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APPRENTICE BOYS OF DERRYGeneral Committee

Apprentice Boys' Memorial Hall,
Society Street,
LONDONDERRY.

17th July, 1970.

Dear Mr. Lynch,

The General Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Derry have noted with interest your concern for the peace of our city and the safety of its people as expressed in your call for the cancellation of the Relief of Derry Celebrations next month. It would appear, however, that you are under grave misapprehension regarding the nature and purpose of our Demonstration.

It has been established beyond question, and accepted by some of the sternest opponents of our Association, that on the 12th August last year no provocation of any kind whatsoever was offered by the Apprentice Boys of Derry. On the contrary, we voluntarily made adjustments to the route of the march, we took special measures to ensure the control and discipline of our members, and we held a meeting with representatives of your co-religionists to whom we explained in detail our plans. We gave them the most specific assurances which we honoured to the letter and we, in turn, received from them assurances not a single one of which was honoured. In spite of the fact that our parade was wantonly attacked, not a single member of the many thousands taking part broke ranks or attempted to retaliate in any way.

Since our Demonstration constitutes neither threat nor provocation to anyone, we can only conclude that it is not the ideals nor the conduct of our Association which has motivated your representations on the matter of our Demonstration, but the very existence of the Association itself. The object of our Association is well set out in the charge given to each member on his initiation - "You have now been admitted an Apprentice Boy, according to our ancient practice, within the Walls of Derry. As you have assumed the name, we trust you will partake of the spirit of the Thirteen Apprentices of this City, who rose in the face of danger on the 18th of December, 1688, and closed the Ferry Gate against the approaching forces of King James II. As they thus maintained, inside Derry's Walls, the resistance of the Protestants of Ulster against the powers of tyranny and bigotry, so may their memory inspire you to uphold the freedom that they won, and like them obtain a good report through faith".

It is evident, Sir, from your intervention that "tyranny and bigotry" are as real in Ireland to-day as they were in 1688-89 and that the Apprentice Boys are needed now as much as ever.

Yours sincerely,

James R. Lynam

General Secretary