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THE BIRMINGHAM SIX COMMITTEE

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26 Adelaide Street
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Co Dublin

26th August 1987

A chara,

I enclose herewith copy of letter received from Paddy Joe Hill, one of the Birmingham Six. I would be grateful if you could take the time to read his letter and perhaps in your position as an elected public representative you could try to help end this nightmare which Paddy and the others have been enduring for thirteen years.

It appears that most people in Ireland now believe the convictions of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and Judith Ward and the Maguire Family to be wrongful. Yet there is no urgency apparent in the various expressions of 'concern' from successive Irish Governments. Thirteen years of wrongful imprisonment is an outrage. These innocent prisoners should be released, their names must be cleared and they must receive compensation for their wrongful imprisonment.

I would be pleased to hear your comments on these cases and would appeal to you again to do everything in your power to help bring this horrific miscarriage of justice to a speedy and just end.

Is mise,



Maire Griffin
Secretary - Birmingham Six Committee

*Letter from Paddy Joe Hill, No. 509496,
HM Prison Gartree, Market Harborough, Leics. LE16 7RP*

29th July 1987

My name is Paddy Hill. I am one of the men more commonly referred to as 'The Birmingham Six', who were tortured and framed and wrongly convicted of the Birmingham Pub Bombings of November 1974. I am presently incarcerated in Gartree prison, England. As a result of an investigation carried out by a Granada 'World in Action' team and an excellent book written by the journalist, Mr Chris Mullin, MP 'Error of Judgement', the Home Secretary, Mr Hurd, was forced to refer our case back to the Court of Appeal. Mr Hurd made his announcement on 21st January 1987, whilst at the same time announcing an inquiry was to be carried out by the Devon and Cornwall police into the alleged misconduct of the Birmingham Police at the time of the bombings.

Following twelve years of wrongful imprisonment I was under the mistaken impression that our nightmare was drawing to a close. I should have realised however, that despite the overwhelming evidence pointing to our innocence, what was really important to the Devon and Cornwall Police was not the release of innocent prisoners; but the closing of ranks in order to protect those policemen who brutally tortured and framed us. The police inquiry was not interested in establishing the truth. It has, in fact, spent the last six months unearthing any sort of filthy information which might discredit the evidence of Mr Tom Clarke, an ex-policeman who had the moral courage to break ranks with his former colleagues and give evidence which verified what we had been saying for twelve years — that we were brutally tortured and framed for a crime which we did not commit. It is my own personal opinion that Mr Clarke is the only individual who comes out of this whole sordid affair with his dignity intact. To say that the police inquiry is a 'whitewash' is an understatement, but as stated so many times in the past, how can the police investigate themselves — especially when there are allegations of illtreatment? If the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, is serious in his desire to establish the truth then surely it would be in everyone's interest if he appointed an independent body to investigate the allegations which we the Birmingham Six and others have made against the Birmingham Police. In order to reinforce our claim that we are innocent, we are prepared to undergo hypnosis, the truth drug and the lie detector test. Unfortunately, however, our requests to undergo such tests have been refused by the Home Office. We have nothing to hide but it seems that the Home Office has.

We welcome the upsurge of support and concern which has been expressed by various groups and personalities. It is ironic that while the Irish Government has done nothing to expose this gross injustice, three English people; my solicitor Gareth Pierce, Chris Mullin, MP and Sir John Farr, MP, have been our most outspoken supporters. These three have been instrumental in having our case referred back to the Court of Appeal. While the Irish Government has expressed concern they have never had the courage to publicly declare their belief in our innocence. For years we have been informing them that concern was not going to release us from this nightmare. If they do not act publicly then the possibility of us ever being free is very slim. I therefore call on the Irish Government to stand along with these people who are convinced of our innocence; to publicly demand our release and to honour the pledge which they gave while in opposition not to implement the extradition treaty with Britain.

By reneging on their pledge not to implement the extradition treaty, the Irish Government are thereby condemning Irish men and women to a lifetime of abuse and racial discrimination. I would therefore appeal through the media to Senator Pascal Mooney to re-table his motion calling for a postponement of the extradition act and would appeal to all political parties to support his motion. The Birmingham Six, Guildford Four, Maguire family and Judith Ward are all living proof of what the Irish people can expect from British justice. To hand over Irish men or women to a British Court is to condemn them to a system where they will not receive a fair or impartial trial; where they will be judged and sentenced by the British media before they even set foot inside a court; and where they will be discriminated against by the whole prison administration because they are Irish. If any other race of prisoners were treated in English jails like the Irish prisoners are, then their respective Governments would have the English Government before the European Courts. It seems that the Irish Government are only interested in cosmetic changes in the Six Counties, ignoring the fact that there are innocent Irish people languishing in English prisons for crimes they did not commit.

I therefore call on the Irish Government to stand up and publicly declare that we are innocent. We, the Birmingham Six, have no faith at all in the Court of Appeal. The farce of a police inquiry that has just finished shows what lengths the British judiciary will go to deny us real justice.

In appealing above the heads of the Irish Government, I appeal to you, the Irish people, to lobby your TDs and Senators on our behalf. It is only public pressure which will help secure our release and it is you, the Irish people, who can apply that pressure. If it were six Englishmen languishing in Irish jails for crimes they did not commit, the English Government would be screaming for their release and rightly so. Evil can only exist when good men and women do nothing about it. The evil which we, the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four, Maguire Seven and Judith Ward have endured for the past 13 years is a result of lack of courage by various Irish Governments. The Nazis were condemned for their treatment of the Jews and everyone said they did not know it was happening. For years we have been making anyone who would listen aware that there are innocent people languishing in English prisons. I therefore call on you, the Irish people, to help us to end this nightmare. I ask you to lend your support and speak out in support of the innocent people in English Jails.

Paddy Joe Hill

ISSUED BY THE BIRMINGHAM SIX COMMITTEE, P.O. BOX 1809, DUBLIN 8