

PRESS RELEASE

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SINN FÉIN

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Sinn Féin Welcomes Truce

A Great Tragedy Imminent

Statement by Ruairí Ó Brádaigh, President of Sinn Féin,
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Sinn Féin welcomes the truce between British and Irish Republican forces which came into being last Monday. Unlike the Christmas and New Year truce and its extension, the British Government must on this occasion show evidence of reciprocation of its good will and sincerity.

A start has been made in this direction with the setting up of British and Republican offices in each of the six counties to supervise the truce.

South of the border, however, a different picture emerges with a great tragedy imminent in the Curragh Military Hospital and Fortlaoise Prison. The 26-County Government will not grant to the hunger strikers what the British Government and its representative, Mr. Whitelaw, conceded to republican prisoners in the North almost three years ago.

Mr. Cooney appears prepared to let men die in very grave circumstances rather than move nine non-IRA prisoners from one set of cells to another within the prison. He now cites "security" as the reason, yet he had long since segregated a small number of Official (Gardiner Place) prisoners in a similar group of cells. The non-IRA prisoners have themselves asked to be moved to another part of the prison.

The Fianna Fáil opposition are not above blame here either. Last Sunday Mr. Lynch supported the Government on this issue and said that no person or group should dictate the conditions of imprisonment. Yet at the 1974 Fianna Fáil Ard-Fheis a resolution was passed unanimously telling the British Government how to run

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its jails, i.e., asking that the Frice sisters and their comrades be moved from prison in Britain to prison in the North of Ireland.

History will judge Messrs. Cosgrave, Cooney, Lynch and Cruise O'Brien in the light of their contributions to the renewed truce now being nailed down effectively in the six counties. A death or deaths on hunger strike in the 26 Counties in the near future will hardly contribute to the cause of Peace with Justice in Ireland. Hope was never higher just now. Surely a great tragedy can still be averted.

ENDS