

E.R.

PAB/1089/RE

Mr Wyatt

CALL ON BISHOP DALY

Mr. Complete  
 Mr. Nagell  
 Mr. 3/6  
 4/6.  
 cc: PS/S of S (L&B)  
 PS/PUS (L&B)  
 Mr Blelloch  
 Mr Palmer  
 Mr Moriarty  
 Mr Gilliland  
 Mr Chesterton  
 Miss MacGlashan

1 JUN 1981  
 Jackson  
 Mr MacKay  
 JLT  
 2.6.81

1. I called on Bishop Daly in Londonderry on 29 May for about an hour. He made it plain that he resented our attempts to persuade him and Cardinal O Fiaich to endorse (as he put it) the Prime Minister's speech in Stormont Castle the day before. The speech, and the subsequent interviews, had merely repeated the Prime Minister's disastrous line of "no surrender". She had been totally negative and cold. Her attempts to distinguish between the Provos and the Catholic population were pointless when nearly every family in the Bogside and Creggan, and in West Belfast, had relatives in the Maze, or had friends with relatives there. It was simply not true to say that the Provisionals had no support. And to state that their cause was discredited was a major error: it was their means, not their goal of a united Ireland, which were unacceptable. And so on. Neither he nor the Cardinal could risk being present on such occasions. He still smarted from being similarly conned (his word) some time ago in London. Moreover, the NIO could not simply summon the Cardinal to a meeting at a few hours notice; and when we tried, we might at least have the decency to tell him, and the Bishop himself, that it was to meet the Prime Minister. A confidential message could be passed if necessary through the local RUC chief. Did we think him not trustworthy?

2. Bishop Daly said that he nevertheless thought it might soon be time for a private meeting between himself, the Cardinal and the Secretary of State in order to run over the ground. Things were not well in Derry. Active support for the Provos was growing, and men released from the Maze who had hitherto kept out of trouble were slipping back into PIRA. People were bitter, frustrated and longing to get the hunger-strike over with. There was a dangerous feeling that the troubles had gone on too long, and "let's get it all over with", either way, once and for all.

3. We spoke about the hunger strike, on familiar lines. Bishop Daly thought that the only way forward might be for an international body of

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impeccable standing (the ECHR might best fit this bill) to make recommendations (for example that all prisoners should be allowed to wear their own clothes all the time) which the Government could implement without compromising on political status. He accepted that the Provisionals might not be ready for a compromise; but thought that the Catholic community would put such pressure on them that at best they would settle and at worst would range Catholic sentiment firmly against themselves. The important need was for some move by the Government.

4. Despite the content of para 1 above, Bishop Daly was friendly throughout and seemed anxious to talk.



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Political Affairs Division

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