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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

Mr. Bell 133/1
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PROTESTS AND SECOND HUNGER STRIKE - WEEKLY BULLETIN NO 19

0900 HOURS THURSDAY 2 JULY - 0900 HOURS THURSDAY 9 JULY

The Bulletin is produced by Liaison Staff (B), Political Affairs Division (B) and Prisons Administration Division (1)(B).

PRISON DEVELOPMENTS

1.1 Maze Hunger Strike. Doherty is now showing the first significant signs of deterioration with some eye trouble and vomiting since 2/7; he is also complaining of neuritis in his right leg. However it should be noted that his condition has not deteriorated to the extent shown by other hunger strikers at this stage of their strikes. Similarly Lynch is still remarkably well, despite having lost 25% of his body weight. His urine has remained clear and he has no significant symptoms. There is some speculation that he may have had a small amount of nourishment or vitamin supplement given to him, though it is not possible to say exactly when or how this might have occurred. Hurson's condition paradoxically is actually the most serious; it is worse than any of the previous strikers at the same stage. He is quite ill, is vomiting a lot and evidently has bleeding in his mouth and throat. He already has marked signs of eye deterioration. McIlwee and Quinn were both moved to the hospital on 3/7; neither has any symptoms so far, nor have Devine or McKeown.

The prisoners' weights are:-

| | Day of Strike | Weight on first examination | Weight today | Weight loss during week | Overall weight loss |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Kieran Doherty | 49 | 11st 11 lbs | 8st 10 lbs | 6½ lbs | 3st 1 lb |
| Kevin Lynch | 48 | 9st 7 lbs | 7st 2 lbs | 4½ lbs | 2st 5 lbs |
| Edward Hurson | 42 | 10st 13 lbs | 8st 2 lbs | 7 lbs | 2st 11 lbs |
| Thomas McIlwee | 32 | 10st 8 lbs | 8st 7 lbs | 8 lbs | 2st 1 lb |
| Patrick Quinn | 25 | 10st 1½ lbs | 8st 8 lbs | 4½ lbs | 1st 7½ lbs |
| Michael Devine | 18 | 9st 8½ lbs | 8st 8½ lbs | 4½ lbs | 1st 0 lb |
| Laurence McKeown | 11 | 10st 8 lbs | 9st 10½ lbs | 8 lbs | 11½ lbs |

(Day 61)
1.2 Death of McDonnell. As anticipated last week McDonnell's condition deteriorated significantly and he died at 04.45 on 8/7 (certified dead at 05.11). He had become semi-conscious early on 7/7 and unconscious after 04.00 hours on 8/7. Death came unexpectedly quickly after unconsciousness - it has been up to 48 hours in the other cases. His body was removed after an hour to Foster Green Hospital and was later taken from there by the relatives. The funeral is reported to be at 1300 hours on Friday 10/7 from St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Andersonstown. Another striker - Patrick McGeoghan has been widely reported as McDonnell's replacement; he did not refuse breakfast today however and even denied the reports; time will tell!

2.1.1 Visits to Hunger Strikers - the ICJP. The Commission first requested to see the hunger strikers on Saturday morning (4/7) and were admitted that afternoon to see them all assembled together in the prison hospital. The meeting ended after some 2½ hours, after which the strikers had a short discussion among themselves (as did the Commission) before asking to see McFarlane (PIRA O/C). The latter was given permission and met the strikers for some 45 minutes.

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2.1.2 The next day (5/7) the Commission had a marathon series of meetings with the strikers from 10.30 - 17.00 and 20.30 - 01.00 hours. Two or three members also had some four hours of discussion with McFarlane over 2 meetings. The latter also saw the strikers on a number of occasions and was accompanied for much of the time by Morrison of PSF who had been given a special visit. The Commission did not however see the hunger strikers and McFarlane together at any stage. Contrary to expectations the Commission did not request to see the prisoners again.

2.2 Other Visits With the exception of Michael Devine all the hunger strikers were visited by members of their families during the period. Devine was visited by Messrs Flynn, Ruddy and Browning; representatives of the IRSP.

3.1 Mr Atkins' Statements The protesters issued a lengthy statement on Saturday 4 July in response to the Secretary of State's statement of 30 June. This was evidently produced outside the prison and was very carefully phrased. It was conciliatory in tone and accepted that 'special treatment' was not being sought. However the measured phraseology is such that it could be interpreted as either a continued insistence on the substance of the 5 demands or a significant watering down of these. The ambiguity is such that it would not be unreasonable to assume some change in PIRA thinking. Important extracts of the statement are as follows:-

"It is wrong for the British Government to say that we are looking for differential treatment from other prisoners. We would warmly welcome the introduction of the five demands for all prisoners. Therefore, on this major point of British policy, there is no sacrifice of principle involved.

"We believe that the granting of the five demands to all prisoners would not in any way mean that the administration would be forfeiting control of the prison, nor would their say on prison activities be greatly diminished; but the prisoner could have his dignity restored and cease to occupy the role of establishment zombie.

"Mr Atkins outlines the present work routine under the title, "Prison Activity". It is a crude system which Mr Atkins disguises with flowery jargon. Yet, it should not be a major point of contention between the administration and ourselves. What the British Government recognises as "prison work" we do not. Therefore, with goodwill, "work" and achieving of compatible arrangement, should be available without loss of principle.

"Besides self-education, which would be the main prop in any agreement, we are prepared to maintain our cells, wings, blocks and engage in any activity which we define as self-maintenance.

"Mr Atkins is either misinformed or exaggerating the free association demand. Free association means that there would be freedom of movement within the wings. Supervision need not be restricted. That is a matter for the regime's discretion. There would be no interference with prison officers who would maintain their supervisory role. It must be remembered that H-Blocks are control units and each wing is built to accommodate 25 prisoners. So it is rather a red herring to speak of the regime losing control of the prison if the prisoners had freedom of the wing.

"Equally, it is misleading to quote figures of 100 prisoners presumably associating together. We believe there should be wing visits but we do not envisage ourselves (although Mr Atkins does) running around the block as we please in large numbers.

"It is unrealistic to expect Loyalists and Republicans to integrate satisfactorily together. Forced integration, or the deliberate creation of a confrontation between those who bear arms in respect of their highly conflicting political ideologies is wrong and can only lead to trouble. Even Mr Paisley recognised this fact several years back.

"If studied carefully it will be seen that our definition of free association is far removed from what seems to be Mr Atkins's.

"Prison clothes are prison clothes. It is illusory to minimise the wearing of prison clothes to half the week. Prisoners, like everyone else, sleep and for most of the other half are forced to wear prison clothes. The women in Armagh wear their own clothes and there is no objective reason why all prisoners should not be allowed to wear their own clothes.

"If we accept that toiletries, and to a lesser extent reading material, are essential, then the weekly parcel amounts to four pounds of fruit. That speaks for itself.

"Lost remission is a result of the protest and is not connected with the cause of it. As the British Government says, the machinery exists to reclaim it - yet, for some reason the British Government is being ambiguous on this matter. What constitutes a "subsequent good behaviour period?" What does one fifth return of remission mean? This should not be an area of disagreement for it does not directly affect the running of the system. But it is of mutual benefit to all whom it affects that full remission is given back to we prisoners.

"In giving our views on what Mr Atkins said, we have outlined what should be the basis of a solution, without loss of principle to either side in this conflict.

"By asking the British administration to come in to discuss a resolution we asking nothing unreasonable. It is common for officials from that administration to visit this prison and converse with prisoners. It has been done before."

3.2 Statement of 8/7. Mr Atkins' further statement was given to the protesting prisoners early in the morning and read to the strikers by the Governor, accompanied by a senior NIO official. The latter was on instructions only to elucidate questions of fact and as none were put, he played no part in the proceedings. The statement was essentially a reaffirmation of that on 30 June and emphasised that no moves would be contemplated under the duress of a hunger strike and that the ICJP were not in any sense negotiators. The second part of the statement "what happens when the protest ends" was aimed at making sure that the protesters were aware of what was available. Little expansion of association was contemplated but the suggestion of association by adjacent wings (made by the ICJP) was taken on board. On clothing the "possibility of further development" was not ruled out. On work no-one would be excluded as of right from liability to allocation to workshops but the commitment was given to add to the range of activities, including examination of the ICJP's suggestions. No more than the existing 1/5 restoration of lost remission to ex-protesters was promised. No change in letters, visits and parcels was postulated.

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The prisoners showed little reaction, though Devine and McIlwee did ask for officials/the Governor to come and discuss the document after they had read it. The prisoners were given an opportunity to discuss the document among themselves and also saw McFarlane for a time. Lynch and Doherty - the 2 most determined strikers - said afterwards that there was nothing in it for them. (The statement was also given to the ICJP before publication.)

3.3 Prisoners' Response. In a statement said to have been smuggled from the prison on 8/7, the protesters claimed that -

"Joe McDonnell need not have died. The British Government's hypocrisy and their refusal to act in a responsible manner are completely to blame for the death of Joe McDonnell and the deep sorrow that accompanies his death.

"For a considerable period of time they have stood on ceremony, asserting again and again that they would not talk to the prisoners in order to find a solution. Yet, after Joe's death, they decide to send an official into Long Kesh to talk to us: or rather talk at us.

"To say the least, that amounts to criminal negligence and typifies the insensitivity and ineptitude of the British Government's mishandling of this issue.

"Lack of urgency, pomp and ceremony should not enter into such a serious and distressing crisis as this.

"On July 4, we issued a lengthy statement in which we outlined the substance of a solution. In drawing up that statement we went to considerable trouble and pains to take into account the British Government's dilemma and to provide a principled and practical solution for all concerned.

"The statement has been acknowledged by the media and by all concerned opinion for what it is, and we were led to believe that the British Government received it very favourably. Yet the only definite response forthcoming from the British Government is the death of Joe McDonnell.

"This morning, Mr Atkins has issued us with yet another ambiguous and self-gratifying statement. Even had we wanted to respond by ending the hunger strike it would have been too late. That statement, even given its most optimistic reading, is far removed from our July 4 statement. At face value it amounts to nothing.

"We again call on everyone, especially the British Government, to make a careful and unprejudiced appraisal of our July 4 statement. This very carefully composed statement can, and must, provide the basis for a just, principled and practical solution for all sides."

4.1 Maze Protest. This remained static at 413 (the drop of 1 reflects McDonnell's departure). Only one extra prisoner refused to work this morning bringing the number to 15.

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4.2 Armagh Protest. Unchanged at 28. The press report today that a female hunger striker might emerge has not received any corroboration from the prison. However this remains a possibility particularly if PIRA were becoming more concerned at the lack of progress in their prison campaign.

4.3 Others. At the Young Offenders Centre an inmate refused food on 8/7, stating that he was on hunger strike until McDonnell was buried. However he resumed eating this morning! No other support action has been reported from other institutions so far.

5. Prisons Assessment. Within the prisons no significant changes have occurred over the period, though with the ICJP intervention interest has again been focussed on the institutions. The most important development was the "prisoners'" statement of 3/7 which as noted above indicates something of a move, though how much is unclear. The importance which PIRA/the prisoners attach to it is shown by further reference back to it in their statement of 8/7. Nevertheless it is evident that one of its main aims has been to prevent PIRA being caught out as the intransigent party. With the death of a further striker (and the first of the second series) it will be interesting to see whether PIRA may rethink the situation earlier than after four more deaths, as was mooted in the press last week. Pressures caused by continuing deaths and the lack of success in terms of concessions won, must inevitably be mounting on and within the organisation. In this connection it may be significant to note that the strikers' morale was described as low today following the evident failure of the ICJP mission, though they expressed their determination to continue. In fact much must now rest on this determination which it may become increasingly hard to bolster, at least with some of the strikers.

6. Ministers' Meetings. These were dominated by Mr Alison's marathon series of meetings with the ICJP at which the Government's prison regimes were clarified again - and again. The first took place at Hillsborough on Friday 3/7 and lasted some 8 hours from 14.30; it was followed by a 3-hour meeting the next morning at the same venue. On Monday night the meeting was held in Stormont Castle and lasted some 4 hours. This was the last formal meeting although 2 members did see the Minister unofficially late on Tuesday night at Stormont Castle. In addition members of the Commission spoke to the Minister and senior officials by phone on a number of occasions.

Mr Alison also met loyalist representatives for an hour on Tuesday evening to discuss prison matters.

DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

7.1 The Campaign. Rioting in West Belfast, Londonderry and Newry followed the announcement of Joe McDonnell's death. The security forces were attacked with stones, petrol bombs, acid bombs and blast bombs. A number of shots were also fired at the police and army. One youth, a member of a gang of petrol bombers, was shot dead by the security forces; an incident which a Provisional Sinn Fein (PSF) spokesman condemned as "just another murder by the British Army in their efforts to silence Nationalist opinion". However the rioting in Belfast was possibly on a smaller scale than that which followed Sands' death.

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7.2 Earlier in the week several anti H-Block meetings, demonstrations and token fasts were staged. On 5 July 1,000 people marched in sympathy to McDonnell's house in Lenadoon Avenue, West Belfast. On the same day, 1,000 people attended a rally in Dungiven and heard Owen Carron (PSF) claim, "We do not want to humiliate the British Government All we want are the five demands." A "Community Stoppage" was arranged for 8 July by Belfast H-Block/Armagh Committee and workers were encouraged to down tools in protest at conditions in the Maze Prison. The Committee claimed, "The only body with the power to solve the hunger strike is the British Government." In the event the strike was overshadowed by the rioting. Following the court hearing for those arrested at the sit down protest on 27 June (see last week's bulletin) John McAnulty, a People's Democracy (PD) councillor and one of those arrested, announced that PD intended to hold another anti H-Block demonstration outside Belfast City Hall in early August.

7.3 Throughout the week relatives of the hunger strikers and leading members of PSF, the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) and the National H-Block/Armagh Committee (NHAC) attended meetings with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace. Seamus Ruddy (IRSP) told the Commissioners that they had no right to negotiate on behalf of IRSP prisoners. Joe Austin (PSF) called on the British Government "to act in a responsible manner by initiating meaningful dialogue." A later PSF statement urged the Government to talk directly to the prisoners and added, "The buck ultimately stops with Brendan McFarlane", whom the Provisionals described as commanding their prisoners in the Maze.

7.4 On 2 July Gerry Adams, PSF Joint Vice President, replied to the Secretary of State's statement of 30 June (see last week's bulletin). He dismissed it as "clearly a pretence at doing something in the face of considerable criticism and querying of Britain's role in Ireland". On the same day Adams was described by a spokesman for the Provisionals as "a central figure in the H-Block/Armagh campaign who has the confidence of the prisoners". Adams himself though denied that "the hunger strikers are in some way manipulated from outside."

7.5 The NHAC announced that it too had selected a candidate for the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election but declined to issue a name. PSF and IRSP have already indicated their preferred candidates for the election Owen Carron and Bernadette McAliskey respectively (see bulletins 17 and 18).

8.1 Political. The ICJP acting under pressure to tell "its side" of the story held a press conference on 8 July in which it accused the Government of "clawing back" from the peace formula allegedly drawn up between them. Bishop O'Mahony's statement that "we feel very, very disappointed and saddened and let down" was indicative of the tone of their views, while their description of the Secretary of State's 8 July statement as "not a serious attempt" to solve the deadlock reflected how far they felt it fell short of what was needed.

8.2 Mr Alison, speaking at a press conference earlier the same day defended the Government's handling of the issue and repeated that if the prisoners called off their action the Government could get on with developing prison reform. But he repeated that this could not take place while a pistol was being held to the Government's head, and categorically rejected earlier allegations by Mr Paisley that the Government had been negotiating, even indirectly, with the prisoners.

8.3 Reactions from the political parties came swiftly. Jim Molyneux (UUP leader) accused the Government and the Commission of misleading and confusing the public as well as the families of the prisoners, and Councillor William Bleakes, Chairman of the Unionist District Councillors'

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Association demanded that Mr Atkins stop any further talks with the ICJP - a body which he said was seen by Protestants as a "front" for the PIRA and a "go between" for the Northern Ireland Office and the Dublin government. John Hume on the other hand said the latest death was a tragedy and could have been prevented as an "extraordinary opportunity existed to resolve the prison crisis once and for all". He accused Mrs Thatcher of again showing a "disastrous failure" to understand the seriousness and the urgency of the situation and he urged the Commission, in spite of the tragic setback, to continue its efforts. The Taoiseach, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, clearly referring to HMG told the Dail that "responsibility rested on those with the greatest power" and added that it was in the interest of Ireland that the "tragedy" of Joe McDonnell should not be used to delay the finding of a lasting solution.

DEVELOPMENTS OUTSIDE NORTHERN IRELAND

9.1 The Republic. Relatives of the hunger strikers met Dr Fitzgerald (Taoiseach) and Mr O'Leary (deputy Taoiseach) on 3 July. A statement issued by the NHAC and PSF Belfast on behalf of the relatives described the meeting as unproductive as Dr Fitzgerald had declined to call publicly on the British Government to concede the prisoners' five demands. Following the meeting Father O'Doyle, Chairman of the NHAC, stressed that the "desired results can only come through direct talks between the British Government and the prisoners themselves." However the women prisoners in Armagh urged Dr Fitzgerald to use his position "honestly and correctly to pressurise the British Government to concede our demands." Richard McAuley (PSF) pointed out that if Kieran Doherty TD dies there will be a by-election in Cavan-Monaghan and Dr Fitzgearld's premiership will be at stake.

9.2 Following McDonnell's death Dr Fitzgerald urged flexibility on all sides in the dispute; 350 people staged a vigil outside the GPO building in Dublin.

10.1 Great Britain. On 7 July, Mr Ernie Roberts, MP and chairman of the Don't Let the Prisoners Die ad hoc committee spoke at a press conference in the House of Commons to launching of a new book entitled "The H-Blocks: An Indictment of British Policy in the North of Ireland." He urged the British Government to concede the prisoners' demands on clothing and work. Mrs Kathleen Finucane, the mother of a prisoner in the Maze, also spoke at the press conference and appealed to the Government "to grant the prisoners demands."

10.2 On the afternoon of 4 July there was a demonstration and march by North London Hunger Strike Action Committee at Archway Underground Station, Junction Road, N7. About 40 people took part including 15 members of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG). The demonstrators were heckled by a group of "skinheads" displaying union flags and shouting National Front slogans. There was no disorder. About 20 supporters of PSF, NHAC, IRSP and Troops Out Movement (TOM) joined the London Irish Festival (a non political event) on 5 July at Roundwood Park, Willesden, London. They made speeches and attracted the attention of about 200 people out of a total of 25,000 who attended the festival. There was no disorder. A silent vigil held in Kilburn Square, London, NW6, to mark the death of the hunger striker Joseph McDonnell on 8 July was attended by about 50 people.

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10.3 15 - 40 people representing the H-Block/Armagh Co-ordinating Committee, TOM, RCG and Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign demonstrated outside the TUC headquarters, Great Russell Street, London, WC1, on 8 July. There was no disorder.

A march and rally by 32 supporters of Manchester Hunger Strike Committee took place on 4 July in Moss Side, Manchester. The same organisation held a demonstration in Piccadilly, Manchester, on 8 July and 30 people took part. There was no disorder at either event.

10.4 A film "Ireland's Hunger Strikers" was shown at a local community centre in the Nether Edge area of Sheffield on 2 July and attracted a small audience.

10.5 A march was organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland in Mansfield on 4 July to protest at Labour Party support of Conservative policy on Northern Ireland and the hunger strike issue, and to call for the sacking of the town's Labour MP, Mr Don Concannon, as Shadow spokesman on Northern Ireland. Groups representing PSF, TOM and various hunger strike action committees took part. About 1,500 people turned out to oppose the march and express support for Mr Don Concannon. There was some disorder which led to 10 arrests for public order offences and assault on police.

10.6 At 1600 hours on Wednesday 8 July 1981, 8 members of the Birmingham H-Block Hunger Strike Action Group entered the Irish Tourist Board offices, Temple Row, Birmingham City Centre. Initially the group refused to leave until the Tourist Board manager had telephoned the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic and related the details. The group eventually left after 15 minutes without the telephone call being made and without causing any public disorder. At 2030 on the same day 27 people staged a picket outside the TAVR training camp, Stoney Lane, Sparkhill, Birmingham. After 45 minutes the group moved to a busy road junction, Stratford Road, at Waldorf Road, Sparkhill. There they displayed banners and placards to passing motorists before dispersing at 2215 hours. The 27 participants comprised 2 members PSF, 9 members Birmingham Youth Against H-Block and 16 members Birmingham H-Block Action Group. These incidents were intended to highlight the death earlier that day of Joseph McDonnell and passed without any disorder.

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11.1 The USA. Bernadette McDonnell, the young daughter of hunger striker Joe McDonnell, has been visiting the United States with other children from Northern Ireland on a holiday financed by Project America, an interdenominational peace group. Miss McDonnell was interviewed on the US television network ABC when she appealed to Americans to write to President Reagan and ask him to pressurise Mrs Thatcher "to solve the Irish question".

11.2 A meeting at the Irish Institute in New York on 3 July was attended by Oliver Hughes, brother of the dead hunger strike Frankie Hughes, and Fergus O'Hare, PD and a Belfast City Councillor. The meeting criticised General Haig, the US Secretary of State, for "openly taking sides with Great Britain in the Northern Ireland conflict."

12.1 Elsewhere. Mrs Margaret Doherty, mother of hunger striker Kieran Doherty TD, and Father Paul, an outspoken critic of the Government's prison policy, visited the headquarters of the French Socialist Party and the French Prime Minister's office in Paris on 2 July. They had what was described in the press as a long and sympathetic hearing in both places.

12.2 Following McDonnell's death a bomb exploded at the Midland Bank in Toulouse. It was similar in type to the one which destroyed a Dunlop warehouse there shortly after Bobby Sands' death. (See bulletin number 10.)

12.3 Count Otto Habsburg, a West German MEP, issued a report on his visit to Northern Ireland in June (see bulletin number 15). He described the hunger strikers as "reminiscent of the Baader-Meinhof gang", and commented "there will soon be an escalation of activities to include women in the hunger strikes."

12.4 There were small anti H-Block demonstrations in Toronto while Princess Margaret and the Queen Mother were visiting.

MEDIA.

13.1 Prior to McDonnell's death the 'Sunday Tribune' (5 July) declared that "... somebody must break the deadlock. That somebody is Mr Atkins. Being in government, with control over the lives of persons in custody, does carry responsibilities which are inescapable."

13.2 The 'Irish Press' (6) was critical that "the official line seems to be that there can be no negotiations; that the prisoners must end their fast before any reforms can be implemented. ... There were negotiations to end the last hunger strike, so why should it be any different on this occasion?" The 'Irish Press' concluded that as Joe McDonnell was now close to death, "it would be piling tragedy upon tragedy if bureaucratic attitudes by the authorities or callous manoeuvrings by organisations on the outside were to delay a settlement until it was too late to save him."

13.3 In praise of the ICJP, the 'Irish Press' (8) pronounced "The only thing concerning the hunger strike which can be said with absolute certainty is that the Commission for Justice and Peace have done Herculean work on this crisis. Numerous people have laboured mightily to resolve the dilemma but the Commission must be applauded for their intensive labours over the last number of days, and before".

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13.4 After McDonnell's death, the 'Belfast Telegraph' (8), said that "the worry today is that even some reasonable people, who would never identify themselves with the IRA, may conclude from the confused reports of the weekend's events that the Government has been mostly to blame for the breakdown. But as has been the case all along, the responsibility for life and death in the Maze where lives are being used as a political weapon, rests with the prisoners themselves." The 'Irish Times' (9) said that "if the formula (to save Joe McDonnell's life) was there, the sense of urgency on the part of the British Government to apply it, was not." It reported that in John Hume's opinion, "Downing Street alone carried the responsibility for holding up movement. and the pointed reference by the spokesman of the Commission later in the day to that body's acceptance of the good faith of the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Mr Alison, seems to support Mr Hume: the delaying tactics were imposed from above." The 'Irish Press' took a similar line, but added "Mrs Thatcher blindly refuses to recognise that the ideological tenacity alone which these hunger strikers are showing marks them off from ordinary criminals. No one anywhere in the civilised world could claim that men ... who come forward one after another to lay down their lives in this agonising fashion are not in a very special category indeed." The 'Irish Independent', normally helpful to HMG said that the fact that "the statement which was accepted at one stage this week by the Provisionals as the basis for a settlement did not tally with the statement which was read to the hunger strikers by a Prison Governor in the presence of a Northern official - is a serious one. The British will have to come up with an adequate explanation of the discrepancy."

13.5 The front page article in 'An Phoblacht' (4) reminded its readers of the successes brought about by the hunger strike and by the 4 (then) who had given their lives - "the world (now) knows that there is a war of national liberation in Ireland, (and) the world knows there are persecuted Irish political prisoners being held in the worst jail and only prison camp in Europe." There was also a profile of Kieran Doherty in the issue; "a quiet, totally dedicated republican and an outstanding soldier".

13.6 Although media coverage overall is at a greater level than in previous weeks, in the British press the hunger strike has taken second place to the recent civil disorder in England.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

14.1 As noted above the focus of attention returned to the prisons in the past week with the intervention of the ICJP. The evident failure or suspension of their mission will however refocus attention on the prisoners/PIRA and HMG. From their statements the former seem to continue to pin their hopes on obtaining as much of the 5 demands as possible whilst evidently now accepting that full political status is unobtainable, at least in one go! The hostile reception of HMG's handling of the Commission's intervention may be expected to lead to further pressure both as part of the campaign and from the 'humanitarian' lobby.

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14.2 On the streets reaction to McDonnell's death has in general been considerably lower so far than any of the preceding deaths, in particular those of Sands and Hughes. However it is still too early to be certain of the significance of this, or whether it is likely to be repeated on further deaths. Reaction and PIRA activity has been higher in Londonderry than Belfast and this represents a continuation of a trend evident for some time. Terrorism and pressure on the Irish Republic and others abroad may be expected to continue as noted previously.

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