



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 August 1984

ST) As I foreshadowed on the telephone earlier, the Prime Minister has now received a letter from Mr. Kinnock seeking an independent inquiry into both the decision to exclude Martin Galvin and the incident following his appearance in Belfast on Sunday. I should be grateful if you could provide a draft reply to Mr. Kinnock's letter as soon as possible. Perhaps we might discuss the timing of a reply when I have had a chance to speak to the Prime Minister.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to Janet Lewis-Jones (Lord President's Office), Nigel Pantling (Home Office) and Stuart Eldon (Lady Young's office).

Tim Flesher

Graham Sandiford Esq
Northern Ireland Office.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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The Office of the Leader of
the Opposition

14 August 1984

Dear Pádraig Kirby,

I have deliberately delayed making any public comment on the events in West Belfast on Sunday because I believe that, in the circumstances, it was advisable to obtain whatever details of the incident were available before seeking action from your Government.

Having now had an opportunity to consider the matter, I must ask you to immediately establish an independent inquiry into the decision to ban Martin Galvin from Northern Ireland and into the incidents which took place following his appearance in Belfast.

It is essential that these two related aspects of the events receive thorough attention.

The decision to ban Galvin was made, it is reported, by the Home Secretary acting on the advice of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. An assessment must clearly be made of the wisdom and the practical implications of their judgement and it will also be necessary to establish whether their decision was made with or without the advice of the RUC. Further, it will be necessary to obtain an explanation of the RUC's operational strategy for that day and, in particular, to establish whether the decision to arrest Galvin by advancing through the crowd was made beforehand or whether police commanders at the scene made an unprepared response or whether they simply permitted such a response to be made by lower ranks. I believe that you will share my view that the action taken by the Royal Ulster Constabulary was a radical departure from their normal practice in similar circumstances or even in circumstances where provocation or threats of attack on the police have been much greater. It resulted in the use of an

unacceptable level of force which caused a death and severe physical injuries and it also gave propaganda material to those in Northern Ireland and elsewhere who support and sponsor violence and terror in pursuit of their political aims. The apparent change in policing methods and the consequences of that change clearly require investigation and it will also be important to establish whether the rules about the use of plastic bullets were adhered to by the RUC.

I understand from a television interview given by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland today that he does not rule out an independent inquiry. In view of the damage which has clearly been done as a result of the incident to relations between the minority community in Northern Ireland and the RUC and to the relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Irish Republic, I urge you to demonstrate the seriousness of your concern about these matters by establishing the appropriate inquiry without delay.

I am releasing this letter to the press.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP

PRIME MINISTER FROM TIM FLESHER

BELFAST

THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE INCIDENTS IN BELFAST HAS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND HAS BEEN FUELLED BY MR PRIOR'S DOORSTEP INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE DECISION TO EXCLUDE GALVIN LOOKED LIKE A "BAD MISTAKE". HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN MISTAKES FOR WHICH HE TOOK FULL RESPONSIBILITY. THIS ASPECT OF HIS REMARKS HAS BEEN SEIZED ON BY THE MEDIA, MR

PRIOR HAS ALSO SPOKEN TO MR

BARRY WHO IS PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED WITH THE MILEAGE WHICH SINN FEIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE OUT OF THE INCIDENT. HE CONTINUED TO PRESS MR PRIOR FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY. THIS CALL HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN UP BY MR KINNOCK WHO HAS WRITTEN TO YOU DEMANDING SUCH AN INQUIRY, BOTH INTO THE EXCLUSION OF GALVIN AND INTO THE RUC TACTICS. I HAVE ASKED NIO TO PRODUCE A DRAFT REPLY WHICH CAN BE TELEXED TO YOU. BUT WE SHALL NEED TO CONSIDER WHETHER SUCH A REPLY NEEDS TO GO QUICKLY, IE IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS, OR WHETHER BY DOING SO WE WOULD SIMPLY FUEL INTEREST. IT MAY BE BETTER TO LEAVE A REPLY FOR A WEEK OR SO.

THE ISSUES WHICH THE MEDIA HAVE IDENTIFIED ARE:

1. WAS THE EXCLUSION ORDER A MISTAKE?

MR. PRIOR SEEMS TO HAVE ADMITTED THIS (ALTHOUGH I AM NOT SURE WHY).

2. WHY DID THE RUC SEEMINGLY ABANDON THEIR NORMALLY RESTRAINED TACTICS AND WILL THERE BE A PUBLIC INQUIRY?

SIR JOHN HERMANN HAS ALREADY SAID THAT THERE WILL BE AN INTERNAL INQUIRY INTO THIS AND MR PRIOR FEELS THAT THIS HAS PRE EMPTED ANY MOVE SUCH AS DRAFTING IN A CHIEF CONSTABLE FROM THE MAINLAND. EQUALLY HOWEVER HE HAS SAID IN HIS INTERVIEW TODAY THAT HE "DID NOT RULE OUT A PUBLIC INQUIRY". WE SHALL HAVE TO SEE WHAT LINE NIO PROPOSE.

END OF MESSAGE
14 AUGUST 1984