

PRIME MINISTER

Sands

Clive telephoned with the latest report on Sands.

The European Commissioners had a satisfactory meeting last night with the FCO and NIO. The latter explained our position in general, and in particular the point that we would not want Adams present at the meeting between them and Sands at the Maze. The Commissioners said that they fully accepted this, and explained that it was their normal practice only to see the complainant with the complainant's lawyer. The complainant in this case is in fact Sands' sister, whom the Commissioners - subsequent to the meeting with the FCO/NIO - got in touch with. They agreed with her that she and Sands' lawyer should be present at the meeting at the Maze. This is entirely acceptable to the NIO.

The Commissioners are hoping to reach Belfast at 1030 London time. There is some risk that they will not be able to land because of heavy snow throughout Northern Ireland and the North of England; but the NIO believe they will be able to get in. Incidentally, Sands' sister has complained at the delay in their arrival; but quite apart from the time it took for them to reach London yesterday, it would apparently have been quite impossible for them to have got into Belfast earlier than this morning because of the weather conditions.

The "crunch" is likely to come when they reach Belfast. Sands will then be told that they have arrived and that the meeting will be with the Commissioners, his sister and his lawyer only. Either he will accept this; or he will insist on Adams, and possibly Macfarlane (the local IRA commander) and the PR man of the Sinn Fein being present. Clive says that the NIO position remains that Adams etc. should not be admitted. However, he says that they are extremely worried about the prospect of Sands insisting on the others being present; and even now are showing some signs of wavering. (I told Clive yesterday about your concern at the possibility of their being admitted, and he passed this on to the NIO.)

Willie Whitelaw is in close touch with Humphrey Atkins. If they were to decide to concede to Sands' demand that Adams etc. should be present, I have told Clive that it would be as well for one of them to consult you on the telephone (if possible). However, once we take off we only have

/ communication

communications through the cockpit, and it will be difficult to have a sensible discussion. So, if there is to be a conversation between you and them, it would have to be before we leave at 3.00 pm. (3.00 pm Qatar time will be 1.00 pm London) If we are in the air, and a decision has to be made, then presumably Willie Whitelaw and Humphrey Atkins will have to take it themselves without consulting you.

I will have to leave the decision  
to H.A & W.W jointly.      JL  
They will have the latest.

25 April 1981      instruction

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Copy of Statement issued by ECHR Commissioners, Belfast  
Saturday 25 April 1981

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Marcella Sands Versus the United Kingdom Government

As stated in the previous press communique of 24 April, the purpose of the visit of the delegation to the Maze Prison was to see Mr. Sands with a view to obtaining his confirmation that he intended to make an application, and if so, to discuss with him the content and handling of the application.

The delegation visited the Maze Prison on 25 April and ascertained through a Solicitor his intentions as regards the above application lodged on his behalf. The delegation established that Mr. Sands did not wish to associate himself with the application.

Nevertheless, Mr. Sands expressed a willingness to see the delegation in the presence of three persons named by him in a statement recently issued in his name. After further consultation, the delegation came to the conclusion that in these circumstances it was not possible to see and confer with Mr. Sands and no meeting took place.

E.R.

The following statement was issued by NIO this evening (probably at about 8.30 pm):

The members of the European Commission on Human Rights who visited the Maze Prison on 25 April in pursuance of a complaint lodged on behalf of Mr. R. Sands against the British Government have issued a statement setting out clearly what took place.

The Government have carried out the undertaking given to facilitate the Commission's examination of any complaint to the Commission about the protest at the Maze Prison.

The Government note that Mr. Sands is not associating himself with the application lodged on his behalf.

OUTLINE OF STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY BROUGHT OUT OF THE MAZE PRISON  
BY MEMBERS OF HUNGER STRIKER BOBBY SANDS' FAMILY:-

"The British Government have the ways and means to concede.  
Until they do, the hunger strike continues.

The Republican political prisoners will not compulsorily  
wear British prison clothes nor compulsorily carry out work  
for the British prison administration. We wish to have  
association with each other in the confines of the Prison.

Four Republican political prisoners are on hunger strike  
on behalf of their 440 comrades here in the H blocks and  
Armagh. Our demands are reasonable and just. We on hunger  
strike are prepared for them."

The statement claimed that the European Commission's  
intervention had been "divisive" and had helped Government  
attempts to confuse the issue.

## FURTHER ALLEGED STATEMENT FROM MAZE PRISON

Sands claimed that the facilities for his three nominees to be present at a meeting with the European Commissioners had been denied. He also said that he had never requested the Commission to investigate the prisoners' demands. He said that the legal requests and submissions to the Commission had been made in good faith by his sister, Marcella, who, he claimed, had been misled by Mr. Haughey into believing that the Commission would deliver on the political prisoners' demands.

He suggested that Mr. Haughey had seen the Commission's intervention as a vehicle for getting the British Government off the hook and he alleged there had been cynical and cold blooded manipulation by Mr. Haughey of people who were clearly vulnerable to this type of pressure.

FOLLOWING FOR THE CABINET OFFICE  
FROM NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE BELFAST  
IMMEDIATE  
SECRET  
252207Z  
NUMBER 427

*MM*  
This is a copy. The original  
has been extracted  
and retained under  
Section 3(4).

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FOLLOWING FOR NUMBER 10  
COPY TO NIO PRIORITY

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THE REPUBLICAN PRESS CENTRE HAD THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE, ALTHOUGH IT PROPORTS TO BE THE WORK OF BOBBY SANDS IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY WRITTEN BY GERRY ADAMS, VICE-PRESIDENT PSF. ON ADAMS INSTRUCTIONS MARCELLA SANDS HAS TOLD THE OFFICE OF THE TAOISEACH THAT SHE WILL BE GOING TO BE DENOUNCING THE CYNICAL INTERVENTION IN THE HUNGER-STRIKE.

QUOTE

THE FOLLOWING PRESS STATEMENT IS CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL

WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO ISSUE THE FOLLOWING SUPPLIED STATEMENT TO OUR OFFICE FROM BOBBY SANDS M.P. THE STATEMENT WAS GIVEN TO THE SANDS FAMILY IN THE EVENT OF A BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMISSIONS INTERVENTION.  
25.4.81

"I DID'NT REQUEST AT ANY TIME FOR THE COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE DEMANDS OF THE PROTESTING PRISONERS IN H BLOCK AND ARMAGH. I DISMISSED THE FIRST SUGGESTION BY JOHN HUME OF THEIR INTERVENTION AS RIDICULOUS. LATER I SAID ON THE 23RD OF APRIL THAT THE CASE IS CUT AND DRIED. THE REPUBLICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS WILL NOT COMPULSORILY WEAR BRITISH PRISON CLOTHING OR COMPULSORILY CARRY OUT WORK FOR THE BRITISH PRISON ADMINISTRATION. WE WISH TO HAVE ASSOICATION WITH EACH OTHER WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE PRISON. DESPITE THIS AND MY LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMISSION I STATED THAT I WAS PREPARED TO MEET ANY EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER PROVIDED ADVISERS CHOSEN BY ME AND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PROTESTING POLITICAL PRISONERS WAS PRESENT.

THESE FACILITIES WERE DENIED ME. THE LEGAL SUBMISSION AND REQUEST TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WAS MADE IN GOOD FAITH BY MY SISTER MARCELLA WHO WAS MISLED BY CHARLES HAUGHEY INTO BELIEVING THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD DELIVER ON THE POLITICAL PRISONERS DEMANDS. MR HAUGHEY LED MY FAMILY TO BELIEVE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WANTED A WAY OUT OF THE DILEMA IN WHICH THEY NOW FIND THEMSELVES AND THAT THE COMMISSIONS INTERVENTION WAS THE VEHICLE FOR GETTING THE BRITISH OFF THE H BLOCOK ARMAGH HOOK.

BECAUSE MR HAUGHEY GAVE SIMILAR ASSURANCE LEADING UP TO THE CONFUSED ENDING OF THE LAST HUNGER STRIKE, BECAUSE MR HAUGHEY HAS IN FACT THE MEANS TO PUT PRESSURE AND TO CALL PUBLICLY ON BRITAIN TO END THE H BLOCK ARMAGH CRISES AND HAS CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO DO SO I VIEWED HIS PROMPTING OF MY FAMILY AS CYNICAL AND A COLD BLOODED MANIPULATION OF PEOPLE CLEARLY VULNERABLE TO THIS TYPE OF PRESSURE. THE COMMISSIONS INTERVENTION HAS BEEN DIVERSIONARY AND HAS SERVED TO AID THE BRITISH ATTEMPTS TO CONFUSE THE ISSUE.

THE ISSUE IS BASIC AND FUNDAMENTAL.

"FOUR REPUBLICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE ON HUNGER STRIKE ON BEHALF OF THEIR 440 PROTESTING COMRADES HERE IN THE H BLOCKS AND ARMAGH. OUR DEMANDS ARE REASONABLE AND JUST. WE ON HUNGER STRIKE ARE PREPARED TO DIE FOR THEM. ONE OF MY COMRADES, FRANKIE HUGHES, IS IN A STEADILY DETERIORATING CONDITION. I AM ON THE 56TH DAY OF HUNGER STRIKE. PATSY O'HARA AND RAYMOND MCCREESH ARE ON THE 35TH DAY OF HUNGER STRIKE.

"NOW THAT THE COMMISSION DISCUSSION IS OUT OF THE WAY AND THE CONFUSION DELIBERATELY CREATED BY ITS INTERVENTION HAS CLEARED, WE THE POLITICAL PRISONERS CALL ONCE AGAIN FOR THE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT OUR DEMANDS.

"THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS THE WAYS AND MEANS TO CONCEDE THEM. "UNTIL THEY DO THE HUNGER STRIKE CONTINUES.

-SIGNED, BOBBY SANDS, PRISON HOSPITAL, H BLOCKS, LONG KESH".

UNQUOTE

\*~\* name  
deleted and  
retained under  
Section 3(4)

Wayland  
13 October 2011