There is a real possibility that the Advisory Council for Northern Ireland may turn out to be a "talking shop" which would be a source of damaging criticism of Government policy but would accept no responsibility for constructive action. Some Northern Irish political parties may refuse to take part in it, and if the SDLP is one of them, there is a risk that the Advisory Council may simply become a sounding board for Protestant opinion in Northern Ireland.

6. On the other hand an announcement to establish an Advisory Council would certainly be regarded by most international opinion as an indication that the Government was trying to make progress, and if the announcement was made on 2nd July before any further hunger strike deaths have taken place, it would not appear to have been wrung out of the Government under duress. There is also the possibility that, if the Government announces a decision to set up an Advisory Council, the Northern Irish political parties will be afraid to refuse to join it in case it turns out to be a significant political development.

7. If the Cabinet agrees in principle with the proposed initiative, there remains the question of timing: is it imperative to be seen to do something before the new wave of hunger strike deaths begin (but also just before the marching season), or could it and should it wait until late summer or early autumn.

HANDLING

8. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland should introduce his paper. You will wish in the subsequent discussion to take this opportunity to allow non-OD Cabinet members to express their views on the Government's policy towards Northern Ireland. You may yourself wish to remind the Cabinet that the Anglo-Irish Joint Studies remain a potentially useful link with Dublin, but



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that they are temporarily in limbo while the Republic sorts out the political problems created by the results of the last election. Other points to cover in discussion are:-

- (a) Does the Home Secretary confirm that he is content with the line proposed in C(81) 36 on the establishment of an independent Advisory Body in relation to Northern Irish prisons?
- (b) Does the Cabinet agree with the proposal to set up an Advisory Council for Northern Ireland? Is the timing envisaged right, in terms of Northern Ireland, of Westminster and of world opinion?
- (c) Does the proposed Council raise any particular problems for the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales?
- (d) How does the Chief Whip expect the Government's supporters and Ulster Unionist MPs to react to the Advisory Council proposal? Should there be some preliminary discussion with the latter before an announcement is made? Would it be sold to them as a step towards the re-establishment of the Stormont Parliament?
- (e) Does the Chief Whip, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Lord President agree in relation to the Houses of Commons and Lords that it would be best to announce the establishment of the proposed Advisory Council for Northern Ireland during the course of the debate on the renewal of powers for direct rule on 2nd July?
- (f) What impact does the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary consider that the proposed announcement will have on international opinion? Are there any particular aspects of the proposal which should be emphasised to maximise its impact abroad, particularly in the United States and the Republic of Ireland? I attach a copy of telegram 207 of 22nd June for our Ambassador in Dublin, which is relevant.



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- (g) Are there any points of detail on the proposals for the Advisory Council on Northern Ireland set out in Annex A to C(81) 36? These proposals have the advantage that they avoid the need for any further immediate legislation or elections. But a number of obvious questions are left unanswered. For example, are all the members to advise on questions as they affect Northern Ireland as a whole, or will they be expected to pursue specific district or constituency interests according to the nature of their original election? How far can such a body be trusted to make its own rules up as it goes along?

CONCLUSION

9. Subject to points made in discussion, you may like to guide the Cabinet to agree to invite the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland -

- (i) to set up by administrative means an Advisory Council for Northern Ireland on the basis described in C(81) 36 and to announce this intention in the debate on the renewal of powers for direct rule;
- (ii) to continue with the necessary preparatory work on composition and terms of reference for an advisory body on Northern Irish prisons, but not to announce its establishment at the present time.

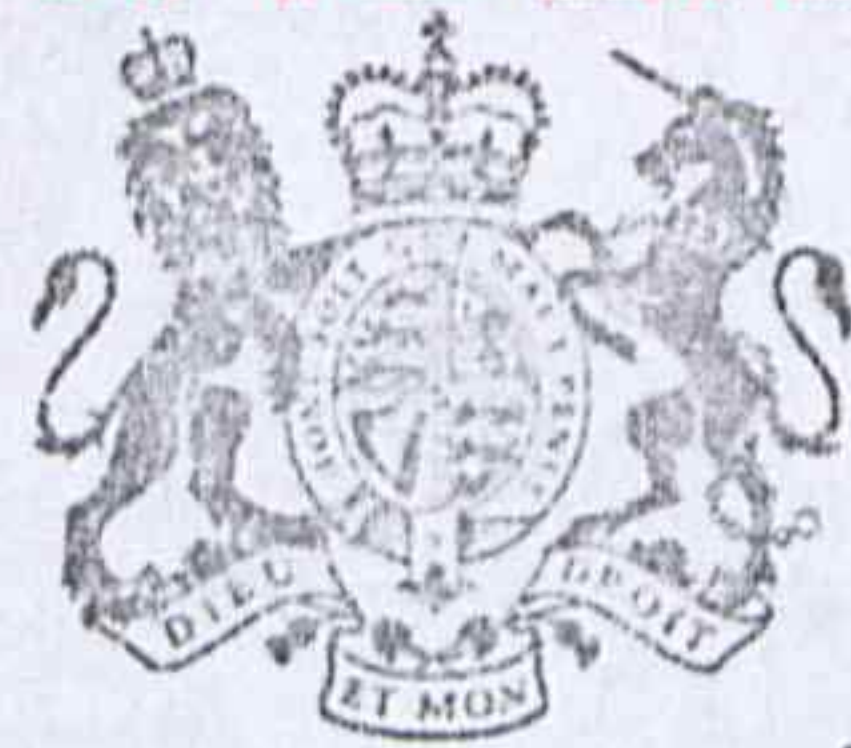
ROBERT ARMSTRONG

(Robert Armstrong)

24th June 1981



**CONFIDENTIAL**



10 DOWNING STREET

*cc Martin*  
From the Private Secretary

*Indulgent File*  
VLS  
cc FCO  
HMT  
23 June 1981

*Dear Noel,*

Message from Mr. Haughey

As you know, the Irish Ambassador called on the Prime Minister this evening to deliver a message, of which I enclose a copy, from the Taoiseach to the Prime Minister about the hunger strike.

For the most part, Mr. Kennedy confined himself to repeating the contents of the Taoiseach's message. I do not, therefore, propose to record his remarks in detail. However, one or two points may be worth noting:

- CJ*
- (a) Mr. Kennedy said that if it were possible for HMG to look again at the regime in the Maze Prison, and the other prisons, now was the time to do so. There was a slight lull. Once the next hunger striker died, the situation would deteriorate again;
  - (b) The Irish Government sensed from their contacts in the North that there was at present a sense of bewilderment and puzzlement among the relatives of the hunger strikers about what exactly the future held. This was also shared by some of the prisoners. This was something which could, perhaps, be exploited;
  - (c) The continuation of the present stalemate would ensure a continuous increase in the propaganda support for the IRA. They might fail to win political status but they would win the propaganda victory. They had already gained a great deal since last October;

/ (d)



(d) The Taoiseach believed that it would be possible, e.g. through the approach advocated by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, to "eliminate" some of the points being made by the IRA. Even if this failed to end the hunger strike, it would help in the propaganda war. The Taoiseach, who was very anxious to help, stood ready to discuss the situation with the Prime Minister on the telephone.

The Prime Minister said that the failure of the hunger strikers to complain to the European Commission on Human Rights made it clear that they in fact had no genuine complaints about the prison regime. Their objective was quite different. They would not be diverted by concessions. The difficulty with the approach advocated by the Taoiseach was that it went along with the salami tactics of the IRA leadership.

The problem in Northern Ireland had not been created by HMG. But there was a general expectation that HMG should solve it. It was not clear how, and in any case if HMG did succeed in solving the immediate problem, they would simply be presented with another problem to solve which further concessions would be sought. The recent statement by the Irish Bishops had been excellent but it seemed to have had little effect. The IRA was in the hands of left-wing extremists who were not greatly interested in the views of the Church.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister said that she would of course consider the Taoiseach's letter but it was not easy to see what HMG could do. It was for others to move.

You should be aware that the Prime Minister mentioned, in passing, the complaint which one of the hunger strikers had apparently intended to address to the European Commission on Human Rights but which, as you know, seems never to have been dispatched. On the way out, I tried to indicate to Mr. Kennedy the sensitivity of this piece of information. However, he seemed not to have realised the significance of what the Prime Minister had said, and I judged it better not to pursue the matter.



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- 3 -

The Prime Minister also informed Mr. Kennedy, very briefly, of the Government's intention to amend the Representation of the People Bill so as to extend disqualification to prisoners serving a sentence of more than 12 months in the Republic of Ireland. Mr. Kennedy welcomed this news. He thought the amendment would remove a potentially serious source of embarrassment to the Government in Dublin.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Roderic Lyne (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Nihal Alexander

Noel Cornick, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.



*SUBJECT*  
T 95/81  
GASÁID NA HÉIREANN, LONDAIN.

17 Grosvenor Place



PRIME MINISTER'S

SW1X 7HR

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. *T 95/81*

cc Mosher  
ops.  
IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

23rd June 1981

*My dear Prime Minister,*

I have been asked by the Taoiseach to convey the following message:

Dear Prime Minister

I should like to refer again to the situation in the Maze Prison. The hunger strikes there are a continuing source of tension, difficulty and danger. The situation is a cause of deep and serious concern for the Irish Government.

The hunger strikes and the deaths are having, inter alia, the following results:-

1. They have generated an entirely new level of support for the IRA among the nationalist community in Northern Ireland. They have widened and deepened the polarisation between the communities there.
2. They have already had a substantial impact on political life here, as the election of two prisoners and the relatively large vote for other hunger strike candidates in the recent general election indicates. Future developments in this area are at present impossible to predict but even at present, from the point of view of security, the situation is a cause of grave anxiety.

/...



3. While it is not ultimately for us to judge the situation it would seem that Great Britain is incurring some measure of damage to her standing on the international scene. There is clearly a widespread upsurge of support for the IRA around the world and particularly in the United States. The implications of this for the flow of material support for violence and also for security measures, North and South, are very serious.
4. The prospect of pursuing increasingly fruitful Anglo-Irish relations is certainly not enhanced.

From our point of view, we must emphasise that the finding of a solution to the situation is of fundamental and far-reaching importance.

While it is impossible to judge with certainty, there are some indications that the present may offer some hope that a way forward can be found. There are circumstances which are unlikely to recur. It seems improbable that any similar respite will offer if the deaths begin again.

Your Government has expressed readiness to keep all aspects of prison conditions under review, in the context of your commitment to a humanitarian regime. I know and appreciate your readiness to consider any further suggestions by the European Commission of Human Rights. Unfortunately, my understanding is that the pace at which that Body's work is proceeding means that it is unlikely to be of any assistance during the present respite.

An approach on the lines we worked out in Dublin before Christmas might suit, that is, a straightforward and clear exposition of what is on offer. The substance might relate to further adjustments that might be made throughout the Northern Ireland prison system which would not constitute the



grant of political status, or impair the authorities' control of the prisons. The recent suggestions by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace may provide a basis for progress.

I appreciate that you may be concerned that a fresh initiative will not end the hunger strike and that those involved will simply exploit the situation to further their campaign. There can, of course, be no certainty about the response. Our assessment is that nevertheless, the balance of advantage is strongly in favour of another initiative. If the attempt is not made, further deaths of hunger strikers will be exploited in IRA propaganda. The resultant accession of support is likely far to exceed what would flow to them if changes were made in the prison rules. Even if the attempt were unsuccessful, it could moderate the flow of support and would also have favourable effects on opinion in the Republic and throughout the world. It would also be of benefit for the fruitful development of relationships within these islands which I continue to hope can flow from the outcome of our meeting last December.

It goes without saying, of course, that we are ready to help in every way possible, in finding an acceptable solution.

Yours sincerely

Charles Haughey

*I am, my dear Prime Minister  
Yours very sincerely  
Eamon Kennedy*

Eamon Kennedy  
Ambassador

---

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
No.10 Downing Street  
London SW1



GRPS 220

C O N F I D E N T I A L

CONFIDENTIAL

FM DUBLIN 22:1500Z JUNE 1981

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 208 OF 22 JUNE 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

MIPT: HUNGER STRIKE

1. THE NEW IRISH GOVERNMENT IS BOUND TO RELY ON INDEPENDENT SUPPORT AND IS LIKELY TO TAKE A MORE PUBLICLY CRITICAL LINE ON OUR POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE LIKELY DEATH OF THE HUNGER STRIKING DEPUTY, DOHERTY, IN MID-JULY WILL ONCE AGAIN FOCUS ATTENTION (AND POSSIBLY WORLD MEDIA ATTENTION) ON THE STRIKE. OPINION HERE, WHICH THE ELECTION SHOWS MORE SYMPATHETIC TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS THAN WE HAD IMAGINED, IS INCREASINGLY MOVING IN THEIR DIRECTION, LESS OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR THE PROVISIONALS THAN FROM CONCERN AT THE PENALTY HMG'S POLICY IS BELIEVED TO BE IMPOSING NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE BORDER IF FIANNA FAIL MOVE INTO OPPOSITION, THEY ARE LIKELY TO TAP THIS ANTI-BRITISH FEELING (AS THEY DID WHEN THEY WERE LAST IN OPPOSITION) MR HAUGHEY'S PRESENT POLICY OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IS, BY DEFINITION, NOT AVAILABLE TO THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.

2. THE SLIGHT SOFTENING IN THE STANCE OF SOME PRISONERS AND THE FAMILIES OF THE PRESENT HUNGER STRIKERS, WHICH BOTH DR FITZGERALD AND THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE CLAIM TO DETECT, COULD OFFER SCOPE TO PREVENT A FURTHER DETERIORATION. IF WE TAKE NO STEPS PUBLICLY DURING THE PRESENT LULL IN STRIKERS DEATHS, EITHER THROUGH CHANGES IN THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION OR VIA THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OR BY SOME INTERNATIONAL DEVICE, TO BE SEEN TO BE DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THE STRIKE, WE WILL APPEAR HERE TO BE IN A WORSE POSITION A FEW WEEKS FROM NOW THAN WE ARE AT PRESENT IT SEEMS THAT EACH DEATH WILL LESSEN OUR ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE AND THAT THE LIKELY BACKGROUND OF SERIOUS PUBLIC DISORDER WILL MAKE AN END TO THE STRIKE MORE DIFFICULT.

F199

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

FM DUBLIN 22:1430Z JUNE 1981

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 207 OF 22 JUNE 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

PS TO THE PM.

NO10 DOWNING STREET.

M.I.P.T.: HUNGER STRIKE

1. I HAD EARLIER SEEN MR O'ROURKE AT THE CANADIAN NATIONAL DAY ON FRIDAY 19 JUNE AND HE SUGGESTED I CALLED ON HIM AND MR NALLY THIS MORNING. I HAVE JUST SEEN THEM SEPARATELY AND THE FOLLOWING POINTS WERE MADE:-

(I) MR NALLY MADE THE POINT ALREADY MADE BY DR FITZGERALD THAT THE PRISONERS THOUGHT MORE ABOUT ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE WHOLE BLOCK THAN ANYTHING ELSE (SEE PARA 2 OF MY I.P.T.). HE SAID THAT WITH THE SLIGHTLY IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE IN THE PRISON WE SHOULD CONSIDER SERIOUSLY GRANTING ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE BLOCK AND AT THE SAME TIME RESTATE THE COMPLETE PACKAGE OF WHAT IS ON OFFER, AS WAS DONE IN THE STRIKE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

(II) BOTH MADE THE POINT THAT ALREADY THE IRA AND H-BLOCK CAMPAIGN WAS CAUSING POLITICAL AND SECURITY PROBLEMS IN THE REPUBLIC. WHEN THE NEXT MAN DIES, IF THE STRIKE IS NOT RESOLVED THEN, THE SITUATION WILL BECOME WORSE AND WE SHALL THEN BE IN A PERIOD OF DEATHS FOLLOWING ONE ANOTHER AT RELATIVELY SHORT INTERVALS. WHEN THIS COINCIDES WITH THE MARCHING SEASON, WE SHOULD HAVE TO PREPARE FOR SERIOUS VIOLENCE BOTH IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC SEMI-COLON

(III) IT THEREFORE SEEMED THAT THE PRICE WE WERE PAYING FOR STANDING UP TO THE IRA STRIKE WAS TURNING OUT TO BE VERY MUCH HIGHER THAN ANYONE COULD HAVE EXPECTED AND THAT OUR NARROW TACTICAL APPROACH TO THE STRIKERS WAS NO LONGER ADEQUATE. SURELY IT WAS WORTH OUR ASKING OURSELVES WHETHER OUR POLICY IN THE PRISONS WAS SO GOOD THAT IT NEED NOT BE CHANGED. OUR FEARS ABOUT PROTESTANT ANGER IF WE GRANTED ASSOCIATION WITH THE BLOCKS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE. BUT COULD WE NOT SIMPLY SAY THAT THE LAW WHICH FORBIDS MILITARY ASSOCIATION AND DRILLING OUTSIDE PRISON WOULD APPLY INSIDE AS WELL?

2. MR O'ROURKE SAID THAT THE TAOISEACH WOULD PROBABLY BE SENDING A MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE STRIKE WITHIN A DAY OR TWO.

3. SEE MY I.F.T.  
FIGG

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

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CHIEF CLERK  
MR ADAMS  
MR BULLARD  
MR FERGUSSON  
LORD N G LENNOX  
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GRPS 200

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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FM DUBLIN 22:1415Z JUNE 1981.

TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 206 OF 22 JUNE 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE NIO (BELFAST)

MS.

HUNGER STRIKE

1. DR GARRET FITZGERALD CALLED ON ME YESTERDAY EVENING AT MY HOME. HE SAID THAT HIS TALKS WITH THE LABOUR PARTY HAD BEEN GOING WELL AND IT WAS PROBABLE THAT HE WOULD FORM A GOVERNMENT ON 30 JUNE. IF THE HUNGER STRIKE HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED BY THAT DATE HE SAID THAT, ASSUMING HE WAS TAOISEACH, HE WOULD BE ASKING FOR AN URGENT MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. IT DID NOT APPEAR THAT ANY NEW MOVES WERE IN TRAIN SINCE THE LAST DEATHS TO RESOLVE THE STRIKE AND ANOTHER DEATH WOULD MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE. HE AND OTHER POLITICIANS HAD SERIOUSLY UNDERESTIMATED THE SUPPORT FOR THE H-BLOCK CAMPAIGN. OPINION AFTER THE NEXT DEATH MIGHT CREATE SUCH A FURTHER EXTENSION OF THIS SYMPATHY THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN THE SOUTH COULD BE AFFECTED.

2. AS REGARDS THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE H-BLOCK, DR FITZGERALD SAID THAT, ACCORDING TO HIS SOURCES, THERE WAS A DEFINITE DIFFERENCE OF VIEW BETWEEN THE PRESENT RELATIVES AND THE IRA AND WE SHOULD EXPLOIT IT. THE NEXT BUNCH OF RELATIVES MIGHT WELL BE LESS INCLINED TO KEEP AN INDEPENDENT LINE. ON ASSOCIATION HE MADE THE POINT THAT THE PRISONERS NOT ON HUNGER STRIKE FELT THAT THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE PRISON WAS NOW BETTER THEN BEFORE THE STRIKE STARTED. THEY WERE NO LONGER BEING ABUSED BY WARDERS. IN SOME WAY THEY FELT THAT THE RIGHT TO ASSOCIATE WITHIN THE WHOLE BLOCK WOULD GIVE THEM A-KIND OF PROTECTION IN THIS RESPECT ONCE THE STRIKE IS OVER.

3. SEE M.I.F.T.

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GROUPS 625  
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FROM DUBLIN 220955Z JUNE 1981  
TO IMMEDIATE F C O (DESKBY 221145Z)  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 205 OF 22 JUNE

PS TO THE PM.  
NO10 DOWNING STREET.

H-BLOCK: INTERVIEW WITH DAVID O'CONNELL.

1. YESTERDAYS SUNDAY TRIBUNE CONTAINED AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DAVID O'CONNELL, (VICE PRESIDENT PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN).

2. THE CRUCIAL PASSAGES READ AS FOLLOWS:-

Q. COULD THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE PROPOSALS BE THE BASIS OF A SETTLEMENT?

A. THE ONLY BASIS FOR A SOLUTION IS THE IMPLEMENTING OF THE FIVE POINTS PUT FORWARD BY THE PRISONERS THEMSELVES IN THE H-BLOCKS AND ARMAGH. WHAT MADE THE COMMISSIONS TWO STATEMENTS ON THIS MATTER INTERESTING WAS THEIR SIMILARITY TO THE FIVE POINTS FROM THE PRISONERS.

Q. YOU DID SAY THOUGH, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE EARLIER THIS WEEK, THAT THE COMMISSION'S TWO STATEMENTS, TAKEN TOGETHER, APPEARED TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY - IN ALL THAT WAS IMPORTANT - THE SAME AS THE FIVE DEMANDS. DOES THAT MEAN THAT IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES, THERE MAY BE THE BASIS THERE FOR A SETTLEMENT?

A. NO, WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS THAT THERE IS A SIMILARITY. WE ARE GOING TO SEE THIS COMMISSION AND POINT OUT THAT THERE IS THIS SIMILARITY, BUT THAT THEIR TWO STATEMENTS ARE DRESSED UP IN A LOT OF VERBIAGE ABOUT MILITARY TRAINING AND ALL THAT NONSENSE. WE ARE GOING TO TELL THEM IT IS NOT HELPFUL TO BE PUTTING THIS IN.

WE FIND THE STATEMENTS INTERESTING. WE ARE GLAD THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN THE INTEREST THAT THEY ARE SHOWING (SEMI COLON) BUT WE FEEL THAT INSTEAD OF ADDRESSING QUERIES TO US AS TO WHAT WE ACCEPT OR DON'T, THEY SHOULD PUT IT SQUARELY TO THATCHER THAT SHE SHOULD ACCEPT THE FIVE POINTS - BECAUSE IN ESSENCE THE COMMISSION HAVE RECOGNISED THAT THE FIVE POINTS PUT FORWARD BY THE PRISONERS ARE REASONABLE AND SHOULD BE CONCEDED.

Q. JOHN HUME AND OTHERS SAID THAT YOUR ATTITUDE TO THESE PROPOSALS IS IMPORTANT, BECAUSE WHEN SUCH PROPOSALS ARE PUT TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THEIR RESPONSE IS TO SAY THERE IS NO POINT IN EVEN CONSIDERING THEM, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE PRISONERS WILL ACCEPT THEM. IT IS FOR THAT REASON THAT I THINK OUR READERS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HEARING WHETHER THESE PROPOSALS, IN SOME FORM, COULD GIVE THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT.

A. THE PROPOSALS FOR A SOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT ARE THE FIVE BASIC DEMANDS OF THE PRISONERS....

Q. ARE YOU



Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT ANY SOLUTION WILL HAVE TO INVOLVE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SIGNING A PIECE OF PAPER CONTAINING THE FORM OF WORDS IN WHICH THOSE FIVE DEMANDS HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED? ARE PEOPLE GOING TO DIE FOR A FORM OF WORDS?

A. NO. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIVE DEMANDS BY THE BRITISH. THEY NEEDN'T PUT ANYTHING ON PAPER ( SEMI COLON) ALL THEY NEED TO DO IS LIFT THE TELEPHONE AND TELL THE GOVERNOR. A TELEPHONE CALL COULD DO IT.

IN RELATION TO JOHN HUME, HE IS TRYING TO SOFTEN THE BRITISH POSITION. HE IS MORE CONCERNED WITH NOT OFFENDING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, WITH SAVING THEIR FACE, THAN WITH SECURING THE FIVE DEMANDS OF THE PRISONERS. WE THINK IT'S A PITY THAT HE'S PLAYING THAT GAME.

Q. CAN I CLARIFY ONE POINT. YOU SAID THE PRISONERS HAD NEVER INTENDED THE DEMAND FOR FREE ASSOCIATION TO INCLUDE FREEDOM TO ENGAGE IN MILITARY TRAINING. IN YOUR VIEW, THEN, IF THAT DEMAND WERE GRANTED, THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM - NO PROVOCATIVE DISPLAYS OF MILITARY DRILLING OR TRAINING?

A. THE PRISONERS HAVE NEVER DEMANDED FACILITIES TO ENGAGE IN PROVOCATIVE DISPLAYS, MILITARY TRAINING, OR ANYTHING ON THOSE LINES. THEY HAVE ASKED FOR FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION...

Q. YES, BUT IT'S A QUESTION OF WHAT THEY MEAN BY THAT, AND WHAT THEY WOULD DO WITH IT IF THEY GOT IT?

A. WELL, THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND IN THE LONG KESH CAGES, WHERE THE REMAINING SPECIAL CATEGORY PRISONERS HAVE FREE ASSOCIATION. WE DON'T GET ANY REPORTS THAT THE BRITS ARE VERY UPSET ABOUT MILITARY TRAINING GOING ON THERE. WE DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS AN ISSUE.

Q. WHO IS GOING TO BE IN CONTROL OF ANY NEGOTIATION THAT TAKE PLACE, AND AN EVENTUAL DECISION ON THE NEGOTIATIONS?

A. THE PRISONERS THEMSELVES. THEY HAVE A CHAIN OF COMMAND IN LONG KESH. BRENDAN MC FARLANE IS THE O.C. AND HE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THOSE ON HUNGER STRIKE, THEY WILL MAKE THE FINAL DECISION AND NOBODY ELSE.

3. FULL TEXT FOLLOWS BY BAG.

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TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

NBPA

His Eminence Cardinal Tomas O Fiaich  
Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland  
Ara Coeli  
ARMAGH  
Co Armagh

*Ant*  
- 23/6

22 June 1981

Dear Cardinal

I feel I should write to tell you how much I admired the statement which you and your colleagues made last week about the hunger strike. It is difficult to see how anyone could remain unmoved by its compassion, its urgency and its directness. I am sure that it will have been of immense help to those few people who still feel a dilemma of conscience towards political violence.

We must hope and pray that those who direct that violence, together with the hunger strikers themselves and their families, will follow your clear lead. It will be a tragedy if they fail to do so and force the minority community in Northern Ireland to suffer again as they did last month. No-one else wishes to see a renewal of rioting, injuries and deaths. West Belfast and West Londonderry have suffered enough the consequences of these misguided men's attempts to achieve by force what could be sought legitimately through peaceful persuasion.

But the next step must be for the hunger strike to end. The pointless waste of young lives, the anguish of relations and friends, the effect of the disturbances in the wider community - all this is of the keenest concern to the Government. The Government has already demonstrated its flexibility in dealing with the prison protests. It is committed to keeping the regime for all prisoners in Northern Ireland under review. We remain ready to facilitate any investigation that the European Human Rights Commission may wish to make in the course of considering the presently outstanding application or any fresh application which may be made.



At the same time, we must all look to the future, difficult though it is at this moment. Your statement speaks of injustices in the past. The Government will continue with the task of creating a just and fair society in Northern Ireland. We want to renew the search for a viable political framework in which this society can live. All these essential tasks will be hindered while the community is divided by the fear and hatred which violence brings.

My colleagues and I share your concern for the future. I hope we may have your prayers at this difficult time.

As the Conference's statement was made public, I propose to release this letter to the Press tomorrow.

Yours sincerely

HUMPHREY ATKINS



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

**CONFIDENTIAL**

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ



Michael Alexander Esq.,  
10 Downing Street  
London  
S W 1

22 June 1981

Dear Michael,

At OD Committee last week (OD(81)<sup>12th</sup> Meeting) my Secretary of State was invited to lay before Cabinet, for consideration on 25 June, a paper which would

- a. consider the composition and terms of reference of a body to advise on the special problems of managing Northern Ireland prisons; and
- b. contain a proposal for the establishment of a non-elective political advisory body.

My Secretary of State will be circulating his paper tomorrow morning. It requires no explanation on point b. above; but as regards point a., having considered the matter further, in the light of the OD conclusion, and after consulting the Home Secretary, my Secretary of State has concluded that he must recommend to the Cabinet that it would be inappropriate to establish at this moment the sort of enquiry on prisons which was envisaged by OD Committee.

OD concluded that, for the reasons recorded in the minutes, there would be objections to setting up a Committee related in any way to the hunger strike. My Secretary of State is now persuaded, on the basis of his further examination of the matter, that there are serious objections to announcing now the establishment of a committee explicitly unrelated to the hunger strike and their security implications. The Home Secretary agrees. The reasons are referred to very briefly in the paper, and it may be useful for me to spell them out here in a little more detail:-

- a. Either it would be regarded as incredible that we should set up such a body unless it was to concern itself with the immediate problem - we should be suspected of creating a route to give concessions - or it would be seen as "fiddling while Rome burns".
- b. The international reaction would be especially severe. It would be likely to convict us of precisely the inflexible and inhumane attitude which we are trying to pin on the other side.

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- c. It would impose an impossible responsibility on the Committee's members. They would be established as a committee to examine the prison regime, but to ignore the hunger strike deaths which would go on around them.
- d. An announcement in the terms proposed would have to say that the Committee was not to concern itself with the hunger strike, and so would imply that we were concerned only with getting the special category prisoners into cells. That would be especially provocative to moderate Catholic opinion. We would be seen by them as saying that we were indifferent to the hunger strikers' deaths, and the troubles on the streets.

... My Secretary of State regards those arguments as particularly compelling at a time when the Irish Catholic Bishops, in their statement of last week (copy attached) have come out in support of so much of our cause. They, like the statement of American Bishops also made last week, commend to both sides the statement of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. Announcing a committee so emphatically unrelated to the hunger strike or these important statements by Catholic opinion would be seen as a deliberate rejection of their moderation, even though in several points they support the Government's position.

It is for these reasons that my Secretary of State would regard it as most unwise to set up such a committee at this stage - though it will certainly be needed at some stage to consider our longer term problems and preparatory work as agreed by OD can continue. He therefore proposes that in the renewal debate, the only new announcement should be that related to the agreed move on the political front.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OD Committee, and to David Wright.

*Yours sincerely,  
Noel Cornick*

NOEL CORNICK

SD

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TO: THE SECRETARY OF STATE

CATHOLIC PRESS @ INFORMATION OFFICE DUBLIN

ATTENTION: NEWS DESK

STATEMENT FROM THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE ISSUED FROM THEIR MEETING IN MAYNOOTH, CO. KILDARE, TODAY, 17 JUNE 1981:

WE ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SERIOUS AND DETERIORATING SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE CONTINUING HUNGER-STRIKE IN THE MAZE PRISON AT LONG KESH HAS LED TO INCREASING POLARISATION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. NOT ONLY HAS IT CLAIMED THE LIVES OF FOUR YOUNG MEN WITHIN THE PRISON BUT IT HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY MURDER, BOMBING AND STREET VIOLENCE IN WHICH MANY MORE LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST. THE DEATHS OF HUNGER-STRIKERS HAVE ALSO BEEN FOLLOWED BY OUTBREAKS OF ARSON, INTIMIDATION AND WILFUL DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY. THIS HEIGHTENED LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM, THE PLIGHT OF THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF INTIMIDATION AND TERROR, THE DEEPENING DIVISIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, HAVE CONSEQUENCES NOT JUST FOR THE NORTH ITSELF BUT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE ISLAND.

EVERY DEATH AND SERIOUS INJURY THROUGH VIOLENCE CALL FORTH A DEEP AND INTENSE SORROW, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE RELIGION AND POLITICAL OUTLOOK OF THE VICTIM. WE EXPERIENCE AN EQUAL SADNESS AT ALL DEATHS WHETHER THE VICTIMS BE PROTESTANT OR CATHOLIC. WE FEEL EQUAL SYMPATHY AND COMPASSION FOR ALL WHO MOURN.

WE REPEAT WHAT THE NORTHERN BISHOPS SAID DURING THE FIRST HUNGER-STRIKE LAST NOVEMBER:

"THE VIOLENCE IN OUR MIDST HAS GENERATED A HIDEOUS SPIRAL OF MURDER, BOMBING, ROBBERY, THE BREAK-UP OF FAMILIES AND DISRESPECT FOR LIFE ITSELF. IT HAS FILLED GRAVES AND PRISONS. IT HAS EVEN CONTINUED UNABATED IN RECENT WEEKS. WE SOLEMNLY DECLARE THAT THOSE WHO KILL, WOUND, THREATEN OR INTIMIDATE, THOSE WHO PUT PEOPLE IN FEAR OF THEIR LIVES OR ENDANGER THEIR LIVELIHOODS, ARE GUILTY OF EVIL DEEDS CONTRARY TO THE LAW OF GOD. THEY STAND IN CLEAR OPPOSITION TO THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST AS PREACHED IN ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. AS CATHOLICS WE MUST ONCE MORE PROCLAIM A DECISIVE NO TO ALL KINDS OF VIOLENCE."

MANY OF THESE EVILS SPRING FROM THE EXISTENCE OF PRIVATE ARMIES OR PARAMILITARY ORGANISATIONS WHICH CLAIM THE RIGHT TO WAGE WAR. NOT ONLY HAVE THEY SENT OUT THEIR MEMBERS TO CARRY OUT CRUEL AND MURDEROUS DEEDS, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO EVIL BY URGING THEM TO ACTS OF VIOLENCE. WE MAKE OUR OWN THE APPEAL WHICH OUR HOLY FATHER MADE IN DROGHEDA TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF IRELAND:

"IF YOU HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THE WAYS OF VIOLENCE, EVEN IF YOU HAVE DONE DEEDS OF VIOLENCE, COME BACK TO CHRIST, WHOSE PARTING GIFT TO THE WORLD WAS PEACE. ONLY WHEN YOU COME BACK TO CHRIST WILL YOU FIND PEACE FOR YOUR TROUBLED CONSCIENCE AND REST FOR YOUR DISTURBED MINDS".

WE ARE NOT UNMINDFUL, HOWEVER, OF THE INJUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND OVER THE YEARS WHICH CREATED A CLIMATE FOR EASY RECRUITMENT BY PARAMILITARY ORGANISATIONS. NOR DID THE PRESENT IMPASSE IN THE



... WHICH MAKES IT EASIER STILL, ARISE SUDDENLY. STRENUOUS EFFORTS WERE MADE TO FIND A SOLUTION LAST YEAR. IF THE PRESENT EFFORTS WERE TO FAIL THE CONSEQUENCES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE ISLAND COULD BE VERY GRAVE INDEED. THERE COULD BE A DANGER OF RESORT TO STILL MORE VIOLENT POLICIES. THERE COULD BE RISKS OF INSTABILITY THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF OUR SOCIETY. WE THEREFORE IMPLORE THE HUNGER-STRIKERS AND THOSE WHO DIRECT THEM TO REFLECT DEEPLY ON THE EVIL OF THEIR ACTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES. THE CONTEMPT FOR HUMAN LIFE, THE INCITEMENT TO REVENGE, THE EXPLOITATION OF THE HUNGER-STRIKES TO FURTHER A CAMPAIGN OF MURDER, THE INTIMIDATION OF THE INNOCENT, THE INITIATION OF CHILDREN INTO VIOLENCE, ALL THIS CONSTITUTES AN APPALLING MASS OF EVIL.

WE APPEAL ALSO TO POLITICIANS AND GOVERNMENTS AND WE REMIND THEM OF THE SOLEMN WORDS OF THE POPE IN DROGHEDA:

"TO ALL WHO BEAR POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE AFFAIRS OF IRELAND, I WANT TO SPEAK WITH THE SAME URGENCY AND INTENSITY WITH WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO THE MEN OF VIOLENCE. DO NOT CAUSE OR CONDONE OR TOLERATE CONDITIONS WHICH GIVE EXCUSE OR PRETEXT TO MEN OF VIOLENCE. THOSE WHO RESORT TO VIOLENCE ALWAYS CLAIM THAT ONLY VIOLENCE BRINGS ABOUT CHANGE. THEY CLAIM THAT POLITICAL ACTION CANNOT ACHIEVE JUSTICE. YOU POLITICIANS MUST PROVE THEM TO BE WRONG. YOU MUST SHOW THAT THERE IS A PEACEFUL, POLITICAL WAY TO JUSTICE. YOU MUST SHOW THAT PEACE ACHIEVES THE WORKS OF JUSTICE, AND VIOLENCE DOES NOT."

AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE WE WELCOME THE RECENT STATEMENT ON THE HUNGER STRIKE FROM THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE AND WE COMMEND IT TO BOTH SIDES AS A POSITIVE EFFORT TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE. LIKE THE COMMISSION WE CALL ON BOTH SIDES TO GIVE AN INDICATION OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE TOWARDS A SOLUTION. WE ASK THE PRISONERS AND THOSE WHO SPEAK FOR THEM TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS ON CLOTHING, ASSOCIATION AND WORK WOULD, IF IMPLEMENTED, PROVIDE THE AVENUE FOR A SOLUTION. WE ASK THE GOVERNMENT TO SHOW A CORRESPONDING OPENNESS ON THESE ISSUES.

THE PRESENT DISTURBING SITUATION SHOULD MAKE US ALL THE MORE DETERMINED TO WORK TOGETHER FOR A SETTLEMENT. WE URGE INCREASED UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC AND CLOSER SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH. WE APPEAL TO ALL THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE PROMOTION OF GOSPEL VALUES IN AN IRELAND INCREASINGLY THREATENED BY SECULARIST STANDARDS. WE ASK PEOPLE NOT TO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE CARRIED AWAY BY DANGEROUS EMOTIONS. WE URGE THEM TO SEEK THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND TO REDOUBLE THEIR PRAYERS FOR A JUST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT CONFLICT. WE DIRECT THAT AS FROM NEXT SUNDAY PRAYERS FOR PEACE BE INSERTED AMONG THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL AT ALL PUBLIC MASSES EVEN ON WEEKDAYS.

WE ASK PEOPLE TO PERSEVERE IN PRAYER ALWAYS. WHAT OUR LORD SAYS TO US IS THAT "WE OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NEVER TO LOSE HEART".

ENDS



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GRPS 350

C O N F I D E N T I A L

FM DUBLIN 18:1925Z JUNE 1981

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 203 OF 18 JUNE 1981

AND REPEATED FOR INFO TO NIO (BELFAST)

HUNGER STRIKE.

FROM TATHAM.

1. IN THE AMBASSADOR'S ABSENCE I WAS ASKED TO CALL AT 1800 ON THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, WHERE I MET THE CHAIRMAN BRIAN GALLAGHER, BUSHOP O'MAHONEY PLUS HUGH LOGUE AND FATHER CRILLY FROM NORTHERN IRELAND. THE LAST TWO DID MOST OF THE TALKING.
2. THEY WANTED HMG TO KNOW THAT FROM CONTACTS THEY HAD HAD WITH PRISONERS FAMILIES OVER THE WEEK-END AND FROM VISITS BY FATHER CRILLY AND MR MCGILL TO THE MAZE ON 16 JUNE THEY BELIEVED THERE WAS GENUINE INTEREST AMONG PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN RESOLVING THE HUNGER STRIKE IMPASSE ON THE LINES OF THE I.C.J.P. STATEMENT OF 3 JUNE. THEY CLAIMED TO BE REINFORCED IN THEIR BELIEF BY TWO TELEXES THEY HAD RECEIVED TODAY FROM THE REPUBLICAN PRESS CENTRE IN BELFAST WHICH AS FAR AS THEY KNEW HAD NOT BEEN RELEASED TO THE PRESS AND WHICH SEEMED CONCILIATORY.
3. THE I.C.J.P. MAINTAIN THAT THE PRESENT LULL OF 10 DAYS BEFORE THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER OF ANOTHER DEATH SHOULD BE USED TO END THE STRIKE. THEY POINTED TO THE DISASTEROUS SIDE-EFFECTS OF THE HUNGER STRIKE IN ULSTER, THE GAINS H-BLOCK SUPPORTERS HAD MADE IN THE DAIL ELECTIONS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH AT A TIME OF A WEAK OR UNSTABLE GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN. HMG SHOULD NOT SEE THIS APPROACH AS A SIGN THAT THE STRIKERS OR THE HARD-LINERS WERE CRACKING, BUT RATHER AS A CHINK OF SANITY AMONG THE LESS COMMITTED WHICH COULD PROVIDE AN OPENING AND MIGHT ENABLE HMG TO SEPARATE CATHOLIC OPINION FROM THE HARD-LINERS. IT WAS VITAL THAT SOME EXPRESSION OF BRITISH INTEREST SHOULD BE RECEIVED WITHIN 24 HOURS. OTHERWISE THE HARD-LINERS COULD TELL THE FAMILIES THAT THE BRITISH WERE NOT INTERESTED AND BRING THEM BACK TO THE PROVISIONAL CAMP.

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4. I EXPLAINED THAT WHILE I WOULD PASS ON THIS APPROACH THE ISSUE WAS A HOT SUBJECT IN LONDON AND THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF A SUBSTANTIVE REPLY WITHIN 24 HOURS. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IF HMG WANTED TO FOLLOW UP THE QUESTION THEY MIGHT PREFER NOT TO DO SO IN DUBLIN OR USING THE I.C.J.P.: THEY ACCEPTED THIS. I HAVE SINCE LEARNT THAT LOGUE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH BY TELEPHONE WITH WYATT IN BELFAST.

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TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 201 OF 18 JUNE 1981  
AND REPEATED TO PRIORITY NIO (BELFAST)

STATEMENT FROM THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE:  
H-BLOCK HUNGER STRIKE.

1. THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS, MEETING IN MAYNOOTH ON 17 JUNE, ISSUED A STATEMENT ABOUT THE HUNGER STRIKE (COPIES TO RID AND NIO (B) BY BAG.) THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS CONTAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS IN THE STATEMENT.

BEGINS.

WE ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SERIOUS AND DETERIORATING SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. THE CONTINUING HUNGER-STRIKE IN THE MAZE PRISON AT LONG KESH HAS LED TO INCREASING POLARISATION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. NOT ONLY HAS IT CLAIMED THE LIVES OF FOUR YOUNG MEN WITHIN THE PRISON BUT IT HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY MURDER, BOMBING AND STREET VIOLENCE IN WHICH MANY MORE LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST. THE DEATHS OF HUNGER-STRIKERS HAVE ALSO BEEN FOLLOWED BY OUTBREAKS OF ARSON, INTIMIDATION AND WILFUL DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY. THIS HEIGHTENED LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND VANDALISM, THE PLIGHT OF THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF INTIMIDATION AND TERROR, THE DEEPENING DIVISIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, HAVE CONSEQUENCES NOT JUST FOR THE NORTH ITSELF BUT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE ISLAND.....

WE THEREFORE IMPLORE THE HUNGER-STRIKERS AND THOSE WHO DIRECT THEM TO REFLECT DEEPLY ON THE EVIL OF THEIR ACTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES THE CONTEMPT FOR HUMAN LIFE, THE INCITEMENT TO REVENGE, THE EXQLOITATION OF THE HUNGER-STRIKERS TO FURTHER A CAMPAIGN OF MURDER, THE INTIMIDATION OF THE INNOCENT, THE INITIATION OF CHILDREN INTO VIOLENCE, ALL THIS CONSITUTES AN APPALLING MASS OF EVIL.....

AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE WE WELCOME THE RECENT STATEMENT ON THE HUNGER STRIKE FROM THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE AND WE COMMEND IT TO BOTH SIDES AS A POSITIVE EFFORT TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE. LIKE THE COMMISSION WE CALL ON BOTH SIDES TO GIVE AN INDICATION OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MOVE TOWARDS A SOLUTION. WE ASK THE PRISONERS AND THOSE WHO SPEAK FOR THEM TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS ON CLOTHING, ASSOCIATION AND WORK WOULD, IF IMPLEMENTED, PROVIDE THE AVENUE FOR A SOLUTION. WE ASK THE GOVERNMENT TO SHOW A CORRESPONDING OPENNESS ON THESE ISSUES.

ENDS.

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2. THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT FROM PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN SO FAR. HOWEVER, DAVID O'CONNELL IS QUOTED IN THE IRISH PRESS OF 17 JUNE AS NOTING THAT THE 3 JUNE STATEMENT BY THE IRISH COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE MADE REFERENCE TO ONLY THREE OF THE FIVE DEMANDS, AND THAT THE COMMISSION HAD "CLOUDED THE ISSUE IN VERBIAGE AND FUDGED IT." HE WENT ON "PERHAPS THEY ASSUME THAT IF THE 3 ITEMS WERE DEALT WITH THESE TWO (I.E. VISITS AND FULL REMISSION) COULD THEN BE SOLVED, BUT WITH OUR EXPERIENCE WE MUST NOT MAKE THAT ASSUMPTION AT ALL". HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE EXPRESSED A WISH TO MEET THE COMMISSION IN ORDER "TO INFORM THEM OF THE FACTS OF THE MATTER".

3. M.I.F.T.

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Ref. A05109

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Nally rang from Dublin at 3.45 this afternoon. He said he had been asked by Mr. Haughey to speak to me.

2. The message was as follows.

3. The situation in Dublin is difficult, and is going downhill. The more things are suppressed in the North, the more they break out elsewhere. Contacts are being established and systems are being set up which are destabilising and make the situation not a happy one.

4. Against this background the Taoiseach feels that the present lull before the next death of a hunger striker might be a time to get other things moving. He has two factors particularly in mind:

- (a) there is at present some tension in relations between the parents of hunger strikers, the hunger strikers themselves and the Provisional IRA controllers outside, which could be exploited;
- (b) if there is a change of Government in Dublin, the new Administration may not be as apparently sympathetic as the present, and that may make the Provisional IRA more amenable.

5. The suggestion is that we should consider whether there is any possibility of "getting back to what had been talked about last December", not so much in substance as in presentation. The suggestion is that we should once again find some way of drawing attention to the fact that what is already on offer is not very far removed from what is demanded, perhaps by issuing a comprehensive restatement of the position, of the kind issued by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland last December.

6. If we thought there was something in this, Dr. Kennedy (the Irish Ambassador in London) would be prepared to come and see you (or me or anyone else you named) to discuss it; or the Taoiseach would send across Mr. Nally himself.

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7. Mr. Nally added that he thought that this suggestion was made in a spirit more of opportunism than optimism: there was a lull in the procession of deaths of hunger strikers, and we ought to see if we could use it.

REA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

18th June, 1981

CONFIDENTIAL



JOCK STALLARD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

*Copied to  
Inland by  
High Court Studies*

*Sent to NIO*

*Ant*

JS/SW

17th June 1981

*Dear Prime Minister,*

I am writing in my capacity as Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party Northern Ireland Group concerning the continuing situation in the Maze Prison.

Our Group has already stated its firm rejection of political status but is in favour of a "humane and responsive" approach to all aspects of prisoners living and working conditions within a common regime, as mentioned in your Government's statement of 23rd October 1980.

We share the concern expressed recently by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, inter alia, about the growing resentment in the nationalist community giving rise to increased alienation from Government and creating a climate for recruitment by para-military organisations, particularly amongst the young, and we are also concerned at the evidence of increased polarisation throughout the community in Northern Ireland.

We are also concerned that responsible leaders views and exhortations have not been taken seriously, thus undermining the authority of democratically elected representatives and increasing the threat of more and worse violence.

We therefore appeal to you and your Government to look again at the situation in line with the promise "to keep the situation under review", and we suggest that:

1. Prisoners in the Maze, at present permitted to wear their own clothes for part of the time, should be allowed to do so at all times (as in Armagh Prison).
2. That some move might be made to increase opportunities for association (as in Portlaoise Prison, for example).
3. The question of prison work should be reviewed in order to ensure that the work is of the greatest possible cultural and educational value.

We believe these reforms could be extended to all prisoners and would remove objections raised by those who are opposed to any change in the Maze. Although we have not been able to visit similar establishments in the Republic, we do know that the Government there has been able, by introducing reforms along the above lines, to avert some of the problems which have arisen at the Maze.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

We would, of course, be happy to discuss these suggestions with you at any convenient time. Meantime, we look forward to a reply which will demonstrate that you and your Government are prepared, given the circumstances, to be more flexible in an attempt to restore an atmosphere that will allow responsible leaders here and in Ireland, North and South, to concentrate on finding a peaceful political solution to the tragic problems of Northern Ireland.

*Yours sincerely,*  
*J. W. Stallard*

Jock Stallard MP  
Chairman  
Northern Ireland Group PLP.

Rt Hon M Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
Whitehall  
LONDON SW1



Ireland, Situation  
Pt 9

SECRET AND PERSONAL

5

Ref. A05103

MR ALEXANDER

--- I am submitting separately a brief for tomorrow's discussion at OD of the memorandum by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. By way of an annex to the brief the Prime Minister may like to see the attached intelligence-based analysis prepared by Mr Ranson of the Northern Ireland Office.

2. It stresses the success of the Provisional IRA in the political aspect of their campaign, the risk of alienation of the Catholic community and the need to respond to counter that political success. It is argued that to take no action in the face of PIRA's political campaign is not standing firm, but is admitting defeat in the political arena, with serious implications for security.

3. That argument seems to point to the need for political response; it is not clear that the proposed review of the prisons is particularly relevant to it. I think that the questions remain as in the brief:

- (i) If this is not the time for a review of the prisons, do we need some kind of political initiative?
- (ii) Is the political initiative proposed by the Secretary of State credible and sufficient?
- (iii) Should it be launched now, or after the summer holiday and the marching season?

4. You will no doubt also be drawing the Prime Minister's attention to telegram number 199 of 17 June from Dublin.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

17 June 1981

SECRET AND PERSONAL



THE PROVISIONALS - POLITICAL ACTIVITY

From time to time and in particular at the beginning of this year - we have considered whether and under what circumstances the Provisionals might switch the focus of their efforts to the political front - it has sometimes been thought that a consequence of this might be a reduction in the amount of energy and effort they put into their terrorist campaign.

2. The reality is of course that they have for some months been devoting increasing effort to political action, while continuing the "military campaign" at the lower level which their now limited capabilities permit. There is also a third dimension, when circumstances such as the deaths of hunger strikers permit - street violence.

3. An important part of the Provisionals political activity consists of seeking to broaden out their support through the H block campaign thus involving uncommitted members of the minority community in peaceful protest in support of PSF objectives. In a short space of time the Provisionals have demonstrated great skill in manoeuvring cynically and adroitly to attract a significant spectrum of support. The Fermanagh by-election and the Dail elections are the best illustrations of this.

4. We have tended to regard the involvement of the Provisionals in political activity as a development to be encouraged. But it is a development that requires a response from Government, as their terrorist activities receive a response. There is very general agreement that the Catholic community has been disturbed by the hunger strikers' deaths, that it blames Government, that there is a degree of alienation and that the Provisionals are getting more support. Unless their political exploitation of the hunger strike situation - and the resulting recrudescence of support for PIRA - can be countered, then the Provisionals "going political" can succeed, where their terrorist activity has failed, in reversing the progress of recent years towards "normality" and renewing for them a base from which a revitalised terrorist campaign could be launched.

5. It is this process which the suggested Prisons Review and a further round of political activity are presumably intended to counter. If we could find less controversial and more certain means to achieve the objective no doubt we would do so, but all options are difficult and can, and no doubt will, be criticised.

6. If it is argued that to have a review of the prisons is to signal that Government is wavering and if Ministers on this score incline to reject the proposal there is surely a counter argument. To take no action in the face of the Provisionals effective political campaign centred on the hunger strikes is not standing firm, but is admitting defeat in the political arena. This will be proved to be so as the Provisionals gather wider support with serious implications for security and law and order.

D&R

16 June 1981



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Ref. A05101

PRIME MINISTER

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Northern Ireland: Political Development and the Prison Situation

(OD(81) 32 and 33)

BACKGROUND

Since OD discussed political development in Northern Ireland on 18th November 1980 the main events have been the collapse of the initial hunger strike in the Maze; the Dublin Summit and the start of the Anglo-Irish joint studies; the second hunger strike; the Fermanagh by-election; the rioting following the four strikers' deaths; the local government elections in the Province; and the general election in the Republic. The immediate background to the two memoranda which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has now circulated are the discussions which you recently had with the GOC and Chief Constable Northern Ireland at Chequers. They are worried that without some modification of the Government's present stance (to show that the Government is not indifferent to the deaths of the hunger strikers) there is a danger of progressive alienation of moderate Catholic opinion. The converse of this is that a modification of the present stance, at any rate while the succession of hunger strikes continues, could be interpreted by the Protestants as a "surrender" to the PIRA and could inflame Protestant opinion.

2. There has been no significant deterioration in the security situation so far as the general level of terrorist incidents is concerned. The security forces do not doubt that they can contain the terrorists. But they are concerned that the hunger strike deaths are now associated with street violence, which is no doubt well orchestrated but involves people well beyond the hard core of terrorists; they are apprehensive about the reappearance of "no-go" areas in Belfast; and the image of renewed street violence is damaging the prospects of economic recovery for Northern Ireland. If the street violence continues, there is a possibility of the security forces being goaded beyond endurance and

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becoming involved in another "bloody Sunday" type of incident, which would alienate international opinion particularly in the Republic of Ireland and the United States.

3. The difficulties will increase when, as seems likely, a regular series of strikers' deaths begin to take place every 10-14 days, starting early next month and continuing into the indefinite future. In the Irish election the H Block candidates did better than anyone had predicted, polling over 42,000 first preference votes and getting two members elected in Border constituencies. This suggests that the Fermanagh by-election was not a passing phenomenon.

4. In his minute to you of 12th June, which has been circulated to the Committee, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland explains the link between the prison situation and the question of a more general political initiative. Essentially his view is that there must be a move in both areas in parallel for there to be any chance of success for either.

5. The questions posed by Mr. Atkins's two memoranda present an acutely difficult balance of political judgment. Either way, a little bad luck could bring us on to a slippery downhill slope in relation to our entire policy towards Northern Ireland. Progress down this slope might be accelerated by further hunger strike deaths, and a growing "troops out" movement in this country. But it could also be accelerated (if the Chief Constable and the GOC are right) by the lack of any modification in the Government's stance. If we get the balance wrong, we might be forced into thinking in very different terms from the limited sorts of initiative now under discussion.

6. Ministers must take seriously the view of the Chief Constable and the GOC that the setting up of a Departmental Committee on the prison system would reassure the Catholics of the Government's sense of concern, and would thus ease the burden of maintaining law and order. But it would probably enrage the Protestants; it would be seen by them and by the PIRA as a sign of weakness, and it seems unlikely that it would persuade the hunger strikers to give up, even if it did not actually strengthen their belief that they were winning. It could all too easily be seen as a move towards arbitration and thus as a sign of the Government losing political control.

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7. As regards political progress, Mr. Atkins's proposal for an elected advisory body has been under consideration for a long time. The Committee discussed and rejected it in 1979. It might be welcome initially to international opinion, as an indication of political movement. But in Northern Ireland it could be a damp squib; and it could end all too easily as a "talking shop" which would be a source of damaging criticism of Government policy but would not accept any responsibility for constructive action.

8. In judging the balance between action and inaction, the essential criterion must be the need not to jeopardise the very real assets which we still retain. The improvement in the general security situation has been maintained. In the Irish election, although the H Block candidates may have done well in the Border areas, the overall result was certainly not a victory for the extreme Republicans. It is significant that Sile De Valera lost her seat in Dublin South. Much of international opinion has been broadly sympathetic to British policy. Other countries have similar problems, and the West Germans for example let their Baader-Meinhof hunger striker die. The Anglo-Irish joint studies remain a useful link with Dublin which both Mr. Haughey and Dr. FitzGerald are anxious to preserve.

9. I find it difficult to believe that this is the right time for launching a proposal for a Departmental Committee in the prison system. If that view were to be accepted, then the question would be whether we could sit still and do nothing - at least until the autumn - and whether, if it is felt that some move must be made, the political initiative proposed is credible and sufficient on its own.

10. You will also wish to have at the back of your mind the possibility that you may wish to appoint a new Secretary of State before long. The appointment of a new Secretary of State would itself be an important political event and gesture in Northern Ireland. A new Secretary of State would need shots in his political locker; to launch a political initiative now would, to put it at its lowest, diminish his options.

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11. The Secretary of State for Scotland and the Attorney General have been invited for this item.

## HANDLING

12. You will wish to invite the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to introduce his two memoranda. You may like to suggest that the Northern Irish prisons situation should be considered first, as a decision on this particular problem will affect the form and timing of any more general political initiative. Discussion should cover the following points -

- (a) Are the Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Scotland content that the proposed terms of reference for the Departmental Committee to review the Northern Irish prison system would not produce awkward repercussions in relation to prisons in the rest of the United Kingdom? Home Office officials are worried by the suggestion that there should be "continuing provision of independent and professional advice on prison policy and practice".
- (b) Is it either desirable or practicable, while the hunger strike continues, to set up this kind of Departmental Committee, which would presumably include members outside Government service? Might the incidence of dying strikers place the Committee under an intolerable strain so far as the timetable of its work and the nature of its recommendations were concerned?
- (c) Would there be any advantage in announcing now that the Departmental Committee will be set up when the hunger strike is brought to an end, linking its creation to the need to consider various administrative problems before the new prison at Maghaberry is opened in 1982? This might go some way towards placating moderate Catholic opinion in Northern Ireland. It might also help to weaken the resolve of the hunger strikers, but it is difficult to set ~~too~~ much store by that.
- (d) Does the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary consider that an initiative on the prisons situation in Northern Ireland is likely to have much impact on international opinion, particularly in the United States? Or is it the political initiative which really matters in this context?

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- (e) Does the proposed political initiative offer enough to be worth pursuing? It was rejected by OD in 1979 as being too slight. Its chances of achieving any success are even more slender now, as they depend on achieving some kind of acceptance by the SDLP of the Government's policy on prisons. The main virtue of the proposal is that it would do something to fill in the current vacuum and indicate a willingness on the part of the Government not to stand still. But would the proposal offer sufficient prospect of progress to be taken seriously at Westminster, in Ireland, and abroad?
- (f) If any political initiative is to be made, what about timing? The renewal of powers debate in the House of Commons on 2nd July would be a good opportunity for an announcement. But soon after that hunger strikers are likely to start dying and the marching season in Northern Ireland will have begun. And Mr. Atkins does not envisage that his meetings with Northern Irish political parties will be completed until about September.
- (g) If there is to be a political initiative on these lines, is it right to start with bilateral discussions with the parties, or is there something to be said for going straight to an announcement of a decision to set up a consultative assembly and letting the talking follow?
- (h) What is the likelihood of the security situation in Northern Ireland deteriorating if the Government takes no initiative? Does the Secretary of State for Defence believe that the security forces will have difficulty in containing the street violence which is likely to take place? Is there likely to be any resurgence of terrorist incidents in the Border areas following the support which has been demonstrated for the H Block candidates?

## CONCLUSION

13. Subject to the points made in discussion, you may wish to guide the Committee to the conclusion that the initiatives proposed in the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's memoranda both in relation to the prisons situation

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and the general political situation offer insufficient promise of immediate benefit to justify their introduction at this particular time and the associated risk of worsening matters. This applies particularly to the prisons proposal. The Committee might conclude that the proposed talks with local political parties should go ahead, without any commitment at this stage to a Government proposal, but that the Government should stand firm in the prisons situation so long as the hunger strikes continue, while recognising that this may represent a bar to progress so far as talking to the SDLP is concerned.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

17th June, 1981

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GROUPS 320

SECRET

SECRET

FROM DUBLIN 171014Z JUNE 1981

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 199 OF 17 JUNE

AND TO IMMEDIATE N I O (BELFAST)

A-5

HUNGER STRIKE

1. IN MY TELNO 184 OF 4 JUNE I SAID THAT I HOPED WE COULD ANNOUNCE SOME INITIATIVE SHORTLY AFTER THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN. IT NOW SEEMS THAT A NEW GOVERNMENT CAN HARDLY BE FORMED UNTIL AFTER THE DAIL MEETS ON 30 JUNE. SO WE HAVE A LITTLE MORE TIME THAN WE EXPECTED.

2. I PAID A BRIEF VISIT TO N I O BELFAST YESTERDAY AND LEARNED OF THE NEW SUBMISSION ABOUT A PRISON REVIEW. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ON WHOM I CALLED KINDLY ASKED ME FOR MY COMMENTS. I SAID I THOUGHT THE MOOD IN THE REPUBLIC ABOUT THE HUNGER STRIKE WAS HARDENING AGAINST US FOLLOWING THE SURPRISINGLY HIGH VOTE FOR THE H-BLOCK COMMITTEES CANDIDATES IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS. THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF THE MATTER ARE BEGINING TO BE OBSCURED HERE BY THE FEAR THAT WE ARE PERHAPS ALLOWING THE STRIKE TO GET OUT OF CONTROL AND FAILING TO RECOGNIZE OR COUNTER ITS DANGEROUS SIDE EFFECTS - POLARISATION IN THE NORTH AND HOSTILITY TO BRITAIN AND POSSIBLE TURBULENCE IN THE SOUTH. BEFORE THE ELECTION IT WAS HOPED THAT OUR OPEN AND ENLIGHTENED ATTITUDE TO MOVES BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD - IF NOT RESOLVE THE QUESTION - AT LEAST ISOLATE THE PROVISIONALS FROM THEIR "HUMANITARIAN" FELLOW TRAVELLERS (WHO ARE NOW CLEARLY MORE NUMEROUS THAN WE THOUGHT AND WHOSE NUMBERS ARE STILL GROWING). THE E C H R INITIATIVE IS NOW SEEN TO HAVE RUN INTO THE SAND. WHAT I THINK IS WANTED IS SOME NEW WAY OF DRAWING IN RESPECTABLE AND WELL-KNOWN FOREIGNERS, PERHAPS FROM WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, IN ANY NEW INITIATIVE WE MAY CONTEMPLATE. THE PROPOSED PRISON REVIEW MIGHT BE A CONVENIENT WAY OF DOING THIS.

3. IN THE PRESENT EMOTIONAL STATE GENERATED BY THE HUNGER STRIKE DEATHS, WE MUST TRY AND GET OUT OF OUR PRESENT DIFFICULTY WHEREBY IRISH MEN ARE SEEN TO DIE IN BRITISH PRISONS AND THE BRITISH CAN'T OR DON'T WANT TO STOP THEM. A REVIEW IN WHICH WELL-KNOWN FOREIGN LEGAL LUMINARIES PARTICIPATED WOULD HELP INTERNATIONALISE OUR DIFFICULTIES AND, PROVIDED OF COURSE THAT THE FOREIGNERS PLAYED THEIR PROPER PART, MIGHT AT LAST TURN THE TIDE IN OUR FAVOUR.

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cc NIO

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

15 June 1981

My dear Bishop

Thank you for your letter of 3 June. I was sorry we were not able to meet in Belfast; I understand your position and, in return, hope that you accept that there was no intention on our part to cause you any embarrassment.

I very much appreciate the full and frank way in which you wrote in your letter of your anxieties about the current situation in your area. I fully share that anxiety, and sought in my recent speech in Belfast to express it clearly and unambiguously. I admire and respect the courage and devotion of Church leaders such as yourself and other leaders who seek in these difficult times to reassure the community and to hold it together. You know that I and my colleagues care deeply about the sufferings of the Catholic community arising from the hunger strike and the disturbances to which it has given rise. The Government is determined to do all that it can to alleviate them and to resume progress towards tackling the wider problems of Northern Ireland.

We will weigh carefully what you say, and what is contained in the document drawn up by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. But the Provisionals have made clear what they are after. There must be the gravest danger that any changes made now would simply encourage the Provisionals to press harder. The hunger strike would then be reinforced and with it the continuing distress in the Roman Catholic community.

/ The

JFA



The next step must be for the hunger strike to end. The pointless waste of young lives, the anguish of relations and friends, the effect of the disturbance in the wider community - all this is of the keenest concern to the Government. The Government has already demonstrated its flexibility in dealing with the prison protests. It is committed to keeping the regime for all prisoners in Northern Ireland under review. We remain ready to facilitate any investigation that the European Human Rights Commission may wish to make in the course of considering the presently outstanding application or any fresh application which may be made.

I realise how the Provisionals are seeking to exploit the issue, and I realise how difficult the resulting situation is for community leaders, as for Government. We must all keep explaining what we are trying to achieve clearly, openly and with the fullest sympathy for what so many are having to bear.

signed

MT

The Right Reverend Edward Daly,  
Bishop of Derry.



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Ireland, Situation  
Pg 9



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PRIME MINISTER

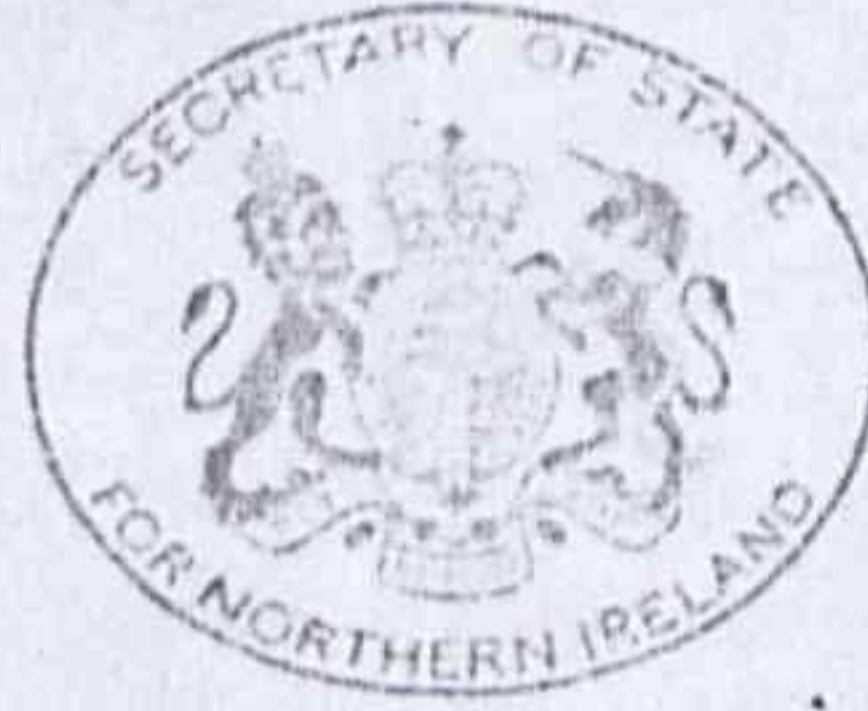
NORTHERN IRELAND: THE NEED FOR MOVEMENT

1. I am today circulating to my colleagues on OD two papers (OD(81)32 and 33) for discussion next week. One deals with the political situation in Northern Ireland; the other with the prisons. The two groups of problems, although set out separately, are closely inter-related. Each, within its own field, proposes a new development in the policies we have pursued so far. It seemed to me essential that, in reading these papers, my colleagues should have before them an explanation of why I think the time for movement has now come.
2. On politics, we have said for two years, in two White Papers, that we were looking for the agreement of the local parties, and could not move without that agreement - any move had to be "acceptable" to both sides of the community. I am now convinced:
  - (a) that the prospects of such agreement, never good, have receded in recent months;
  - (b) that we cannot stand still for the remainder of this Parliament on political development in the North while continuing to pursue - as we are committed to doing - the development of relations with Dublin; and
  - (c) that we must therefore contemplate taking a unilateral step now, looking for support to Westminster.
3. On prisons, we have over the last eight months stood firm against the hunger strikers and their demands. And I am quite clear that on our points of principle (no differentiation; and no loss of control) we must continue as firm as ever.

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But there is both room and, I believe, need for movement. I am therefore proposing the setting up of a Committee which we shall certainly need before long to advise us on some difficult medium and long-term problems which we face, and which could also, if we so choose, be charged with the more urgent role of providing a possible way of easing the short-term impasse.

4. These two moves are linked. We have not been wrong in seeking the agreement of local political parties to constitutional change. We have certainly not been wrong in standing firm on the prisons issue. But:

- (i) I believe there is increasingly a mood in the country that if we cannot "do something" about "the Northern Ireland problem", we should consider withdrawal. The message which I get loud and clear from every contact I have with broad public and political opinion - including particularly backbench Conservative opinion relayed by the officers of the Party's Northern Ireland Committee - is that the time has come for us to be seen to be making moves, on both fronts, political and prisons, since they reinforce each other. We are not winning friends by doing nothing.
- (ii) On the political front it is clear from all our efforts of the past two years that "acceptability" is a chimera. We were right to try to find it. We should be foolish to refuse to acknowledge that it is not to be found. If by the next election we wish to be seen to have made some progress, we must be bold enough to proclaim and pursue a course in spite of local disagreement.

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(iii) On prisons, apart from the longer term problems (which we have to face in any case), I now feel strongly that a continuing, apparently endless, series of deaths from hunger strikes will cumulatively lose us both the catholic population of Northern Ireland and the sympathy of the world opinion. We may outface the hunger strikers; but we shall pay a heavy price for doing so. In my view we must be seen at least to have tried to facilitate a lessening of tension, perhaps leading to a way of ending the strikes. In the perception of the outside world the line between firmness and intransigence is a narrow one.

5. With these considerations in mind I propose in the papers the appointment of some kind of Departmental Committee to consider and advise on the problems in NI prisons. On politics, it is as impracticable as ever to set up without the agreement of the parties any new body exercising executive powers. I am therefore proposing that we should establish an elected advisory body, being an arrangement which we could, if necessary, impose /

6. If the approach to political development proposed in the paper is approved by OD, we have to decide how much I should say in the Renewal Debate in early July before I have completed talks with the local parties. I propose to make it clear in my speech that HMG is persuaded that Northern Ireland needs now some development on the political front; that I have in train discussions with the local political leaders so that I can learn their present thinking; that we recognise that, since a consensus on the way ahead may well be lacking, we shall have press ahead with it; and that we shall publish a White Paper in the autumn with our proposals, to give Westminster and GB opinion generally the

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opportunity to express its view on future development. This would be going a long way towards indicating that HMG will publish and carry forward proposals in the autumn irrespective of the parties' reactions; while avoiding any appearance that the talks with the parties would be a mere charade.

7. I am sending copies of this minute to the other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*H.A.*

H.A.

12 June 1981

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

12 June 1981

*ms*

*Dear Michael,*

NORTHERN IRELAND: PRISONS

In paragraph 6 of OD (81) 33 my Secretary of State undertook to send to his colleagues examples of the material which has been prepared for use in countering hostile propaganda about Northern Ireland in the United States and elsewhere. I attach a number of pamphlets which have been sent to posts throughout the world and which have been widely distributed to elected representatives, journalists and members of the public. Some of these were also published in French and German.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosures to the Private Secretaries of all members of OD and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely,  
Noel Cornick*

NOEL CORNICK



**CONFIDENTIAL**  
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

11 June 1981

*Type for PM's signature*

*Dear Michael,*

*Paul*

Thank you for your letter of 5 June with which you enclosed a letter to the Prime Minister from Bishop Daly of Derry. I enclose a draft reply for the Prime Minister's consideration.

As you are aware, Cardinal Hume is anxious to persuade Cardinal O Fiaich to travel to London sooner than 30 June in order to expedite their joint meeting with the Prime Minister at which they will wish to discuss their continued concern for the Catholic community. We recommend therefore that we should wait until we hear whether or not Cardinal Hume's persuasion succeeds before replying to Cardinal O Fiaich's letter of 2 June.

*Ans.  
Seyle*

S W BOYS SMITH

**CONFIDENTIAL**



DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To	Enclosures	Copies to be sent to
The Most Reverend Edward Daly Bishop of Derry Bishop's House St Eugene's Cathedral LONDONDERRY Northern Ireland		
(Full Postal Address)		(Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY ..... PRIME MINISTER .....  
(Name of Signatory)

PERSONAL

Thank you for your letter of 3 June. I was sorry we were not able to meet in Belfast; I understand your position and, in return, hope that you accept that there was no intention on our part to cause you any embarrassment.

I very much appreciate the full and frank way in which you wrote in your letter of your anxieties about the current situation in your area. I fully share that anxiety, and sought in my <sup>recent</sup> speech in Belfast ~~on my recent visit~~ to express it clearly and unambiguously. I admire and respect the courage and devotion of Church leaders such as yourself and other leaders who seek in these difficult times to reassure the community and to hold it together. You know that I and my colleagues care deeply about the sufferings of the Catholic community arising from the hunger strike and the disturbances to which it has given rise. The Government is

.../2



determined to do all that it can to alleviate them and to resume progress towards tackling the wider problems of Northern Ireland.

We will weigh carefully what you say, and what is contained in the document drawn up by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, **B**ut ~~from all~~ the Provisionals have ~~said and done~~ they ~~have~~ made clear what they are after. There must be the gravest danger that any changes made now would simply encourage the Provisionals to press harder. ~~so~~ The hunger strike would <sup>then</sup> be reinforced and with it the continuing distress in the Roman Catholic community.

The next step must be for the hunger strike to end. The pointless waste of young lives, the anguish of relations and friends, the effect of the disturbance in the wider community - all this is of the keenest concern to the Government. The Government has already demonstrated its flexibility in dealing with the prison protests. It is committed to keeping the regime for all prisoners in Northern Ireland under review. We remain ready to facilitate any investigation that the European Human Rights Commission may wish to make in the course of considering the presently outstanding application or any fresh application which may be made.

I realise how the Provisionals are seeking to exploit the issue, and I realise how difficult the resulting situation is for community leaders, as for Government. We must all keep explaining what we are trying to achieve clearly, openly and with the fullest sympathy for what so many are having to bear.



*Ireland*

PS N IRELAND OFFICE - PS TO SEC OF STATE  
RM 66 A/2 GGS

PS/LPS

PS/PUS

N IRELAND OFFICE [4 copies]

MR BULLARD

MR FERGUSSON

HD/RID

HD/PUSD (2)

HD/INF *INF*

HD/NEWS DEPT

SIR K STOWE

MR MORIATY

MR MARSHALL

MR BUXTON

CABINET OFFICE - SIR R ARMSTRONG  
DIO

... ..  
... ..

NO 10 DOWNING STREET

RESIDENT CLERK

GR 450

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON 111325Z JUN 81

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NO 1791 OF 11 JUNE

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO LONDON, NIO BELFAST,  
ROUTINE DUBLIN

*me*

**NORTHERN IRELAND HUNGER STRIKE**

1. CONGRESSMAN BIAGGI IS SEEKING CO-SPONSORS FOR A RESOLUTION ON THE HUNGER STRIKE WHICH HE PLANS TO INTRODUCE IN THE HOUSE TODAY. THE RESOLUTION DEPLORES ALL VIOLENCE, EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN AT THE HUNGER STRIKE AND CALLS ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO EXERCISE GREATER URGENCY AND FLEXIBILITY IN FINDING A HUMANITARIAN SOLUTION.

2. SENATOR KENNEDY'S OFFICE HAVE TOLD US THAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND GROUP PLAN TO PRE-EMPT THIS INITIATIVE BY INTRODUCING THEIR OWN RESOLUTION IN BOTH THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE. THIS RESOLUTION CONDEMNS VIOLENCE FROM ALL SIDES IN NORTHERN IRELAND: URGES ALL PARTIES TO EXPLORE ALL POSSIBILITIES FOR ENDING THE HUNGER STRIKE: URGES THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO EXERCISE GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN ADMINISTERING PRISON RULES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND TO INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OR OTHER INDEPENDENT THIRD PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EFFORT TO SETTLE THE HUNGER STRIKE: CALLS FOR AN EARLY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF BOTH COMMUNITIES: AND CALLS ON THE US GOVERNMENT TO EXPRESS TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THE CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE



THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THE CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR THE IMMEDIATE SETTLEMENT OF THE HUNGER STRIKE AND A LASTING SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

3. THIS RESOLUTION THUS GENERALLY REFLECTS THE LINE TAKEN BY THE FOUR HORSEMEN IN THEIR LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE HUNGER STRIKE. KENNEDY'S STAFF EMPHASISE THAT THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND ARE CONTINUING THEIR EFFORTS, DESPITE CONSTITUENCY PRESSURE, TO TAKE A MODERATE AND RESPONSIBLE LINE AND NOT TO ALLOW BIAGGI TO MAKE THE RUNNING. THEY SAY THAT THE RESOLUTION, IN PARTICULAR THE SUGGESTION OF INVOLVING THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, IS INTENDED TO MAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE RESOLUTION, ONCE INTRODUCED, WILL BE REFERRED TO THE RESPECTIVE FOREIGN RELATIONS/FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE WHO WILL CONSIDER WHAT, IF ANY, FURTHER ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN. BIAGGI'S AIM IS PROBABLY TO PAVE THE WAY FOR HEARINGS ON NORTHERN IRELAND. THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND DO NOT EXPECT FURTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN CONGRESS, BUT HOPE THAT THEIR RESOLUTION WILL HELP THE HUNGER STRIKE TO BE BROUGHT TO AN END BEFORE THE CONDITION OF THE NEXT HUNGER-STRIKER BECOMES CRITICAL.

5. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS ACTIVITY, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NORTHERN IRELAND WILL BE RAISED DURING THE LORD PRIVY SEAL'S CALLS ON SENATOR PERCY AND CONGRESSMAN ZABLOCKI ON MONDAY, 15 JUNE. ZABLOCKI HAS RECENTLY JOINED THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND.

HENDERSON

NNNN



**CONFIDENTIAL**

file 812

10 June 1981

European Commission on Human Rights

The Prime Minister has seen and taken note of your letter to me of 5 June about the visit of a British team to Strasbourg on 3 June to discuss with the Commission the complaints under Article 8 and Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights which the Commission is now considering.

**M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER**

S.W. Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office

SL

**CONFIDENTIAL**





THA BK

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 June 1981

CF

I enclose, together with its attachment, a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from the Clerk of the Massachusetts Senate. I have acknowledged Mr. O'Neill's letter.

Subject to your views, I would not have thought any further action was required.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Stephen Boys-Smith.

MA

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

B





B12

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 June 1981

I am replying on the Prime Minister's behalf to your letter to her of 29 May.

The contents and the enclosure to your letter have been noted.

MA

Mr. Edward B. O'Neill





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

9 June 1981

*Dear Stephen,*

Following a telephone call from Dr. Ian Paisley this morning, arrangements have been made for Dr. Paisley to have a meeting with the Prime Minister in her room at the House of Commons at 1530 on Thursday 25 June. We will ensure that some 45 minutes are available for the discussion.

I am sending copies of this letter to Roderic Lyne (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely*

*Richard Alexander*

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

*24-6-81*

*JS*  
*cc 20*  
*6*



GR 270

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

FM HOLY SEE 091430Z JUN 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 14 OF 9 JUNE 1981

1. FOLLOWING IS MESSAGE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, THE RT HON. HUMPHREY ATKINS MP, FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH ARCHBISHOP SILVESTRINI.

2. BEGINS:

" I WAS MOST GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE, THROUGH THE KINDNESS OF THE BRITISH LEGATION TO THE HOLY SEE, YOUR MESSAGE OF 30TH APRIL, ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY FR JOHN MAGEE, AS A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY FATHER.

" SINCE THEN THE SITUATION IN THAT AREA HAS FURTHER DETORiated: THE TRAGIC TOLL OF DEATHS CONTINUES, BOTH AMONG THE HUNGER STRIKERS AND AMONG THE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM.

" I AM SURE YOU ARE WELL AWARE OF THE HEARTFELT PREOCCUPATION WITH WHICH THE HOLY FATHER FOLLOWS THE WORSENING OF THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AND PRAYS THAT THROUGH THE WISDOM AND HUMANE FORESIGHT OF ALL CONCERNED, A SATISFACTORY COMPROMISE MAY BE FOUND AND THE TRAGIC CHAIN OF VIOLENCE MAY FINALLY BE BROKEN.

" I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EXPRESS THE APPRECIATION WITH WHICH I HAVE NOTED HOW THE PRIME MINISTER MRS MARGARET THATCHER, IN HER SPEECH AT STORMONT ON 28TH MAY, QUOTED THE POPE'S ADDRESS IN DROGHEDA, DURING HIS VISIT TO IRELAND IN 1979.

" I GREATLY HOPE THAT THE CALL OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR AN END TO EVERY FORM OF VIOLENCE AND FOR A SEARCH FOR 'A PEACEFUL POLITICAL WAY TO JUSTICE' (IBID., NO.14) WILL FINALLY BE GIVEN A POSITIVE HEARING ". ENDS.

3. PLEASE CONVEY TO ADDRESSEE.

4. THE CONFIRMATORY TEXT AND SEPARATE LETTER TO HEAD OF REPUBLIC OF IRELAND DEPARTMENT FOLLOW BY BAG.

HEATH

NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED

RID  
NAD  
INFORMATION DEPT  
WED  
MAED  
NEWS DEPT  
SECURITY DEPT  
PUSD  
PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR HURD

PS/MR RIDLEY  
PS/MR BLAKER  
PS/PUS  
SIR A ACLAND  
CHIEF CLERK  
MR ADAMS  
MR BULLARD  
MR FERGUSSON  
LORD N G LENNOX  
MR BRAITHWAITTE

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
NORTHERN IRELAND

THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED

RESTRICTED



MR. ALEXANDER

MR. PATTISON

Dr. Paisley rang this morning asking for a meeting with the Prime Minister and I offered him 1530 in the Prime Minister's room at the House on Thursday 25 June. That was the day he asked for. I gave him 45 minutes to an hour, *dependent on her commitments*

*at the time.*

*C.S.*

9 June 1981





The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES ..... <i>PREM 19</i> .....	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>505</i> ..... (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details:  <i>Letter from Stowe to Whitmore dated 8 June 1981</i>	
CLOSED FOR ..... YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<i>8 November 2011 A Wayland</i>
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
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MISSING	
NUMBER NOT USED	



Instructions for completion of Dummy Card

Use **Black Pen** to complete form

Use the card for one piece/item number only

Enter the Lettercode, Series and Piece/Item references clearly  
e.g.

LETTERCODE/SERIES

.....GRA 168.....

PIECE/ITEM .....49.....

(ONE PIECE/ITEM NUMBER ONLY)

Please Sign and Date in the box adjacent to the description that applies to the document being replaced by the Dummy Card

If the document is Closed under a FOI exemption, enter the number of years closed. See the TNA guidance *Preparation of records for transfer to The National Archives*, section 18.2

The box described as 'Missing' is for TNA use only (it will apply to a document that is not in its proper place after it has been transferred to TNA)



(2)

*Handwritten scribbles*

*Handwritten signature* 8/6

1. MR ALEXANDER

2. PRIME MINISTER

*Handwritten signature*

NORTHERN IRELAND - PROPAGANDA

You may care to see (attached) the latest publication from NIO.

2. This "What the papers say" sets out comments by newspapers at home and abroad, mostly across the USA, which generally support the UK Government's line. Copies of the booklet have been put in the libraries of both Houses and the Press Gallery

*Handwritten signature*

B. INGHAM

8 June, 1981.



# H-BLOCKS

What the  
papers say



## UNITED KINGDOM

### THE TIMES

“THE NATURE of the offences committed by the IRA should alone disqualify their members from claiming political status. They are not, for the most part, committed against those people whom they hold responsible for the policy they object to. The greater proportion of those who have died and have been injured by IRA action have been innocent individuals, who have no responsibility. Indeed, in many instances the IRA have neither known nor cared who was liable to be killed. By what logic can such indiscriminate violence be classed as political crime justifying preferential treatment?”

### THE GUARDIAN

“THE CENTRAL demand of the IRA — for clear political status — cannot be clearly met. To license killing of passers-by and census makers as well as of soldiers and policemen is to give every criminal with a passing political excuse free licence within the realm. How do you separate a bank robber for IRA funds and a bank robber from the East End who pleads that a random GLC election leaflet turned him into a crook?”

### DAILY EXPRESS

“ORGANISED civilised government, with its compromises and tolerances, is unacceptable to extremists. They must get their own way in everything — and those who resist must perish. This is the tyranny of terror; be it the IRA, the Red Brigades of Italy, Baader-Meinhof in Germany, the Basque terrorists in Spain, or scores of similar organisations throughout the world. Britain has acted with a degree of restraint, unimaginable elsewhere.”

### DAILY Mirror

“MR SANDS demanded political status, but he had won the political status which matters when he topped the poll in the Fermanagh by-election.”



## The Daily Telegraph

“HUNGER striking is a fairly familiar device which normally fails even to procure lasting fame for those who employ it. Those who should be admired are the Government (particularly the Northern Ireland Office) for its steadfastness, the prison and medical staffs who have had to attend to the macabre details of this grisly affair, and the security forces who can be counted on to meet with vigour and restraint whatever plans the IRA may have to avenging with innocent blood Sands’ crime against himself.”

## THE Sun

“BOBBY Sands stood for tyranny – the dark tyranny of terror by the bomb cruelly placed to maim and kill unsuspecting innocents. Had his demands to wear his own clothes, to be excused work, to be allowed to mingle with other IRA prisoners, been granted does anyone imagine he would have been content? Of course not. He would simply have climbed to fresh heights of effrontery.”

## Daily Mail

“THE FUNERAL of Bobby Sands was an occasion of genuine grief for the members of his family but the IRA did its best to make it a macabre propaganda circus. The ritual of the so-called full military honours at the graveside with masked gunmen solemnly firing volleys into the air is a gangsters’ parody of the moving tributes which fighting men traditionally pay to comrades who fall in the defence of honourable causes. Bobby Sands was one who whether willingly or unwillingly killed himself to further an evil crusade. He was the tool of wicked conspirators who, if they ever took control of Ulster, would bring the province nought but bloodshed, tyranny and desolation.”

## DAILY STAR

“IN THE long run the ballot box offers the people of Northern Ireland their only hope. Violence, like the death of Bobby Sands, offers them nothing.”



## Belfast Telegraph

“THE ‘five demands’ (of the hunger strikers) are a means to an end — the undermining of the whole prison system, and, ultimately, the British responsibility for Northern Ireland. Any government which gave way to such pressures would not be worthy of the name, and would deserve the chaos that resulted. Mrs Thatcher is not in that mould.”

## NEWS LETTER

“IT IS significant that not a single critical representation on the Government's handling of the Maze hunger strike has been received from any foreign government while the orchestrated demonstrations that have taken place do not reflect representative views.”

## Birmingham Post

“WHOSE DEATH should most trouble and stir the consciences of the peoples of Ireland, of Britain, of Europe and of the United States? That, self-inflicted in the Maze jail in Ulster by Robert Sands, a leading member of the IRA, or the death of a young mother Joanna Mathers, mercilessly gunned down while doing nothing more than collect census papers in Londonderry? According to the security authorities the gun from which the shot was fired had been used twice previously in IRA shootings. But which death *ought* to stir the conscience of Ireland, Britain, Europe and the United States? There can be but one answer. Only a distorted conscience, a wrong sense of human values, will be more moved by a death deliberately designed to cause mischief and great harm to others.”

## The Journal, Newcastle

“AS THE funeral took place in Belfast of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands, masked men in combat jackets were at the heart of the procession. Many shopkeepers and businesses were forced to close for the day “as a mark of respect”. The ceremony itself was conducted with what the Provisional Sinn Fein, the Provisional IRA's political wing, described as “full military honours”. Many on this side of the Irish Channel — and indeed many people in the province itself — will find it hard to accept the freedom of movement allowed to terrorists as they see pictures in their newspapers or watch television film of shots being fired over the coffin. They will also find it hard to grasp why Sands should have been given the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. He did, after all, commit suicide — and isn't this a mortal sin in the eyes of the Catholic Church?”



## Yorkshire Post

“THE IRA is as unrepresentative of the people of Northern Ireland as the Red Brigades are of the people of Italy. Even from his cell, Sands was holding innocent people hostage and making ransom demands. For the message always was that his suicide would lead to violence as surely as if a hijacker had exploded a hand-grenade in an aircraft. Hundreds of innocent people have been murdered and maimed by the IRA, whose victims are never given the choice between life and death.”

## THE OBSERVER

“THE HUNGER strikes are not to improve prison conditions in Northern Ireland, which are better than in most European prisons. They are for political status — the right of convicted terrorists to run their own camp compounds; to train, discipline and punish their own members. The IRA and its apologists are not concerned with civil liberties or legal reform, but with victory in their terrorist campaign.”

## SUNDAY EXPRESS

“THE VICTIMS of terrorism who have been murdered since Bobby Sands began his hunger strike, unlike Sands, had no choice about their fate. For them there were no last-ditch appeals. Nobody wants to see a coffin carried out of the Maze prison. But Bobby Sands' murderous friends plotted to arrange for all those other coffins to be carried out to Ulster's graveyards. They are the very dregs of humanity.”

## The quality of Scotland SUNDAY STANDARD

“SANDS in his short life has been manipulated by his political masters with a cynicism matched only by Goebbels, the evil propagandist of the Third Reich. They promoted him 'officer commanding' in the Maze, they told him to stand in the Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election, they ordered him to begin his fast. He was also told which visitors to agree to see, which to refuse.”



## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

### Irish Independent

“BOBBY Sands was convinced he was doing the right thing for his cause and for Ireland. It is a matter of profound regret that this is not so. He was under the control of forces whose only desire was to use his death to manipulate public opinion through misplaced sympathy which his sufferings aroused. The ‘just demands’ of the prisoners must be placed alongside the thousands who, today, carry mishapen bodies because of the bombs and bullets of the terrorists. The demands for political status must be weighed in the balance with those who were murdered for alleged political reasons.”

### THE IRISH TIMES

“HOWEVER widely support is given to the obsequies for Bobby Sands, it can in no sense be said that there is a process of national mourning going on. For one million people in Northern Ireland are mourning their own dead. The population of this island without that one million people in no way constitutes the nation.”

## FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

### Die Welt

“THE HARD fact remains that Sands was trying to blackmail the State with his life. To make political prisoners of these criminals now would mean to lend later legality to murder and terror.”

### Bonner Rundschau, Bonn

“THE BRITISH Government’s attitude towards demands for political status is shared by East and West European Governments. If Britain had made concessions, almost irresistible pressure would have arisen in Germany, Italy, France, or Spain to make similar concessions to terrorists there.”



## SWEDEN

### Gothenburg Post

“BOBBY SANDS was a terrorist. Now he is a dead terrorist. We ought to bear it in mind in order not to fall into the trap where we think more of and sympathise with the murderer more than his victim.”

## SWITZERLAND

### Tages Anzeiger, Zurich

“THE BRITISH Government had no other choice than to let Sands die. Whatever the colour of the government there . . . compromising with terrorism is no way of mastering it. Bobby Sands, unlike over 2,000 other victims of terrorism in Northern Ireland, died of his own volition.”



## The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

(Circ 584,500)



“BOBBY Sands had a record of violence as an ‘IRA militant’, placing innocent lives in jeopardy while bombing warehouses and participating in armed robberies. But because of massive publicity he may be remembered mainly for the manner of his death after a 66-day fast, holding in his hands a golden crucifix presented by a special papal envoy.”

## The Washington Star

(Circ 345,641)

“THE greater potential tragedy in the Sands affair is not the wasted life of that young man, who basically did himself in with the encouragement of his supposed friends, but the possibility that more innocents will die in related disturbances. Add to that the chance that Ulster’s ordeal will be prolonged — the inevitable peace delayed — and the cost of Bobby Sands’ self-destruction is great indeed.”

## New York Times

(Circ 914,938)



“GRANTING political status to Nationalist prisoners was tried in 1972 and judged a failure in 1976 because it sanitized crime and abetted the IRA’s recruiting. In the words of Gerry Fitt, a Catholic Socialist who represents West Belfast in the British Parliament “Within days of special category status being granted the IRA went on a rampage. Within a month the heart was torn out of the city of Belfast where I was born and raised, on the day that became known as Bloody Friday.” Mr Fitt deeply regretted supporting the concession.”

**Columnist Anthony Lewis:**

“A GROUP of terrorists, highly disciplined and utterly brutal in its disregard for human life, set out to overthrow the existing order and establish a Marxist state. Its methods are murder and intimidation: most of its victims are innocent civilians. Such a group would be almost universally detested and condemned in this and other Western countries — right? Wrong: not if it is the Provisional Irish Republican Army. The Provisionals do not bring an Irish solution closer; they bring on the unworkable policies of extremism. That is why it is so sickening to see their blackshirt tactics romanticised.”



## New York Daily News

(Circ 1,554,604)



“BRITISH Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher could grant political prisoner status to terrorists in the Maze Prison.

Thatcher firmly opposes such a decision — and so do we. To cave in . . . would be to hand the cause of international terrorism an enormous victory. It would suddenly elevate gun-runners, bombings and assassins to the high station of ‘freedom fighters’ and do infinite damage to the cause of peace in Ireland and around the world.”

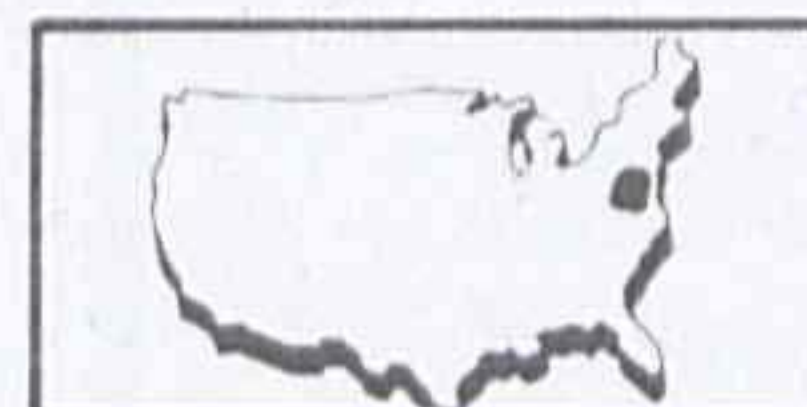
## New York Post

(Circ 624,287)

“THE pathetic nature of Bobby Sands’ last act as a committed IRA man should not blind anyone to the cold-hearted cruelty for which his sacrifice is being used. His suicide is a rallying ground for the terrorists who form the Provisional Wing of the IRA. Their technique is violence. The greater potential tragedy in the Sands affair is not the wasted life of that young man, who basically did himself in with the encouragement of his supposed friends, but the possibility that more innocents will die in related disturbances. The chance that Ulster’s ordeal will be prolonged — the inevitable peace delayed — and the cost of Bobby Sands’ self destruction is great indeed.”

## Boston Sunday Globe

(Circ 710,731)



“BOBBY Sands, MP, Commander in the IRA, is no Kevin Barry. He is not another martyr for old Ireland, another murder for

the Crown. He is a victim of abuse and exploitation, not by the British but by the IRA.”

## Christian Science Monitor

(Circ 172,470)

“PRIME Minister Margaret Thatcher cannot be faulted for her staunch refusal to the demands of the IRA prisoners at Maze prison who wish to be granted special status and treated as political prisoners. To do so would be to give legitimacy to the Provisional IRA and invite misuse of prison privileges for plotting further outrageous acts of terrorism. Those Irish Americans who so mindlessly contribute funds to the IRA should be aware that the IRA receives much of its weaponry (and moral support) from Soviet-bloc countries. The fact that Moscow lauds Bobby Sands as a martyred freedom fighter should give IRA sympathisers in the West pause.”

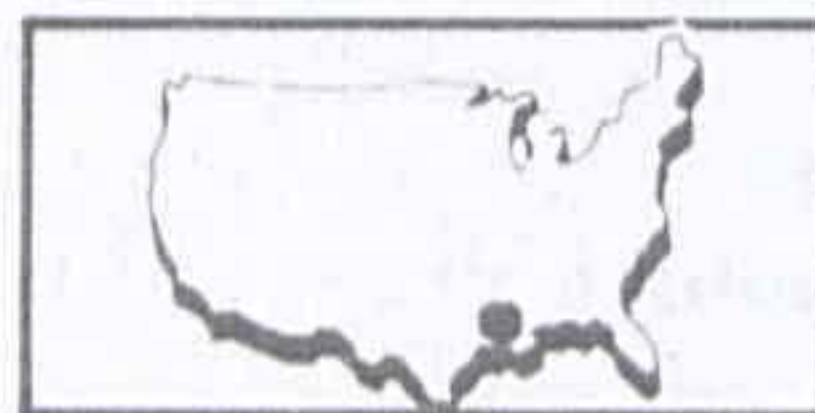
**David K Willis, Staff Correspondent:**

“... THE IRA strategy is to force the British out of Ireland . . . the scenario also presupposes a revolution in Southern Ireland as well — a point imperfectly understood abroad . . . The . . . platform (of Provisional Sinn Fein president Ruari O Bardaigh) stops only a short way from Communism. It calls for nationalisation of banking, finance, insurance, mining, energy and more. Worker-owned co-operatives would run agriculture and industry.”



## Houston Post, Texas

(Circ 330,203)



“THOUGH the IRA tries to pin the label of torture on Sands’ death, it won’t stick. Sands starved by choice. In his last days he was treated with remarkable tenderness — laid on a water bed and gently bandaged to ease the friction on the wasted body. Any torment given that body was by his own act of denial.”

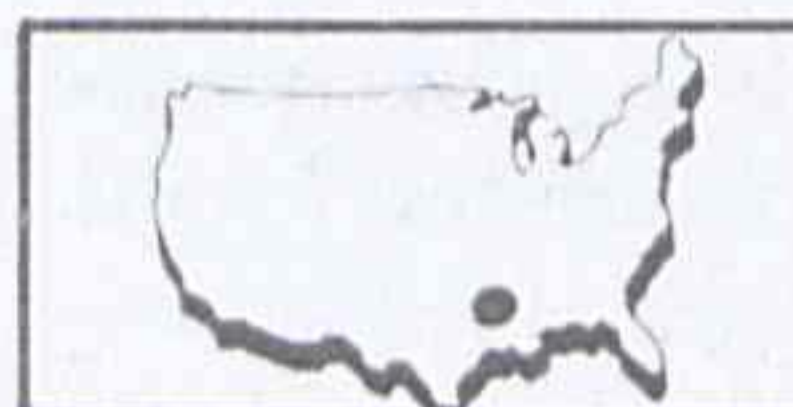
## Houston Chronicle

(Circ 348,601)

“LAST year the Basque separatists were blamed for 95 assassinations in Spain, most of them policemen. There were numerous acts of violence. Someone unfamiliar with Spain would think the entire Basque region was seething with rebellion. Not so. There are more than 2 million people of Basque heritage in Spain. But the ETA (which stands for Basque land and liberty) Guerrilla organisation has fewer than 400 members. Somehow the idea is spreading that these 400 terrorists speak for all the Basque people of Spain. It’s the same way in Northern Ireland. Most of the hard-working family-orientated people of Northern Ireland want nothing more than peace.”

## Dallas Times Herald

(Circ 249,890)



“DURING his first term in prison Irish revolutionary Bobby Sands wrote his creed: ‘I was set to confront the might of the Imperial Empire with an M-1 carbine and enough hate to topple the world’. Today Sands is dead, the victim of a searing hatred that has taken 2,000 lives in Northern Ireland in the last 12 years. Sands starved himself to death in a vain effort to force the British Government to treat revolutionary terrorists as political prisoners, instead of common criminals.”

## Dallas Morning News

(Circ 286,955)

“THE WORD ‘martyr’ is being applied freely to Sands both at home and abroad. No tag could be less appropriate. Classically the martyr — a word derived from the Greek for witness (of Christ) — is a man or woman put to death for the strength and constancy of his religious faith. The British, who refused Sands’ claims to political prisoner status, did not put him to death. He committed suicide by refusing to eat.”



## San Francisco Chronicle

(Circ 506,000)



“THE demands (for the hunger strikers) appear harmless enough, perhaps even trivial. And many view the British Government’s response as heartless and inhumane. That Government, however, would have been in the position of admitting to the world that it held prisoners because of their political beliefs and not because they had violated criminal statutes. Terrorism goes far beyond the expression of political belief and dealing with it does not allow for compromise, as many countries of western Europe and United States have learned.”

## San Francisco Examiner

(Circ 159,325)

“IT’S a pity that Bobby Sands died but he was deluded if he confused nobility with violence, and thought that the latter could bring his land to a better day. We expect his testimonial of death will not cause the British Government to make concessions to terrorism. Nor should it make any, no matter what price must be paid for the rule of law, and the rule of the ballot as the ultimate deciding power.”

## Riverside (California) Press

(Circ 33,334)



“SANDS’ demand of Britain for special treatment as a political prisoner is a status that even the Irish Republic does not give to IRA gunmen such as he.”

## Los Angeles Times

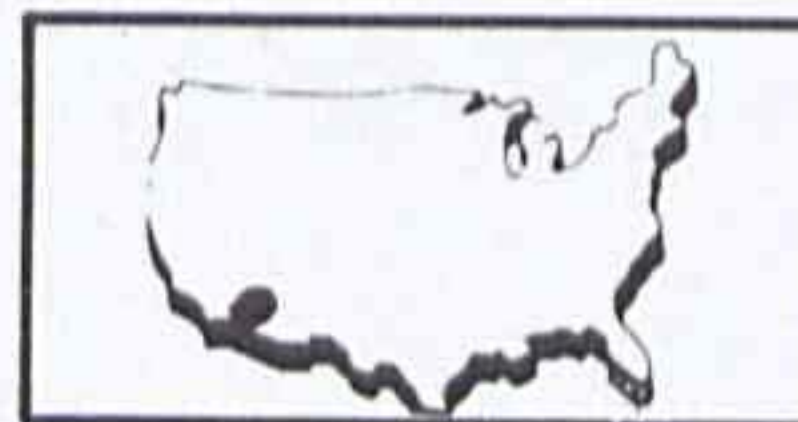
(Circ 1,024,322)



“SANDS was a terrorist who chose to die, unlike the more than 2,000 victims of the past 12 years of violence who had no choice. And the organisation that he represented, the Provisional Wing of the IRA, is a terrorist group composed of men and women who murder and mutilate. Americans can play a role by not feeding the violence through contributions to such organisations as the Irish Northern Aid Committee which was ordered by a Federal Judge to register as an agent of the IRA.”

## The San Diego Union

(Circ 201,798)



“TO YIELD, the British would be bowing to the same plea that comes from terrorists in every part of the world — that acts of violence are somehow excusable if they are committed for a political cause. A Government cannot make that concession and uphold the rule of law. For the British to have yielded in this case would have been a step towards surrendering the Irish people to anarchy and civil war.”



## Chicago Tribune

(Circ 789,767)



“BOBBY Sands deliberately aimed at suicide, not as a protest against violence but as a stimulus to civil war. Mahatma Gandhi

used the hunger strike to move his countrymen to abstain from fratricide. Bobby Sands' deliberate slow suicide is intended to precipitate civil war. The former deserved veneration and influence. The latter would be viewed, in a reasonable world, not as a charismatic martyr but as a fanatical suicide, whose regrettable death provides no sufficient occasion for killing others ”

## Sun-Times

(Circ 657,275)

“SANDS is no political idealist. His long record indicates the obvious about his behaviour. He is a savage terrorist. A criminal. The British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is right in refusing to grant Sands' demands on grounds that his crimes were politically motivated.”

**Columnist Edward Langley:**

“IRISH Americans mostly believe that innocent Catholics have been randomly scooped up by the British and tortured into confessions that will put them into a Maze Prison, a hell-hole that reeks of filth. Both are largely myths. Torture? All security interrogations are recorded on TV tape. And the Maze is the newest most modern prison in Europe. Most IRA true believers in America have been had. They're too terrified to set a shoe in Ulster or to look at the other side of the coin. The Irish war will fade in direct proportion to the Irish-Americans' willingness to challenge the IRA's line, to hear the British side and to — one hopes — realise that the IRA is: less than 500 Oswald Hinckley freaks supplied with Soviet-bloc weapons intent on turning both Irelands into an Allende-type Chile; there isn't a patriot among them. ”

## Tulsa Tribune

(Circ 75,994)



“IF THE British Government had bowed to the demands of Bobby Sands and raised the status of himself and the IRA

terror squads to that of political prisoners it would, of course, be under obligation to do the same for their opponents. The child who steps into a booby trap and is torn to ribbons would therefore be considered not the victim of a heinous crime but simply a participant in a political demonstration. Where does this thinking lead? ”

## THE TENNESSEAN

(Circ 128,170)



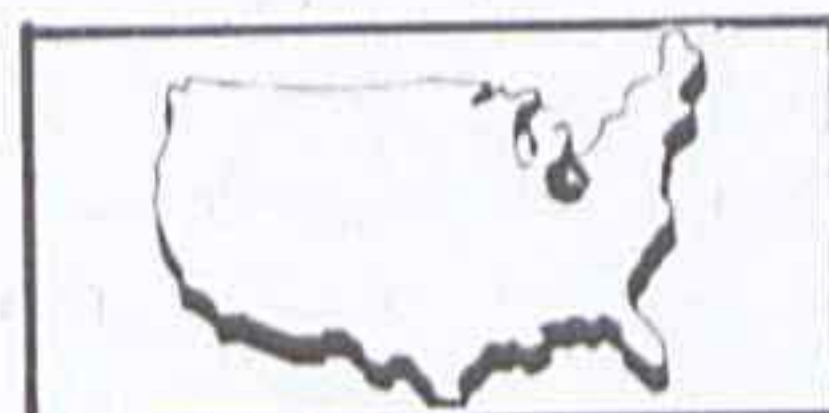
“BLOOD money. That is the only word to describe the money given by American supporters of the Irish Republican Army

in Northern Ireland. The money buys guns, bullets and explosives. Most often, the innocent die. Bobby Sands' death wasn't noble. It was pathetic, as pathetic as those who believe their money contributes to anything other than wrongdoing. ”



## Detroit News

(Circ 630,573)



“NO GOVERNMENT can afford to concede that repugnant acts of violence are somehow sanctified by political aspirations. The

IRA is accorded no political status in the Republic of Ireland, and human rights groups, like Amnesty International, have not supported its demands for recognition.”

## Quincy Patriot Ledger, Mass

(Circ 82,612)



“Were Britain to concede to demands for privileged status for convicted terrorists, the IRA would quickly find another

issue to ignite street warfare.”

## Pittsburgh Post Gazette

(Circ 180,772)

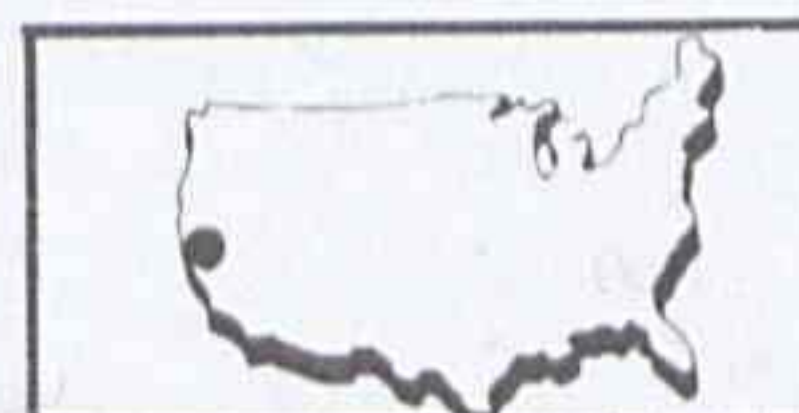


“THE LOGIC of the basic British position is sound. Unless a Government is willing to concede that it exercises authority in-

validly it necessarily will punish those who break the law and harm others for ‘political’ reasons the way it punishes other lawbreakers and the men of violence.”

## The Oregonian

(Circ 248,229)



“THE EUROPEAN Commission on Human Rights and Amnesty International recognised it was proper for the British to

refuse to give convicted criminals political status while in prison. Those Americans who have made such demands on the British Government would be shocked at permitting the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Weather Underground or any Nazi or Klan activists arrested for acts of violence to claim special privileges on the grounds their acts were political.”

## CANADA

## The Gazette, Montreal

(Circ 142,256)

“It is a pity that a man should choose to die for a simple-minded and implausible idea, a confusion of violence and politics.”





10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Attached is a letter  
from Bishop Daly.

Michael has asked  
NIO for an urgent  
draft reply.

Charlotte Stevens  
Duty Clerk

6.6.81

ms



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



**CONFIDENTIAL**

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ

(2)

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

*Prime Minister.*

*You may like to glance - As you will see, your*

5 June 1981

*instructions have closely followed! There is still a deafening silence about the complaint made to the ECtHR last Saturday by a hunger striker.*

*Dear Sir,*

PRISON PROTEST IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION HUMAN RIGHTS *Paul - 9/6*

Our representatives visited Strasbourg on 3 June at the invitation of the Commission for what the latter called an informal examination of the complaints under Article 8 and Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights which they are now considering. The Commission raised, as they are bound by the Convention to do, the question of a friendly settlement. I enclose a detailed account of the discussion, to which it may be useful to add the following by way of commentary.

Our representatives were pressed rather harder than we had expected to enter into discussion of the substantive issues underlying the complaints. As instructed, they declined to enter into such discussion. They handed over the paper mentioned in my earlier letter, which appears as Annex A to the record of the meeting. That was just as well, because representatives of the applicant (who had seen the Commission in the morning) had clearly played down the question of political status, and had also made much of the myth that HMG did a deal to end the last hunger strike and had subsequently reneged it. The Commission Secretariat acknowledged that we sent them long ago copies of the statements published at the end of the last hunger strike. Those statements spelt out what had always been available to those ending the protest, and we shall have no trouble in showing that we have followed that procedure to the letter.

Two of the Prime Minister's points emphasised in your letter of 29 May came up in the discussions. First, it is clear that the Commission recognise that although they have now declared admissible the outstanding complaints under Articles 8 and 13, we remain free to use all the relevant arguments - including those which bear on admissibility - as the case proceeds. Second, the Commission have yet to decide whether they will regard the complaint under Article 13 (availability of effective remedy in respect of breach of the Convention) as being confined to the outstanding complaint under Article 8 (freedom of correspondence). We shall continue to argue that the complaint under Article 13 can relate only to the Article 8 complaint and as the note of the meeting indicates our position was made clear to the Commission's representatives.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

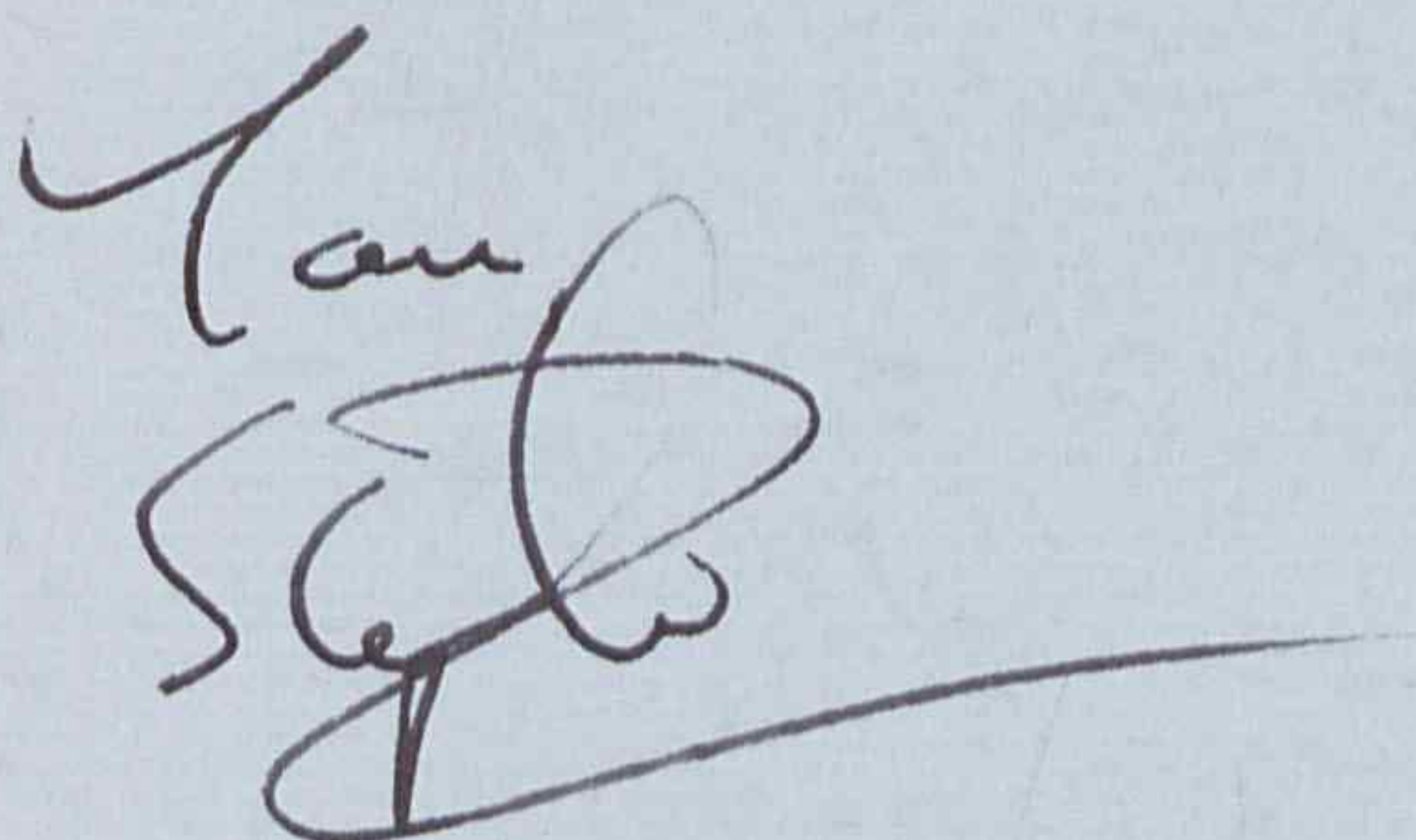


**CONFIDENTIAL**

The Commission are communicating HMG's attitude to the other side. If no more is heard about a "friendly settlement", the Commission will proceed with the examination of the substantive complaints, all of which would take some time.

There was one aspect of the meeting which was of interest. The complainant's representative gave the Commission the impression that political status was not the problem, and that they were interested in humanitarian aspects of the prison regime. Our representatives explained the truth of the situation by referring to statements made by and directly on behalf of the protesting prisoners, including the hunger strikers. The line taken by the applicants' representatives may be a pointer to the protesters' future stance. The Secretary of State will be circulating a paper to OD about the prison situation during the next few days.

I am sending a copy of this letter, and the enclosure, to John Halliday (Home Office), Roderic Lyne (FCO), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and Jim Nursaw (Law Officers Department).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S W Boys Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

S W BOYS SMITH

**CONFIDENTIAL**



NOTE OF A MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, STRASBOURG 3 JUNE 1981 AT 2.00 PM

## Present:

Professor C A Norgaard	- Acting President	Mr D M Edwards	- Legal Advisers
Professor T Opsahl	- Member of the Commission		Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Mr H C Kruger	- Secretary of the Commission	Mr A H Hammond	- Legal Advisers
Mr O'Boyle	- Commission Secretariat		Home Office
		Mr N C Abbott	- Northern Ireland Office

McFeeley et al v The United Kingdom

1. Opening the meeting, Professor Norgaard explained that the Commission wished to establish whether there was any basis for a friendly settlement under Article 28(b) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the Convention) of the outstanding complaints under Articles 8 and 13 in the case of McFeeley et al v the UK. From their meeting with the Applicants' Representatives that morning, the two Commissioners believed that they had established that the Applicants wanted a friendly settlement on the basis of improved prison conditions: it was said that they were not seeking political status. Professor Norgaard reminded the meeting that a friendly settlement under the Convention need not be based on the issues in dispute in the outstanding complaints: they could in theory be based on prison conditions generally.

2. In reply, Mr Edwards said that although the complaints under Articles 8 and 13 had been declared admissible, we regarded our position as fully preserved and were ready to argue our case at a later date. The UK had no proposals for a friendly settlement. We assumed that if the Applicants had any such proposals they would be processed through the Commission in the normal way. If any such proposals appeared, we would naturally take them to our Ministers.



3. Discussion then turned to conditions in Northern Ireland prisons and the changes introduced in recent months. We accordingly judged it right to hand over our note, copy at Annex, "Protest at HM Prison Maze, Description of HMG's Position". Mr Edwards explained that, unlike the protesting prisoners, the Government had shown itself to be flexible in its readiness to improve the regime for all prisoners on humanitarian grounds. However, although flexible, there were certain points of principle on which the Government had not been, and would not be, prepared to move, viz no differentiation for particular groups of prisoners; and no ceding of control by the authorities to the prisoners over day to day life in the prisons. These principles were clearly stated on the first page of our note: the Commission had already rejected the motion of political status for certain prisoners in its Partial Decision last June. The Government, while standing firm on these issues, had of course made major improvements in the conditions of all prisoners in Northern Ireland as our note explained. Our handing over of this note did not imply that the points which it contained were in any way the subject of negotiation.

4. Professor Opsahl drew attention to the 32 page document "Regimes in Northern Ireland Prisons" which was made publicly available following the statement to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 4 December 1980 (this was the document placed in the House of Commons Library.) The Applicants' Representatives had told the Commission that the Government had not kept its word on the regime available to prisoners who ended their protests as explained in that and other documents and, perhaps, in oral undertakings. Was there another document? Professor Opsahl asked whether there had been a lack of communication between the Government and the protesting prisoners and whether clarification now would provide the basis for a friendly settlement.

5. Mr Abbott explained that, as Mr Atkins had told Parliament on 19 December, all prisoners in Maze and Armagh Prisons were given a note on 18 December explaining what would happen when the protest ended. This note, which had been reproduced in the Official Report for 19 December was consistent with the 32 page document. The Government had not gone back on its word: the regime available



to prisoners who ended their protests had been made wholly clear throughout. Mr Kruger confirmed that the Commission had been kept abreast of these developments.

6. Professor Norgaard pointed out that since nothing which had been said at the meeting provided the basis for a friendly settlement, he was not clear why the Government had apparently sought to expedite consideration of the outstanding complaints. Mr Edwards said that given the continuing prisons protest and the hunger strikes we had not wanted to frustrate the Commission's continuing examination of the case by concentrating on technicalities: we were not concerned at what stage our arguments on the merits of the outstanding complaints were heard. (Mr Kruger confirmed that this was clearly understood.) But Mr Edwards explained that the line we had taken on admissibility did not mean that we had proposals to put forward, nor had we implied this at any time.

7. Professor Norgaard doubted whether the Applicants would be prepared to put forward proposals for a friendly settlement unless the Government indicated its readiness to seek one. The Commission Team pressed the United Kingdom to reconsider its approach - bearing in mind particularly that the Applicants were said not to be seeking political status - so that an opening could be found on which a friendly settlement could be based. Could the final sentence of paragraph 2 of the note we had handed over (Annex A) be taken as an indication that proposals by the Applicants channelled through the Commission would be considered? Would the Government be prepared to elaborate further in writing on what regime would be available to prisoners who ended their protests? At this point Professor Norgaard said that the Applicants were looking for some sign of the Government's goodwill. Mr Edwards reacted strongly to this suggestion: the Government had already demonstrated its goodwill by the changes which had been introduced on the prison regime. There was no question of needing further gestures to show goodwill.

8. The UK party repeated that any proposals by the Applicants would be shown to UK Ministers. We could not say more; but the Commission and its procedures were of course taken seriously by the UK Government.



**CONFIDENTIAL**

If the Commission required further information about the regime available to prisoners in Northern Ireland, we would do our best to supply it; but the Commission were already aware of the Government's position on the issues of principle and on the key features of the regime. Mr Hammond emphasised that the note we had handed over was not in any way a basis for negotiation but was rather a record of what had been done by HMG. He also pointed out that the Government had demonstrated its flexibility through a number of important changes in the regime for all prisoners: it was the protesting prisoners who had been inflexible. Mr Hammond pointed out that there had been conflicting statements by people who purported to represent the protesting prisoners on what they were demanding: sometimes it appeared that the demand was for political status; at others for minor adjustments in the prison regime but it was our understanding that they were demanding the former. Mr Abbott pointed out that in their statement of 5 February, announcing the current hunger strike, the protesting prisoners had said in terms that they were "demanding to be treated as political prisoners".

9. Mr Kruger saw little prospect of a friendly settlement unless both sides were prepared to negotiate. It was in theory possible for a friendly settlement to be achieved by unilateral statements but in practice this was unlikely to yield results. The Commission Team noted that we had not come to negotiate. If there were no proposals for a friendly settlement, the Commission would move on to consider the merits of the outstanding complaints. In the case of the Article 13 complaints, this would probably not be before July. The complaints under Article 8 would await the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in a Home Office case (Silver et al) which raised similar issues on prisoners' correspondence. Professor Opsahl suggested that the Article 13 issue might be wide enough to embrace issues other than those under Article 8. (It was possible, although unclear, that he might have been implying that the Article 13 issue was relevant to the hunger strikers' grievances.) Mr Hammond stressed that it was the Government's submission that Article 13 was relevant, if at all, only to the outstanding complaints under Article 8.

**CONFIDENTIAL**



10. Mr Kruger emphasised that the proceedings before the Commission were confidential. He also noted that it was essential for the status of the Commission that it confined itself to legal matters and did not become involved in political issues. Mr Edwards said that this was well understood.

11. In conclusion, Professor Norgaard said that the Commission would tell the Applicants' Representatives of the Government's position and remind them that it was open to them to put forward proposals for a friendly settlement if they so wished. Professor Norgaard explained that the Commission was at the disposal of the parties at any time until the case closed should they wish to reach a friendly settlement.

*N.C. Abbott*  
N C ABBOTT

4 June 1981



## PROTEST AT HM PRISON MAZE: DESCRIPTION OF HMG'S POSITION

Principles

1. HMG has consistently asserted certain principles in respect of prison administration on which it would not be prepared to compromise. These principles are:-

(i) No political or special category status for any prisoners. Any differentiation of treatment of a certain group or class of prisoners in Northern Ireland is objectionable under this principle. This principle was endorsed by the ECHR in its Partial Decision of June 1980.

(ii) The prison authorities must remain fully in control of the prison administration and of the major elements of day to day life in the prisons.

2. Subject to those principles, HMG has shown itself to be flexible and willing to introduce changes in the prison regime for both conforming and protesting prisoners. (The reference to protesting prisoners here relates to any prisoners who do not conform with prison rules irrespective of the alleged motivation for their crimes.) Most of the following changes were introduced after the Commission made its partial decision in June 1980. Irrespective of any protests, the Government is keeping under review the scope for improvements in the regime applicable to all prisoners in Northern Ireland.

3. Additional Privileges made available to protesting prisoners:

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| (i) Provision of plimsolls, vests and shorts for exercise. | } 23.3.80. |
| (ii) Weekly letter in and out instead of monthly.          |            |
| (iii) Two visits a month instead of one.                   |            |



- (4) One extra hour's physical recreation each week in the gymnasium.
- (5) One evening's association per week
- (6) Availability of "closed" visits for prisoners who refuse to be searched.
- (7) Books and newspapers made available in each wing.
- (8) Compassionate home leave on death of a near relatives made available on the same basis as for conforming prisoners.

)  
 August/  
 September  
 1980

(9) For those prisoners on a "clean" protest:

- (i) the rate of loss of remission was halved as compared with those on the "dirty" protest.
- (ii) A special monthly parcel is allowed containing up to 4 lbs of fruit and toilet articles.
- (iii) One hour extra exercise each day is allowed.

)  
 January  
 1981

4 Ex-protesting prisoners

Following a review a partial restoration of lost remission is now being given to those who have discontinued their protest and are now fully conforming.

5 All prisoners

All prisoners now benefit from the Government's decision to abolish prison uniform as such and to substitute prison-issue civilian-style clothing which is available as a personal issue to each prisoner.



Despite the action in January last of a number of protesting prisoners involving the destruction of cell furniture and damage to cells, all protesting prisoners have now been issued with beds and bedding, tables and chairs and the issue of other cell furniture continues. At the request of protesting prisoners, writing material and pens were provided as were additional books and newspapers.





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

5 June 1981

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has just received from Bishop Daly of Derry. Clearly Bishop Daly's letter should both be considered together with the one from Cardinal O Fiaich which I forwarded to you yesterday and receive a very early reply. I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft by Wednesday 10 June.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

16





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

5 June 1981

I am replying on the Prime Minister's behalf to your letter to her of 3 June. Your letter is receiving urgent consideration and will receive an early reply.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

The Right Reverend Edward Daly,  
Bishop of Derry.

Sh





Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

4 June, 1981.

BF 11/6  
As I mentioned to you on the 'phone a moment ago, we have now received a reply from Cardinal O Fiaich to the Prime Minister's letter to him of 28 May. As you will see, the Cardinal's reply is not very forthcoming. I should be grateful if you could let me have early advice as to how you would suggest we proceed.

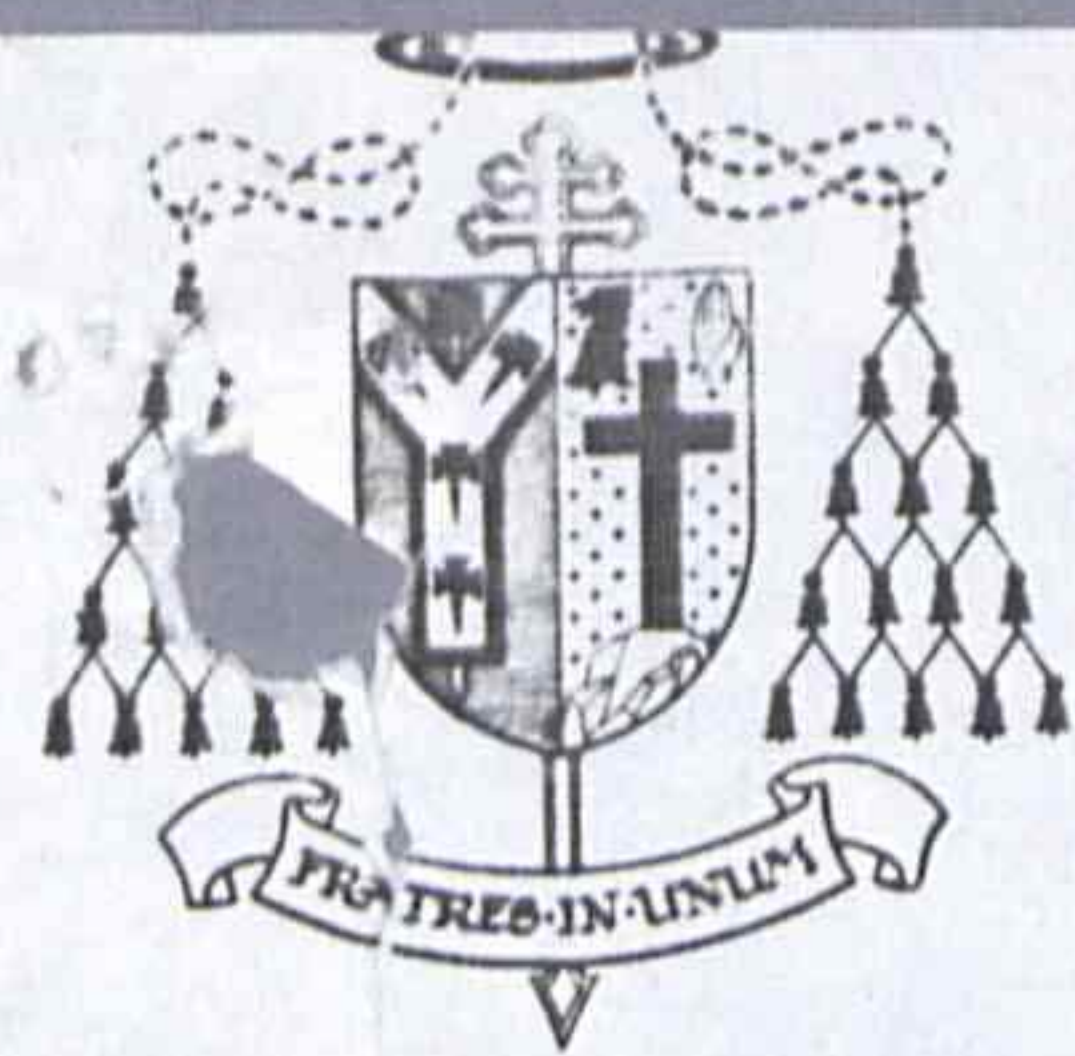
I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to Roderic Lyne (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

MB





'Ara Coeli  
Ard Mhacha/Armagh

2nd June, 1981.

R4

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 28th May. I am afraid it was not possible for me to rearrange part of my programme for that day at such short notice.

I will be in London on 30th June - 1st July but I should point out that the reason for my visit is an invitation from the Parish Priest of Balham to commemorate with his parishioners the third centenary of the execution of a former Archbishop of Armagh, St. Oliver Plunkett. The execution took place on 1st July 1681. You might not consider this the most auspicious occasion for a meeting.

In addition, having read your speech at Stormont last week, and being aware that two events will be pending - the death of more hunger strikers unless something happens to persuade them to end their strike, and the marches leading up to the 'Twelfth of July' celebrations - I wonder at the wisdom of having a meeting at that time which will undoubtedly become public. We both have a common concern to keep normal life going and to work unceasingly for peace and reconciliation.

If you think that a meeting at that time would be helpful I would be free to go straight from Heathrow Airport (arriving 3.40 p.m.) to Downing Street on Tuesday, 30th June, or alternatively to call on you sometime after 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st July.

Yours very sincerely,  
Tomás Ó Fiaich

Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.





RS

Bishop's House  
St. Eugene's Cathedral  
Derry BT48 9AP  
Ireland

Tel. Derry 62302 (STD CODE 0504)

CONFIDENTIAL

3rd June 1981

B/F with draft  
reply

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher,  
10, Downing Street,  
London.

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

Unknowingly I received an invitation to meet you at the lunch in Stormont Castle last week. Due to security reasons, I was not told that you would be there. I had some other commitments here on that day, so I did not accept the invitation to lunch with the Secretary of State at such short notice. Since then, there have been some allegations in the Guardian and Sunday Telegraph that I snubbed you. I wish you to know that that was not the case. In hindsight, I felt that the Secretary of State could have confided in me, especially at the present very critical time. As a Bishop, I have to respect many confidences, and I greatly resented the implication that I could not be trusted. Indeed, I have already respected many confidences placed in me by the Northern Ireland Office. I am afraid that the same cannot be said of the NIO as regards confidences which we shared about meetings and times of meeting which, on several occasions, were somewhat mysteriously leaked to the press in advance much to the embarrassment of Cardinal O'Fiaich and myself.

I have read the full text of your speech at the lunch in Stormont Castle. I agree with you when you state that the Provisional IRA have put the Catholic community on the rack. I say that as somebody who lives in one of the most troubled areas. I have spent many sleepless nights recently with petrol bombing and riots taking place around my house. I live in an area which, at the present time, is deprived of many amenities as a result of rioting and destruction. Several close friends have been murdered by the IRA. I have also had close friends murdered by the Security Forces. I have lived and worked here as priest and bishop for more than 19 difficult years. I abhor and detest violence and injustice of all kinds and have publicly stated my position on countless occasions and I have suffered many threats and intimidation as a result. I have publicly stated that I do not consider that a hunger strike can be morally justified in the present circumstances. I do not believe in political status, nor have I ever suggested that it should be introduced.



With Cardinal O'Fiaich, I was engaged in discussions with Mr. Humphrey Atkins for a period of seven or eight months last year. Those talks were designed to avoid the present dreadful situation. I believe that had our advice been accepted and responded to, the present situation and resultant polarisation would not have developed.

I believe that the IRA, loyalist paramilitary groups, murder and bombing, hunger strikes and all the abhorrent phenomena in this community stem from a fundamental political problem. I believe that if the political problem is confronted, the symptoms of this problem will no longer exist. The violence etc, are symptoms of the problem rather than the problem itself. I think you are already aware of this. And I appreciate that the political problem is difficult and extremely complex and will not be solved in the short term.. However, I believe that, with more sensitive handling, some of the symptoms can be alleviated.

The most immediate problem just now is the hunger strike and all the community unrest that has been generated by it. Hunger strikes in Ireland have historically unleashed a dreadful backlash in the community. For somebody who is not Irish, this may be very difficult to understand. I do believe very sincerely, with respect, that your Government must try to be more sensitive to the community which is being torn apart by the hunger strike. There is a battle for hearts and minds going on within the Catholic community here. I have spent the last seven years as a Catholic Bishop here. During those years, the whole thrust of my pastoral work has been trying to alienate young people from the IRA, pointing out the incompatibility of membership of such an organisation with christian living. Up until the autumn of last year, I had been making considerable headway. Violence was reduced to a very low level once again in this city. IRA activity was minimal. The Catholic community and especially the young had disowned them. Prison protest marches were attracting little local support. The situation has now changed utterly. I have experienced great hostility from young people once again. There is wholesale intimidation going on, and whilst there is a containment policy that may be working fairly well, it is making life almost intolerable for those within the containment areas. I do think that if your Government could see it's way to implement some changes in the prison regime applying to all prisoners here, short of granting political status, it would receive a positive response from this community. I am convinced of this. The Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, a very esteemed Commission of the Irish Catholic Church, yesterday submitted a document to Mr. Atkins making some concrete suggestions on these lines. I would plead with you to give careful attention to this document. I believe that we simply cannot afford to let this situation drift any longer. If it is allowed to drift, this whole area will slip into anarchy with disastrous consequences for everyone. As you likely know, all kinds of undesirable local and foreign influences are busily operating here peddling philosophies which are



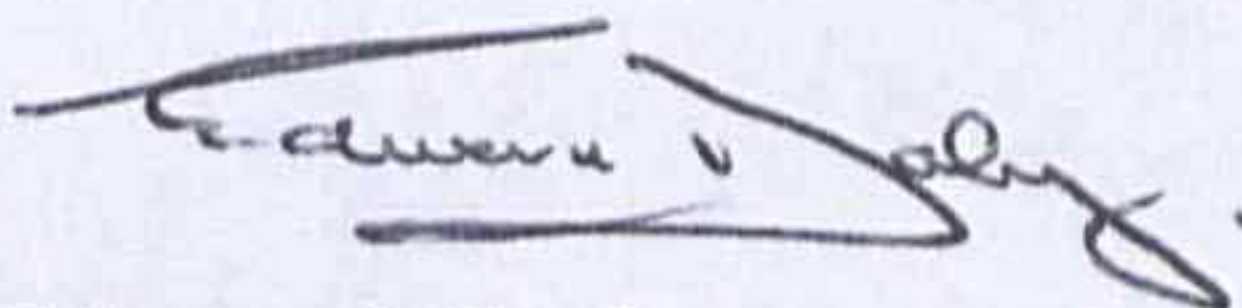
completely alien to us. I have a great love and affection for the people here. They are very good and kind people. They have suffered terribly. We have one of the highest levels of unemployment in Western Europe. Yet, before these troubles began, this community was completely law-abiding. I believe that if urgent action is taken, we can still salvage the situation. Thus I would plead with you to give your most careful consideration to this. Whatever the reaction of the prisoners might be, or whatever the reaction of their organisations outside may be, the Catholic community here, I am convinced, would respond positively to an acceptance of the suggestions made by the Justice and Peace Commission.

I am writing this letter to you in confidence. This letter will not be published by me. I hope that you will see your way to respond positively to it. I can assure you that a positive response will evoke unanimous and energetic support from myself and the other Catholic Bishops here, and from the great majority of the Catholic community throughout Ireland. I do not think that it will evoke a wholly negative reaction from the Protestant community here, apart from some predictable objections from some predictable quarters. They are as anxious as anyone here to see an end to this problem.

I look forward to hearing from you at your early convenience.

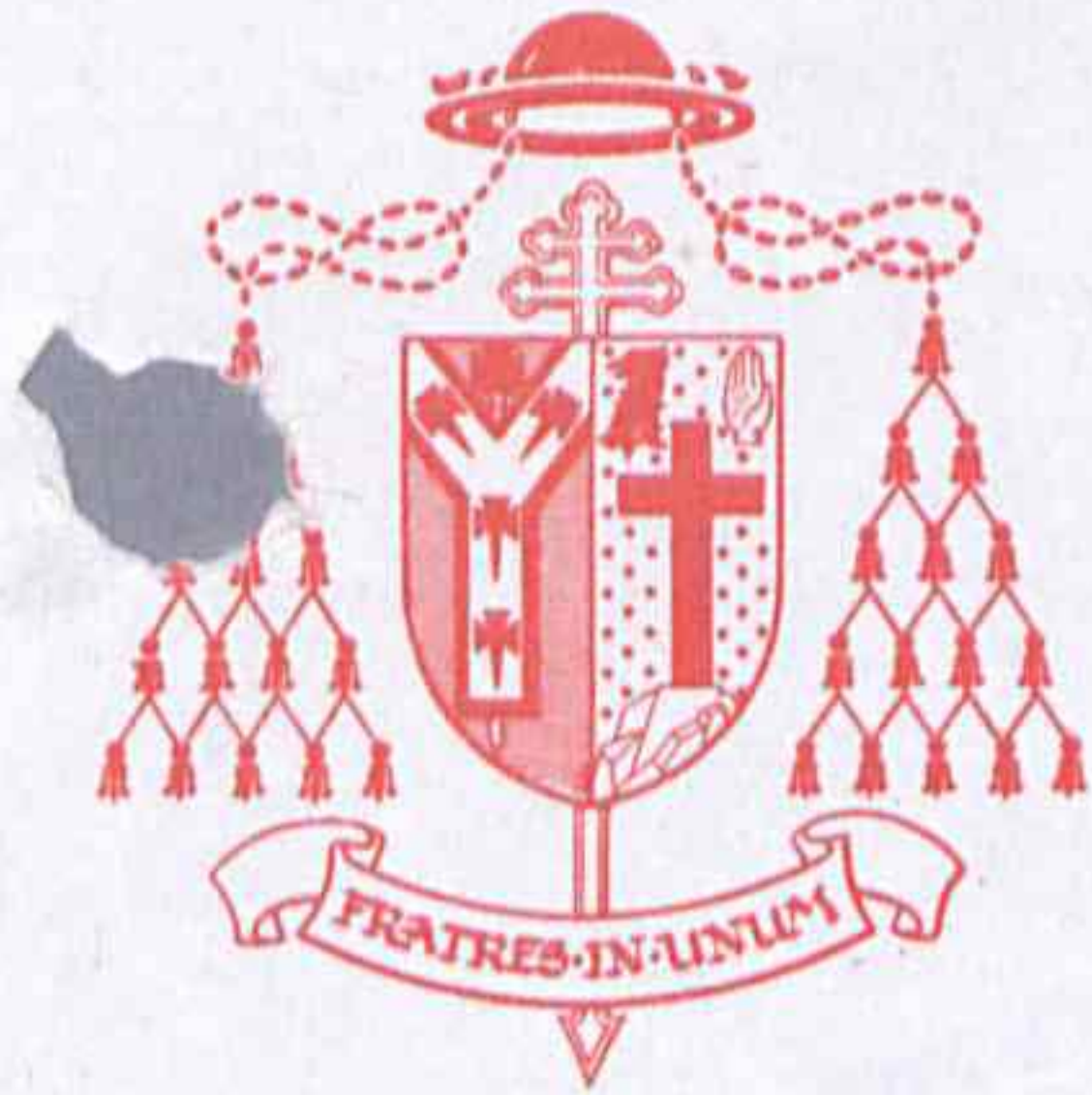
I am,

Yours sincerely,

+ 

+ Edward Daly  
Bishop of Derry





It would be unwise to refuse. His  
other engagements are not a  
matter for me  
Ara Coeli  
Ard Mhacha/Armagh

Prime Minister

Not very gracious - to put it  
mildly!

2nd June, 1981.

I have asked for advice. Mr. Atkin is seeing Cardinal  
Hume (who has praised your Belfast speech) to-morrow. The Cardinal  
is taking an interest in this meeting.

Dear Prime Minister,

2nd June 1981

Thank you for your letter of 28th May. I am afraid it was not possible for me to rearrange part of my programme for that day at such short notice.

I will be in London on 30th June - 1st July but I should point out that the reason for my visit is an invitation from the Parish Priest of Balham to commemorate with his parishioners the third centenary of the execution of a former Archbishop of Armagh, St. Oliver Plunkett. The execution took place on 1st July 1681. You might not consider this the most auspicious occasion for a meeting.

In addition, having read your speech at Stormont last week, and being aware that two events will be pending - the death of more hunger strikers unless something happens to persuade them to end their strike, and the marches leading up to the 'Twelfth of July' celebrations - I wonder at the wisdom of having a meeting at that time which will undoubtedly become public. We both have a common concern to keep normal life going and to work unceasingly for peace and reconciliation.

If you think that a meeting at that time would be helpful I would be free to go straight from Heathrow Airport (arriving 3.40 p.m.) to Downing Street on Tuesday, 30th June, or alternatively to call on you sometime after 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 1st July.

Yours very sincerely,  
Tomás Ó Fiaich

Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.



PRIME MINISTER

Office in Belfast has rung to say that one of the hunger strikers, Lynch, has just signed an application for his complaints to be investigated by the European Commission of Human Rights.

We are not meant to know about this yet. He saw his solicitor and his family in prison this morning. The Government has no comment but when the news is made public we will take the line that we are happy to facilitate any applications from the hunger strikers to the European Commission.

Duty Clerk



BRITISH EMBASSY

3100 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

Telephone: (202) 462-1340

1 June 1981

Representative Marie Howe  
The Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
House of Representatives  
State House  
Boston

*fa*  
*Shub*

Dear Ms Howe,

I have been asked to acknowledge receipt of the resolution concerning Mr Bobby Sands adopted by the Massachusetts House of Representatives on 14 April, a copy of which you recently sent to the Prime Minister.

Firstly, may I say that we profoundly regret that Mr Sands chose to take his own life. His death was needless and will not make any contribution towards the peaceful resolution of the problems facing Northern Ireland.

Mr Sands was, as your resolution states, legitimately elected to serve as a Member of Parliament in the United Kingdom. You will by now be aware that the House of Commons did not take action to expel him from Parliament. However, Mr Sands was a prisoner, convicted of serious criminal offences, with several years of his sentence still to be served. There could be no question of releasing him to enable him to take his seat in the House of Commons. The British Government believes that it would be wrong for an elected representative to be given immunity from imprisonment or any other privileges placing him above the law. In this context you may be interested to know that the House of Commons Committee of Privileges, which in 1970 considered the position of Members of Parliament who were also convicted prisoners; concluded that

"While a Member of Parliament in prison after conviction remains a Member of Parliament, he is in no different position from any other person so detained. Your Committee are of the opinion that a Member of Parliament should not be given any special advantages by reason of his being a Member".

*Yours sincerely,*

*Alan Goulty*

A F Goulty  
First Secretary

bcc:  
PS/Secretary of State  
for Northern Ireland  
Mr Abbott SIL NIO(L)  
N Sanders Esq  
10 Downing Street





EDWARD B. O'NEILL  
CLERK OF THE SENATE

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE SENATE  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON  
TEL. 727-2476

May 29, 1981

*J 10/6*

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher  
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom  
London, SW1

Dear Mrs. Thatcher,

I am transmitting to you herewith copies of  
resolutions adopted by the Massachusetts State  
Senate on May 18, 1981.

Respectfully,

*Edward B. O'Neill*

Edward B. O'Neill  
Clerk of the Massachusetts Senate

EBO'N/pjc



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-ONE

RESOLUTIONS MEMORIALIZING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE  
UNITED NATIONS TO RESOLVE THE NORTHERN IRELAND CRISIS  
AND RESTORE HUMAN RIGHTS TO ALL OF IRELAND.

WHEREAS, FRANCIS HUGHES CHOSE TO FORFEIT HIS LIFE IN A FINAL ELOQUENT  
STATEMENT AGAINST THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND; AND

WHEREAS, THE STUBBORNESS OF A BANKRUPT BRITISH POLICY IN NORTHERN  
IRELAND HAS CAUSED, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY, THE DEATH OF MANY IRISH PATRIOTS;  
AND

WHEREAS, THE TROUBLES IN NORTHERN IRELAND ARE NOT MERELY AN INTERNAL  
AFFAIR OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, BUT RATHER A SUBSTANTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS  
REQUIRING INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION FOR A RATIONAL SOLUTION; AND

WHEREAS, THE DEATHS OF FRANCIS HUGHES AND BOBBY SANDS SHOULD EVOKE IN  
PEOPLE EVERYWHERE AN ABHORRENCE OF A CALLOUS AND SCANDALOUS POLICY WHICH PERMITS  
INDIVIDUALS TO DIE AND A NATION TO BECOME A VICTIM OF SOCIAL TURBULENCE; AND


WHEREAS, MANY OTHER IRISHMEN WILL SURELY DIE AS A RESULT OF THE  
CONTINUING PETTIFOGGING OF BRITISH LEADERS WHO IGNORE THE WORDS OF JOHN DONNE  
THAT "EVERY MAN'S DEATH DIMINISHES ME"; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, THAT THE MASSACHUSETTS SENATE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS THAT THE  
BRITISH GOVERNMENT TAKE IMMEDIATE PUBLIC ACTION TO RESTORE HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT THE UNITED NATIONS PLACE THE MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND ON ITS AGENDA FOR ACTION FORTHWITH; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT COPIES OF THESE RESOLUTIONS BE TRANSMITTED FORTHWITH BY  
THE CLERK OF THE SENATE TO THE CONSUL GENERAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM IN BOSTON,  
THE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, PRIME MINISTER  
MARGARET THATCHER, ELIZABETH THE II, QUEEN OF ENGLAND, AND TO THE SECRETARY  
GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, KURT WALDHEIM.

SENATE, ADOPTED, MAY 18, 1981.

  
*William M. Bulger*  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

*Edward B. O'Neill*  
CLERK OF THE SENATE

OFFERED BY:

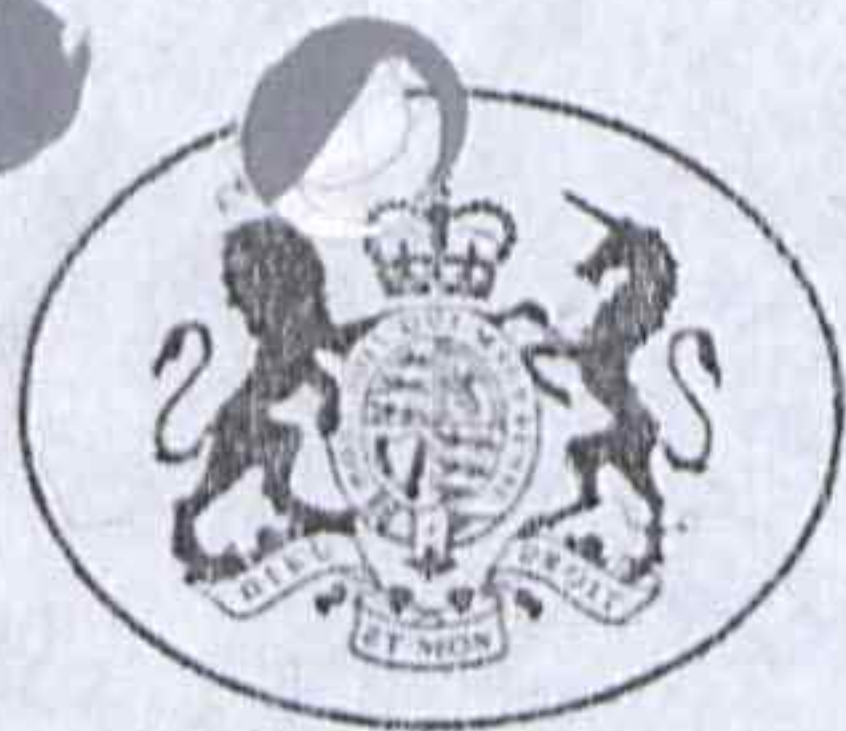
WILLIAM M. BULGER  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

*Daniel J. Foley*  
SENATOR DANIEL J. FOLEY



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*Ireland*



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

*Enlin + for Nurs*

I attach a note on recent British and overseas press comment about events in Northern Ireland which the Secretary of State thought your Minister might be interested to see and to show to other Ministers and Parliamentary Private Secretaries in your Department.

*S.W. Boys Smith*

S.W. Boys Smith  
29 May 1981

To Private Secretaries to Members of Cabinet,  
Jim Nursaw, Law Officers Department  
David Wright, Cabinet Office



E.P.  
N. IRELAND PRISON PROPAGANDA

During the past few weeks it has been suggested in some quarters that the Government was "losing the propaganda battle" over the Maze Prison hunger strike, as a result of which four Irish Republican terrorist prisoners have already taken their own lives in their quest for a distinctive political status within the Prison. Such opinions are inevitably impressionistic rather than being based on a thorough reading and analysis of the wide range of newspapers and journals at home and abroad which have commented on the issue. It is also probable that those who make this claim are confusing reporting with editorial opinion.

Newspapers and broadcasting organisations throughout the world have paid particular attention to the hunger strike, focusing especially on the death of Robert Sands, the first one to commit suicide in this way. That was to be expected. But, despite attempts by the Provisional IRA to gain propaganda advantage, this extensive publicity has not resulted in either governments elsewhere or newspaper editorial writers around the world accepting their line. No government in the free world has sent either a formal or informal protest to Her Majesty's Government about the hunger strike and the balance of editorial comment in the UK and foreign Press has been overwhelmingly in support of the Government's position on political status. While the Government has been criticised by a number of columnists for inflexibility and for not going some way to meet the prisoners' demands, no one has advocated capitulation on the central issue.

Attached are extracts from editorials in publications in the UK, Irish Republic and North America, written when attention was being directed to Sands. They clearly indicate the extent to which leader writers have grasped the issues, as explained to them through vigorous and sustained briefing by Government information officers in London, Belfast and posts abroad. News media interest has been gradually waning despite three further suicides, but the Government information effort continues.





Since the publicity surrounding Sands' hunger strike and death, the news media have been devoting greater attention to the victims of terrorism in Northern Ireland. For the first time for a number of years, national newspapers and TV bulletins have been providing coverage of the deaths and funerals of policemen, soldiers and civilians in the Province. And there are indications that in other ways, too, both journalists and programme makers from the U.K. and other countries are making more efforts to analyse the true situation in Northern Ireland.



UNITED KINGDOM:

The Times

The nature of the offences committed by the IRA should alone disqualify their members from claiming political status. They are not, for the most part, committed against those people whom they hold responsible for the policy they object to. The greater proportion of those who have died and have been injured by IRA action have been innocent individuals, who have no responsibility. Indeed, in many instances the IRA have neither known nor cared who was liable to be killed. By what logic can such indiscriminate violence be classed as political crime justifying preferential treatment?

The Guardian

The central demand of the IRA - for clear political status - cannot be clearly met. To license killing of passers-by and census makers as well as of soldiers and policemen is to give every criminal with a passing political excuse free licence within the realm. How do you separate a bank robber for IRA funds and a bank robber from the East End who pleads that a random GIC election leaflet turned him into a crook?

Daily Express

Organised civilised government, with its compromises and tolerances, is unacceptable to extremists. They must get their own way in everything - and those who resist must perish. This is the tyranny of terror; be it the IRA, the Red Brigades of Italy, Baader-Meinhof in Germany, the Basque terrorists in Spain, or scores of similar organisations throughout the world. Britain has acted with a degree of restraint, unimaginable elsewhere.

Daily Mirror

Mr Sands demanded political status, but he had won the political status which matters when he topped the poll in the Fermanagh by-election.

Daily Telegraph

Hunger striking is a fairly familiar device which normally fails even to procure lasting fame for those who employ it. Those who should be admired are the Government (particularly the Northern Ireland Office) for its steadfastness, the prison and medical staffs who have had to attend to the macabre details of this grisly affair, and the security forces who can be counted on to meet with vigour and restraint whatever plans the IRA may have to avenging with innocent blood Sands' crime against himself.



### The Sun

Bobby Sands stood for tyranny - the dark tyranny of terror by the bomb cruelly placed to maim and kill unsuspecting innocents. Had his demands to wear his own clothes, to be excused work, to be allowed to mingle with other IRA prisoners, been granted does anyone imagine he would have been content? Of course not. He would simply have climbed to fresh heights of effrontery.

### Belfast Telegraph

The "five demands" are a means to an end - the undermining of the whole prison system, and, ultimately, the British responsibility for Northern Ireland. Any government which gave way to such pressures would not be worthy of the name, and would deserve the chaos that resulted. Mrs Thatcher is not in that mould.

### Sunday Express

The victims of terrorism who have been murdered since Bobby Sands began his hunger strike, unlike Sands, had no choice about their fate. For them there were no last-ditch appeals. Nobody wants to see a coffin carried out of the Maze prison. But Bobby Sands' murderous friends plotted to arrange for all those other coffins to be carried out to Ulster's graveyards. They are the very dregs of humanity.

### Daily Mail

The funeral of Bobby Sands was an occasion of genuine grief for the members of his family but the IRA did its best to make it a macabre propaganda circus. The ritual of the so-called full military honours at the graveside with masked gunmen solemnly firing volleys into the air is a gangsters' parody of the moving tributes which fighting men traditionally pay to comrades who fall in the defence of honourable causes. Bobby Sands was one who whether willingly or unwillingly killed himself to further an evil crusade. He was the tool of wicked conspirators who, if they ever took control of Ulster, would bring the province nought but bloodshed, tyranny and desolation.



The Star

In the long run the ballot box offers the people of Northern Ireland their only hope. Violence, like the death of Bobby Sands, offers them nothing.

News Letter

Sands went on with the attempt by himself and his fellow hunger-strikers to blackmail the Government into granting the five IRA demands for a special category that would amount to the essence of political status for prisoners, many of whom committed atrocious murders.

Irish Times

However widely support is given to the obsequies for Bobby Sands, it can in no sense be said that there is a process of national mourning going on. For one million people in Northern Ireland are mourning their own dead. The population of this island without that one million people in no way constitutes the nation.

The Observer

The hunger strikes are not to improve prison conditions in Northern Ireland, which are better than in most European prisons. They are for political status - the right of convicted terrorists to run their own camp compounds; to train, discipline and punish their own members. The IRA and its apologists are not concerned with civil liberties or legal reform, but with victory in their terrorist campaign.



Birmingham Post

Whose death should most trouble and stir the consciences of the peoples of Ireland, of Britain, of Europe and of the United States? That, self-inflicted in the Maze jail in Ulster by Robert Sands, a leading member of the IRA, or the death of a young mother Joanna Mathers, mercilessly gunned down while doing nothing more than collect census papers in Londonderry? According to the security authorities the gun from which the shot was fired had been used twice previously in IRA shootings. But which death ought to stir the conscience of Ireland, Britain, Europe and the United States? There can be but one answer. Only a distorted conscience, a wrong sense of human values, will be more moved by a death deliberately designed to cause mischief and great harm to others.

The Journal, Newcastle

As the funeral took place in Belfast of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands, masked men in combat jackets were at the heart of the procession. Many shopkeepers and businesses were forced to close for the day "as a mark of respect". The ceremony itself was conducted with what the Provisional Sinn Fein, the Provisional IRA's political wing, described as "full military honours". Many on this side of the Irish Channel - and indeed many people in the province itself - will find it hard to accept the freedom of movement allowed to terrorists as they see pictures in their newspapers or watch television film of shots being fired over the coffin. They will also find it hard to grasp why Sands should have been given the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church. He did, after all, commit suicide - and isn't this a mortal sin in the eyes of the Catholic Church?

Yorkshire Post

The IRA is as unrepresentative of the people of Northern Ireland as the Red Brigades are of the people of Italy. Even from his cell, Sands was holding innocent people hostage and making ransom demands. For the message always was that his suicide would lead to violence as surely as if a hijacker had exploded a hand-grenade in an aircraft. Hundreds of innocent people have been murdered and maimed by the IRA, whose victims are never given the choice between life and death.



EUROPE:

Die Welt

The hard fact remains that Sands was trying to blackmail the State with his life. To make political prisoners of these criminals now would mean to lend later legality to murder and terror.

Bonner Rundschau, Bonn

The British Government's attitude towards demands for political status is shared by East and West European Governments. If Britain had made concessions, almost irresistible pressure would have arisen in Germany, Italy, France or Spain to make similar concessions to terrorists there.

Gothenburg Post

Bobby Sands was a terrorist. Now he is a dead terrorist. We ought to bear it in mind in order not to fall into the trap where we think more of and sympathise with the murderer more than his victim.



EIRE:

Irish Independent

Bobby Sands was convinced he was doing the right thing for his cause and for Ireland. It is a matter of profound regret that this is not so. He was under the control of forces whose only desire was to use his death to manipulate public opinion through misplaced sympathy which his sufferings aroused. The 'just demands' of the prisoners must be placed alongside the thousands who, today, carry mishapen bodies because of the bombs and bullets of the terrorists. The demands for political status must be weighed in the balance with those who were murdered for alleged political reasons.



UNITED STATES:

New York Times: (Circ 820,239)

Granting political status to Nationalist prisoners was tried in 1972 and judged a failure in 1976 because it sanitized crime and abetted the IRA's recruiting. In the words of Gerry Fitt, a Catholic Socialist who represents West Belfast in the British Parliament "Within days of special category status being granted the IRA went on a rampage. Within a month the heart was torn out of the city of Belfast where I was born and raised, on the day that became known as Bloody Friday." Mr Fitt deeply regretted supporting the concession.

Columnist Anthony Lewis: "A group of terrorists, highly disciplined and utterly brutal in its disregard for human life, set out to overthrow the existing order and establish a Marxist state. Its methods are murder and intimidation; most of its victims are innocent civilians. Such a group would be almost universally detested and condemned in this and other Western countries -- right? Wrong: not if it is the Provisional Irish Republican Army. The Provisionals do not bring an Irish solution closer; they bring on the unworkable policies of extremism. That is why it is so sickening to see their blackshipt tactics romanticised."

Boston Sunday Globe (Circ 628,755)

Bobby Sands, MP, Commander in the IRA, is no Kevin Barry. He is not another martyr for old Ireland, another murder for the Crown. He is a victim of abuse and exploitation, not by the British but by the IRA.

Times, Picayune

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has commented that 'a crime is a crime is a crime' and that is the only position that can be taken. Can society agree that a crime of violence committed for private gain is to be punished one way, but that the same crime - or worse - committed with political motivation should carry lesser penalties? This would encourage rather than discourage the intrusion of brute force into the processes of peaceful democracy.

Houston Post, Texas (Circ 293,979)

Though the IRA tries to pin the label of torture on Sands' death, it won't stick. Sands starved by choice. In his last days he was treated with remarkable tenderness - laid on a water bed and gently bandaged to ease the friction on the wasted body. Any torment given that body was by his own act of denial.

Quincy Patriot Ledger, Mass (Circ 72,952)

Were Britain to concede to demands for privileged status for convicted terrorists, the IRA would quickly find another issue to ignite street warfare.



The Oregonian, Oregon (Circ 236,000)

The European Commission on Human Rights and Amnesty International recognized it was proper for the British to refuse to give convicted criminals political status while in prison. Those Americans who have made such demands on the British Government would be shocked at permitting the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Weather Underground or any KKK or Klan activists arrested for acts of violence to claim special privileges on the grounds their acts were political.

Pittsburgh Post Gazette, Penn (Circ 191,900)

The logic of the basic British position is sound. Unless a Government is willing to concede that it exercises authority invalidly it necessarily will punish those who break the law and harm others for "political" reasons the way it punishes other lawbreakers and the men of violence.

Chicago Tribune (Circ 752,861)

Bobby Sands deliberately aimed at suicide, not as a protest against violence but as a stimulus to civil war. Mahatma Gandhi used the hunger strike to move his countrymen to abstain from fratricide. Bobby Sands' deliberate slow suicide is intended to precipitate civil war. The former deserved veneration and influence. The latter would be viewed, in a reasonable world, not as a charismatic martyr but as a fanatical suicide, whose regrettable death provides no sufficient occasion for killing others.

Chicago Sun-Times (Circ 581,553)

Sands is no political idealist. His long record indicates the obvious about his behaviour. He is a savage terrorist. A criminal. Thus British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is right in refusing to grant Sands' demands on grounds that his crimes were politically motivated.

COLUMBIAN EDWARD R. ROYCE

Irish Americans mostly believe that innocent Catholics have been randomly scooped up by the British and tortured into confessions that will put them into the Maze Prison, a hell-hole that reeks of filth. Both are largely myths. Torture? All security interrogations are recorded on TV tape. And the Maze is the newest most modern prison in Europe. Most IRA true believers in America have been had. They're too terrified to set a shoe in Ulster or to look at the other side of the coin. The Irish war will fade in direct proportion to the Irish-Americans' willingness to challenge the IRA's line, to hear the British side and to - one hopes - realize that the IRA is less than 500 Oswald Hinkley freaks supplied with Soviet-bloc weapons intent on turning both Irelands into an Allende-type Chile; there isn't a patriot among them.



New York Daily News (Circ 1,937,465)

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher could grant political prisoner status to terrorists in the Maze Prison. Thatcher firmly opposes such a decision - and so do we. To cave in .... would be to hand the cause of international terrorism an enormous victory. It would suddenly elevate gun-runners, bombers and assassins to the high station of 'freedom fighters' and do infinite damage to the cause of peace in Ireland and around the world.

Christian Science Monitor (Circ 166,654)

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher cannot be faulted for her staunch refusal to the demands of the IRA prisoners at Maze prison who wish to be granted special status and treated as political prisoners. To do so would be to give legitimacy to the Provisional IRA and invite misuse of prison privileges for plotting further outrageous acts of terrorism. Those Irish Americans who so mindlessly contribute funds to the IRA should be aware that the IRA receives much of its weaponry (and moral support) from Soviet-bloc countries. The fact that Moscow lauds Bobby Sands as a martyred freedom fighter should give IRA sympathisers in the West pause.

New York Post (Cir 615,900)

The pathetic nature of Bobby Sands' last act as a committed IRA man should not blind anyone to the cold-hearted cruelty for which his sacrifice is being used. His suicide is a rallying ground for the terrorists who form the Provisional Wing of the IRA. Their technique is violence. The greater potential tragedy in the Sands affair is not the wasted life of that young man, who basically did himself in with the encouragement of his supposed friends, but the possibility that more innocents will die in related disturbances. The chance that Ulster's ordeal will be prolonged - the inevitable peace delayed - and the cost of Bobby Sands' self destruction is great indeed.

Washington Post (Circ 514,849)

Bobby Sands had a record of violence as an "IRA militant", placing innocent lives in jeopardy while bombing warehouses and participating in armed robberies. But because of massive publicity he may be remembered mainly for the manner of his death after a 66-day fast, holding in his hands a golden crucifix presented by a special papal envoy.



San Francisco Chronicle (Circ 474,000)

The demands (for the hunger strikers) appear harmless enough, perhaps even trivial. And many view the British Government's response as heartless and inhumane. That Government, however, would have been in the position of admitting to the world that it held prisoners because of their political beliefs and not because they had violated criminal statutes. Terrorism goes far beyond the expression of political belief and dealing with it does not allow for compromise, as many countries of western Europe and United States have learned.

San Francisco Examiner (Circ 155,889)

It's a pity that Bobby Sands died but he was deluded if he confused nobility with violence, and thought that the latter could bring his land to a better day. We expect his testimonial of death will not cause the British Government to make concessions to terrorism. Nor should it make any, no matter what price must be paid for the rule of law, and the rule of the ballot as the ultimate deciding power.

Los Angeles Times (Circ 984,300)

Sands was a terrorist who chose to die, unlike the more than 2,000 victims of the past 12 years of violence who had no choice. And the organisation that he represented, the Provisional Wing of the IRA, is a terrorist group composed of men and women who murder and mutilate. Americans can play a role by not feeding the violence through contributions to such organisations as the Irish Northern Aid Committee which was ordered by a Federal Judge to register as an agent of the IRA.

San Diego Union (Circ 189,100)

To yield, the British would be bowing to the same plea that comes from terrorists in every part of the world - that acts of violence are somehow excusable if they are committed for a political cause. A Government cannot make that concession and uphold the rule of law. For the British to have yielded in this case would have been a step towards surrendering the Irish people to anarchy and civil war.

Riverside (California) Press (Circ 33,530)

Sands' demand of Britain for special treatment as a political prisoner is a status that even the Irish Republic does not give to IRA gunmen such as he.

Detroit News (Circ 627,560)

No Government can afford to concede that repugnant acts of violence are somehow sanctified by political aspirations. The IRA is accorded no political status in the Republic of Ireland, and human rights groups, like Amnesty International, have not supported its demands for recognition.



Dallas Times Herald (Circ 239,514)

During his first term in prison Irish revolutionary Bobby Sands wrote his creed: 'I was set to confront the might of the Imperial Empire with an M-1 carbine and enough hate to topple the world'. Today Sands is dead, the victim of a searing hatred that has taken 2,000 lives in Northern Ireland in the last 12 years. Sands starved himself to death in a <sup>VAIN</sup> effort to force the British Government to treat revolutionary terrorists as political prisoners, instead of common criminals.

Tulsa Tribune (Circ 77,678)

If the British Government had bowed to the demands of Bobby Sands and raised the status of himself and the IRA terror squads to that of political prisoners it would, of course, be under obligation to do the same for their opponents. The child who steps into a booby trap and is torn to ribbons would therefore be considered not the victim of a heinous crime but simply a participant in a political demonstration. Where does this thinking lead?

Dallas Morning News (Circ 277,466)

The word 'martyr' is being applied freely to Sands both at home and abroad. No tag could be less appropriate. Classically the martyr - a word derived from the Greek for witness (of Christ) - is a man or woman put to death for the strength and constancy of his religious faith. The British, who refused Sands' claims to political prisoner status, did not put him to death. He committed suicide by refusing to eat.

Tennessean (Circ 128,170)

Blood money. That is the only word to describe the money given by American supporters of the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland. The money buys guns, bullets and explosives. Most often, the innocent die. Bobby Sands' death wasn't noble. It was pathetic, as pathetic as those who believe their money contributes to anything other than wrongdoing.

Houston Chronicle (Circ 317,320)

Last year the Basque separatists were blamed for 95 assassinations in Spain, most of them policemen. There were numerous acts of violence. Someone unfamiliar with Spain would think the entire Basque region was seething with rebellion. Not so. There are more than 2 million people of Basque heritage in Spain. But the ETA (which stands for Basque land and liberty) guerrilla organisation has fewer than 400 members. Somehow the idea is spreading that these 400 terrorists speak for all the Basque people of Spain. It's the same way in Northern Ireland. Most of the hard-working family-orientated people of Northern Ireland want nothing more than peace.



Washington Star

The greater potential tragedy in the Sands affair is not the wasted life of that young man, who basically did himself in with the encouragement of his supposed friends, but the possibility that more innocents will die in related disturbances. Add to that the chance that Ulster's ordeal will be prolonged - the inevitable peace delayed - and the cost of Bobby Sands' self-destruction is great indeed.

CANADA:

The Gazette, Montreal (Circ 111,140)

It is a pity that a man should choose to die for a simple-minded and implausible idea, a confusion of violence and politics.



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 May 1981

Dear Stephen,

Prison Protest in Northern Ireland and  
European Commission on Human Rights

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 28 May on this subject. I should say at once that she was extremely unhappy that, given her views on the questions at issue, there had been no discussion of the proposals in your letter during her visit to Belfast yesterday.

The Prime Minister has made the following comments on your letter:

- (a) The representative who goes to Strasbourg on Monday - or one of the representatives - should be a legal expert fully conversant with the relevant law;
- (b) It must be made clear that, as the Attorney General said during the meeting with the Prime Minister on 18 May (Clive Whitmore's letter to you of 19 May refers), we regard our position on admissibility as fully preserved and that we shall, if necessary, be prepared to argue our case at a later date;
- (c) As set out in the attachment to Clive Whitmore's letter under reference, HMG are of course prepared to facilitate the work of the ECHR in examining complaints under Articles 8 and 13 of the Convention and in ascertaining the relevant facts. However, as far as we are concerned, the only complaint at present extant is that under Article 8, relating to correspondence. In the absence of any other complaint, the Prime Minister assumes that action under Article 13 will relate to Article 8;
- (d) As far as the friendly settlement procedure is concerned, HMG have no proposals to bring forward. We assume that if anyone else has proposals to make these will be submitted to the ECHR in the normal way;

/ (e)

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- (e) The Prime Minister has no objection to the points set out in the "bout de papier" attached to your letter being put across provided it is made crystal clear that our making them in no way implies that they are the subject of negotiation;
- (f) You may think that, in the light of (d) and (e) above, the final two sentences of the brief summarised in your letter should read as follows:  
"The Government, while standing firm on these issues, has of course made major improvements in prison conditions. These are summarised in the attached "bout de papier". We have no proposals of our own to put forward under the friendly settlements procedure. We assume that proposals which any other party wishes to put forward will be submitted to the Commission in the normal way."

The Prime Minister has asked me to make it clear that while she is prepared to see the ECHR carrying out their duties in the manner outlined above, and to facilitate their activities, she is not prepared to appear to be seen to be negotiating about prison conditions through the ECHR. She would regard it as particularly damaging for this impression to be created in the immediate aftermath of her visit to Belfast.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Roderic Lyne (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and, together with a copy of your letter, to Jim Nursaw (Law Officers' Department).

*John Smyth*

*Nicholas Alexander.*

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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Northern Ireland Office  
Stormont Castle  
Belfast BT4 3ST  
Telephone Belfast 63011

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

Prime Minister (1)

May I tell you that 28 May 1981

Dear Michael,

You would be worried for them to proceed as they propose?

No - see  
Ant  
now.

PRISON PROTEST IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

At the meetings with my Secretary of State on 18 May, the Prime Minister indicated that she had no wish to see the Government involved in the "friendly settlement" procedure which is one of the steps normally gone through by the European Commission of Human Rights (ECHR) in dealing with complaints under the Convention.

The Commission has now written formally to inform the Government that it has declared admissible the complaints in the Maze case under Articles 8 and 13, and has invited the Government so submit any proposals we may wish to make with a view to arriving at a "friendly settlement". In this connection, they have also invited us to send someone to an informal meeting with them next Monday (they are inviting representatives of the other side to meet them separately). These steps are part of the normal procedures of the Commission. My Secretary of State has been considering how we should respond to this invitation.

It is essential, in his view, that we handle the ECHR's involvement in the Northern Ireland prisons issues as one of the many strands in our presentation of the Government's case, at home and abroad, over the weeks leading up to the next series of hunger strike deaths. The substance of our case is firmness (of course), coupled with a reasonable approach to all who share our concern at the futile loss of life in Northern Ireland. It is with this overriding consideration in mind that he assesses our options as follows:

- (a) to turn it down flat. This would give the other side the opportunity (which they would be sure to exploit) to blame us

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publicly for having killed any possibility of ending the prison impasse, and would have a damaging effect on the Catholic section of the Northern Ireland community. It would also, in the view of the FCO, be bad for our general relations with the Commission (with whom we have a wide range of dealings going far beyond NI);

(b) we could seek a postponement on the ground that we need more time to think. That would give the impression that we were contemplating proposals to put forward, and, since we are not, it could only generate later disappointment; and

(c) we could seek a way of responding positively which will nevertheless avoid any danger of our being sucked into any kind of negotiation or give the impression that we were seeking a "friendly settlement".

(c) above seems the best course, not because we are in the game of looking for a compromise, but in the interests of maintaining good relations with the Commission and, more crucially, because of the need to counter the main thrust of PIRA's propaganda. The Provisional leadership is manoeuvring, cynically but effectively, to direct the frustration and anger of the Catholic community, arising from the hunger strike, against the Government, representing it as intransigent and unearring: despite the fact that it is the Government which has demonstrated its flexibility and humanitarian concern by adjustments to the prison regime while the Provisionals have remained dedicated to achieving their five demands which amount to political status. The Provisionals must not be allowed to succeed in their attempts to misrepresent the Government's position and so alienate the Catholic community. This has implications for the outcome of the prisons protest as well as for the security situation generally. The handling of the Human Rights Commission's involvement in the case takes place against this background. It is necessary to ensure that, if the Commission is seen to be unable to make progress, it is the intransigence of the Provisionals which has brought this situation about. The Provisionals

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are likely to be engaged in trying to ensure exactly the opposite. The Government must not play into their hands by bringing the process to a halt.

My Secretary of State therefore proposes that we should send one or more officials to Strasbourg on Monday, briefed to speak on the following line - a line to which they must adhere strictly. It would run as follows:

.....

The Government has from way back been very flexible in its readiness to improve the regime for all prisoners in the interests of being humanitarian. (At this point they would offer the Commission a "bout de papier" (copy annexed) which would set out the various steps taken over the last 18 months (most in response to the Commission's own criticisms of last June) to make available better conditions to both conforming and protesting prisoners). However, although flexible, there are certain points of principle on which the Government, for moral and practical reasons, has not been, and will not be, prepared to budge, viz. no differentiation for particular groups of prisoners; and no ceding of control by the authorities to the prisoners over day-to-day life in the prison. (Here it would be pointed out that the first half of the "bout de papier" consists of a statement of these principles). Thus the Government, while standing firm on certain important issues, has in fact gone far to meet the case for improved conditions, whereas the protestors have not moved one inch from their demands. We have no proposals of our own to put forward, but we should - subject always to our points of principle - be prepared to consider anything the other party may put forward. No No No

*This implies that if they moved we would move.*

In this way my Secretary of State believes it will be possible to:

- (a) maintain our good relations with the Commission;

SECRET



SECRET



*It doesn't  
strike  
balance at  
all*

(b) strike the right balance between firmness on points of principle and a readiness - which we have already stated publicly - to consider proposals from responsible bodies (although we have none of our own to offer);

(c) demonstrate how far we have already moved to improve the prison regime in Northern Ireland, and how inflexible the other side have been; and

(d) reassure the Catholic population in Northern Ireland (and many others abroad - eg the Irish Americans) that we are not dismissive of the interests of the prisoners with whom they have natural sympathies.

As time is short, I should be grateful if you could let me know by early tomorrow whether the Prime Minister is content with this proposal.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Roderick Lyne (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Tom,  
Steve*

S W BOYS SMITH  
Private Secretary

*This letter must have been written and the policy decided before we left Belfast to-day. I am utterly dismayed and very angry that it was to-day was discussed with me even though IYS, PWS were other known how strongly I felt about it. I propose the following course of action.*

*1) Find a highly skilled rep. to Strawberry who is fully conversant with the law.*

*2) Review the legal point on a daily basis*

PD

SECRET



to be argued in Court - (This point  
you remember was made by the A.G.)

3) In the meantime, as the Commission  
itself has only raised the question of possible  
infringement of ~~one~~ human rights, we are of course  
prepared to consider a friendly settlement  
with regard to the - i.e. correspondence.

We have no further proposals to make  
in view of what has already been  
done but will consider proposals on the issue.

4) Should however the Commission wish to  
have facilities to find the texts they  
will of course be granted wholeheartedly &  
immediately.

5) Any proposed changes must apply  
to all prisoners in North Ireland. There can be  
no question of special status for some.

AK.





## ECHR - MAZE PROTEST - HMG POSITION PAPER

Principles

HMG has consistently asserted certain principles in respect of prison administration on which it would not be prepared to compromise. These principles are:-

- (1) no political or special category status for any prisoners. Any differentiation of treatment of a certain group or class of prisoners in Northern Ireland is objectionable under this principle. This principle was endorsed by the ECHR in its Partial decision of June 1980.
- (2) The prison authorities must remain fully in control of the prison administration and of the major elements of day-to-day life in the prisons.

Subject however to those principles. HMG has shown itself to be flexible and willing to introduce changes in the prison regime for both conforming and protesting prisoners. The following changes have been introduced since the ECHR made its last investigation into the Maze and action by HMG to improve the conditions in which the protesting prisoners presently live continues.

Additional privileges made available to protesting prisoners

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| (1) Provision of plimsolls, vests and shorts for exercise.) | } 26.3.80 |
| (2) Weekly letter in and out instead of monthly.            |           |
| (3) Two visits per month instead of one.                    |           |





- (4) One extra hour's physical recreation each week in the gymnasium.
  - (5) One evening's association per week.
  - (6) Availability of "closed" visits to prisoners who refuse to be searched.
  - (7) Books and newspapers made available in each wing.
  - (8) Compassionate home leave on death of a near relative made available on the same basis as for conforming prisoners.
- (9) For those prisoners on a "clean" protest:
- (i) the rate of loss of remission was halved as compared with those on the "dirty" protest.
  - (ii) A special monthly parcel is allowed containing up to 4 lbs of fruit and toilet articles.
  - (iii) One hour extra exercise each day is allowed.

} August/  
} September  
} 1980

} January  
} 1981

#### Ex-protesting prisoners

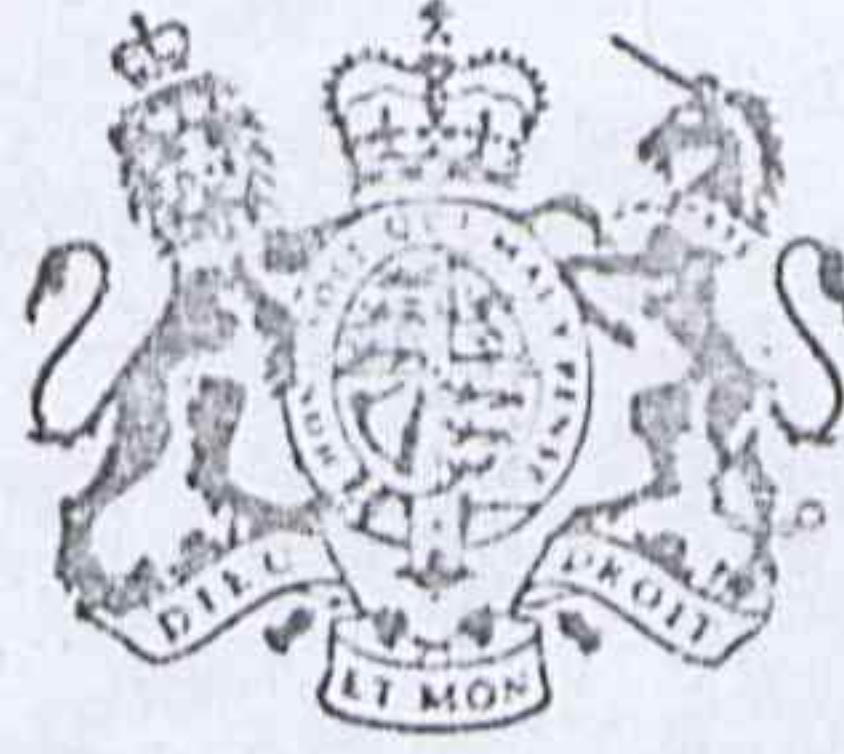
Following a review a partial restoration of lost remission is now being given to those who have discontinued their protest and are now fully conforming.

#### All prisoners

All prisoners now benefit from the Government's decision to abolish prison uniform as such and to substitute prison-issue civilian-style clothing which is available as a personal issue to each prisoner.

Despite the action in January last of a number of protesting prisoners involving the destruction of cell furniture and damage to cells, all protesting prisoners have now been issued with beds and bedding, tables and chairs and the issue of other cell furniture continues. At the request of protesting prisoners, writing material and pens were provided as were additional books and newspapers.





10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO MESSAGE-FROM CARDINAL O'FIAICH (text also attached)

Thank you for your telegram of 13 May about the hunger strike at the Maze Prison. I understand your concern. I fully share it.

The Government have repeatedly made clear how much they regret the loss of life through all forms of violence in Northern Ireland. The Government is not the inflexible party in this issue. The Provisional IRA, at whose behest the hunger strike is taking place, have stated and restated from the beginning that they would call off the strike only if the Government were to concede all five of their demands. What they want is not prison reforms, but a special different status for some prisoners. This the Government cannot concede, since it would encourage further blackmail and support for terrorism. We cannot treat persons convicted of criminal offences as prisoners of war, which is what they want.

In contrast, the Government had demonstrated flexibility in a number of ways. We introduced important and humane changes in the prison regime last year. We took the initiative to de-escalate the dirty protest in January, and responded promptly to the ending of the dirty protest in March, cutting the rate of loss of remission by half. We allowed the three Dublin TDs, the ECHR representatives and the Pope's representative to visit the Maze in the hope that they could find some way

/to persuade



to persuade Mr. Sands and the other hunger strikers to cease their action. I hope the remaining hunger strikers will even now respond to the Pope's message.

You make a number of points about the prison population in Northern Ireland. I am very aware of them, as is the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. We are committed to maintaining an enlightened and humanitarian prison regime, and I believe we do so. We are ready to listen to representations from responsible quarters - including for example the European Commission on Human Rights - on all aspects of the environment for all conforming prisoners: but we cannot yield on the issue of political justification for murder and violence and of prisoner of war status for those who commit such crimes.

Like you, I am anxious to avoid all further needless deaths in Northern Ireland from whatever part of the community. You in particular will I am sure appreciate the heavy load my colleagues and I bear in discharging our responsibilities. But the solution does not lie in our hands. It lies with the hunger strikers themselves, their families and advisers. More directly, it lies with the leaders of the Provisional IRA, who have taken a cold-blooded decision that the unfortunate men now fasting in prison are of more use to them dead than alive. This seems to me the most immoral and inflexible decision anyone could take.

Since you released your telegram to the press, I am sure you will not mind my publishing this reply.

MARGARET THATCHER

The Most Reverend Tomas O Fiaich, Archbishop of Armagh



Toll 1135 ± 115

7582 CAYOFF G  
7589 CAYOFF G

TELEGRAM-BY-TELEX

ARA COELI  
APRAGH

13 MAY 1981

THE HON MARGARET THATCHER, M.P.  
PRIME MINISTER  
10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON.

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

HAVING ALREADY APPEALED TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO GIVE UP THEIR FAST, I NOW REPEAT MY EARNEST REQUEST TO YOU AND THE CABINET TO ABANDON THE INFLEXIBLE POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND REGARDING PRISON DRESS AND THE FRATERNISATION OF PRISONERS AT WORK OR RECREATION.

NORTHERN IRELAND, WITH A FIVE-FOLD INCREASE IN <sup>Prison</sup> POPULATION, REQUIRES A DIFFERENT APPROACH FROM OTHER AREAS, FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF ITS PRISONERS 1) ARE VERY YOUNG, 2) COME FROM LAW-ABIDING FAMILIES, 3) HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO VERY LONG TERMS, 4) DO NOT SHARE THE RELIGION OR NATIONAL IDENTITY OF THEIR JAILERS.

YESTERDAY'S DEATH OF FRANCIS HUGHES IS A FURTHER BLOW TO THE EFFORTS OF ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS HERE TO UPHOLD LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR AS THE SUPREME LAW AND ONLY ADDS FUEL TO THE FIRES OF HATRED AND VIOLENCE. IN GOD'S NAME, DON'T ALLOW ANOTHER DEATH. I BESEECH YOU TO TAKE THE MOVE IMMEDIATELY BY MAKING PRISON DRESS AND WORK OPTIONAL FOR ALL PRISONERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND, AS PRISON DRESS HAS ALREADY BEEN ABANDONED HERE IN APRAGH PRISON FOR NEARLY A DECADE. SUCH CHANGES WOULD BE WELCOMED BY PRISONERS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS. PLEASE SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO TALK TO THE PRISONERS' SPOKESMEN AS WAS DONE DURING THE LAST HUNGER STRIKE AND THE DANGER OF FURTHER DEATH CAN BE REMOVED.

CARDINAL THOMAS O'FLAHERTY  
ARCHBISHOP OF APRAGH

7582 CAYOFF G  
7589 CAYOFF G



From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

1.



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

~~Dear~~ Prime Minister.

Although Mr Steel has now been to the Stage,  
I think this draft remains valid.

Mike Pattison Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

27 May 1981

- 1. MODBA
- 2. Prime Minister

Content for Mr Atkins  
to reply to Stephen  
Ross as in this

*M I have not seen  
which is new  
society I should  
prefer not*

*But it is  
for Mr A to sign*  
**Dear Mike to**  
*attach  
go in*

We spoke today about your letter of 14 May concerning  
Stephen Ross's letter to Michael Mates.

*draft?*

I attach a draft reply which my Secretary of State  
proposes to send Mr Ross: perhaps you would let me  
know if there are any comments on its content.

(I should add that it is now unclear whether Mr Ross  
will be visiting Northern Ireland - with fellow  
Liberals - shortly: if he does not, we shall have to  
amend the penultimate paragraph.)

*MAD*  
*27/✓*

*Yours sincerely*  
*Mike Stephens*  
M W HOPKINS

*Told NIO PM content.*

*MAD*  
*3/✓*



Stephen Ross Esq MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
BY LA OAA

You wrote to Michael Mates on 11 May about the ~~Mase~~ hunger strike, and sent a copy of the letter to the Prime Minister and myself. I am sorry that because of pressure of events during recent days I have not been able to respond before this to the interesting points which you made; I have now also seen a copy of Michael's reply to you dated 15 May.

~~Before turning to the substantive points in your letter I should like to comment on the article in "New Society" which you mentioned. For my part I find it incredible that any reputable journal should have published such a collection of lies and distortions; the article made no attempt at any critical analysis of the material which had been supplied to the journalist concerned as part of the continuing IRA propaganda campaign.~~

I am aware that there are many sincere people, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, who believe that the Government could reach an acceptable compromise with the hunger strikers and those who support them by making this or that concession - for example in regard to clothing and work - in regard to the prison regime. Our position on this is clear. We have been flexible, and are committed to a humanitarian prison system. But a little more flexibility is not what the hunger strikers and the other protesters are seeking; their demands are inseparable from their



fundamental demand for a special regime which would give them a large measure of control over their lives in prison and the substance of political or prisoner-of-war status. This the Government cannot and will not concede.

I share your concern about the difficulty of satisfying public opinion, particularly abroad, about the justification for our stand on this issue. However there is a tendency to assume that media reaction in Western countries has been more unsympathetic than is in fact the case. In the United States, for example, editorial comment has been at least two to one in our favour. Nevertheless I recognise that there has been a good deal of adverse reaction.

There are, it seems to me, a variety of causes for this. The issues are complex and not often very well understood; the instinctive humanitarian response of some well-intentioned people can lead them into a false position; and of course there is a body of world opinion, particularly in the USA, which is so partisan on this issue that they would disregard the Government's position no matter how cogently argued or intrinsically correct. We certainly accept that it is vital that the Government's case should be put as clearly and forcibly as possible, and we put a great deal of effort into bringing this about. No doubt you will have seen a copy of the Prime Minister's response to "the Four Horsemen", which is a good example of what we are trying to do to inform interested and influential opinion overseas.

I was very interested in your suggestion that a possible way forward might be for a small group of MPs from the All Party Committee to visit Maze prison in the company of representatives of the main political parties in Northern Ireland. I am bound to


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say, however, that I see a number of difficulties about your proposal. There is a danger that either some of the local political parties, or the prisoners' representatives, would not regard the proposed inquiry as either impartial or meaningful, and refuse to co-operate. There is also a risk that the group's discussions would place the Government in a difficult position since any such talks would be seen as amounting <sup>to</sup> negotiations of a kind with the Provisional IRA. It seems very doubtful, in any event, whether the establishment of such an inquiry would lead to the calling-off of the hunger strike; so far the prisoners concerned have made it quite clear to all who have talked to them that they will call off the action only when all their demands are met.

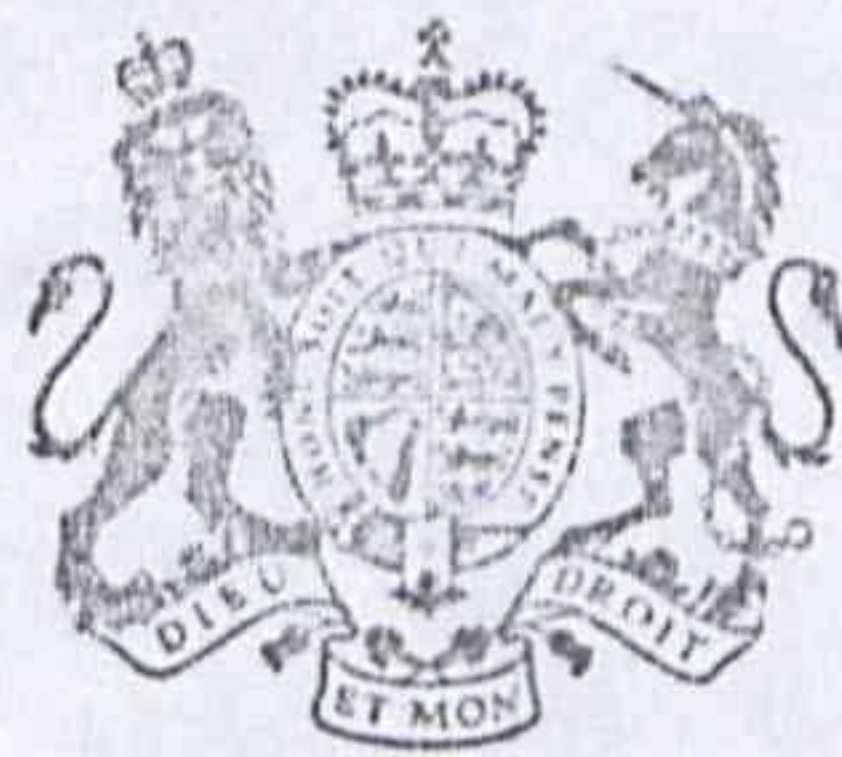
I wonder if the best way of proceeding, in the short term, would be for you to have a discussion with Michael Alison at an early opportunity following the Liberal party visit <sup>to N - I -</sup>. No doubt you will be discussing the whole prison issue at length with David Steel and with Lord Hampton in the light of your visit, and it might be helpful if you were to talk to Michael while the impressions of the visit are fresh in your mind.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to Michael Bates.





SECRET



Subject filed on  
Ireland, Pt 9, lit<sup>A</sup>

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

27 May, 1981

Dear Stephen,

Northern Ireland

As you know the Prime Minister held a meeting at Chequers yesterday evening with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to discuss the present situation in the Province. Sir Kenneth Stowe, General Sir Richard Lawson, Mr Jack Hermon and Mr Ranson were also present.

In response to the Prime Minister's invitation, Mr Hermon said that the situation in Northern Ireland had been developing rather rapidly since mid-April. Prior to that the security forces had succeeded in stabilising the situation. However following the deaths of the four hunger strikers there was a growing tendency for the Catholic community to display sympathy for the 'martyrs'. The Catholics were also becoming alienated from Government policy. There was little sympathy for the PIRA as such and no pressure for the granting of political status or the five demands. But the continuing violence and the activities of Dr Paisley were giving rise to unease and dissatisfaction. There was increasing support amongst the young for the PIRA. PIRA intimidation was becoming more effective, as could be seen from what had happened to Messrs Fitt and Devlin. The police were being forced to abandon foot patrols and to remain in their vehicles. In sum, there was some doubt as to whether the level of security achieved in the recent past could be maintained and a risk that some of the ground won e.g. in terms of the Catholic community's confidence in the security forces, would be lost. If the Government could dispel the impression of inflexibility and could get over instead that its policy was magnanimous and caring, these risks might be reduced.

General Lawson supported Mr Hermon. He said that the security threat could be contained. Neither the riots nor the scale of terrorist activity were as substantial as in the past. The Government was in no danger of defeat. None-the-less the population were becoming alienated. The PIRA had succeeded in obscuring the fact that they were responsible for the present troubles. The Catholics were looking to HMG for movement of some kind.

/Mr Ranson said

SECRET



Mr Ranson said that the PIRA recognised they could not win through terrorism. Their thinking was concentrated on the need to find a way to win back the support of the Catholic community which they had lost in recent years. They saw the hunger strike, about the launching of which they had had grave doubts, as a way to drive a wedge between the Catholic community and the Government. They knew that the situation was delicately balanced and that their effort might already have "peaked" in PR terms. There might be an opportunity in the next few weeks for the Government to attempt to reassure the Catholic community.

The Prime Minister asked whether there were any specific proposals aimed at securing the objective which had been outlined. It was not easy to envisage a proposal which would be substantial enough to satisfy the Catholic community, and more particularly the hunger strikers, while being sufficiently limited in scope to avoid alarming the Protestants. Mr Hermon said that the precedent of the Bennett Enquiry might be helpful. He believed that there would be value in setting up a similarly expert enquiry to investigate prison conditions in Northern Ireland. Its point of departure would be Section 7 of the Prisons Act, 1953. The enquiry might be tasked to consider whether the types of crime, the motives of the criminal and the purpose of imprisonment in Northern Ireland were the same as those in the rest of the United Kingdom. The terms of reference would include no promise of change in prison conditions, nor indeed any acknowledgement of a need for change. A principal objective of setting up the enquiry would be to remove the question of prison conditions from the political arena.

Sir Kenneth Stowe pointed out that the need for an investigation into prison conditions in Northern Ireland had been apparent for some months. He had, for instance, been struck by the absence of specialised psychiatric and psychological advice. There were no penologists in Northern Ireland. The gulf which divided the Protestant prison officers from the largely Catholic prison population was a problem peculiar to Northern Ireland: it had been largely responsible for the breakdown of the situation in the Maze in the weeks after the collapse of the first hunger strike. If it was agreed that there was a case for an initiative on prison conditions, the next four weeks i.e. before the next hunger striker was expected to die, might be the time to launch it.

In subsequent discussion it was confirmed that an enquiry of the kind proposed would cover all prisons and prisoners in Northern Ireland. It was recognised that if the idea were to be pursued it would need to be worked out in considerable detail and would have to be considered by Ministers. Clearly the enquiry could not be mandated to enquire into the five demands or to consider the question of special status for the hunger strikers. But any enquiry would be forced to deal with the question of existing special category prisoners.

It was argued that, even if it was agreed to launch an enquiry into prison conditions, this would not of itself reverse the present trend towards alienation of the Catholic community. A sustained effort, which would have to involve the Prime Minister herself, would be required. It would have to continue for some weeks. This would, in effect, be a major hearts and minds campaign aimed at the Catholic community.

/In a discussion



SECRET

- 3 -

In a discussion of the timing of any initiative, it was suggested that the PIRA would be trying in the days and weeks immediately ahead to intensify the street rioting and to raise the level of terrorist activity. They would also engage in more specifically political activity with the objective of broadening their support in the Catholic community and, perhaps above all, of capitalising on the forthcoming election in the Republic. They could also be expected to renew their efforts to move a writ for a further by-election in Fermanagh. All this suggested that the Government, if it were to take any kind of initiative, should move sooner rather than later.

The Prime Minister said that the Government must be 'rock solid' against any concessions to the hunger strikers or PIRA. She doubted whether the answer to the present situation could be as simple as a statement by her or an announcement of an enquiry into prison conditions. However she agreed that the suggestion of an enquiry into prison conditions should be analysed further. She also agreed that a gesture towards the Catholic community should be made and that it should be made by her in Northern Ireland. If she were to come to Belfast, her visit must have a purpose and should encompass a meeting with religious leaders. She would be prepared, if necessary, to come in the very near future and to make a statement or be interviewed on TV while there. She asked, therefore, that urgent consideration should be given to the timing of her visit and to the programme for that visit.

As you know it was subsequently agreed that the visit should take place tomorrow, 28 May.

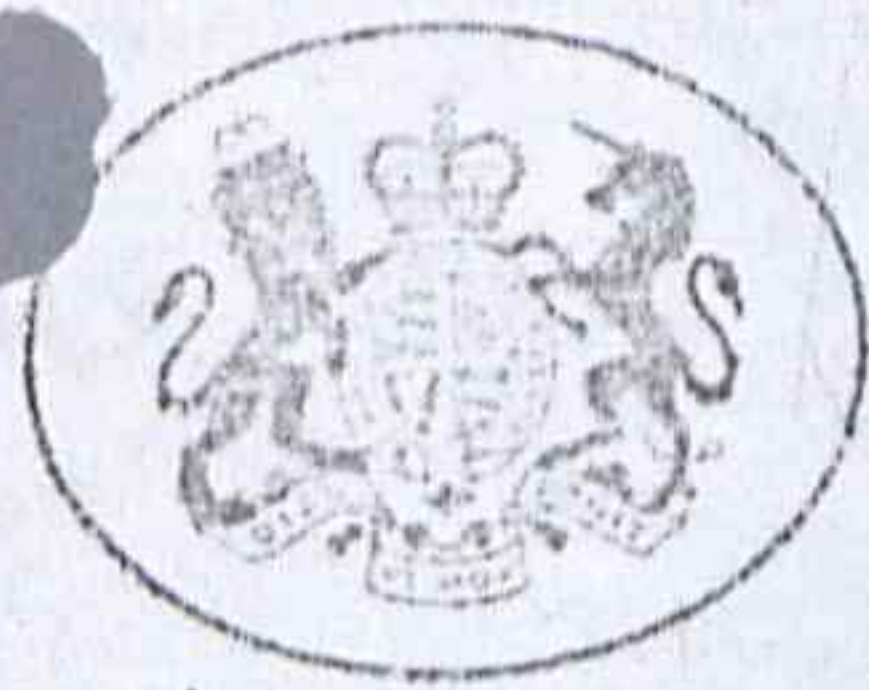
I am sending copies of this letter to Roderic Lyne (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), John Halliday (Home Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely*

*Michael Alexander*



*M. Whitmore*



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

**IA**

Michael Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

*Top Copy on Ireland, 1 copy + 3  
leave message  
27 May 1981  
Feb 81: Vint to N.I.  
Bingham  
CWS  
mcdBA*

*Dear Michael*

With his letter of 26 May, Stephen Boys-Smith enclosed papers on the present state of the Catholic Community and the Protestant Community in Northern Ireland. You also have a paper from us on the current perceptions of the Provisional movement.

By way of further background briefing, I now enclose notes on the following:

- A. The security situation (including statistics)
- B. The local election results
- C. The Northern Ireland economy
- D. The present state of play on better government for Northern Ireland
- E. International implications, including the Republic of Ireland.

Since the draft programme suggests a visit to the Belfast segment, I also enclose a brief note on that (Brief F), and in case it is thought helpful I also enclose a very brief note (Brief G) about the Church leaders whom the Prime Minister may meet.

I shall let you have the steering brief\* and any other material (such as any further thoughts on the draft speech) as soon as they are available.

*(\* Now attached.)*

*Yours sincerely*  
M W HOPKINS *Mike Hopkins*



Mr. Ingham.

STEERING BRIEF

BACKGROUND

Security

1980 was the quietest year in Northern Ireland for a decade. Notwithstanding the violence associated with the hunger strikes the number of serious/incidents /terrorist recorded in 1981 remains broadly at 1980 levels. The security forces are having important individual successes against the terrorist organisations (eg the capture of an RPG on 26 May) and have been able to contain so far the violence provoked by the successive deaths of the hunger strikers.

Politics

The Northern Ireland local government elections on 20 May was one where the competition between Parties on the same side of the sectarian divide was more important than that between Unionists and Nationalists. The DUP doubled its seats and now claims the same following as the UUP. SDLP support held up well; the heaviest losers in the elections were Alliance and some of the smaller Parties. The increase in polarisation represented by these results make the prospects for any new political initiative much bleaker.

Economy

The economic situation remains gloomy. The unemployment figures to be announced today will top 100,000 for the first time and the prospects for manufacturing industry remain poor.

CURRENT ISSUES.

Within the community attitudes are at the moment dominated by the hunger strike. On the Protestant side, however, its concerns, while focussed on that issue, go wider: it still needs reassurance that the security situation is under control, that HMG is planning no radical moves with Mr Haughey, and that political status will continue to be refused. The Government's stance on the last of these has provided a fair measure of that reassurance.



E. R.

The Catholic mood is very different. The minority community has most to fear, and to suffer, from the violence generated by the hunger strikes. It is vulnerable to intimidation which it is exceptionally difficult for the security forces to prevent at the time. Knowing that the Provisional IRA are intransigent it looks to Government to find some answer to the impasse over the hunger strikes and in the meantime for protection from violence. Sensing neither at the moment there is great danger of the community's alienation from Government which, if not arrested will make both the task of the security forces in dealing with disorder and of Government in seeking to restore normality and make political progress, much more difficult.

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT.

The purpose of the visit is to provide reassurance to the Catholic community. The centrepiece of this effort will be the speech and TV interviews which it is proposed that the Prime Minister should give. The speech material seeks to develop the following points, with the Catholic community in particular in mind.

- (a) the Government is committed to securing the wellbeing of all the people of the Province. Its only enemies are the men of violence;
- (b) it is well aware of the suffering that the Catholic community is enduring. There are no easy answers to it but the process of law will prevail;
- (c) the hunger strike is not of the Government's choosing: and the Government wants to see it resolved;
- (d) there are, however, some things that, in seeking a resolution <sup>no</sup> Government could do;
- (e) looking forward the Government, while aware of the mistakes of the past remains determined to bring about a situation in which the people of Northern Ireland can solve their problems in a reasonable way.



In pursuit of the main purpose of the visit, and in support of her speech, it is proposed that the Prime Minister should have an opportunity to meet, besides the security forces, the people of the Province, their community, their church and their political leaders. The main difficulty she may experience in her meetings with them may focus on the plea from the Catholic community for some resolution of the hunger strike issue without breaching the principles by which the Government is being guided and for which it enjoys general support inside and outside the community.

The main points to make are:-

- (a) the Government is firmly committed to maintaining and, as necessary and practical, improving <sup>the</sup> present prison regime. It has demonstrated that determination by what it has done before and after the beginning of the last hunger strike. It will stand by its commitment in future;
- (b) there is no evidence whatever so far that those behind the hunger strike want anything less than the political status and a regime to match which they originally demanded. In the face of that, tinkering with the regime would not only not end the strike: it must surely tempt those behind it to hang on;
- (c) the Government is not prepared to say it is only tinkering when in fact it is conceding substance. That would betray all those who have taken <sup>their</sup> stand on the principles that the Government share, whatever it may at present be costing them.

While the main purpose is to reassure the Catholics this must not be at the expense of the Protestants; the points above serve both requirements.



## SECURITY MATTERS

Terrorist activity in Northern Ireland has been characterised by periods of relative calm alternating with outbursts of violence but the Provisional IRA's main targets have remained unchanged. The RUC and the army continue to be the prime targets but there have been attacks on property in an effort to disrupt the life of the Province. The terrorists are undoubtedly capable of mounting attacks using powerful weapons particularly on "soft" targets and have been particularly doing so along the border with the Republic recently.

The level of violence in the Province has nevertheless declined substantially. There was less violence last year than at any time since 1970. While there was an outbreak of violence at the turn of the year - following the end of the first hunger strike - some of which eg the killing of Sir Norman Stronge, received wide publicity, the level of violence earlier this year continued its downward trend. Indeed, the level of violence in the first 4 months of this year was lower than in the same period last year;

	1.1.80 - 30.4.80	1.1.81 - 30.4.81
Deaths SF	14	13
Deaths Civilian	22	11
Injuries SF	62	149
Injuries Civilian	194	151
Explosions	139	72
Shootings	242	123

There has however been an upsurge in both violent attacks and street disorder since the death of Robert Sands on 4 May. So far there have been 17 deaths (8 SF; 9 civilian, 2 of which are known to have been terrorists), but the level of violence was still somewhat below the average for 1980 as a whole.

In the first 4 months of this year 220 persons were charged with serious terrorist type offences by comparison with 200 during the same period last year.



The regular Army strength in Northern Ireland is currently about 11,000 men in addition to which there are about 7,500 (full and part-time) members of the UDR. They are deployed in support of the 7,000 strong police force. The size of the Army's presence is determined principally by the RUC's requirement for military support, and as this has declined so have troop levels (from 13,000 at the beginning of 1980). It has however always been recognised that at times of tension additional reserves might be necessary and this was the reason for the recent deployment to Northern Ireland of the Spearhead Battalion of 600 men. Troop levels since January 1980 have been:

Date	No of major units	No of men (approx)
Jan 1980	13	13,000 +
Feb 1980	12	12,500
July 1980	11	11,900 (by Oct 80)
Nov 1980	10	11,300
Apr 1981	9	c.11,000
May 1981	9+ Spearhead	c.11,650



POLITICAL SITUATION

1. With the 20 May District Council elections now over, there may be renewed pressure on HMG to take some kind of "political initiative". There is a growing feeling that the current political stagnation in Northern Ireland plays into the hands of the Provisionals and the Maze hunger strikers; opinion in both the Republic of Ireland and the US is once more beginning to press for some sign of political movement; and at Westminster the direct rule renewal debate at the end of June or beginning of July may be the occasion for questioning from Members of the continued absence of any political breakthrough.

The local election results have not shed any much clearer light on the way ahead. The DUP clearly established itself as the most potent force in the Unionist community. Although the UUP restricted its losses to a minimum and gained almost exactly the same number of first preference votes as the DUP, the contrast between the UUP's steady decline and the DUP's dynamism is a telling one. It is not impossible that Jim Molyneaux could now face a leadership challenge either from Harold McCusker (who might try to take on Paisley) or from an alternative figure such as John Taylor or Robert Bradford who might seek to make peace with the DUP.
3. On the minority side the SDLP share of first preference votes fell from 20.6 per cent to 17.6 per cent while the hard line Republican Irish Independence Party, fighting local elections for the first time, gained 3.9 per cent. This result was a satisfactory one for the SDLP in the circumstances. Nevertheless the IIP vote, together with the election of 4 outright supporters of the hunger strikers, is seen as a fillip for the Provisionals.
4. The main losers in the election were Alliance whose moderate non-sectarian support was squeezed by the reversion to traditional loyalties and whose share of the vote dropped from 14.4 per cent to 8.9 per cent. Their influence must be considerably reduced as a result.
5. In seeking political movement HMG remains committed to the principles enunciated in the 1979 and 1980 Command Papers ie a transfer of powers to elected representatives on a basis that, by involving the minority in the Province's affairs, makes it acceptable to both parts of the community.



6. The results in the local government election compared with 1977, were:

	1977		1981	
	<u>% 1st prefs</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>% 1st prefs</u> <u>/estimate/</u>	<u>Seats</u>
DUP	12.7	74	26.57	142
OUP	29.6	178	26.56	151
SDLP	20.6	113	17.6	104
IIP	-	-	3.9	21
Alliance	14.4	70	8.9	38
WPRC	2.6	6	1.7	3
PD/IRSP	-	-	1.3	4
UPUP	-	-	1.3	4
UUUP	3.2	12	1.4	4
UPNI	2.4	6	1.1	2
NILP	0.8	1	0.7	1
NUPRG	-	-	0.45	1
Others	8.3	44	8.8	51
		<u>526</u>		<u>526</u>

/Note: percentages do not sum to 100% as some minor candidates are excluded/.



NI ECONOMYGeneral

1. NI is an uniquely economically distressed region of the UK - exceptionally high unemployment, low GDP per head (77% of UK average, 60% of EC average), low activity rates, high net outward migration, high degree of dependence on declining staple industries, and one of the highest rates of natural increase of population in the EC.
2. NI's problems are exacerbated by its lack of natural resources, its location on the extreme periphery of the Community, its limited home market, dependence on the level of demand in its export markets, and the impact of the civil disturbances.

Unemployment

3. The May figure is 101522 (17.6%) which is an increase of 33720 in the last year. This will be the first time this number of unemployed exceeded 100,000. This average conceals pockets of extremely high unemployment, eg in West Belfast.

Future Prospects

4. Substantial redundancies already notified/ (both ICI and Courtaulds but which have not yet taken place will be losing several hundred workers in Carrickfergus next month) will push the figures higher towards a possible average for 1981/82 of 108,000.

5. A higher figure is possible in subsequent years if some of the high-risk, high-unemployment companies close: Courtaulds (man made fibre, Londonderry, 700) is certain to close; British Enkalon (man made fibre, Antrim, 1200) is likely to close, and the following are very vulnerable:



Ormeau Bakery (Belfast, 1500),

Unipork (meat, Cookstown and Enniskellen, 850)

Herdmans (meat, Strabane and Belfast, 850)

Henry Denny (meat, Craigavon, 500)

Also at risk, but less severely, are:

Goodyear (tyres, Craigavon, 1109)

Moygashel (clothing, Ballymena and Dungannon, 700)

Moy Park (meat, Dungannon, 665)

Monsanto (man made fibre, Coleraine, 550)

The future of Shorts and especially Harland and Wolff are not assured in the longer term.

7. Even though over 7000 jobs were promoted in 1980, the prospects on the job creation front are now poor, given the current world recession and the image projected of Northern Ireland in recent weeks.

#### Special Measures

8. The special measures already taken include:-

1. offering the most attractive package of financial assistance for new industry in the United Kingdom;
2. tackling the problem of high electricity costs;
3. shifting the emphasis in public expenditure towards the trade, industry, employment and energy programmes;
4. taking extra measures to improve training and to tackle the special needs of the young unemployed;
5. initiating a special review of NI agriculture.



BETTER GOVERNMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

1. The Secretary of State set out his proposals for creating arrangements for the government of Northern Ireland that will better meet the needs of all of its people, in a Written Answer to a PQ from John Watson on 19 March. In the likely event of the continuation of Direct Rule for the time being, the Secretary of State's immediate priority is to ensure that HMG's policies for security and the economic and social development of the Province are effectively implemented, under his direction and with the maximum possible reduction in the overlap between the NIO and the NI Departments.
2. Studies which were put in hand during 1980, and which included a Rayner Scrutiny of Financial Administration, demonstrated the need for tighter central control of all the public financial and manpower resources of government in Northern Ireland; for co-ordinating the policies of NI Departments and managing them so that they operate so far as possible as a single department; and for concentrating the primary responsibilities of the NIO in Belfast.
3. The change of ministerial appointments in January provided an opportunity for the Secretary of State to take a first step in this direction by allocating across-the-board responsibilities to his Ministers of State. At official level this is now being achieved by means of a Management Group which matches the whole of the Secretary of State's responsibilities, with the PUS as chairman, and the Head of the NICS as his deputy. They are charged with co-ordinating policy and resources across the full range of NI government and ensuring positive but sensitive government under the Secretary of State's personal direction.
4. Three further studies have recently been completed: one on the best way to achieve the amalgamation of the control functions of the NI Departments of Finance and of the Civil Service; and two others into the organisation of economic affairs and social affairs respectively. Discussions and consultations following up these reports are proceeding urgently.



INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The current hunger strike has generated substantial international interest, notably in the US, the Holy See and Western Europe. We have encountered no difficulties from allied governments, although it remains to be seen whether President Mitterand will succumb to left wing pressure in France. An Emergency Debate was held in the European Parliament in early May but in the event a helpful (EDG) motion was passed to the discomfiture of Blaney and others who had put down hostile motions. The visits to the Maze prison by the Pope's emisary, Father Magee, two delegates of the European Commission of Human Rights (to see whether Sands wished to adopt an application lodged by his sister: he did not) and three members of Dail Eireann helped maintain international interest until the middle of this month. But this has declined and the attempt on the Pope's life has probably had the indirect effect of reducing sympathy abroad for terrorist prisoners in Northern Ireland. When it is known publicly - probably in the next few days - that the European Commission of Human Rights have declared admissible two outstanding complaints by protesting prisoners at the Maze, international interest might revive, especially in Western Europe.

2. There has been some unhelpful television coverage in the US but in recent days there has been some attempt at balance: moreover, attention has now been diverted to the Pope and other issues. The editorials of at least 75% of leading American newspapers has been responsible and helpful. Media coverage in Western Europe, with the Republic of Ireland and France notably hostile. All posts have rebutted IRA propaganda vigorously: the Prime Minister's reply to the



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recent message from the Four Horsemen about the hunger strike was distributed widely at home and abroad.

3. Politics in the Republic of Ireland have been dominated by the hunger strike and the forthcoming general election. In recent weeks the Joint Studies have scarcely got a look in. The Taoiseach has urged HMG to be flexible on prison conditions but has been careful not to associate himself with the prisoners' demands for political status. Both Government and Opposition believe that the European Commission of Human Rights could produce a solution but are vague about that body's involvement. There is a risk that Provisional Sinn Fein sympathisers could take six seats in the general election next month. On the whole the media, including the Irish Times which is the Republic's leading newspaper, have been hostile, concentrating on HMG's alleged inflexibility on prison conditions.

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"THE SEGMENT"

The Segment is a traffic-free security zone covering the main shopping area of Belfast city centre - an area of approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile long and 600 yards wide. The streets are blocked by barriers manned by (200 unarmed) members of the Civilian Search Unit. Vehicles are not allowed in (except for essential services and delivery vehicles, on production of a pass) and pedestrians are searched on entry. The Segment was set up in the early '70s with the aim of making it more difficult for bombs, and particularly car bombs, to be planted in the shopping area.



CARDINAL TOMAS O FIAICH: ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH AND PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND

A conservative theologian in the Catholic Church, with little pastoral experience prior to his appointment as Archbishop in 1977. His public pronouncements tend to gain him notoriety, believing in a phased British withdrawal from the North. He rejects violence, but has on occasions been far from helpful on the prisons issue.

RT REV DR JOHN W ARMSTRONG: CHURCH OF IRELAND ARCHBISHOP OF ARMAGH AND PRIMATE OF ALL IRELAND

Appointed in February 1980, while Chairman of the Irish Council of Churches. All his Ministry was in the Republic. He is a leading ecumenist, keen to build good relationships with other church leaders. Politically aware, although opposed to the Church's direct involvement in politics. He did at one stage indicate a willingness to talk with PIRA.

RONALD CRAIG: MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (UNTIL MONDAY 1 JUN 1981)

Born 1916 in Belfast. Married with two children. Heavily involved in youth and sporting activities (played rugby three times for Ireland in 1938). Whilst in the Ministry has served in Larne, Woodvale and for the past 11 years in Carrickfergus. Belongs to the ecumenical and progressive wing of the church and unlike his predecessor is prepared to meet members of the Catholic church. He is popular, lively and energetic but holds strong beliefs on Sunday observance and mixed marriages.

REV W SIDNEY CALLAGHAN: PRESIDENT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND (1980-81)

Born in Dublin (1926). Educated at Trinity College Dublin. Joined the Ministry at age 21 and moved to Northern Ireland. Married with two children. Spent much of the 1960's in Agnes Street off the Shankill Road. Well known for his regular radio broadcasts on Downtown Radio he is articulate popular and deeply committed to ecumenism.



Political Questions

Ul. Vol. Rev  
U.F.R.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Facts</u>
1. In the <u>local government elections</u> on 20 May the DUP doubled their vote at the expense of the Official Unionists, and the Nationalist fringe parties did well.	Are the prospects for political progress now much bleaker?	They are. The community is more polarised than it was several months ago. But it would be wrong to rule out all hope of political progress at this stage.
2. The <u>Joint Studies</u> are proceeding, and people expect a further Summit perhaps in July.	Will you press ahead with the Joint Studies?	Papers have been drafted (but not finally agreed) at official level. The date of a further Summit has yet been fixed.
3. Many Unionists want a <u>devolved Parliament</u> , some want <u>integration</u> . The minority are suspicious of both.	Will you try again to reach agreement on a devolved government for the Province?	The Government's policy is to see to give the people of the Province a greater degree of responsibility in managing their affairs; but this must be in a way acceptable to the minority as well as the majority.
4. Following the DUP wins in the local elections, some Official Unionist Councillors have said they will not take part in cross-border co-operation schemes with the Republic.	Do you deplore this refusal?	We want to encourage neighbourly co-operation, which is in the interest of Northerners themselves. There is no sinister motive in this.
5. Mr Wedgwood-Benn has suggested that Britain should pull out of Northern Ireland and send in UN troops.	Do you agree with this idea?	No role for a UN force in UK.
6. Mr David Owen has suggested seeking a solution in an EEC context.	Do you agree with this idea?	It is not clear how the EEC could help.



SECURITY QUESTIONS.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Facts</u>
1. Murder of offduty policeman last night.	Security policy failing? More troops along the border?	The policy is to bring criminals to justice. RUC continue to make many arrests and bring charges. Chief Constable and GOC both satisfied with resources. Many troops in border areas already.
2. UDA arms find.  <i>Pres. Sinn Fein.</i> <i>Pres. I.R.A.</i>	Why not now proscribe UDA?	Position kept under review. Distinction between an organisation as such engaged in terrorism (eg PIRA, UFF - both proscribed) and individuals happening to belong to an organisation also committing crime. Police investigate all crime anyway. Non-proscription of an organisation is no protection for its members who commit crimes.
3. Deaths (believed to be 4 since hunger strikes began) and injuries from baton rounds.	Are the SF making too free use of them?	SF subject to the law like everyone else. Decision on use necessarily for Commanders on the spot. Their use needs to be set against the hundreds of petrol and other bombs thrown at SF. Chief Constable believes baton round is the most effective method of riot control consistent with the principle of minimum reasonable force.



HUNGER STRIKE QUESTIONS.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Question</u>	<u>Facts</u>
1. The Government position is firm.	Why not more flexibility?	Flexibility demonstrated both before and after the first hunger strike, with changes to regime (including clothing), the initiative to wind down the protests in January, the cut in the rate of lost remission when the dirty protest ended, and the issue of beds, bedding, cell furniture, books and writing materials to ex-dirty protesters. In the face of this there has been no reduction whatever in the scale of what those who speak for the hunger strikers are demanding.
2. Disorders attributable to the hunger strike.	Enough is enough, surely the Government can now settle it with a concession?	The Government is committed to maintaining and, as necessary and practical, improving the prison regime. It stands by that commitment: but there is no evidence that those behind the hunger strike want anything less than their original demands. In that situation concessions solve nothing: rather they tempt those behind the hunger strike to hang on.
3. Publicity about the ECHR.	Comments?	The proceedings of the Commission are confidential but the Government's position clear. It has been and is prepared to give the ECHR facilities for investigating a genuine complaint within their terms of reference.



Event

Question

Facts

4. McLaughlin has ended his strike.

Comments?

Welcome his decision in his own interests, his family's and the community's. Note by contrast the cynicism of the Republican Press Centre's statement. They want "a long hunger strike" as a form of pressure: the hunger striker, apparently, does not matter.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Ireland

Ireland  
MAP 17



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Prime Minister

This is the note which  
is intended to serve as the  
basis for the meeting at 6.00

Clive Whitmore Esq today.  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

HW

26 May 1981

26.5.81

Dear Clive,

HUNGER STRIKE

1. Over the last few weeks we have succeeded in our aim of getting across to people in the Province, including the Provisionals, the message that the Government cannot compromise on political status or the five demands. This has needed hard words, which have naturally not gone down easily with the Catholic community.

2. So far the security forces have been able to cope without too much difficulty: indeed, the trouble on the streets has been less than most people expected. Nevertheless, attitudes in the Catholic community have been changing as the hunger-strikers have died. I attach a note which sets out the changes, and their implications, with a complementary note about the Protestant community.

...

Yours,  
S W Boys Smith

S W BOYS SMITH



## NORTHERN IRELAND: THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

1. The paper on the prisons protest considered by Ministers on 20 May 1981 contained the following paragraph:

"For the Protestant community, HMG's handling of the prisons is seen as a measure of its resolve against the IRA. Concessions to Republican pressure would be interpreted as weakness and would have consequences for the security situation."

But the picture in the Protestant community is complex.

2. Unionist politicians are unanimous (though with differing degrees of vehemence) in protest against anything which suggests HMG may be in the process of making concessions of any sort to Republican prisoners above all under the pressure of a hunger strike, of international or Church opinion, or the Irish Government, or of a terrorist campaign. Every re-iteration of HMG's firm stance is music to their ears.

3. This general attitude, so far as we can judge from our contacts, is shared by the Protestant community as a whole. Even very moderate Protestants will insist on the necessity not to give in to the IRA: and they believe that the Provisionals, if HMG stands firm on this issue, will eventually capitulate. The Protestant community as a whole would, however, prefer to accept any changes in the present situation which resolved the prisons issue and its accompanying violence provided this was not tantamount to political status (or gave the prisoners control over how they spent their time) or seemed to be a charter for an eventual amnesty; and provided, above all that they resolved the issue. A touchstone of Protestant reaction would be their assessment of what weakness the Government had shown towards the Provisionals.



4. The UDA have come out publicly in favour of what they call special category status, distinguishing it from the Republicans' "political status". This has long been the UDA position - some of their own prisoners went on an abortive hunger strike before Christmas to achieve it, and they would not object to any concessions provided their prisoners benefitted. But in this attitude they are not representative of the Protestant community as a whole. Thus, while the UDA would not support political protest against concessions with either paramilitary or terrorist activity, they would of course feel bound to react if they thought the Provisionals had won a major confrontation with the Government; and might be drawn into violence through the reaction of the Protestant Community as a whole.

5. Other bodies representative in some ways of Protestant opinion and important in this context are the UDR, the RUC and the Prison Officers. The GOC and the <sup>Chief Constable</sup> / have already told the Secretary of <sup>bodies</sup> State that they would not expect the two former / to react adversely to movement forward under the ECHR (eg Article 28) procedure. Because of their close involvement in dealing with the prisons protest, prison officers are more sensitive to changes which could be interpreted as concessions to protestors. But subject to the provisos already outlined, some movement, for example under the ECHR, could be achieved without causing an unacceptable reaction from these quarters.

#### Conclusions

6. The Protestant Community's attention is presently focussed on the prisons and the hunger strike but its mood is dependent on issues going far wider. Its need remains much the same as identified last December; ie for reassurance that:-



E.R.

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- a. the security situation is under control;
- b. HMG has made no plans in association with Mr Haughey for radical moves in the political or institutional field; and
- c. intends to stand firm on the position that while we will continue to operate a humanitarian prisons regime there is no question of concessions which would be tantamount to political status.

Directions in Republic.

Northern Ireland Office  
26 May 1981

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## NORTHERN IRELAND: THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

1. The present hunger strike evoked little interest at its outset in the Catholic community. Attitudes have been changing with the deaths of the hunger strikers. What is said below is true chiefly in West Belfast, but applies also in Londonderry and to a lesser but increasing extent in other parts of the Province: and applies to all sections of the Catholic community.
2. They fear that the current rioting could lead to a major confrontation between the Security Forces and the Catholic community. They are also anxious that, with the community polarised, there are dangers of intersectarian violence. Though only a minority think that political status should be granted the great majority of the Catholic community believe that it is up to Government as the stronger party somehow to resolve the impasse.
3. At the same time, many Catholics, even those who do not support militant Republicanism, instinctively sympathise with the H Block protestors, who strike a deep chord in nationalist sentiment. Candidates in the local elections standing on an H Block ticket, some with Provo connexions, did well. Mr Gerry Fitt who spoke out against the hunger strike was defeated.
4. We have detected no great upsurge of popular support for the Provisionals. Catholics resent PIRA attempts over the past few weeks to manipulate them. They are deeply worried about the trouble which PIRA can bring to their communities. But though they blame PIRA too for the stalemate in the hunger strike, they have no illusions that PIRA will prove flexible and this accentuates their tendency to look to Government to make a move.
5. The necessary actions of the security forces in containing riots are inevitably exploited by PIRA sympathisers: and the longer street confrontations continue, the more tempting it becomes for those Catholics, caught in the ghettos, to blame them on the security forces. Familiar allegations are already circulating about army and police brutality, and are widely believed.



E.R.

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6. It is clear, not least from intelligence sources, that the shift of Catholic opinion described above has been a major aim of PIRA policy. We have evidence of an organised campaign to stir up anger over the security forces' activities, for example. As the hunger strike continues, Catholic frustration is turning increasingly to bitterness and anger. Alienation of the community poses difficulties for every day Government and puts at risk the return to normality in the Province. The task of the security forces in policing Catholic areas has become more difficult and the growing acceptance of the RUC by the Catholic community is being checked. Intelligence confirms stories that PIRA terrorists are finding the population of West Belfast more ready than they were a few weeks ago to give them the passive support they need to operate.

7. We have succeeded in getting through to PIRA, to the Protestants and of the Catholics the important message that Government cannot yield on the five demands, or on political status. That message must not change. Our problem is, at the same time, that we must not allow those seeking the alienation of the Catholic community by exploiting their fears to achieve their aim.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

26 May 1981

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Colloids - more systematic

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Procedures - something should be done

Intersected

We have succeeded in getting through to the Catholics the important message that government cannot... at the same time, that we must not allow those seeking the elimination of the Catholic community... to exploit their fears to relieve their sin.

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*Inland. CF?*



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE  
GREAT GEORGE STREET,  
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Michael Pattison Esq  
Private Secretary  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

*26* May 1981

*Type for PM's signature*

*Am*

*Dear Mike*

You asked for a draft letter for the Prime Minister to send to Mr Molyneaux in reply to his letter to her of *12* May about the mortar bomb attacks on Newtownhamilton and Rosslea RUC stations in County Fermanagh on 8 and 9 May respectively. Ten mortar bombs were fired at each police station and both stations were extensively damaged. There were five army casualties. Preliminary forensic tests have indicated that the mortars used in these attacks were of a kind manufactured by the Provisional IRA.

The correspondence has of course been largely overtaken not only by Mr Molyneaux's question to the Prime Minister at question time on 12 May, but by the meeting the Prime Minister and my Secretary of State had with Mr Molyneaux on *14* May when this subject was raised. Mr Atkins said then that there had been some evidence of test firing in the Republic and if Mr Molyneaux had proof of this it would be put to the Irish authorities at once. However you may still think it worth sending Mr Molyneaux a simple reply in the lines of the draft attached.  
...

I am sending a copy of this letter to Francis Richards (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely  
Mike Stephens*

M W HOPKINS



DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER.....

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE.....

To

James H Molyneaux JP MP  
House of Commons  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 0AA

(Full Postal Address)

Enclosures

Copies to be sent to

HIDDEN COPIES:

PS/Secretary of State

(Full Address, if Necessary)

LETTER DRAFTED FOR SIGNATURE BY PRIME MINISTER  
(Name of Signatory)

You wrote to me on 12 May about recent mortar attacks on the security forces in County Fermanagh, and the subject came up at your meeting with Humphrey Atkins and myself on 14 May. I invited you then to send me whatever information you had on the attacks.

The evidence so far is that the mortars appear to have been manufactured by the terrorists themselves. But the final results of the forensic tests which are being conducted will not be available for a while yet.

SD



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Prime Minister

You may like to see this letter circulated by the Chancellor - but Prof Wilson is out of touch if he really believes that you have missed this point.

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG  
01-233 3000

21 May 1981

R. Harrington, Esq.,  
Private Secretary,  
Northern Ireland Office

MP 22/4

ms

Dear Roy,

I attach a letter to the Chancellor from Professor Thomas Wilson of the University of Glasgow. The point he makes about the objectives behind the demand for special treatment is I am sure one you are familiar with, but the suggestion is that more effective use could be made of this in statements by your Secretary of State or by the Prime Minister. In the Chancellor's absence abroad I am passing the letter on to you direct, since I am sure he would wish you to see it without delay.

I am copying this letter and the attachment to Mike Pattison (NO.10).

Yours ever,  
Peter

P.S. JENKINS



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

Professor Thomas Wilson



Adam Smith Building  
University of Glasgow  
Glasgow, G12 8RT  
041-339 8855  
Extension 659

19th May, 1981.

Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC  
House of Commons,  
LONDON SW1A 0AA.

Dear Geoffrey,

H - Block

Although the H - block crisis is not your direct concern, may I make a suggestion? After talking to a good many people about this issue in recent weeks, I am convinced that there is a quite inadequate understanding of what is one of the most important objectives behind the demand for special treatment. This is that, by stages of course, they hope to acquire p.o.w. status - even if they pretend this is not so. It would then be possible to declare that the war was over, at some convenient point, and thus start a campaign for the release of prisoners. (The war could, of course, be resumed later.)

When I have referred to amnesty as the aim, I have found that even people who were inclined to regard the Government's attitude as unreasonably rigid have changed their views at once, almost without exception.

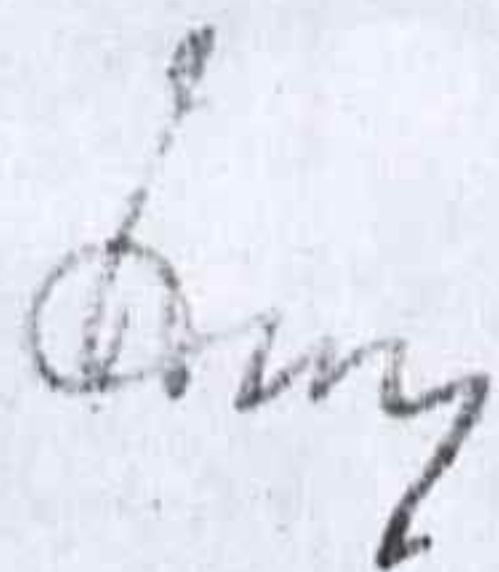
Yet this point has not really been brought out by the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State even in their firm statements. I see that there is a passing reference to it in Christopher Thomas's article in yesterday's Times but this is unusual.

Would you care to suggest that the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State should give some emphasis to this ultimate objective of the hunger strikers in any subsequent statements?

They might also refer in passing to the unyielding treatment of hunger strikers in the past by Dublin Governments - even under De Valera.

Kind regards.

Yours ever,





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File

Ireland

dd

SUBJECT.



cc. Master set.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

21 May, 1981.

Dear Stephen,

Northern Ireland

The Prime Minister held a meeting yesterday evening to consider the handling of the situation arising from the prison protests in Northern Ireland, on the basis of the paper enclosed with your letter of 15 May to Michael Alexander. The Home Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Lord Privy Seal, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Attorney General were present, as well as Sir Robert Armstrong and Mr. Wade-Gery.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said that the situation in the Province had altered in some respects since the paper was written. Questions relating to the European Commission on Human Rights had been resolved following the two meetings held by the Prime Minister on 18 May. But a time of considerable difficulty lay ahead. The next hunger striker (McCreesh) would probably die the following day, and a fourth (O'Hara) by the end of the week. There should then be an interval of 3-4 weeks before the fifth striker (who had started his strike only when Sands died) would be near death, unless he chose to accelerate the process by refusing water as well as food. There was no sign that the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) leadership, which was controlling the strikers, would let them give up; and there was no doubt that McCreesh's family, including his brother who was a priest, had specifically dissuaded him from breaking his fast on 16 May. Rioting would no doubt continue. But the Security Forces' success in confining it to the Catholic areas where it broke out meant that the PIRA had failed in their aim of provoking widespread violence between the two communities; and hostility to the rioting was building up among moderate Catholics, on whose property and daily lives its damaging effects were concentrated. The PIRA might therefore put less effort into starting riots and turn back to their established policy of attacking members of the Security Forces. Given the continuous strain to which the Security Forces were subjected, there was always the risk of a mistake on their part leading to an accidental death which could spark off even more serious trouble. But they were so far coping well with the situation, and there was beginning to be some scope for shortening their exceptionally long periods on duty. Meanwhile, following the local elections in the Province which were taking place that day, he himself would be having talks with local political leaders about the

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mechanics of restarting the process of political development. What the substance of that process might now be was a matter on which he would be consulting his OD colleagues in about two weeks' time. This timetable took account of the need, at the end of June, to seek from Parliament authority for the continuation of direct rule for a further year. In the meantime every effort should be made to win the propaganda battle, both at home and abroad; and to this end he had already established an informal group of officials which would meet frequently and regularly in London, in parallel with the operational group already meeting daily in Belfast. Criticism in the United States had been stemmed, but might increase again if there were more deaths. In the Republic of Ireland Mr. Haughey was under very strong pressure to attack the British Government's stance, but was resisting this, thanks to his interest in maintaining the special relationship established at the Dublin Summit and continued by the Joint Studies. If he had been less restrained, the current situation in Northern Ireland would have been much worse.

The meeting endorsed the general approach set out in the paper enclosed with your letter of 15 May 1981. It was agreed that there was no alternative to the Government's present policy, in pursuit of which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had the fullest support of his colleagues. At some stage it might be appropriate for the Prime Minister to send a carefully worded message about the situation in the Province to selected Heads of other Governments. But this might be more effective if done in the context of a new initiative for local political development. One major disadvantage of the lack of such development was that no new political leadership was able to evolve; and further discussion with existing leaders was liable to remain as unproductive as in the past. Meanwhile public criticism was growing in Great Britain over the ceremonies with which the PIRA were able to surround the funerals of their members. Government policy in this regard could not be changed, but there might be a case for re-emphasising in public the practical reasons which lay behind it.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Michael Arthur (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence), Jim Nursaw (Law Officers' Department), and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours ever,*

*Alvin Shinn.*

Stephen Boys-Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.



Ireland

FILE

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

21 May 1981

I am enclosing two telegrams the Prime Minister has received concerning the hunger strikers in Northern Ireland.

I have not acknowledged them. Please deal with these telegrams as you think fit.

~~W.F.S. RICKS~~

Stephen Boys Smith, Esq.,  
Northern Ireland Office.

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MARGARET THATCHER PRIME MINISTER  
10 DOWNING ST  
LONDON SW1

ON BEHALF OF THE TWO MILLION WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF THE  
NEW YORK STATE AFL-CIO, WE APPEAL TO YOU TO PREVENT  
THE DEATHS OF ANY MORE IMPRISONED IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY  
HUNGER STRIKERS. TWO YOUNG MEN --ROBERT SANDS AND FRANCIS  
HUGHES--HAVE ALREADY DIED AND TWO MORE--PATRICK OHARA  
AND RAYMOND MCCRESH--ARE NEAR DEATH AND MANY MORE  
WILL SURELY FOLLOW IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS UNLESS YOU TAKE  
QUICK ACTION. WE URGE YOU TO IMMEDIATELY AUTHORIZE POLITICAL  
PRISONER STATUS FOR ALL IMPRISONED MEMBERS OF THE IRISH  
REPUBLICAN ARMY. IRA MEMBERS AND OTHER IRISHMEN HAVE  
ALREADY DIED BECAUSE YOU HAVE REFUSED TO PROVIDE POLITICAL  
PRISONERS WITH EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW. IN THE INTEREST  
OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND HUMANITY, PLEASE ACT NOW BEFORE  
ANY MORE YOUNG MEN CHOOSE TO DIE FOR THEIR CAUSE. MANY OF OUR  
MEMBERS HAVE FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THEY ARE  
DEEPLY TROUBLED AND SADDENED BY RECENT EVENTS THERE. IT IS IN THE  
BEST INTEREST OF ALL IRISHMEN, PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC,  
FOR YOU TO USE THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF YOUR OFFICE TO  
INTERVENE AND PREVENT FUTURE TRAGEDIES.

RAYMOND R. CORBETT  
PRESIDENT NEW YORK STATE AFL-CIO

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MARGARET THATCHER PRIME MINISTER 10 DOWNING ST LONDON WEST

ONE

22/5

DEAR PRIME MINISTER

I WOULD URGE YOU TO LOOK INTO THE SERIOUS CONDITIONS  
OF THE REMAINING PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE IN A BELFAST



PRISON FURTHER DEATHS WILL NOT BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION

TO THE IRISH PROBLEM

I AM EXPRESSING MY CONCERN THROUGH THE IRISH NATIONAL  
CAUCUS AND OTHER CONCERNED

COLL 10

1-013785C140 MARGARET PAGE02/22

IRISH AMERICANS IN THE HOPE THAT  
THE REMAINING PRISONERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO DIE  
CONGRESSMAN BALTASAR CORRADA  
RESIDENT COMMISSIONER PUERTO RICO

COL



*Prime Minister*  
*AW*

GROUPS  
UNCLASSIFIED  
FROM DUBLIN 200935Z MAY1981.  
TO PRIORITY F C O  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 164 OF 20 MAY.  
AND TO PRIORITY N I O (BELFAST)

CAMLOUGH MURDERS.

THE TAOISEACH ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT LAST NIGHT.

''THESE LATEST DEATHS IN THE CONTINUING TOLL OF TRAGEDY UNDERLINE ONCE MORE THE NEED TO PURSUE URGENTLY A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHICH WILL BRING THIS AWFUL CYCLE OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO AN END.

OUR SYMPATHY GOES OUT TO ALL THE BEREAVED FAMILIES.

WHAT IS NEEDED ON THE PART OF ALL WHO ARE INVOLVED IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS AN APPROACH BASED, ABOVE ALL ELSE, ON RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE.''

ENDS.

**THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED.**

TATHAM.

**NORTHERN IRELAND LIMITED**

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MAED	CHIEF CLERK
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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1578 OF 20 MAY 1981

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO BELFAST NIO LONDON

INFO PRIORITY DUBLIN

INFO SAVING BIS NEW YORK

M I P T

NORTHERN IRELAND: U S TV AND RADIO COVERAGE 11-18 MAY.

1. THE DEATH OF HUGHES, THE SUBSEQUENT RIOTING AND VARIOUS FUNERALS IN N. IRELAND WERE REPORTED BY THE TELEVISION AND RADIO NETWORKS WITHOUT PROMINENCE AND WITH MUCH LESS SENSATIONAL REPORTING THAN IN THE PREVIOUS WEEK (MY TEL NO 1471). MOST REPORTS DESCRIBED HUGHES AS A QUOTE CONVICTED MURDERER UNQUOTE, AND EXTRACTS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR N.I.'S RADIO INTERVIEW WERE WIDELY AND HELPFULLY USED BY ALL THE MAIN RADIO NETWORKS. ABC CARRIED THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S DESCRIPTION OF HUGHES AS QUOTE ONE OF THE MOST WANTED MEN IN N.IRELAND UNQUOTE. BUT REPORTS ON ALL THE TELEVISION NETWORKS OF THE BRAWLS OVER THE ROUTE FOR THE HEARSE CARRYING HUGHES'S BODY FROM THE MAZE, WITH EXTENSIVE FILM OF THE POLICE REMOVING THE UNDERTAKER FROM THE HEARSE BY FORCE SHOWED THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES IN AN UNSYMPATHETIC LIGHT. BOTH ABC AND CBS CARRIED CRITICAL COMMENT BY A FRIEND OF HUGHES. REPORTS OF THE HUGHES FUNERAL ALSO PLAYED UP THE SECURITY RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON MOURNERS. BUT THE FUNERAL OF THE MILKMAN, KILLED BY RIOTERS AFTER SANDS DEATH WAS ALSO PROMINENTLY COVERED. ON THE SAME EVENING, CABLE NEWS NETWORK, NOW RECEIVED IN OVER 5 MILLION HOMES, CARRIED AN HOUR LONG INTERVIEW WITH HMC G NEW YORK.

2. THE SINGLE MOST UNHELPFUL TELEVISION REPORT OF THE WEEK WAS THE REPEAT OF A 1974 REPORT ABOUT STRABANE BY ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR PROGRAMMES IN THE COUNTRY, CBS'S QUOTE 60 MINUTES UNQUOTE (WITH AN AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 30 MILLION A WEEK). THE SEGMENT, INTRODUCED AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF HOW LITTLE THE SITUATION HAD CHANGED IN THE LAST DECADE, WAS AN EMOTIVE ACCOUNT OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION IN STRABANE, SHOWING QUOTE THE INDIGNITIES AN OCCUPYING FORCE INFLECTS ON PEOPLE, INCLUDING A VISITING CAMERA CREW, EVERYWHERE UNQUOTE, THE DESTRUCTION OF SHOPS AND OFFICES, AND THE INEVITABLE FILM OF SOLDIERS JUXTAPOSED WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.

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3. OTHERWISE THE REDUCED IMPACT OF REPORTS ON NETWORK TV AND RADIO ILLUSTRATED THEIR TENDENCY TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE MAJOR STORY AT A TIME AND THEN TO DROP IT ABRUPTLY. ATTENTION HAS NOW BEEN DIVERTED TO THE SHOOTING OF THE POPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST. IN A SUMMARY OF THE WEEK'S NEWS ON 17 MAY CBS PLACED A REPORT ON THE DEATH OF HUGHES AFTER ACCOUNTS OF THE SHOOTING OF THE POPE, THE ISRAEL/SYRIA DISPUTE AND THE ELECTION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT OF FRANCE AND BALANCED IT WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE MURDER OF A CATHOLIC BUTCHER WHO HAD REFUSED TO CLOSE HIS SHOP ON THE DAY OF THE FUNERAL.

4. ON LOCAL TELEVISION STATIONS IN NEW YORK INTEREST IN LOCAL NORAID DEMONSTRATIONS WAS ALSO GREATLY REDUCED. ONLY ONE STATION, COMPARED WITH SIX THE PREVIOUS WEEK, USED A SHORT INTERVIEW WITH BIS NEW YORK ON THE DEATH OF HUGHES. REPORTS OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS OUTSIDE THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE QE2, WERE ALSO BRIEF. THE VISITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND GROUP WERE WELL COVERED ON LOCAL RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS: ONE MEMBER GAVE A COMMENTARY ON NEW YORK'S NORMALLY HOSTILE CHANNEL 5 NEWS AS A BALANCE TO A PREVIOUS STATEMENT BY A NORAID SUPPORTER.

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FM WASHINGTON 202300Z MAY 81

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1577 OF 20 MAY

INFO IMMEDIATE NIO BELFAST, NIO LONDON, PRIORITY DUBLIN,  
BIS NEW YORK.

*From Miami*

*Ms.*

*[Handwritten signature]*

MY TELEGRAM NO 1471

NORTHERN IRELAND: US MEDIA COVERAGE

1. THE DECLINE OF US MEDIA ATTENTION OBSERVED IN MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE CONTINUES. NORTHERN IRELAND REMAINS A PROMINENT STORY, BUT BY NO MEANS THE DOMINANT ONE.

2. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS HUGHES' FUNERAL AND THE MURDER OF 5 BRITISH SOLDIERS HAVE RECEIVED FULL BUT FACTUAL COVERAGE. EDITORIAL COVERAGE CONTINUES AT A LESSER RATE: IT REMAINS THE CASE THAT NO INFLUENTIAL US NEWSPAPER HAS CALLED FOR THE GRANTING OF POLITICAL STATUS. INDEED EDITORIAL COMMENT, THOUGH BY NO MEANS UNIFORM, IS INCREASINGLY FAVOURABLE. TODAY'S PRESS COMMENT INCLUDES A REPORT BY THE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE NOTING THE STRENGTH OF BRITISH AND NORTHERN IRISH POPULAR SUPPORT FOR HMG'S POSITION, THE NORMALITY OF ONGOING INDIVIDUAL AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AND THE STRONG ATTRACTIONS OF NORTHERN IRELAND FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT; A FORCEFUL AND STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES BY THE ASSISTANT EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES; AND AN EDITORIAL IN THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS UNEQUIVOCALLY CONDEMNING THE IRA GANGSTERS WHO BLEW UP A BRITISH ARMoured CAR AND EQUATING THEM WITH THE PUERTO RICAN THUGS WHO BOASTED OF A MURDEROUS BOMB ATTACK AT A NEW YORK AIRPORT.

3. SUCH COMMENT WILL ITSELF PROVOKE HOSTILE LETTERS AND ARTICLES. BUT THE TREND OF MAINSTREAM COMMENT IS INCREASINGLY BALANCED, INDEED FAVOURABLE. I THINK THERE ARE TWO FACTORS IN THIS. FIRST, THE VERY LONG DRAWN OUT NATURE OF THE HUNGER STRIKES, AND THE INTENSITY OF THE PRO-IRA PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, HAS FORCED EDITORIAL WRITERS AND MAJOR COLUMNISTS TO TAKE A LONGER AND MORE CONSIDERED LOOK AT THE ISSUES THAN IS NORMAL HERE WITH NORTHERN IRISH COVERAGE. SECOND, THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON THE POPE AND (ESPECIALLY IN NEW YORK) THE PUERTO RICAN BOMBINGS, CLOSELY COINCIDING WITH THE MURDER OF THE FIVE SOLDIERS, HAVE BROUGHT TO THE FORE THE GENERAL U.S. FEAR AND DETESTATION OF TERRORISM, AND STRENGTHENED CONSERVATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF AN INTERNATIONAL LINKAGE (HOWEVER STRUCTURED) OF TERRORIST GROUPS. I SENSE A GROWING REALISATION IN THE MAJOR U.S. MEDIA THAT THEY HAVE DROPPED THEIR GUARD, AND HAVE TOO EASILY AND UNCRITICALLY PROVIDED A PLATFORM FOR STRONGLY BIASED AND EXTREMIST VIEWS, AND THAT THIS REFLECTS POORLY ON THEIR JOURNALISTIC PROBITY. THE ENFORCED RESIGNATION OF DALY (DAILY NEWS COLUMNIST) WAS A MILESTONE IN THIS PROCESS. AND THE ECONOMIST ASSESSMENT, OF 16 MAY, OF US MEDIA COVERAGE WAS, WE KNOW, ADDRESSED PRIMARILY TO U.S. EDITORS AND, COMING FROM THAT INFLUENTIAL SOURCE, WILL HAVE PRODUCED SOME CONSCIENCE-SEARCHING.

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4. M I F T GIVES A FURTHER AND DETAILED ACCOUNT OF TV AND RADIO COVERAGE AS OBSERVED IN NEW YORK UP TO 18 MAY. THIS DEMONSTRATES CLEARLY ENOUGH THAT WE STILL FACE HOSTILE ATTITUDES IN MANY QUARTERS, PARTICULARLY IN NEW YORK AND OTHER CITIES WITH A CONCENTRATION OF EXTREME IRISH-AMERICAN OPINION.

5. BUT WE ARE NOW SEEING, IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA BOTH PRINT AND ELECTRONIC, EVIDENCE OF A WISH TO RESTORE SOME BALANCE AND INDEED TO PRESENT HMG'S VIEWS MORE FAIRLY. ON 19 MAY ABC TELEVISIONS QUOTE NIGHTLINE UNQUOTE (ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES ON U.S. TELEVISION, WITH AN AUDIENCE OF APPROXIMATELY 10 MILLION A NIGHT) DEVOTED ITS ENTIRE 30 MINUTES TO PRESENTING AN QUOTE ANTI-IRA POINT OF VIEW UNQUOTE. THE PROGRAMME INCLUDED AN INTERVIEW WITH A MEMBER OF THE RUC SEVERELY BURNT IN AN INCIDENT WHEN A COLLEAGUE WAS KILLED (QUOTE ONE OF THE INCREASING NUMBER OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS UNDER ATTACK FROM THE IRA UNQUOTE), A LIVE DISCUSSION WITH TWO LONDONDERRY WIDOWS (QUOTE THE TERRORISTS HAVE BEEN MADE OUT TO BE HEROES, YET THEIR VICTIMS HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN EXCEPT BY THOSE WHO LOVED THEM UNQUOTE), AND A COMMENTARY BY AN IRISH-AMERICAN CATHOLIC WHO DESCRIBED THE IRA AS BENT ON QUOTE A MISSION OF MISERY, DESTRUCTION AND DEATH, SO TURN ALL OF IRELAND INTO A GIGANTIC CUBA WITH A BROGUE UNQUOTE. THE PROGRAMME CONCLUDED WITH A LIVE INTERVIEW WITH ME. I AND MY STAFF, U.S.-WIDE, OF COURSE CONTINUE TO TAKE EVERY WORTHWHILE OPPORTUNITY TO STATE THE CASE. IT IS NOW BEING HEARD, AND REFLECTED, MORE WIDELY.

HENDERSON

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PART ..... 3 ..... ends:-

..... CAW is Father Brian McCreesh of 20/5/87 .....

PART ..... 4 ..... begins:-

..... Washington tel: 1577 of 20/5/87 .....