

**SOLP**

MICHAEL CANAVAN  
Constituency Representative  
27 Talbot Park,  
Derry  
Telephone: Derry 51308

## Constituency of Derry

27th. Nov. 1979.

The Secretary of State,  
Stormont Castle,  
Belfast.



Dear Sir,

Following a recent visit by Dr. J. Hendron, Dr. R. McLean and myself to a protesting prisoner in the H Blocks we wish to express grave concern about matters which adversely affect the daily lives of these prisoners and constitute a very serious erosion of internationally accepted standards of prisoners rights.

These include:-

Such prisoners for whatever reason do not enjoy facilities for daily mental or physical recreation.

They have no association with one another except at Sunday religious service.

Taken either together or separately such deprivation over a protracted period of time is bound to result in severe mental and physical damage in the long-term. In the short-term these circumstances ~~must seriously~~ must seriously disturb the prisoners concerned. The resultant tension must make prison life much more difficult for both prisoners and staff.

The refusal to wear prison clothes or to do prison work may be in breach of discipline but the resultant situation, including as it does the loss of remission on sentences, is massively out of all proportion. Surely the deprivations mentioned above were never intended to be appropriate subject matter for either privileges or punishment, but are basic human rights, particularly of persons in prison.

Were prisoners allowed to wear their own clothing or other clothing appropriate to recreational activities many of these problems would either disappear or be greatly mitigated.

Where prison populations are concerned we believe that authority ~~has~~ has the responsibility for making the first move to break the deadlock and for relieving the present difficult and painful <sup>be</sup> situation. A positive response to such a move would then clearly/seen to be necessary to ameliorate suffering.



MICHAEL CANAVAN  
 Constituency Representative  
 27 Talbot Park,  
 Derry  
 Telephone: Derry 51308

# Constituency of Derry

Context

In addition to the matters mentioned above it is alleged that the humiliating mirror searches take place on occasions internal to prison life eg. on cell changes and at times of religious services which appears unnecessary.

It is also alleged that the lighting in some of the H.Block cells is faulty and needs repair or replacement.

Hoping to hear from you as a matter of urgency,

Yours faithfully,

...Michael Canavan

SDLP spokesman for law and order.

Mr Templeton

Mr Jackson has not yet seen this case; presumably you will mention it to him when he is available.

WJ 30  
 11  
 79