



P/A

cc Mr McAuley

Handwritten initials/signature

2 July 1993

TO: Mr Gibson

FROM: P J M Taggart

"UNFINISHED BUSINESS": CHANNEL 4 - MONDAY, 7 JUNE 1993

1. Your minute of 23 June refers.
2. I attach a draft analysis/critique of the fair employment aspects of the above programme. Mr McKenzie will be commenting to CCRU on the Ashton Centre and Mr Wood may have views on the use of footage of Ministers, the image of violence which is portrayed and on the journalistic style.
3. The bulk of the work on this has been done by Damian McAuley and in my absence on leave you may wish to discuss it with him.

Handwritten signature: P J M Taggart

P J M TAGGART



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
An Equal Opportunities Organisation

ANALYSIS/CRITIQUE OF "UNFINISHED BUSINESS" PROGRAMME SHOWN ON CHANNEL 4

Resume of the programme

This programme purports to be about discrimination against the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. It opens in the USA (Columbus, Ohio) with footage filmed at a MacBride hearing held in February 1992. The case for the MacBride Principles is set out with a selective resume of what the principles require - showing the thrust of the principles to be reasonable and beyond criticism.

A major, high profile, City Hall ball, organised by (among others) Eddie Haughey of Norbrook Laboratories, with guests including Caspar Weinberger, Princess Magaretta of Romania and other dignitaries, is used to portray the comfort of middle-class life in Northern Ireland (available to those in employment).

Two academics (Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, who were the authors of the 1988 Obair Report on Unemployment in West Belfast) make various points about the comfort of the middle-class, the nature of the decision making process in Northern Ireland, the political struggle, the lack of local democracy and political accountability, the effects of direct rule and the fact that whatever change there has been in Northern Ireland has been driven by international pressure.

Oliver Kearney, Secretary of "Equality: the campaign for Economic Equality" figures large in the programme. He comments on Catholic inequality and its persistence, is shown discussing employment inequality in the Northern Bank and various other major institutions and is seen distributing leaflets calling for the boycott of the Northern Bank. The only reference to the fair employment laws is in the context of their alleged ineffectiveness.

Several US local (council based) politicians and activists - Roger Weist, Pat O'Malley and Kathleen Whitford - are shown putting forward the MacBride case. Weist is Ohio State President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. O'Malley is a US lawyer and Cleveland Councilman. He is a member of Noraid and, in August 1992, led the March Tour to Northern Ireland. (Noraid is still registered as the agent of the Provisional IRA in the United States.)

The programme spends a good deal of time showing Richard Needham on PR activities (eg launching IRTU) and often shows him being boisterous and forthright in his own inimitable style. He is seen to be "talking-up" Northern Ireland. It also uses footage of the Prime Minister visiting IDB House and stating that the Government will not give in to violence. The academics comment that all investments are milked for publicity again and again by Government. It is alleged that the Northern Ireland Information Service was given massive resources to counter the publicity related to the 1981 hunger strikes and, since then, its PR activities (hugely resourced) have become very slick. The academics allege that the propoganda effort to show that Northern Ireland is a normal society has "enticed the militarists into the conflict".

Kearney refers to "structured and pervasive economic apartheid" as the keystone of the conflict. Much of the footage of the programme seeks to juxtapose Mr Needham's attempt to convey normality and prosperity (and middle-class comfort) with images of violence, bombs exploding and scenes of bomb damage. The academics refer to the need to "break the old structures" which, although painful, will be a beneficial process.

The programme ends with footage of an anniversary of internment rally with the following statement from Oliver Kearney:-

"If you are not prepared to support non-violent, moral economic sanctions in whatever form, either through the MacBride Principles campaign in the United States, through campaigns of boycott in Ireland and elsewhere to produce reform within this State - even at the risk of altering the political structures of the State - what, then, is your moral authority for condemning those who say there is no alternative except the use of physical force? Are you entitled to condemn them if you are not offering them an effective non-violent alternative?"

Comment

While there are few straight factual inaccuracies in the programme, there is one which should be noted. Pat O'Malley, testifying before a MacBride hearing, states that in 1989 Shorts was sold "by its Protestant/Loyalists owners" to Bombardier and in the two years since then the proportion of Catholics has risen from 5% to 12%. This is simply wrong. It is

estimated that in 1979, Shorts employed 5% Catholics. The company's affirmative action programme began several years before the sale to Bombardier and by 1991 they employed just over 12% Catholics.

Most of the criticisms that can be made of the programme relate to its lack of balance. For example:-

- (i) There is no attempt whatever to show the complexity of the issues being dealt with - most of the ills of Northern Ireland are portrayed as the result of the wilful actions of the British Government who are actively seeking to maintain the status quo.
- (ii) There is no reference whatever to the controversy surrounding the MacBride Principles campaign or the fact that it does not enjoy any widespread support in Northern Ireland from individuals or political parties nor that the only political party to support the campaign is Sinn Fein.
- (iii) There is no reference to the fact that the Ohio MacBride Bill (the hearings of which were featured in the programme) was in fact defeated in the Ohio Senate and did not become law.
- (iv) There is no acknowledgement whatever of the stringent requirements of the fair employment law in Northern Ireland or the fact that it is now widely accepted that the 1989 Act is working well.
- (v) The programme, while showing much of the results of violence, makes no mention of the perpetrators of the violence.

The clear message of the programme - both implicit and explicit - is that the problem of discrimination justifies both non-violent action and the use of violence. The quote from Kearney at the end of the programme at least implies that by not accepting the MacBride Principles the British Government forfeits its right to condemn those who resort to violence. The programme clearly set out only to criticise the British Government and to promote the political views and aims of a small minority in Northern Ireland.

22/9 PT 23/6/93



cc Mr McAleer
Mr McAuley
BF 29.6.93

Mr Taggart

23/6/93

"UNFINISHED BUSINESS": CHANNEL 4, MONDAY, 7 JUNE 1993

Please see the attached minute from Mr Quinn which seeks contributions towards a critique of the programme which has been sought by the Secretary of State. I should be grateful if you could put in hand the preparation of our contribution to that critique and let me see it please by, say, 29 June.

D GIBSON

23 June 1993



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An Equal Opportunities Organisation

cc: Mr Wood - B
Mr Watkins - B
Mr Corbett

From: Mr S Quinn
16 June 1993
To: Mr Gibson, DED
Mr McKenzie, DOE

"UNFINISHED BUSINESS": CHANNEL 4, MONDAY 7 JUNE 1993

1. PS/Secretary of State's 15 June reply to my 11 June submission (copied herewith to Mr McKenzie because of the Ashton Centre references) asked for "an analysis and detailed critique of the programme to be put in hand, with the aim of presenting this critique to the ITC and using it as a basis for refuting any who repeat the programme's inaccuracies".
2. The critique will focus more on the questions of balance, partiality, misrepresentation and omission and journalistic competence, though I recall one factual inaccuracy uttered by one of the US speakers (re the ownership of Shorts).
3. CCRU's interest in the programme relates to the Cultural Traditions Group's part-funding of it, and we are following up that aspect with the Community Relations Council.
4. Mr Wood has kindly agreed to co-ordinate and gloss the critique, and has suggested that contributions should assess how fair and accurate the programme was, and what necessary perspectives were omitted. He has asked for contributions to be with him by 2 July.

SQ1954

5. A tape of the programme is available from the Information Services.

[Signed SQ]

STEPHEN QUINN

SQ1954



4/90

cc Mr Watkins
Mr MacKenzie P/A
Mr Wood
Mr Taggart o/r
Mr McAuley JAK
Mr McAleer b/A

Mr Quinn - CCRU

"UNFINISHED BUSINESS": CHANNEL 4, MONDAY, 7 JUNE 1993

Your minute of 16 June sought contributions to an analysis and detailed critique of the above programme and I am attaching a paper which has been prepared in this Department.

This makes the point that there were few factual inaccuracies in the programme and the criticisms come down to lack of balance and journalistic style. As regards balance, the paper draws attention to the more obvious ones, added to which it would have been helpful to the viewer to know the background of each of the contributors eg that O'Malley is a member of Noraid. As regards journalistic style, Mr Wood is more expert, but the juxtaposition of a unique banquet (organised, incidentally, by a businessman who provides a lot of jobs in an area of high unemployment) and some of the undoubted difficulties of unemployed people in areas of disadvantage, was surely inexcusable.

Finally, you will recall me telling you that Don Anderson of the Northern Ireland office of the ITC had sought a meeting about the programme with Bob Cooper and Harry Goodman of the FEC. This duly took place and Anderson told Cooper that he had been asked by his London office for briefing on the programme (and, presumably, on local reaction to it). Apparently the ITC is expecting us to complain about the programme to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. I am aware that a decision has been taken not to do so (with which I agreed) but you, and Mr Wood, might like to reconsider in light of the above.

D GIBSON
6 July 1993



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An Equal Opportunities Organisation

ANALYSIS/CRITIQUE OF "UNFINISHED BUSINESS" PROGRAMME SHOWN ON CHANNEL 4

Resume of the programme

This programme purports to be about discrimination against the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. It opens in the USA (Columbus, Ohio) with footage filmed at a MacBride hearing held in February 1992. The case for the MacBride Principles is set out with a selective resume of what the principles require - showing the thrust of the principles to be reasonable and beyond criticism.

A major, high profile, City Hall ball, organised by (among others) Eddie Haughey of Norbrook Laboratories, with guests including Caspar Weinberger, Princess Magaretta of Romania and other dignitaries, is used to portray the comfort of middle-class life in Northern Ireland (available to those in employment).

Two academics (Bill Rolston and Mike Tomlinson, who were the authors of the 1988 O'Fair Report on Unemployment in West Belfast) make various points about the comfort of the middle-class, the nature of the decision making process in Northern Ireland, the political struggle, the lack of local democracy and political accountability, the effects of direct rule and the fact that whatever change there has been in Northern Ireland has been driven by international pressure.

Oliver Kearney, Secretary of "Equality: the campaign for Economic Equality" figures large in the programme. He comments on Catholic inequality and its persistence, is shown discussing employment inequality in the Northern Bank and various other major institutions and is seen distributing leaflets calling for the boycott of the Northern Bank. The only reference to the fair employment laws is in the context of their alleged ineffectiveness.

Several US local (council based) politicians and activists - Roger Weist, Pat O'Malley and Kathleen Whitford - are shown putting forward the MacBride case. Weist is Ohio State President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. O'Malley is a US lawyer and Cleveland Councilman. He is a member of Noraid and, in August 1992, led the March Tour to Northern Ireland. (Noraid is still registered as the agent of the Provisional IRA in the United States.)

The programme spends a good deal of time showing Richard Needham on PR activities (eg launching IRTU) and often shows him being boisterous and forthright in his own inimitable style. He is seen to be "talking-up" Northern Ireland. It also uses footage of the Prime Minister visiting IDB House and stating that the Government will not give in to violence. The academics comment that all investments are milked for publicity again and again by Government. It is alleged that the Northern Ireland Information Service was given massive resources to counter the publicity related to the 1981 hunger strikes and, since then, its PR activities (hugely resourced) have become very slick. The academics allege that the propoganda effort to show that Northern Ireland is a normal society has "enticed the militarists into the conflict".

Kearney refers to "structured and pervasive economic apartheid" as the keystone of the conflict. Much of the footage of the programme seeks to juxtapose Mr Needham's attempt to convey normality and prosperity (and middle-class comfort) with images of violence, bombs exploding and scenes of bomb damage. The academics refer to the need to "break the old structures" which, although painful, will be a beneficial process.

The programme ends with footage of an anniversary of internment rally with the following statement from Oliverly Kearney:-

"If you are not prepared to support non-violent, moral economic sanctions in whatever form, either through the MacBride Principles campaign in the United States, through campaigns of boycott in Ireland and elsewhere to produce reform within this State - even at the risk of altering the political structures of the State - what, then, is your moral authority for condemning those who say there is no alternative except the use of physical force? Are you entitled to condemn them if you are not offering them an effective non-violent alternative?"

Comment

While there are few straight factual inaccuracies in the programme, there is one which should be noted. Pat O'Malley, testifying before a MacBride hearing, states that in 1989 Shorts was sold "by its Protestant/Loyalists owners" to Bombardier and in the two years since then the proportion of Catholics has risen from 5% to 12%. This is simply wrong. It is

estimated that in 1979, Shorts employed 5% Catholics. The company's affirmative action programme began several years before the sale to Bombardier and by 1991 they employed just over 12% Catholics.

Most of the criticisms that can be made of the programme relate to its lack of balance. For example:-

- (i) There is no attempt whatever to show the complexity of the issues being dealt with - most of the ills of Northern Ireland are portrayed as the result of the wilful actions of the British Government who are actively seeking to maintain the status quo.
- (ii) There is no reference whatever to the controversy surrounding the MacBride Principles campaign or the fact that it does not enjoy any widespread support in Northern Ireland from individuals or political parties nor that the only political party to support the campaign is Sinn Fein.
- (iii) There is no reference to the fact that the Ohio MacBride Bill (the hearings of which were featured in the programme) was in fact defeated in the Ohio Senate and did not become law.
- (iv) There is no acknowledgement whatever of the stringent requirements of the fair employment law in Northern Ireland or the fact that it is now widely accepted that the 1989 Act is working well.
- (v) The programme, while showing much of the results of violence, makes no mention of the perpetrators of the violence.

The clear message of the programme - both implicit and explicit - is that the problem of discrimination justifies both non-violent action and the use of violence. The quote from Kearney at the end of the programme at least implies that by not accepting the MacBride Principles the British Government forfeits its right to condemn those who resort to violence. The programme clearly sets out only to criticise the British Government and to promote the political views and aims of a small minority in Northern Ireland.