

PRIME MINISTER

The Prime Minister agrees that his statement
could be revised in this understanding that what
has been done about clothing was no more
than was already the practice in women's prisons
in GB & NI.

WM
Mo

Jim Prior's Statement on Northern Ireland Prisons

⁰⁸³⁰ I passed this message to the Duty Clerk at
Northern Ireland Prisons

WJ
6x.81

1. Herewith telegram from Willie Rickett.
2. Willie Whitelaw has said that he could live - just - with these proposed changes so far as prisons in the remainder of the United Kingdom are concerned.
3. You will remember the advice which you received from a Privy Councillor (with which I am in strong agreement) that there should be a decent interval between our victory over the hunger strikers and what some will perceive to be their partial victory over "the ~~small~~ authorities". Jim Prior has in mind to make his statement on Tuesday 6 October. I think that it would be very much better if this statement could be delayed.
4. In paragraph 2., second sentence, line 3, I suggest that the words "to be reasonable and flexible and" should be deleted. In the last sentence of the second paragraph, I suggest that the words "I want to play my part in seeking reconciliation and an end to violence by introducing" should be deleted and that the words "I am able to announce" should be inserted.
5. I believe that the "more generous scheme for restoration of lost remission", announced in paragraph 6, is objectionable in principle. I fear that it is likely to make the task of the Prison Officers more difficult and will be widely misunderstood in the Province. If, as we all hope, the security situation in the Province improves, it would be possible, on some future date, to announce "a more generous scheme for restoration of lost remission". I believe that it would be a great mistake to make this announcement at this stage.

6. Paragraph 9 is a licence - it is true for 28 days only - to defy Prison Rules with impunity. Here again, I think that this unprecedented concession can only make the task of the Prison Officers more difficult and will be perceived as an unjustified concession.

7. It is clear that Jim's proposed Statement has been leaked already - herewith telegram from Ian Paisley. This may mean that whatever reservations you may have about Jim's Statement, it is too late to alter it, although I hope that this is not the case.

8. I remind you, again, of the advice of the Privy Councillor.

Ian Gow

6 October 1981

DESKBY 052300Z

Reed Del. Office
0935.

IMMEDIATE

Set Dist

cc Mr. Alexander

Mr. Fall

JM

6/10

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 052300Z

FM FCO 151809Z OCT 81

CONFIDENTIAL

TO IMMEDIATE UKDEL MELBOURNE

TELEGRAM NUMBER 208 OF 5 OCTOBER

INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS (FOR PS/LPS)

FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY AND FALL
FROM RICKETT, 10 DOWNING STREET.

MESSAGE BEGINS:

HUNGER STRIKE

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT WHICH MR PRIOR INTENDS
TO MAKE TOMORROW, 6 OCTOBER, SETTING OUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON REGIME, AS FORESHADOWED IN PREVIOUS GOVER-
NMENT STATEMENTS. THESE CHANGES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE ATTACKED BY SOME
PROTESTANT POLITICIANS AS AN UNNECESSARY SURRENDER TO THE
PROVISIONALS. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME CATHOLICS, ESPECIALLY THOSE
WHOM THE HUNGER STRIKERS HAVE BLAMED FOR LETTING THEM DOWN, WILL SAY
THAT THE CHANGES DO NOT GO FAR ENOUGH. THE NIO ARE CONFIDENT THAT
THE GREAT MAJORITY OF PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS ARE GLAD THAT THE
HUNGER STRIKE IS OVER AND WILL ACCEPT WHAT MR PRIOR IS DOING.

QUOTE

DRAFT STATEMENT ON PRISONS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN
IRELAND.

THE HUNGER STRIKE HAS ENDED, BY THE VOLUNTARY
ACTION OF THE PROTESTORS. IT IS TIME TO HEAL THE DEEP WOUNDS
AND FRESH DIVISIONS CAUSED BY THE STRIKE BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
THE PRISONS, AND HELP TO BRING TO AN END THE VIOLENCE WHICH FOR
SO LONG HAS PREVENTED THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOP-
MENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

2. ON 3 OCTOBER I SAID THAT I WOULD BE MAKING A STATEMENT ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRISON SYSTEM. BOTH MY PREDECESSOR AND I WERE ALWAYS DETERMINED (TO BE REASONABLE AND FLEXIBLE AND) TO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS WHERE THEY COULD BE MADE. WE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE WOULD NOT ACT UNDER DURESS. UNTIL NOW, THE HUNGER STRIKE MADE MOVEMENT IMPOSSIBLE. NOW IT IS OVER, (I WANT TO PLAY MY PART IN SEEKING RECONCILIATION AND AN END TO VIOLENCE BY INTRODUCING) ^{2 Am Able To Announce} CHANGES ALONG THE LINES SET OUT BY MY PREDECESSOR ON 30 JUNE AND 8 JULY.

3. I MUST MAKE IT QUITE CLEAR WHAT I AM NOT PREPARED TO DO. THE PROTESTORS' VIEWS ON WORK AND ASSOCIATION ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH A CIVIL PRISON SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY THE MODERN AND HUMANE SYSTEM WHICH MAKES THE PRINCIPAL JAILS OF THE PROVINCE AS ADVANCED AS ANY IN THE WORLD. THERE IS ROOM FOR DEVELOPMENT HERE AS ELSEWHERE. BUT THERE WILL BE NO QUESTION OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION OR ANY RETURN TO SPECIAL CATEGORY STATUS.

4. I HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT CHANGES. THEY WILL APPLY TO ALL PRISONERS IN ALL PRISONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

5. CLOTHES

PRISONERS WILL IN FUTURE BE ABLE TO WEAR THEIR OWN CLOTHING AT ALL TIMES. TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS, THE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS CHANGE WILL BE SET OUT IN A LEAFLET WHICH LORD GOWRIE WILL ARRANGE TO HAVE CIRCULATED TO ALL PRISONERS TOMORROW.

THESE ARRANGEMENTS COVER FOR EXAMPLE THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT CLOTHING WORN BY PRISONERS DOES NOT RESEMBLE THAT OF PRISON OFFICERS, IS NOT TANTAMOUNT TO A UNIFORM, AND IS NOT OTHERWISE OFFENSIVE OR UNSUITABLE WE ALSO NEED TO SPECIFY THE QUANTITIES OF CLOTHING AND MAKE THE LAUNDRY ARRANGEMENTS.

THESE ARE PRACTICAL MATTERS AND NEED CAUSE NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS. THE CHANGE WILL TAKE PERHAPS TWO OR THREE WEEKS TO COMPLETE. FAMILIES MAY BRING CLOTHES TO THE PRISONS WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE DETAILS IN THE LEAFLETS. THOSE WHO PREFER TO CONTINUE TO WEAR THE PRISON ISSUE CIVILIAN-STYLE CLOTHING WILL OF COURSE BE ABLE TO DO SO.

6. REMISSION

AT PRESENT PRISONERS WHO HAVE LOST REMISSION AS A PENALTY FOR CERTAIN PROTEST ACTION MAY HAVE 20 PER CENT OF THAT LOST REMISSION RESTORED AFTER 3 MONTHS OF FULL CONFORMITY WITH PRISON'S RULES. A NUMBER OF PRISONERS HAVE ALREADY GAINED FROM THIS. I AM NOW INTRODUCING A MORE GENEROUS SCHEME FOR RESTORATION OF LOST REMISSION. LORD GOWRIE WILL MAKE FULL DETAILS KNOWN SHORTLY, BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:-

- (I) THE NEW SCHEME WILL EXTEND TO ALL PRISONERS WHO HAVE LOST REMISSION OTHER THAN AS A RESULT OF VIOLENT ACTS AGAINST PRISON OFFICERS OR OTHER PRISONERS:
- (II) THE AMOUNT OF LOST REMISSION WHICH MAY BE RESTORED WILL BE INCREASED TO A MAXIMUM OF 50 PER CENT, IE. THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY QUALIFIED FOR THE EARLIER 20 PERCENT RESTORATION WILL GAIN A FURTHER 30 PERCENT, AND THOSE WHO NEWLY QUALIFY WILL GAIN THE FULL 50 PER CENT:
- (III) THE NEW SCHEME, WILL APPLY ONLY TO THOSE PRISONERS WHO HAVE EITHER ALREADY COMPLETED A PERIOD OF 3 MONTHS' CONFORMITY TO PRISON RULES OR WHO NOW DO SO.

THIS NEW SCHEME APPLIES TO PAST BEHAVIOUR. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT PRISONERS WHO IN THE FUTURE LOSE REMISSION FOR BREACHES OF PRISON RULES WILL HAVE LOST REMISSION RESTORED.

7. ON THE ISSUE OF ASSOCIATION

CONFORMING PRISONERS ALREADY HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIXING WITH ONE ANOTHER AT MEALTIMES, WORK, EXERCISE, AND DURING THEIR PERIODS OF ASSOCIATION EACH EVENING AND AT WEEKENDS. THERE IS LITTLE IMMEDIATE SCOPE FOR EXPANSION HERE BUT I HAVE ACCEPTED THAT THERE SHOULD BE SOME PROVISION FOR PRISONERS IN ADJACENT WINGS OF H-BLOCKS TO SHARE ASSOCIATION IN RECREATION ROOMS AND EXERCISE AREAS. BEFORE THIS CHANGE CAN BE IMPLEMENTED NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONTROL AND SUPERVISION OF SUCH MOVEMENT AND CERTAIN ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL CHANGES WILL BE REQUIRED. THESE WILL TAKE SOME WEEKS.

8. THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRISON SYSTEM IS A CONTINUAL PROCESS: IN PARTICULAR THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF WIDENING THE SCOPE OF WORK IN THE PRISONS CAN BE EXAMINED BUT ONLY WITHIN CERTAIN WELL-DEFINED LIMITS. THERE ARE OBVIOUS PRACTICAL AND FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS ON WHAT CAN BE ARRANGED. HERE I SHOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO PRISON STAFF FOR SUCCESS-

... PROTEST. I AM VERY CONSCIOUS THAT MANY, INDEED MOST OF THE PRISONERS, ARE YOUNG MEN. EVEN IN THE CONTEXT OF DESERVEDLY LONG SENTENCES ON CONVICTION OF VIOLENT CRIMES MANY OF THEM WILL, IN THE NORMAL WAY, BE RELEASED DURING THEIR WORKING LIVES. I DO THEREFORE WANT TO ENCOURAGE A SYSTEM WHERE THE VERY ADVANCED TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE, WHICH HAVE MUCH IMPRESSED ME, MAY BE FREELY USED BY ALL PRISONERS. LORD GOWRIE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS FIELD AS THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS SETTLE DOWN.

9. THE CHANGES WHICH I AM ANNOUNCING WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO WORK THROUGH. I HOPE THAT AS THEY COME INTO EFFECT, PROTESTING PRISONERS WILL RECOGNISE THE BENEFITS OF CONFORMITY WITH THE RULES, AND THE PENALTIES WHICH EXIST FOR THOSE WHO BREAK THEM. IN ORDER TO CREATE A BREATHING-SPACE AND EASE THE CHANGE-OVER IN THE PRISON SYSTEM, FOR 28 DAYS FROM YESTERDAY NO LOSS OF REMISSION WILL BE IMPOSED AS A PENALTY FOR BREACHES OF PRISON RULES ARISING OUT OF THE REFUSAL TO WEAR CLOTHES.

10. I HOPE THAT THE END OF THE HUNGER STRIKE, TOGETHER WITH THE MEASURES I HAVE DESCRIBED ABOVE, WILL HELP END THE CONFRONTATION WHICH HAS CAUSED SO MUCH TRAGEDY AND SUFFERING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PRISONS. WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT WHILE 10 YOUNG MEN HAVE DIED TRAGICALLY IN THE MAZE, MANY MORE PEOPLE HAVE DIED DURING THE PERIOD OF THE STRIKE AS INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE VIOLENCE OUTSIDE. OUR TASK IS TO STOP THE MEN WHO ARE CAUSING THAT VIOLENCE, AND TO TURN ALL OUR ENERGIES TOWARDS CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND. I WANT TO GET ON WITH THIS TASK. IN THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION WITH WHICH I HAVE PUT FORWARD MY PRISON REFORMS, I LOOK FOR CO-OPERATION AND SUPPORT IN THIS WIDER PURPOSE FROM ALL THE LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

UNQUOTE.

MESSAGE ENDS

CARRINGTON

NNNN



Ireland

10 DOWNING STREET

Willie ✓ MAP has told MIO to go ahead as x is the case & has continued with Melbourne.

Clive has ring in this morning ^{2M} _{5/10} concerning S/S N. Ireland statement.

The P.M. is content for the statement to be issued.

She has asked ~~if~~ ~~if~~ if the clothing concession is the same as that allowed at Armagh women Prison and women Prisons throughout the U.K.?

Can we confirm this point with N.I.O. and if this point is correct, go ahead and issue

If the consensus goes beyond
the women's consensus.
The P.M. will have to be
consulted again

Andy

File No. _____
Department _____
Drafted by
(Block Capitals) W. F. S. RICKETT
Tel. Extn. _____

OUTWARD
TELEGRAM

Security Classification
CONFIDENTIAL
Precedence
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Distribution:-

Copies to:-

[TEXT]
and Fall
FOLLOWING FOR ALEXANDER, PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY
FROM RICKETT, 10 DOWNING STREET.
Message begins:
HUNGER STRIKE
Following is the text of the statement which
Mr. Prior intends to make tomorrow, 6 October, setting
out developments in the Northern Ireland prison regime,
as foreshadowed in previous Government statements.
These changes will undoubtedly be attacked by some
Protestant politicians as an unnecessary surrender
to the Provisionals. On the other hand, some
Catholics, especially those whom the hunger strikers
have blamed for letting them down, will say that the
changes do not go far enough. The NIO are confident
that the great majority of Protestants and Catholics
are glad that the hunger strike is over and will
accept what Mr. Prior is doing.

/QUOTE

Despatch 15/20 5/10/67

06
From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

M Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

5 October 1981

Dear Mike

HUNGER STRIKE

As you know, the hunger strike in the Maze prison came to an end on the afternoon of Saturday 3 October. A statement issued in the name of the protesting prisoners that afternoon blamed the Catholic hierarchy, the SDLP and the political parties in the Republic for persuading the strikers' relations to sabotage the strike by authorising medical intervention, and for failing to put effective pressure on the Government to make concessions. The statement reaffirmed the protestors' commitment to achieve the five demands and said that they would not submit to what they described as a degrading regime.

The end of the hunger strike has been widely welcomed in the community. There have been the expected accusations of a sell-out from some Protestants, but they have been muted. The prison is quiet and the former hunger strikers are receiving treatment and taking nourishment. It is not yet clear what new form the prison protest might take. The next week or so will be very important if we are to defuse the protest and come to some sort of modus vivendi, however fragile and acrimonious with the prisoners.

... I enclose a copy of a statement which Mr Prior is making tomorrow which sets out developments in the Northern Ireland prison regime as foreshadowed in previous Government statements.

/...

These changes will undoubtedly be attacked by some Protestant politicians as an unnecessary surrender to the Provisionals. The statement tries to take account of their fears and Mr Prior thinks their reaction will be manageable. Some Catholics - especially those whom the hunger strikers have blamed for letting them down - will say that the changes do not go far enough. However, we are confident that the great majority of Protestants and Catholics are glad that the hunger strike is over and will accept what Mr Prior is doing.

I am copying this letter (and the enclosure) to John Halliday (Home Office), Francis Richards (FCO), David Omand (MOD), David Heyhoe (Privy Council Office) and Jim Nursaw (Attorney General's Office).

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

DRAFT STATEMENT ON PRISONS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The hunger strike has ended by the voluntary action of the protestors. It is time to heal the deep wounds and fresh divisions caused by the strike both inside and outside the prisons, and help to bring to an end the violence which for so long had prevented the social, political and economic development of Northern Ireland.

2. On 3 October I said that I would be making a statement about the development of the prison system. Both my predecessor and I were always determined to be reasonable and flexible and to seek improvements where they could be made. We also made it clear that we would not act under duress. Until now, the hunger strike made movement impossible. Now it is over, I want to play my part in seeking reconciliation and an end to violence by introducing changes along the lines set out by my predecessor on 30 June and 8 July.

3. I must make it quite clear what I am not prepared to do. The protestors' views on work and association are not compatible with a civil prison system, especially the modern and humane system which makes the principal jails of the Province as advanced as any in the world. There is room for development here as elsewhere. But there will be no question of a political or military system of administration or any return to special category status.

/...

4. I have decided to make the following important changes. They will apply to all prisoners in all prisons in Northern Ireland.

5. Clothes

Prisoners will in future be able to wear their own clothing at all times. To avoid any misunderstandings, the practical arrangements for this change will be set out in a leaflet which Lord Gowrie will arrange to have circulated to all prisoners tomorrow. These arrangements cover for example the need to ensure that clothing worn by prisoners does not resemble that of prison officers, is not tantamount to a uniform, and is not otherwise offensive or unsuitable. We also need to specify the quantities of clothing and finalise laundry arrangements. These are practical matters and need cause no serious problems. The change will take perhaps two or three weeks to complete. Families may bring clothes to the prisons when they have been informed of the details in the leaflets. Of course, those who prefer to continue to wear the prison issue civilian-style clothing will be able to do so.

6. Remission

At present prisoners who have lost remission as a penalty for certain protest action may have 20% of that lost remission restored after three months of full conformity with Prison Rules. A number of prisoners have already gained from this. I am now introducing a more generous scheme for restoration of lost remission. Lord Gowrie will make full details known shortly, based on the following principles:-

- (i) the new scheme will extend to all prisoners who have lost remission other than as a result of violent acts against prison officers or other prisoners;
- (ii) the amount of lost remission which may be restored will be increased to a maximum of 50%, i.e. those who have already qualified for the earlier 20% restoration will gain a further 30%, and those who newly qualify will gain the full 50%;
- (iii) the new scheme will apply only to those prisoners who have either already completed a period of 3 months' conformity to Prison Rules or who now do so.

This new scheme applies to past behaviour. It does not mean that prisoners who in the future lose remission for breaches of Prison Rules will have lost remission restored.

7. Association

Conforming prisoners already have many opportunities for mixing with one another at mealtimes, work, exercise, and during their periods of association each evening and at weekends. There is little immediate scope for expansion here but I have accepted that there should be some provision for prisoners in adjacent wings of H-Blocks to share association in recreation rooms and exercise areas. Before this change can be implemented, new arrangements for the control and supervision of such movement and certain additional physical changes will be required. These will take some weeks.

8. The Government has made it clear that the development of a prison system is a continual process; in particular that the possibility of widening the scope of work in the prisons can be examined within certain well-defined limits. There are obvious practical and financial limitations on what can be arranged. Here I should like to pay tribute to prison staff for successfully maintaining an enlightened system for conforming prisoners while coping with the great stress and strain occasioned by the protest. I am very conscious that many, indeed most of the prisoners, are young men. Even in the context of deservedly long sentences on conviction of violent crimes many of them will, in the normal way, be released during their working lives. I do therefore want to encourage a system where the very advanced training and educational facilities available, which have much impressed me, may be freely used by all prisoners. Lord Gowrie will continue to keep a close eye on developments in this field as the new arrangements settle down.

9. The changes which I am announcing will take some time to work through. I hope that as they come into effect, protesting prisoners will recognise the benefits of conformity with the rules, and the penalties which exist for those who break them. In order to create a breathing-space and ease the change-over in the prison system, for 28 days from yesterday no loss of remission will be imposed as a penalty for breaches of prison rules arising out of the refusal to wear clothes.

10. I hope that the end of the hunger strike, together with the measures I have described above, will help end the confrontation which has caused so much tragedy and suffering inside and outside the prisons. We must never forget that while 10 young men have died tragically in the Maze, many more people have died during the period of the strike as innocent victims of the violence outside. Our task is to stop the men who are causing that violence, so that we can turn all our energies to creating a better future for all the people of Northern Ireland. I want to get on with this task and I have made it clear that my priority will be to tackle our economic difficulties. In the spirit of reconciliation with which I have put forward my prison reforms, I look for co-operation and support in this wider purpose from all the leaders of the community.