



Minister of State

RE/ MGF S (B)  
Mr Steele  
Mr MacCabe  
Mr Stanley  
Mr Cornick  
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/MINOFs/2477



FROM: NOEL CORNICK  
Regimes Division (Planning)

31 MAY 1990

cc Mr Steele  
Mr Stanley  
Mr Semple

- ✓ C11/6
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  
x4489



EM/RP1/168

DRAFT LETTER FOR THE SIGNATURE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE

Checked  
02

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

You wrote to <sup>my office</sup> ~~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 <sup>addressing letters</sup> ~~writing~~ directly to Ministers.

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

Your correspondents' allegations about conditions in the prison are exaggerated. <sup>when</sup> ~~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 <sup>whether</sup> ~~for as long as~~ prisoners choose to behave in this wholly unacceptable and futile manner.

or not

~~You should be in no doubt that~~ <sup>T</sup> 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.

Fe  
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.

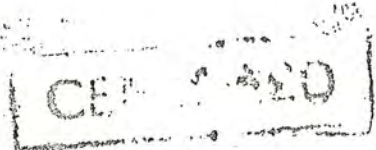
I again reiterate my demand on behalf of the  
prisoners, for their own safety, and in the interests  
of common sense, for a system of separation in the  
prisons.

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. ARMSTRONG  
H.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  
 (more) 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 endure as a result of the Republican's  
 latest 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 Hygienic  
 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~~  
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~~ 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. A. P. M. Thomas