



Minister of State

RS/MGFS (B)
MR STEELE
MR ~~Maccabe~~
MR Stanley
MR Comick
H/Case 8105.

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
STORMONT CASTLE
BELFAST BT4 3ST

Tel. Belfast (0232) 63011
Telex 74272

Dr I R K Paisley MP MEP
256 Ravenhill Road
BELFAST
BT6 8GJ

6 June 1990

Dear Ian

You wrote to my office on 14 May enclosing letters you had received from Messrs G Armstrong and E Mawhinney, currently being held on remand in Belfast Prison. I am sorry that you still feel unable to observe the courtesy, commonly followed by Westminster MPs, of addressing letters directly to Ministers.

I emphasise firmly to you the Government's determination to resist pressure for segregation in Belfast Prison. I have pointed out on many occasions recently that segregation only helps the paramilitary organisations in the prison by allowing them to exercise wholly improper intimidation and control over other prisoners within their wing. The Government is not prepared to countenance this.

Your correspondents' allegations about conditions in the prison are exaggerated. When prisoners have slopped out under their doors, which is not a common occurrence, the mess is quickly cleared up. There is no question of prisoners being forced to paddle through it to reach their cells nor of food running the risk of contamination by close contact with it.

The Governor and his staff have continued to work energetically and effectively in extremely difficult circumstances, and will continue to do so whether prisoners choose to behave in this wholly unacceptable and futile manner or not.



The only ones likely to gain from continued protest action by "Loyalist" prisoners - and the most serious incidents recently have been perpetrated by "Loyalists" - will be the Republican paramilitaries, and they are well aware of that fact.

John Cope

THE RT HON JOHN COPE MP

LD/MINOF5/2477



FROM: NOEL CORNICK
Regimes Division (Planning)

31 MAY 1990

cc Mr Steele
Mr Stanley
Mr Semple

- ✓ CA 1/6
1. Mr Maccabe
 2. PS/Minister of State (B&L)

MINISTER'S CASE 8105: DR I R K PAISLEY ON SEGREGATION

Dr Paisley wrote to "The Permanent Secretary, Rt Hon John Cope's Office" on 14 May enclosing virtually identical letters from 2 Loyalist remand prisoners in Belfast Prison who alleged that they were forced to live in "inhumane living conditions", that landings were "swimming in urine" and that this was all the result of protest action by Republican prisoners.

Dr Paisley's letter is, effectively, a further shot in the segregation campaign. He attributes the "intolerable conditions" to "the NIO's mishandling of the situation" and repeats his demand for a system of separation in the prison. As is so often the case, the prisoners' claims, which Dr Paisley endorses, are greatly exaggerated and, as the Minister is well aware, the present disturbances in Belfast Prison are by no means solely the responsibility of Republican prisoners. A self-explanatory draft reply is attached.

Noel Cornick

NOEL CORNICK
F4489



EM/RP1/168

DRAFT LETTER FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE

Checked
OB

Dr I R K Paisley MP M.E.P.
256 Ravenhill Road
BELFAST
BT6 8GJ

You wrote to ^{my office} ~~the Permanent Secretary~~ on 14 May enclosing letters you had received from Messrs G Armstrong and E Mawhinney, currently being held on remand in Belfast Prison. I am sorry that you still feel unable to observe the courtesy, commonly followed by Westminster MPs, of ^{addressing letters} ~~writing~~ directly to Ministers.

I ~~[must at the outset]~~ ^{to you} emphasise ~~[most]~~ firmly the Government's determination to resist pressure for segregation in Belfast Prison, ~~[from whichever quarter it may come]~~ ^{pointed out} ~~As~~ I have ~~said~~ ^{said} on many occasions recently, ^{that} segregation ~~[or separation as I see you are now calling it]~~ ^{by} plays directly into the hands of ^{only} ~~the~~ paramilitary organisations in the prison, ^{exercise} ~~wield~~ wholly improper ^{intimidation} ~~influence~~ and control over ^{other} ~~the~~ prisoners within their wing. ~~Quite~~ simply, ~~The~~ Government is not prepared to countenance this.

Your correspondents' allegations about conditions in the prison are exaggerated. ^{when} ~~If~~ prisoners have slopped out under their doors, which is not a common occurrence, the mess is quickly cleared up. There is no question of prisoners being forced to paddle through it to reach their cells nor of food running the risk of contamination by close contact with it.

~~[I do not accept that we have mishandled the situation as you allege.]~~ The Governor and his staff have continued to work energetically and effectively in extremely difficult circumstances, and will continue to do so ^{whether} ~~for as long as~~ prisoners choose to behave in this wholly unacceptable and futile manner.

or not

~~You should be in no doubt that~~ ^T the only ones likely to gain from continued protest action by "Loyalist" prisoners - and the most serious incidents recently have been perpetrated by "Loyalists" - will be the Republican paramilitaries, and they are well aware of that fact.

Je
5/6



256 Ravenhill Road,
Belfast. BT6 8GJ.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

14th May, 1990.

The Permanent Secretary,
Rt. Hon John Cope's Office,
Stormont Castle,
Belfast. BT4 3ST.



Dear Sir,

I have received the enclosed letters from irate
prisoners at Crumlin Road.

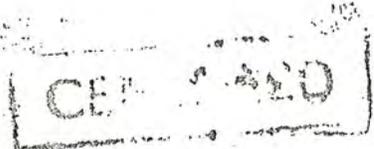
As you can tell, they suffer intolerable conditions.
The violence in the prison last evening is due to
the N.I.O.'s mishandling of the situation in the
prisons.

I again reiterate my demand on behalf of the
prisoners, for their own safety, and in the interests
of common sense, for a system of separation in the
prisons.

Yours sincerely,

P. P. Ian Paisley
IAN R. K. PAISLEY M.P., M.E.P.

In replying to this letter, please address the envelope as follows:

Number A2661 Name G. ARMSTRONGH.M.P. CRUMLIN ROAD, C. Wing 3 Prison
BELFAST. BT14 6AE.

Dear Rev I. K. Paisley,

I am a remmand
loyalist Protestant Prisoner, housed here in the
(Crumlin Road. I have been on Remmand a
(mere) 10 months up to the present time of writing
this letter.

The (reason) I have chose to write to you, is
about the inhumane living conditions, we have
to indure as a result of the Republican's
hatest protest. Their actions ~~the~~ have in-
cluded not only the breaking of the prison's
toilets - wash Rooms - and fittings, they
have continually emptied the pots which
they use to urinate into out the cell doors.

This means the landings 1-2-3 have
been literally been swimming in urine.
Subsequently when we are out of our cells
at any time out of our (23) Hour lock up
imposed ~~through~~ through these peoples actions,
~~by~~ by the Authorities, it means we have to
wade through it which is highly un Hygenic
and unhealthy, as the Governor has not allowed
us to collect our meals as normal, ~~as~~ Instead
they serve our food on a small trolley about
6 inches above the floor which is covered in

PTC

2.
(U.S. IN G). If they even let us collect
our meals at least only our foot wear
would be affected. Even then it means
our footwear is tramping the mess into
our cells which we are confined to
23 hours a day.

Lately we saw our Sunday Minister
and he agreed the ~~cond~~ conditions were
terrible, and he stated that even he
had to suffer the indignity of having
to plough through the mess.

Incidentally he was a Combined Services
Minister. I also heard on the Radio
that the N.I.O. stated publicly that there
was no mess and no cause for alarm,
Well that statement I totally repudiate
and refute as even you the Clergy
saw and experienced this at first
hand.

Obviously I realise Mr Paisley that
you are an extremely busy man
and so on, but I would
like to think that you could take the
time to read this even if you
cannot help our plight.

Thanks for listening
Yours Faithfully
L. R. Armstrong