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SECRET AND PERSONAL

PUS/574  
14 DEC 1990  
N.I.O. LONDON

FROM: J G PILLING  
DUS(L)  
13 December 1990

Copy No 2 of 6

cc: PUS (L&B) - B (2 and 3)  
Mr Alston - B (4)

Mr Thomas - B (1)

SIGNED

**POLITICAL MOVEMENT AND THE PROVISIONALS**

Thank you for sending me a copy of your note of 13 December to PUS.

2. I share Mr Hallett's doubts about the relevance of the examples but not because of the nature of British colonial rule. I see no escape from thinking out our own position from first principles because

- we are not addressing a scenario where HMG is to leave the scene with the result that the courts, the police and prisons will fall under the control of others and any releases by representatives of HMG would be only a little way ahead of when they would have happened in any case
- the crimes committed by many of those in prison in Northern Ireland were committed against members of the other community in the Province and, on any view, those communities will continue to live where they are under whatever fresh political arrangement were put in place.

3. Because of the first of those two points it may be that Ireland 1916-17 is the most relevant time and place to look for relevant precedents. Do we know if any duly tried and sentenced prisoners were released in June 1917 as opposed to internees or those held after court martial? Coming even closer to home do

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