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Mr. Bell 12/8  
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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

PROTESTS AND SECOND HUNGER STRIKE - WEEKLY BULLETIN NO 22

0900 HOURS THURSDAY 23 JULY - 0900 HOURS THURSDAY 30 JULY

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

PRISON DEVELOPMENTS

1.1 Maze Hunger Strike The condition of Lynch has now become critical and he lapsed into unconsciousness yesterday. The doctor was doubtful if he would last throughout the night but having done so he is expecting Lynch's death sometime today. Doherty's clinical progression continues to be erratic although it has remained largely static and he remains lucid and able to converse freely although he has virtually lost his vision. Unconsciousness and death are thought to be at least 48 hours away. Of the remaining strikers only Quinn's condition gives any cause for concern. His family have a history of kidney trouble and Quinn was in a virtual state of collapse after the talks with Adams, etc (See 2.1).

The prisoners' weights are:-

	Day of Strike	Weight on first examination	Weight today	Weight loss during week	Overall Weight loss
Kieran Doherty	70	11st 11 lbs	NA	NA	*3st 6 lbs
Kevin Lynch	69	9st 7 lbs	NA	NA	12st 12½ lbs
Thomas McIlwee	53	10st 8 lbs	7st 3 lbs	6lbs	3st 5 lbs
Patrick Quinn	46	10st 1½ lbs	7st 6½ lbs	5½ lbs	2st 9 lbs
Michael Devine	39	9st 8½ lbs	7st 10lbs	3 lbs	1st 12½ lbs
Laurence McKeown	32	10st 8 lbs	8st 12lbs	4lbs	1st 10 lbs
Patrick McGeown	21	9st 8 lbs	8st 11b	4lbs	1st 7 lbs
Matthew Devlin	16	11st 12½ lbs	10st 8½ lbs	6½ lbs	1st 4 lbs

\* last weighed on 14.7.81

1 last weighed on 19.7.81

2.1 Visits to Hunger Strikers - Adams, Carron and Ruddy

On 29/7 a chaplain at the Maze passed on a request from Cardinal O'Fiaich asking that permission be given for a visit later that day to the hunger strikers and Brendan McFarlane by Gerry Adams of PSF and 2 others. It was claimed that the meeting might result in the ending of the hunger strike. After consideration it was agreed that the visit could take place on the clear understanding that neither the NIO nor the Governor were to be involved. Adams was accompanied by Owen Carron (Sands' former election agent) and Seamus Ruddy, IRSP. The visit lasted for just over 4 hours and it is understood that a suspension of the hunger strike for 3 to 6 months to allow for the introduction and monitoring of prison reforms was suggested, but that this was rejected by the prisoners. Interviewed later on radio Adams indicated that he had told the hunger strikers that Republicans outside "would understand" if they decided to end the hunger strike. However a statement from the Republican Press Centre attributed to Adams that -

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"They (the prisoners) told us individually and collectively that they were determined to continue with the hunger strike until the British Government was pressurised into meeting in a common-sense manner with the protesting prisoners' and hunger strikers' position as outlined in their July 4th statement."

2.2 Other Visits to Hunger Strikers Close relatives of Doherty and Lynch remain constantly in the prison hospital throughout this critical period. Quinn and McIlwee were also visited by Jim Gibney (PSF) and members of their families. Father McIlldowney and Father Flanagan visited Lynch and McIlwee respectively.

3.1 Prisoners' Statement Following recent events including the visit by 2 NIO officials to the Maze on 21 July and the Taoiseach's subsequent comments "the prisoners" issued the following statement on 24 July:-

"Were the SDLP to with-draw from the Councils, it would force the British to reconsider on not settling the issue; and the Church, by providing and pursuing a vigorous course of action, could also affect British intransigence," said the statement from the H-Blocks PRO.

"Until moves along these lines happen, the British will remain complacent to the deaths, and the agony will continue.

"At present the British are looking for what amounts to an absolute surrender. They are offering us nothing that amounts to an honourable solution; and they have created red herrings, such as their refusal to allow Brendan McFarlane to represent the prisoners, to cover their inflexibility," the statement went on.

"The power to move them lies with the Nationalist leaders. Were the Dublin Government to be courageous enough to stand against them then the British would have to reconsider their position.

"But Mr FitzGerald has taken a decision not to strain Anglo-Irish relations, and he has decided to get out of the H-Block issue at the first opportunity.

"That he has used such a transparent move as the Brit publicity stunt into the camp hospital, shows how desperate he is.

"Considering the regime in Portlaoise, where the five demands were given by Fine Gael to Republican prisoners, does Mr FitzGerald support the contents of our July 4 statement.

"At this stage he should state his Government's position honestly and in a forthright manner. He should state that he does not support the prisoners' demands, and that he is more concerned about offending the British Government than he is about saving the hunger strikers lives.

"If the British were genuinely disposed to seeking a solution, the proposed meeting between the strikers, their families, clergy and the Northern Ireland Office would be of benefit; and we would welcome it so long as the strikers were adequately represented in the person of Brendan McFarlane.



"A permanent ending of all prison protest can only come when the British Government is pressurised into meeting our simple, reasonable and just demands."

4.1 Maze Protest This remains unchanged; numbers fell to 468 following 2 releases and the transfer of a prisoner to the Psychiatric Unit of Maze (Compound) Hospital. Numbers refusing to work dropped by 2 to 15.

4.2 Armagh Protest Unchanged at 28.

5. Prisons Assessment The continued survival of Lynch and Doherty, very much against the pattern of the other hunger strikers continues to cause comment, although there is no conclusive evidence that they are receiving or have received assistance from any source. Despite however the imminent death of Lynch there is no sign of weakening among the hunger strikers and the leadership within the prison. The intervention of Adams, Carron and Ruddy may well reflect doubts about the wisdom of the present tactics by the leadership outside, perhaps encouraged by the hostile attitude of some of the relatives, but there would seem to be no evidence of this among the hunger strikers and their leaders in the prison as yet.

#### THE CAMPAIGN

6.1 Northern Ireland An H-Block rally in Baniskillen on 26 July attracted 2,000 people who followed a piper and 4 men carrying a black coffin along a 3-mile route. In Magherafelt a march by the South Derry and South West Antrim Relatives Action Committee and a counter-demonstration by the DUP were both postponed from Sunday to Monday (27). The rallies took place without trouble.

6.2 The day of the Royal Wedding (29 July) was marked by H-Block marches in Belfast. More than 2,000 demonstrators from Falls Road and Andersonstown converged on Milltown Cemetery where they were addressed by Joe Austin (PSF). About 1,500 people took part in a rally in New Lodge area of Belfast after a march from the Ardoyne. There were also small meetings and marches in other Northern Ireland towns. All passed off without incident.

6.3 After his visit to the prison on 29 July, Gerry Adams (Vice-President of PSF) said that he had gone into the jail "reluctantly". He claimed that he had told the prisoners that there "was absolutely no problem with anyone on the outside if they wished to end their hunger strike. The hunger strike can end whenever the prisoners wish to end it. ... We are prepared to do whatever the prisoners decide." He continued that the prisoners had told him "individually and collectively, that they were determined to continue with the hunger strike until the Government were pressurised into a meeting, in a common sense manner with the protesting prisoners and hunger strikers position as outlined in their July 4 statement". The hunger strikers also "again called upon the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the Dublin Government and the SDLP leadership to come out clearly and to publicly pressurise the Government, or at least to honestly state why they are not doing so".

6.4 In a statement smuggled out of the prisons the Republican protesting prisoners in the Maze endorsed the nomination of Owen Carron as NHAC candidate for the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election which will take place on 20 August. Carron said that he was standing as "proxy political prisoner for the five demands" and emphasised that he was standing as the candidate of the NHAC and not PSF. He is being opposed by Mr Ken Maginness of the Official Unionist Party: the SDLP has also announced its intention to field a candidate.



6.5 On 30 July Bishop Edward Daly of Londonderry made what the Belfast Telegraph described as a "dramatic appeal" to the prisoners to end their hunger strike before any more deaths took place. Bishop Daly appealed to Mrs Thatcher and the Northern Ireland Office to "reciprocate by treating this as a most urgent and highly important problem that needs a lasting solution ..."

7.1 Political Following continued NIO opposition to Brendan McFarlane's involvement in any clarification, McFarlane advised the prison authorities over the weekend that he was now willing to participate in any meeting involving hunger strikers and officials in a "non-negotiating role". The offer was turned down in a NIO statement of 27 July which reiterated that McFarlane had no role to play in any hunger strike talks but that the Government remained willing to clarify matters to the hunger strikers directly.

7.2 The same weekend Mrs Thatcher wrote to the Four Horsemen arguing that her Government had acted honourably and shown great flexibility throughout the hunger strike. The news media paid particular attention to the following extract: "You will no doubt have seen that a spokesman for the Prime Minister of Ireland said that Dr Fitzgerald believed the British Government had met his suggestions that an official should speak to the hunger strikers, that he deeply regretted the hunger strikers had rejected the offer from officials to clarify what conditions would apply if the strike ended, and that in his view responsibility for finding a solution now rested with the prisoners." On 28 July the Taoiseach called in the British Ambassador, Sir Leonard Figg, and complained that his position over the hunger strike was seriously misrepresented in the letter. He expressed concern that this should have occurred and ... it was learned later that Dr Fitzgerald had "communicated his true position to the recipients of the letter": "Britain has not shown sufficient urgency and flexibility at various times during the crisis; he did not say that responsibility for finding a solution now rested with the prisoners. The Irish Government's commitment to finding a solution is continual and ongoing."

8.1 In the Republic The Northern Standard, principal local paper for the Cavan-Monaghan constituency for which Kieran Doherty is TD, published an appeal to his supporters on 25 July to persuade him to end his fast. The editor said the onus was on the people who voted for him to make a move to save him pointing out that "Kieran Doherty and those who have died have given ample proof of their courage and conviction". Doherty himself appealed through his father to members of the Dail to support the five demands.

8.2 Groups from Provincial centres including Belfast, Limerick, Waterford and Monaghan met up in Dublin on Saturday 25 July for a march from the GPO Building to Leinster House. The numbers were estimated variously at 4/5,000 (Garda), 6/7,000 (Irish Times) or 15/20,000 (organisers). No attempt was made to reach the British Embassy and in contrast to the previous weekend's march the demonstration was essentially peaceful though the Irish Authorities were taking no chances and 1,500 Gardai were on duty with troops standing by.

8.3 Sixteen relatives of hunger strikers met the Taoiseach in Dublin on 27 July (the third such meeting) but some left in frustration before the end of the meeting. They had asked the Taoiseach to support the five demands and to recall the Irish Ambassador in London, expel the British Ambassador in Dublin and withdraw all troops from the border areas. Pat McGeown (wife of Patrick McGeown) condemned the decision to allow the Irish Ambassador to attend the Royal Wedding.



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8.4 On 29 July supporters of the hunger strikers were suspected of cutting cable television links near Dublin an hour before transmission of events leading up to the Royal Wedding Ceremony. Most viewers in the Republic were unaffected and were able to watch on RTE. A small number of demonstrators (according to the Newsletter less than 200) turned up outside RTE's Dublin Headquarters to protest at the broadcasting of the Wedding Service. There were also small pickets outside the homes of leading Dublin politicians including those of the Taoiseach, Dr Fitzgerald, the Tanaiste, Mr O'Leary and the leader of the Opposition, Mr Haughey.

9.1 In Great Britain Over the weekend (25-26) leaflets supporting the Hunger Strike were distributed to passers-by in London and Birmingham. On 27 July 13 members of the Manchester Hunger Strike Committee occupied the Manchester Offices of Aer Lingus.

9.2 The following day (28) five H-Block supporters commenced a 48-hour fast outside County Hall in London. They were later joined by 10 more fasters (including Ken Livingstone, leader of the GLC). The demonstration was peaceful except for a minor fracas which led to one National Front supporter being arrested. According to the Irish News (30) 600 black balloons (100 for each dead Hunger Striker) were released over London as Prince Charles left Buckingham Palace for the wedding.

9.3 A "National Demonstration" in Leeds, organised by the Leeds Hunger Strike Committee on the day of the wedding (29) was attended by 380 people from H-Block committees all over the country and also such diverse groups as the Moslem Students Society and the Iranian Students for the Freedom of the Working Class.

10.1 Elsewhere The "Irish Echo" published in the United States reported that an Irish Freedom Rally was planned for Chicago on 25 July and that more than 5,000 people were expected to attend. There appears to have been little activity in the US or elsewhere linked specifically to the Hunger Strike issue though the daily demonstrations outside British Missions in Boston and New York continue.

10.2 On 28 July red paint was thrown at the walls of the British Embassy in Paris in protest against the British Government's refusal to grant political status to Republican prisoners.

#### MEDIA

11.1 Press obsession with the Royal Wedding, particularly in Great Britain, but also to some extent in Ireland has crowded out coverage of the hunger strike. Editorial comment on the dispute has been negligible.

11.2 The 'Irish Independent' (25) published a long article on the Southern Government's handling of both the current hunger strike and that of the latter part of 1980, by Bruce Arnold. It concluded that, "It will not do for the Taoiseach to be characterised by his press secretary, Liam Hourican, as feeling "that he has done all he can" and will now end his efforts to solve the hunger strike ... . What is certainly needed is a restatement of principle; continued work behind the scenes, and without inspired leaks, the re-activation of the Anglo-Irish talks; an early meeting with Margaret Thatcher."

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11.3 The 'Irish News' (30) criticised the "duplicity and methods used by the British" over the issue, echoing an address Sean MacBride had made in New York a few days previously. It continued: "It is this extraordinary shifting ground which angers people who are entirely opposed to all violence; and which astounded and dismayed people of such obvious integrity as the members of the Commission for Justice and Peace. But some understanding of just how such "duplicity" appears to Ireland and to the rest of the world, was expressed by a very sober British journal recently. 'The Economist', referring to the implication of "bad faith" in the statement from the Commission following the death of Joe McDonnell, said "the Westminster Government this week made itself a lot of enemies, old and new!"

11.4 In a leader headed "Misrepresentation", the 'Irish Independent' (30) accused Mrs Thatcher of misleading the people in the United States into believing that Dr Fitzgerald thinks a solution to the hunger strike lies only with the hunger strikers, through her letter to the 'Four Horsemen'. The leader declared that "The most charitable interpretation one can make is that she is being badly advised by people who do not understand the situation. If this is so she should go back to her advisers again, this time with the knowledge that her letter has caused resentment even among the people in the country who know themselves as moderates."

11.5 Andersonstown News (25) declared "It is hard to imagine anything more cynical than the declaration this week by the Dublin Government that it "has done all it can" on the H-Block issue. The Dublin stance gets both the Irish and the British Governments off the hook; and that seems to be all that matters, never mind about the lives of men who are at this moment helpless and powerless with nothing to give but their suffering and their lives".

11.6 An Phoblacht (25) pronounced on its front page that the hunger strike "has produced the first Irish national heroes since the twenties. No other deaths, of so many brave men and women over the last 12 years of struggle, have had the same effect". Also in the issue was a 2-page profile of Thomas McIlwee; "sincere, easy-going and full of fun".

#### OVERALL ASSESSMENT

12. In spite of the imminence of the deaths of Doherty and Lynch the prisoners have maintained a very hard line position. Their rejection of the possible way out offered to them by the Adams' intervention would seem to preclude any possibility of significant movement on their part in the immediate future. This is despite evidence of mounting pressure on the Provisionals, including from the families of some of the hunger strikers, for an end to the protest. As far as the overall campaign is concerned, the peaceful nature of the NHAC demonstration in Dublin last weekend probably reflects the fact that the previous week's incidence was considered to have been counter-productive. However with further deaths now apparently inevitable and with a consequential by-election in the Republic as well as in Fermanagh/South Tyrone renewed political activity and pressure is likely to build up over the next few weeks.

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