

2 SEP 1981
 Jackson

IMMEDIATE MUFAX

PS/Lord Gowrie (I&B)

Mr. MacLay

Mr. Temple 28/9

Mr. Dabell
MT 24/9

The meeting is known at 230,
 with a briefing over lunch beforehand
 which Mr Palmer is attending. SCT

c.c. PS/Secretary of State (I&B)-M
 PS/PUS (I&B)-M
 Mr. Blelloch
 Mr. Palmer (DH)
 Mr. Doyne-Ditmas
 Mr. Blatherwick

MRS. McCLOSKEY

22.9.81

Mrs. McCloskey is the mother of Liam the next hunger striker due to die. She recently asked to see the Prime Minister and was advised by the Prime Minister that this was not possible but that NIO officials would be prepared to talk to her.

2. Mr. John Hume telephoned me today to say that he had spent some time yesterday with Mrs. McCloskey who had now made up her mind to authorise her son's resuscitation when he reaches the point of death, though of course hoping that it would not reach that point. She was of course anxious to keep this decision secret because of the pressures which are being brought to bear on the families of hunger strikers by the Provisional IRA and INLA.

3. She would like to see Lord Gowrie and to be accompanied by Mrs. Lynch, the mother of the dead hunger striker who herself fought hard to make her son call off the hunger strike.

4. You will see from the early papers about Mrs. McCloskey's approach to the Prime Minister that there were arguments both ways. And the principal argument against involving the Prime Minister was that this personalises the conflict as one between her and the hunger strikers. Hence the offer for the NIO to see Mrs. McCloskey. If Mrs. McCloskey wishes to see Lord Gowrie I think we should make a mistake if we were to say that only officials were able to see her. Our best hope of seeing an end to the hunger strike is through pressure by the families. We should support those of the families who are against the hunger strike, without of course giving them the kiss of death. Mrs. McCloskey and Mrs. Lynch are both anti-hunger strike and as this meeting at their wish would be without publicity, I recommend

22 SEP 1981

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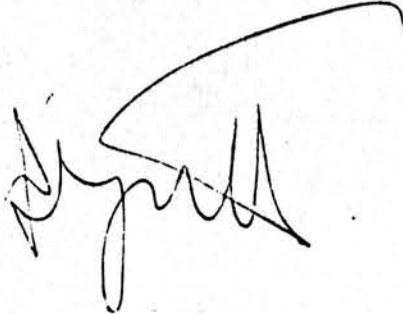
E.R.

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that Lord Gowrie should agree to see them as soon as possible.

5. I attach a copy of the submission on the approach to the Prime Minister and of the letter which the Prime Minister sent.

6. If possible I would like to call Mr. Hume back this evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.J. Wyatt', with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the top of the signature.

D.J. WYATT

21 September 1981

(MR/11n)

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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

DUB 514
21 SEP 1981
N.I.O. BELFAST

15 September 1981

RECEIVED BY
16 SEP 1981 16
PRIVATE OFFICE

mbh
16/9
② C.C. Fairbairn
PS/S/L/B
Mr Bellch
Mr Marshall
Mr Dwyre Dumas
Mr Martin
Mr Palmer
Mr Wyatt
Mr Jackson
Mr Hammett
Mr Corbett

③ PA

Dear Mrs. McCloskey,

Thank you for your letter of 1 September.

I have indeed received it personally and read it, I hope, with true understanding. I do care very deeply about those to whom the hunger strike has brought pain and bereavement, as I do for all those in Northern Ireland who have suffered from violence in whatever form that has taken.

You ask if you can come and see me. I hope you will understand that I really do not mean to disappoint you and Mrs. Lynch, but I am afraid I do not see how such a meeting could help. I believe myself that the Government's position has already been set out very clearly. But my officials are, nevertheless, ready to explain it again carefully to anyone to whom that would be of value. That of course extends, before anyone else, to the families of the hunger strikers. If that would be of any help to you, then it can be done with all speed. But the fact is that the hunger strikers have no more to gain for themselves by carrying on. I think many people now do understand this. It is my hope that those whom the hunger strikers trust will say so to them and that my writing to you will help you to do so.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

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Mr Atkins feels that on balance the better course is for Mrs McCloskey's request not to be granted but that we should be ready, as we were with the Quinn family, for officials to see her if that is what she should wish. I attach a draft which, while turning down the request for a personal interview, is aimed at showing the Prime Minister's sympathetic understanding of the spirit in which the letter was written.

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

Hidden copies

PS/S d/B (3)
PS/Mr Atson/L+B)
PS/AUS (11)
Mr Marshall
Mr Bloch
Mr Palmer
Mr Morarty
Mr Wyatt
Mr Doyle Dumas
Mr Gilliland
Mr Jackson
Mr Harrington

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ



Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

14 September 1981

Dear Michael

You wrote to Stephen Boys Smith on 7 September enclosing a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister had received from Mrs McCloskey, the mother of one of the Maze hunger strikers. You asked for a reply by today and added that the idea of a meeting might be worthy of more serious consideration than might have been the case a month or two ago.

We have prepared a note on all three ladies which draws upon intelligence-based material. You may find it helpful to have this in your papers and I enclose a copy.

There are good arguments both for and against a meeting of this kind. If it took place, and went well, it would be a way of lending support to the families who in the recent past have been exerting a powerful influence that has been working in our interests and against those of the Provisionals. It would also be a way of showing that the Government means what it says in insisting that it will remain firm on principles but that it does care for those - and particularly the relatives - to whom the hunger strike has brought pain and bereavement. These are no doubt the points you very much had in mind.

Against that, it is questionable whether we ought to create, as Dr Fitzgerald did, a precedent for seeing relatives which we might subsequently have to breach: and we should in any case advise against seeing Mrs Hinphey who, whatever her credentials as a friend of the McCloskeys, is not, as an activist, someone whom the Prime Minister should be asked to see. Nor, though there is no reason to doubt Mrs McCloskey's assurance that the meeting would not be given publicity, can we rule out its becoming known.

/...

CC

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