



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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IRISH EMBASSY, LONDON.

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9 July 1987

PSS  
 AJS O'Mathúil  
 Councillor A.I.  
 A.I. Secretariat  
 Box.

Dear Assistant Secretary

A conversation with Alastair Logan, Solicitor to Paddy Armstrong of the Guildford Four.

I met Logan at a reception given by Robert Kee. Logan warmly welcomed the decision of the Irish Government to refuse to allow the Extradition Act to come into force on 1 December unless the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguires are all found innocent. I gave him the background, as I understood it, to this matter, and drew a distinction between the Motion of 18 June in the Seanad and the force of a Government decision. I also outlined in a general way some of the considerations which have informed Irish Government policy on these cases, stressing in particular our concern that some of the most potent supporters of those concerned, right wing Conservative politicians, object fundamentally to any interference, as they see it, from the Irish Government or Irish politicians, in a matter of "British justice". I pointed out to him the angry reaction in the previous Sunday Telegraph of Sir John Biggs-Davison in an article which also drew the broad conclusion that the Extradition Act would not proceed because of these cases; and that Biggs-Davison described the alleged intervention of the Irish Government in the Guildford case as "deplorable".

I enquired about Yvonne Fox's evidence in the Guildford case. He outlined a fairly horrific picture of internecine bickering between the families involved: some of these oppose Fox giving evidence to the police, even if this compromises Paul Hill; others, including Logan, oppose Fox giving evidence to the "fascist" police, even if that procedure ensured that the affidavit got to Douglas Hurd

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himself. Logan has, he said, a personal sworn statement by Fox but he is bound by the families of Gerry Conlon and Paddy Armstrong not to reveal its contents to anyone.

I suggested that all this may not perhaps best serve the best interests of Paul Hill and the other three concerned. Logan was in full but rather helpless agreement with this; and he was reasonable on that point. He was, however, semi-deranged on the point of pressurising Yvonne Fox into not giving the police a sworn affidavit: the police are, in his view, fascists, and he was impervious to the suggestion that, even if they are, they cannot easily interfere with a sworn affidavit. He said that Fox would, in the process of giving the affidavit, be subjected to horrors, including psychological torture, which would have the effect of distorting her mind and her evidence.

Starting with the fact that we all share the conviction that the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguires are innocent, I elaborated successive Irish Governments' policy over the years of carefully supplementing the pressure from British political and public figures; that we have been very careful not to dilute or dissolve support from figures like Biggs-Davison, Farr and others who oppose the Anglo-Irish Agreement, are to varying extents cool about the Republic, but are nevertheless most important in this matter; that we have slowly pushed out the barriers with the Home Office to the point - and still up to a point - that they take on board our concerns; that, for example, I will shortly discuss these matters in detail with important Home Office figures (Timothy Renton, the Minister of State and Edward Bickham, Douglas Hurd's Political Adviser, but I did not mention names) and he and others must understand that we cannot blow these contacts and our influence by, as it were, cashing our cheques in public after such meetings; and that we can through these contacts ensure that the Home Secretary himself is kept personally and fully up to date with developments.

Finally, I said that it is of course helpful for us too to be fully up to date on developments, and that, if he wished, he could let us have a silent copy of Yvonne Fox's statement to him about the

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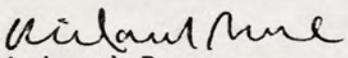
night of the bombing when, she alleged, he was only absent for 20 minutes. He said he would consider this and get in touch.

Comment

All in all, it seems that the Guildford Four are being very badly served by their erstwhile best friends. Logan is intelligent and probably capable, but his own personal obsessions - leaving aside their merit or lack of it - sound as though they are batsqueaks in proportion to what seems to be going on among the families and what, in effect, is preventing Yvonne Fox's evidence getting to the Home Secretary.

If and when Logan gets on again I will try to nudge him in the direction of one way or the other unblocking the process of getting to the Home Secretary what at present is the only possible new evidence which might perhaps get Hurd to rescind his decision and refer the Guildford case to the Court of Appeal. As we know, the only likely way in which, in turn, the Maguires case can be reopened is through progress on the Guildford case. If Logan and the others continue to block Fox's evidence, we might perhaps consider quietly activating some concerned but friendly public or political figure with a view to breaking the log-jam.

Yours sincerely

  
Richard Ryan  
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.