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17th May 1977

Mr. D. Gallagher

Dear Gearóid

W 18/5
I am enclosing copy of the transcript of last night's World in Action programme, which reported the talks between Desmond Boal and Sean MacBride and about which there were a number of articles in today's newspapers.

Yours sincerely

D A Gallagher

Dermot A Gallagher

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WORLD IN ACTION 16 MAY 1977: Some notes on tonight's programme.

The script of tonight's programme "What Mr Paisley Didn't Know" contains most of the information World in Action has discovered about the Northern Ireland peace talks being conducted between Desmond Boal and Sean MacBride.

The following notes are small items of further information which may be of help:

Boal has defended hundreds of IRA and Loyalist terrorist suspects. He left Stormont as an MP in 1972 - and got a better hearing from Protestant paramilitaries for his ideas on Federalism as a solution to the Irish problem than his fellow MPs thought possible.

MacBride, former Foreign Affairs Minister, and a life long Republican, was briefly IRA Chief of Staff in the 1930s. He has vehemently denounced the Provisionals' present campaign. According to Joe Haines' book 'The Politics of Power', both Boal and MacBride were believed to have been acceptable as intermediaries in the attempt to get a permanent truce in 1975 between the British government and the Provisional IRA.

We cannot say how long the initiative has been going on. But MacBride and Boal became involved last March. They first met one afternoon at Boal's home near the fishing village of Ardglass on Ulster's County Down coast.

The meeting place was a condition laid down by Boal as a symbolic gesture. It meant that any solution finally achieved after a permanent ceasefire would not have had its origins in London or Dublin.

We also know that the peace plan under discussion does suggest a break with Britain - but does not give the Provos their ultimate aspiration of an all Ireland Republic.

The two mediators had at least three further meetings at Boal's home. They then met in Paris where a final document - believed to be just one page of clauses - was drafted over a long lunch at UNESCO Headquarters.

Boal was holidaying in Tunisia and MacBride flying back from Bangladesh where he was trying to save a group of prisoners from execution in his role as an international peacemaker.

The Paris document was sent back via couriers for both sides to study, the same method used for each draft refined in the earlier meetings at Boal's home.

It took about ten days to reach all members of the Provisional IRA's Army Council scattered in safe hideouts south of the Irish border. The distribution problem for the Loyalists was easier - their leaders were more accessible.

We understand the intention is that full details of the document and what led up to it will be published in the event of success to start an unprecedented debate on both sides of the border.

Our sources tell us that both Boal and MacBride are confident that they are talking to men who can deliver their part of the ceasefire pact. There have been no face to face meetings between the principals on either side.

One figure on the Loyalist side of the initiative is John McKeague, who has links with the illegal Red Hand Commandos, and who earlier this year launched a cross border debate on Independence for Ulster.

Some prominent UDA men were not in evidence during the strike. It seems likely that this group included the UDA men involved in the peace moves.

Footnote: World in Action knows of the stream of rumours of face to face talks between Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries alleged to have taken place since the end of the 1975 truce.

We are quite satisfied that the MacBride/Boal initiative, unlike the others, has made substantial progress.

TX : 16.5.77.

WORLD IN ACTION

"WHAT MR PAISLEY DIDN'T KNOW"

Investigation by John Ware

Producer: Michael Beckham

Reporter: Gordon Burns

Editor: Ray Fitzwalter

Executive Producer: Brian Lapping

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PAISLEY V/O :

COMM: The Rev. Ian Paisley's battle cry to his church congregation on the eve of the strike in Northern Ireland two weeks ago. But behind the God fearing talk were the paramilitary protestant groups like the Ulster Defence Association guilty of some of the province's most savage murders.

PAISLEY V/O

COMM: ~~Last~~ ^{This} weekend Ian Paisley's support collapsed. The strike committee had underestimated the loyalist will to ~~stand up to~~ ^{defy the} strong arm men. This is ^{first} the story of why the strike failed ^{but, more important} and how it almost ruined a new and secret attempt to end the seven years of violence - an attempt that Mr Paisley knew nothing about.

TITLE

WORLD IN ACTION has discovered the first attempt by ~~the~~ ^{key} IRA and protestant paramilitaries to sign a peace treaty. Reporter Gordon Burns.

GORDON BURNS TO CAM

The failure of the reverend Ian Paisley and his fellow strike leaders to bring Northern Ireland to a stand still may prove to have a far greater significance than simply demonstrating that Mr Paisley hadn't got the power he thought he had. It may give an important and highly secret

GORDON BURNS TO CAM. (CONED)

peace initiative the chance to be concluded and to bring about a cease fire in Northern Ireland by the summer, between on the one side the Provisional IRA and on the other the protestant paramilitary groups who control and operate from areas like East Belfast.

BOAL IN BELFAST

COMM: This man filmed in Belfast last week is Desmond Boal, Ulster's most distinguished QC. He is the ^{emissary} ~~mediator~~ ^{for} the protestant street armies in these ^{talks.} ~~negotiations.~~ For him the strike threatened the most important negotiations of his lifetime. He refused to talk to WORLD IN ACTION but we pieced together some details of the talks. The initiative involves all major republican factions but principally the provisionals and their enemies the armed loyalist groups. Each side is represented by ~~an envoy acting as a mediator and~~ ^a go-between. ~~The~~ ^{The} ~~gunmen do~~ ^{not meet face to face.} The man representing the IRA wings in the talks is 73 year old Sean MacBride, former Irish Foreign Minister a nobel peace prize winner and barrister. He too would not discuss the peace plan with WORLD IN ACTION.

MacBRIDE

(PAUSE)

Sean MacBride has vehemently denounced the provisional IRA's present campaign but he

COMM (CONTD): is trusted by the IRA because in the 1930's he was their chief of staff. He has since become one of Ireland's most distinguished international statesman. He has taken on major mediation missions for the United Nations. This is his first for the gunmen.

The tough uncompromising attitudes of loyalist paramilitaries like these UDA men and their Catholic counterparts are well understood by Desmond Boal. Hundreds of IRA and loyalist terrorist suspects have been defended by him in court.

At their meetings in Northern Ireland and in Paris MacBride and Boal got the same message from the men of violence for whom they were mediating .. unless the bloodletting ends soon it would leave a desert where peace had no place.

A few days after Easter Sunday the two envoys had drawn up a written agreement in Paris which they were confident would receive the approval of both sides. A cease fire then seemed imminent.

GORDON TO CAMERA OUTSIDE

COUNCIL HQ

But the one thing the mediators hadn't bargained for was the loyalist action council's strike. The reverend Ian Paisley announced his plans to bring Northern Ireland to a stand still, and

GORDON TO CAMERA OUTSIDE
COUNCIL HQ (CONTD)

suddenly the peace initiative was in danger of coming to an abrupt halt. Mr Paisley of course had no knowledge of any peace deals, despite the fact his close confidant and one time personal advisor Desmond Boal was so deeply involved, and perhaps the real irony was that most of the paramilitary representatives on the action council hadn't also been taken into confidence.

PAISLEY

COMM: Paisley was leading an odd coalition of fringe politicians and ruthless paramilitaries. They banked on repeating the victory of the loyalists 1974 general strike, that had wrecked Westminster's power sharing initiative. ^{la}
~~But~~ this general strike Paisley was making two demands.

CAP

First, security. He wanted a major offensive by the British army against the IRA - with fast results.

PAISLEY SYNC

. You get your priority right friend, and we're not going to allow our wives and families to be battered into the ground by either Mr Mason's British Army or by the Irish Republican Army. 7 years is enough too long.

COMM: Paisley's second demand was Government. He wanted a return to protestant majority

COMM CONTD: rule to get security back in the hands of loyalists. This would *have* meant resurrecting Stormont, Ulster's abolished parliament, so hated by Catholics because it was protestant. *Such a proposal* dominated. / ~~This~~ was disastrous for the cease fire plan ~~the~~ painstakingly constructed by Desmond Boal and Sean MacBride. Catholics would never again accept unbridled protestant domination.

~~When~~ When the IRA heard this demand before the strike began, they ~~dramatically cooled~~ *went cold* on the peace initiative. The one mystery at this stage was ~~which~~ *which* ~~the~~ *and its paramilitary allies* members of the strike action council knew about the peace moves.

POLITICIANS GRAPHIC

COMM: The key political figures running the strike were Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, ~~and~~ Ernest Baird, of the tiny United Ulster Unionist Party and Jim Smyth of the Ulster Workers Council.

The enforcers for Paisley and the politicians were a collection of at least six protestant paramilitary groups, some of whose leaders were involved in the peace negotiations.

The IRA wanted to see if the leaders of the loyalist paramilitaries would change as a result of the strike and they wanted to know who they might be negotiating

COMM CONTD: with later.

Paisley's most important paramilitary backer in the strike is Andy Tyrie of the tough heavily armed UDA. Some of its leading members are party to the negotiations.

The illegal Ulster Volunteer Force who ^{round} came ^{backing} late ~~to~~ to the strike ~~are~~ are thought to be involved in the peace plan too. And finally John McKeague who is in contact with the Red Hand Commandos, another ^{hard-line} ~~paramilitary~~ paramilitary group. ~~They had representation on the action council when the strike started.~~ He is directly involved in the peace plan.

If the peace initiative was to succeed the strike had to fail. ^{First} ~~time~~ the story of how ~~the~~ the strike collapsed

The presence of all these paramilitary groups behind Ian Paisley is one of the main reasons why the loyalist population of Ulster rejected the strike. Over the last 2 weeks gangs of paramilitary loyalists have roamed the streets of Belfast threatening people who went to work.

Jean Coulter ^{is} ~~former~~ ^{ly elected to the} Northern Ireland Assembly ~~is~~ well known for her staunch protestant views. She was asked to join the Action Council at a meeting with Paisley last year.

JEAN COULTER SYNGE

We in the official unionist party knew that there was revulsion at some of the activities that had been perpetrated against our own people, and after that meeting we then decided to hold another meeting with some of the Westminster representatives, and after that meeting finished Dr Paisley put one arm round my shoulder, one arm round the other independent member's shoulder and he asked the both of us to climb down, and he assured us, that he is a minister of the Gospel, with his reputation could not be involved with the criminals, the gangsters and the murderers. Now that was on Saturday shortly after 1 o'clock and the following week Dr Paisley was meeting with paramilitary organisations. Who had murdered members of our own religion.

8
—
COMM

The UDA frustrated by the initial lack of support for the strike, began blocking roads that had to be cleared by the police.

In a confrontation with the police in East Belfast, Andy Tyrrie the leader of the UDA, threatened real violence.

Paisley, clearly embarrassed, was immediately forced to rebuke Tyrrie publicly for this threat.

The paramilitarans moved onto another tactic, intimidation by phone.

Tom Steel is a social worker who lives in Bangor.

STEEL SYNC

Phone calls were taken by my some of my daughters some of the family they were just phone calls to warn me to watch what I was doing and to warn me that if I didn't back the strike well I would receive the consequences as a result if I didn't back the strike. While I was having a cup of tea at about half past one in the morning, we heard a sudden bang, we looked out of the window couldn't see anything, but fractional, couple of seconds later the car just went up in smoke. And that was the car burned out. Now I have been told they have went in an indirect way they told friends of mine to warn me that the next action will be physical violence.

INT

When you say they have warned you who are you

talking about?

STEEL

The UDA. I want to make no reservations for saying that.

INT

How can you be positive?

STEEL

Because I know every one of them. And I've told the police exactly what I think it is.

POLICE SWITCHBOARDS

The Police began a frantic drive to combat the anonymous phone calls, setting ^{up} switch boards to deal with frightened businessmen and workers.

POLICE INSPECTOR

Right you have got L division there what is the, your return from L, 13, 25 all told that makes a total of 26 for L division on that side right, Okay. And your intimidation returns for R division 190, that makes 192 all told for the intimidation return. Following is the intimidation returns from all divisions 1837, that's one thousand eight hundred and thirty seven intimidation returns.

CHIEF CONSTABLE NEWMAN SYNC

Chief Constable can you give us some idea of the level of intimidation that has taken place since the strike began?

In figures we've had about 1,600 complaints of intimidation. I suspect however that is something in the nature of the pick of the iceberg, probably not all cases of intimidation were reported to us.

INT

So you would anticipate that a lot more of it has been going on and has reached police hands?

NEWMAN

I would say so yes.

COMM

In hardline loyalist areas like East Belfast most shops were closed throughout the strike, many because of intimidation. Public services like buses that had to move through these areas were at risk. We talked to this busdriver who wanted to remain anonymous about the fear of driving through areas dominated by the bully boys.

But as the daily proof of their defeat grew - paramilitaries stepped up their terror campaign. In the middle of last week they shot a busman dead on the Crumlin Road.

There was a second death on the same day. This garage that had stayed open was bombed and a part-time soldier in the Ulster Defence Regiment was killed.

These two outrages effectively finished the strike. This man worked at the garage.

NEWMAN

And are you satisfied that those events particularly the bus driver and indeed the UDR man who was killed in the bomb blast at the petrol station, that that is the work of the Loyalists as a result of this strike, part of the intimidation campaign? That is my expert assessment.

It is killings like these at the negotiations of Raymond Hoal and Sean McBride hope to bring an end.

FUNERAL

PAISLEY SYNC

Q

But there have been three deaths in this strike also which the police are blaming on your strike.

Paisley

The police have not.

Q

And a lot in injuries including 24 injuries.

Paisley

The police have not made any statement against the United Nations action of council about these deaths, now let's get it straight.

They have to us Dr Paisley. The suggestion is that those deaths would not have occurred if it wasn't for the strike.

JEAN COULTERINT

Does that also mean that you feel the strike is not for security, it's for some other reason

JEAN COULTER

Well how can you say the strike is all about security when the people who are spearheading the strike have been responsible for murdering their own members even

INT

Why do you think that the Reverend Ian Paisley associates then with organisations like this as more or less leader of the Action Council

JEAN COULTER

I can't think, I can't see a reason why he condemned them in private that he should now seemed to have forgiven them their sins. It's probably very wrong of me talk in that strain as a protestant knowing that there is only one mediator between God and man. But I find it very hard to forgive people who fight their own and don't fight the enemy as hard.

COMM: The ~~entire basis~~ ^{lynch pin} of the strike was the assumption by Mr Paisley that the workers at the Ballylumford power station which supplies 3/5 of Ulster's electricity would join the strike. Here he made his biggest blunder.

COMM CONTD: So confident was he that the 520 workers would walk out, as they did in 1974, that the strike council issued this leaflet. It urged the men to join the Ulster Workers' Council and therefore the strike. What the leaflet did not say was that membership would cost a £1 fee. The men ^{did not take kindly} ~~were furious~~ to this.

~~On~~ On the eve of the strike-call they ~~was~~ ^{So a} voted to stay at work. ^A campaign of intimidation began in the power workers' home town of Larne. Jim Kirkwood is senior shop steward of the Electric ^{al} ~~Trade~~ Union and was in daily contact with the Ballylumford stewards.

KIRKWOOD SYNC

INT

What knowledge do you have of intimidation

KIRKWOOD

Just the reports the stewards have sent in that there has cars come up to the houses, people making signs at the window and driving off. Telephone calls in the night to say I hope you haven't booked any holidays this year. The pickets shouting remember you've got to work with us or you've got to travel through the estates at night, you know, just subtle remarks of intimidation.

INT

But widespread

KIRKWOOD

Very widespread

INT

And has ti frightened the men

KIRKWOOD

Yes, the men have been very frightened for their families especially the shift workers who may be out all night.

COMM: We managed to interview a power worker who had been threatened for staying at work. As a condition he insisted that we should not show his face and further more we should distort his voice.

MAN V/O

Well it was the wife that reported it to me. She had taken the telephone call that day and the person who called had said to the wife that I could expect a parcel but the wife had thought that both end sides had been cut up.

COMM

He told us how many of his colleagues among ^{the} 520 power workers at Ballylumford received threatening calls.

V/O

Well they have had telephone calls, they've had the knock at the door. They have had people stop them in the streets. Some have had their windows broke and some of them have been followed about the place when they were out in the car by other cars.

INT

If you had given us this interview in vision, what do you think would have happened to you?

V/O

Well, I think it would just be a case of being shot, it's as simple as that.

COMM

Although the work force was reduced to 2/3rds during the two week stoppage - the power station remained at full capacity.

PAISLEY

INT

This strike was called, Mr Paisley on two issues. One incidentally which seems to have been forgotten over the last days and that is the issue of a return to a government in Stormont. What has happened to that. Has that been left. Has that been forgotten?

PAISLEY

No it's not been forgotten, because that's the only way you can have security. The only way you'll have a proper security.

INT

But you haven't, you haven't

PAISLEY

The only way you'll get proper security in this country is to the people to look after security answerable to a local parliament.

COMM: WORLD IN ACTION discovered that Paisley himself wanted to remove the demand for a return to Stormont - before the strike began.

GORDON BURNS TO CAM

But by the eve of the strike Mr Paisley knew he'd backed a loser. He grudgingly admitted to his closest friends that Westminster would never surrender to the second of the demands the return of protestant rule. His only chance of success now was to harness the widespread emotional support in the country on the security issue and that alone. So at 1 o'clock in the morning on April 29th he made a last desperate bid to save the day. He made a phone call to see if the second of the demands could be struck from the advertisement to appear in the paper that morning but he was too late.

GORDON BURNS TO CAM (CONTD)

the news letter presses were already rolling

COMM: At midnight last Friday, Ian Paisley and the Action Council called off the strike.

At a press conference the following day a defeated Paisley was still claiming partial success. But the UDA paramilitary leader, Andy Tyrrie who was ~~at~~ ^{at} Paisley's ~~side~~ ^{side} ~~platform~~ ^{plans were} when the strike ~~was~~ announced was not on the platform.

PAISLEY SYNC

The strike has been successful in that it has established even by those most violently opposed to it, unanimity about the gravity of the security situation and the urgent necessity for dramatic and effective action.

GORDON BURNS

Mr Paisley can I remind you of a quote of yours at the end of 1975, when you referred to the UDA as an organisation whose members have been tried in the courts had pleaded or been found guilty of the most diabolical crimes, they've murdered protestants as well as Roman Catholics in the most sadistic and inhuman ways and was thought to intimidate peace people, who seemed to carry out their businesses in a proper manner. I'll ask you that in the light of the widespread intimidation in the

GORDON BURNS CONTD

course of this strike and indeed the deaths that occurred during the length of the strike whether you regret having got involved with the paramilitary.

PAISLEY

No I, I stand over that statement as the leaders of the UDA know Mr Tyrrie at the first press conference made it perfectly clear that he regretted what certain UDA members had done that it was his effort to try and alter the course of the movement and as far as we are concerned I happen to believe a person is innocent 'til he's proved guilty and I want to see who are tried in the courts who are for the crimes that have been committed during this strike and I am not prepared, I am not prepared to take any condemnation of any man until that man has run the course of British justice.

COMM: Tyrrie, who had been at the back of the hall with his bodyguard left the meeting separately, clearly letting Paisley the politician take the blame for the strike's failure. *He told with earlier.*
 "I can ditch the politicians whenever I want. We decided that this time they were going out in front. The only way they lose their job is by being made redundant. There's only one way I lose

COMM CONTD: my job - and that's a bullet in the head."

With the failure of the strike we understand that Sean MacBride, acting for the IRA is now ready to resume the peace negotiations.

He and Desmond Boal will soon take up the meetings that they hope will bring peace to Northern Ireland this summer.

GORDON TO CAMERAINT

The two mediators first met here one afternoon in March at Desmond Boal's home on the County Down coast near the fishing village of Arghglass.

They came here on three further occasions before Easter, so meeting Boal's one condition that all talks would take place North of the Border. Now that was a vitally symbolic gesture for it meant that any solution finally achieved after a permanent cease fire, would not have had it's origins in either Dublin or London, and we believe whatever the detail of that final solution, the Provisional IRA's ultimate aspiration of an All Ireland Republic would not be achieved and nor would the traditional Protestant link with Britain be kept. But the most historic step that from the outset the mediators were going to get the cease fire deal in writing. (Now no such document it is believed was drawn up at the clandestine talks between British Civil Servants and the IRA that brought about the short lived cease fire in 1975.

COMM

Boal and MacBride finally agreed a document over a long lunch at this building, UNESCO HQ, Paris - ^{in the week} ~~three days~~ after Easter. MacBride was chairing

COMM (CONT):

a meeting there. He had an urgent message for Boal, "the IRA side was close to accepting the ^{mediators'} ~~the~~ latest draft proposals." Boal ^{who was on} ~~out there~~ holiday in Tunisia ~~and~~ flew to Paris.

GORDON BURNS

After the Paris meeting the document was sent back to the Paramilitaries for scrutiny. Our sources tell us it was short, perhaps no more than a single page of clauses. The two mediators believed that agreement was just ten days away, that was the time it would take McBride to contact each member of the Provisional IRA's Army Council scattered in hideouts South of the Border. The task for Desmond Boal of contacting the Loyalists was easier, their leaders were more accessible.

COMM

During the ten days that the document was circulating South of the Border to the IRA - Ian Paisley decided on a strike.

The initiative was suspended. *All Desmond Boal and Sean MacBride could do was wait.*

GORDON BURNS

The failed strike proved that one million protestants will not be led by strong armed men, but the loyalist and IRA terrorist leaders have yet to prove in public the sincerity they seem to have shown in private to the mediators Boal

and McBride namely that after 7 years of blood letting there can never be a winner. We understand that Boal and McBride are both hopeful that a ceasefire can be achieved, if that happens their roles as mediators will end and an unprecedented public debate will follow. The ceasefire terms will be put to protestants and Catholics, but as Mr Paisley said two weeks ago in calling for a strike victory in the end it is the people who will decide.