

Balf. C. Daly - 3 APR 1981  
papers



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
DUBLIN.

31 March 1981

D J Wyatt Esq  
Under-Secretary  
Northern Ireland Office  
Belfast

INFO. POL. AND POL. AFFAIRS / 7SS  
- 3 APR 1981  
REFER TO:

see Davis

1. I enclose a copy of Bishop Daly's latest letter on the Maze prison protest. I do not think it would be profitable to continue this correspondence with the Bishop any further, so I have sent him a simple acknowledgement saying that I have copied his letter to the authorities in Northern Ireland.

your own

Leonard.

L C W Figg

Enc

Mr Dazell For Mr Bishop Daly  
Mr. Templeton  
Mr MacLay (You will recall the letter which we drafted for Mr Figg to send to Bishop C Daly.)

Mr Jackson:  
Mr Wyatt passed this to me for information to Bishop C Daly.  
No action necessary.

SCT

3.4.81

3 APR 1981



Com. 11/11/81 20/3  
M. Figg 23/3  
M. W. 23/3  
30/3

ST. MICHAEL'S  
LONGFORD  
telephone (043) 6432

From the Bishop of Ardagh + Clonmacnois

19th. March 1981.

His Excellency, The British Ambassador,  
L.C.W. Figg, Esq.,  
British Embassy,  
DUBLIN.

I don't wish this  
is worth continuing.  
But I shall simply  
ack. & say I have  
heard of it. 20/3

Your Excellency,

I thank you for your letter of 11th. March. I am grateful to you for having taken the trouble to reply at considerable length to my letters, and I have read your letter and your enclosure with care and with interest. I apologise for my delay in responding.

I should like to begin by insisting again, and with emphasis, that my repudiation and my condemnation of the Provisional I.R.A. are at least as strong, as absolute and as unreserved as are those of the United Kingdom Government. I know that it is not necessary for me to say this to you, since I have repeatedly and categorically asserted this condemnation in public. Nevertheless, I feel that it is important to repeat my assertion in this context, since, unfortunately, dissatisfaction with the official Government policy on the H-Block prisoners has sometimes been regarded as putting in doubt one's attitude towards the I.R.A. and their abominable crimes.

From my total repudiation of the I.R.A. it immediately follows that I could not either advocate or accept any granting to the prisoners of "political status". However, the information available to me does not convince me that the protesting or the hunger-striking prisoners are in fact demanding "political status". My information may, of course, be incomplete or mistaken. What is undoubtedly true is that the I.R.A. organisation outside the prison is exploiting the situation for its own propaganda benefit. It is my impression that statements have been made in the name of the prisoners which were not in fact drawn up by the prisoners themselves, and claims have been made, purporting to be the prisoners' claims, which in fact differ from the prisoners' own statement of their "demands". This is precisely my deep and continuing concern, namely that the Provisional I.R.A. are reaping a considerable propaganda harvest from the H-Blocks situation. It is because of the important benefits which the I.R.A. are deriving from the protest that I feel so saddened and depressed about its continuance.

I conclude by stressing that anything which I or my brother-bishops have said about the H-Blocks situation has had only two motives: firstly, humanitarian concern for the prisoners themselves and particularly for their relatives, the latter usually innocent of all support for, or often even knowledge of, their subversive activities; and secondly, our moral abhorrence for the I.R.A.

The fact that, despite this unequivocal moral stand, we nevertheless cannot accept important parts of official Government policy on the H-Blocks as being wise or as being helpful, is, I think, something the significance of which should be deeply pondered — on both sides.

I thank you sincerely for your concern and for your visit and your letters.  
I assure you of my kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

+ Carol B. Daly  
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