

Monsignor Denis Faul 9/11/04

Where were you at the time of Internment?

In 1971 I was teaching in a grammar school, St Barter's (sp). I was up there for years but I was on holiday. I was applying for a place in Pomeroy which is in County Tyrone, and the Internment day was 9th August, which I think was a Monday, and on Wednesday after Mass a man came in to see me, a past pupil of mine, he was a young teacher and he said 'I was taken away to be interned and we were brutally ill-treated'. I said 'Where did this happen?' He said 'I think it was Ballykinder'. The British army stamped on them and kicked them around and put them into stress positions and treated them very, very badly. 'Oh, it happened to everybody', he said.

I got in touch with a colleague of mine, Fr Brian Brady in Belfast, and he'd had the same very bad reports from Belfast. So I went down to Belfast and we straight away got a number of priests together and we started recording the statements from all these people and eventually we formed a little group, the Association for Legal Justice... We got together some excellent men who worked very, very hard, set up a little office at the bottom of the Falls Road and [interviewed] everybody who was interrogated by the police or had been in and out. We gathered a terrible picture of ill-treatment over the next – well it went on for the next nine years. But then a few days went past and we were told by relatives that a number of people were missing. There was in particular a young man here, Paddy Joe Maclean, who was also a teacher and a good friend of mine and a very peaceful man. The relatives could get no trace of them.

His wife contacted you?

Yes, as far as I remember, the message came to me, probably from the wives – the relations and different ones - and we couldn't work out where these people were. We worked out eventually that there were about 10 - I think it was 12 - and there were 2 more later on, that were missing from different parts.

I went to Belfast every day and we were collaborating together to put together this information. It was most mysterious: these ten were missing. It began to get into the Irish news, the local papers a little bit about this but not very much. Eventually then after about 7 or 8 days we found these men had arrived back into the Crumlin Road prison, which was a remand prison in Belfast and we were able then to get the whole story. Some of our staff and workers got the whole story then – had to be 16th or 17th August 1971, we began to get the story. So by about the 21st, we had the whole story

How did you get the story?

We advertised and made it known public that we were taking statements. People came to Belfast and relatives got in touch with us from different parts...it was that little committee, a number of priests in Belfast. People came up to the Falls Road and saw the group and told them. The relatives were in a state of terror and they just went to

anyone to tell them. And we managed to assemble the material and find out that there was 10, I think, that were missing.

You were phoning the authorities?

Oh yes. But they would put you off. We did that, I did a lot of that. But they wouldn't tell you about it, they didn't seem to know themselves.

You rang up...

Yes. 'I'm looking for Sean McKenna, where is Sean McKenna? His mother or his wife is looking for him' (he was one of the ones from Newry and then there were two from Armagh). As you can see it was a rather confused situation, we were trying to gather a bit of information here, a bit of information there. We thought at first it was simply – since they had taken in 330 men and let out a good number of them all right, like my teacher friend who came to Mass. We thought it was just a bit of bureaucratic confusion, that these men would turn up somewhere.

Then they turned up and we found how they had been treated. Hooded, put in stress positions, and beaten up for seven days non-stop, day and night. We immediately recognised this as torture. We gathered up all the facts as best we could. Father Brady went to the ** (hotel). I also conveyed the information to Cardinal Conway but he had it already.

How did he get it?

He got it from Paddy Joe Maclean. As soon as Paddy Joe got back to the Crumlin Rd Prison, about 16th, 17 August, he wrote it all out and gave it to one of the prison officers who took it to Cardinal Conway. When I saw Conway he already had got it from Paddy Joe. He went over to see Mr [Edward] Heath. But I didn't know that.

We went to the Sunday Times Insight Team on 24, 25 August and we gave it all to them. We thought it was a great scoop. It never appeared.

You took written statements?

Oh yes, written out. Father Brady was a very methodical man, he had it all written out, dictated, written statements. I mean, *our* statements. We didn't have statements from the men who were still in prison at that stage. And later on in September we gave it to a man named Campbell, the same stuff. It never appeared.

Did they give you any reason?

No. And then John ***** came over in the first of November to see Austin Curry, a public representative. And then it appeared. Because Curry would have talked about it, would have proclaimed it. And then it was obvious to me that there was a D Notice. The army must have said 'Give us three months to apply these techniques, we'll get all the information about the IRA in every shape and form and we'll put an end to the

whole thing.’ I think there must have been a D Notice on that because the Insight Team were given it twice in August and September and didn’t publish it.

Did the Insight team not jump out of their seats when you told them what was happening? I would have thought this was a huge story for them?

No they took the story and said ‘This is a very serious’ and all that but they probably already knew that there was a D Notice on it. Didn’t tell us. But – then we understood then that there wouldn’t be any more of this, that this was ended. Yet there was two more in Sept, one was Shannon in Belfast, the other *** from ***** anyway. They also got the same treatment. Then there was all the other treatments: electric shock and all that. [Ted] Heath was denying them and they were saying it wasn’t happening but they were happening.

The minute Cardinal Conway got the information from Paddy Joe Maclean, he rang 10 Downing St to speak to Mr Heath. Perhaps in hindsight he should have published it but he didn’t want to because he was afraid of young men, joining the IRA – they would have joined in hordes if they heard of this. So he went over to Heath and Heath gave him a guarantee that it wouldn’t happen again. And it happened again, of course, in September. Two more.

Cardinal Conway then had to go away to some meeting in Rome – I don’t think he should have gone away but he was - there was two or three months when the worst of this was going on. I think there was a senate of bishops going on in September, 1971, went on till about the first of November. There was hell to pay here. He should have been here. Anyway, at the conference of bishops in Rome he gave all the information that he had to Cardinal Cook, Archbishop of New York and *he* went home and preached about it and embarrassed all the English there. All the swanky English out there and hostesses and all were very dismayed.

There was the famous broadcast was made by Alasdair Cook, *Letter from America* about how the little boy went to the baseball match to see babe Ruth and Babe Ruth didn’t hit a single run and the wee boy said ‘Say it didn’t happen!’ He was very disappointed. The Americans were very disappointed that their British friends were torturing people. Like the Gestapo.

Was the shock regarding Internment, or was it the treatment that had been doled out to the twelve suspects?

Both. A lot was down to the twelve. They were special and everybody knew they were special. The Dublin government were very anxious to get it. And they agreed... to take it to Strassbourg, almost immediately. There were other ill-treatments that we supplied to the Dublin government, too.

I saw these people when they came out of prison and they were just black from – chest and stomach was absolutely black. These were big strong men. ... We collected about 20 methods of phys torture.

The army would say that the twelve who were subjected to Interrogation in Depth were selected because they were the very top IRA suspects at the time...?

That was the tragedy of it. They were not the top men. They were nobodies. I mean, Paddy Joe Maclean is a very clever man but he was a complete pacifist, has been a pacifist all his life. Doesn't believe in violence. Sean **** was just a painter and a big talker. He died since as a result of his ill-treatment. They were low-grade people. God help them: they hadn't a clue. You can see their names in the book. That chap Michael **** who got the ill treatment, just a few years ago when Adams set off on the peace process, he didn't go with Adams, he went with one of the other groups, the Continuity or the Real IRA. The IRA kneecapped him. **** [name]. One of the torture victims they'd been preaching about all over the world. They proceeded to torture him!

A very interesting fact is that in the 70s and 80s, the IRA set up torture houses to interrogate suspect informers. There was one in Dundirk, one in Andersons' Town. And they got various boys, the rumour is that this man Scapaticci was the main torturer. A very bad boy. And fully they employed nearly all the RUC techniques. But the first thing they did was put a hood on you. I remember a very high up IRA man who was a suspect told me he was taken into this house in Andersons Town and they put a hood on him. Usually the prisoner was hooded. Straight away, sensory deprivation techniques. The first thing was to hood the man. I remember this man was telling me that he was in this house in Andersons Town and – they were going to kill him or something but they were interrogating him (he chucked himself out of the window). They hooded them! A favourite one was to run a bath, put your feet into it and run electric current through it. That was one of the ones we protested to the Heath government about in 1971! They imitated it. This was really despicable about the IRA: they imitated most of the tortures of the RUC after us protesting all over Europe and American about them.

The IRA made hay with the allegations of mistreatment, didn't they?

Oh yes. Recruits and money from America. It was wonderful [for them], you know. But the only way we could stop it was from publicity. The only way we could stop it was to write those books, at our own expense – well, we sold them for 50p.

What percentage of the 12 subjected to interrogation in depth really were involved in terrorism? Some of them, surely...?

I would say a minority of them - and none of them were high level. I mean Shivers was nobody. He's dead now. Paddy Joe Maclean was not. ***** is the fellow that was kneecapped afterwards, he wouldn't have... *****'s family would have been - I think Gerry Adams' mother was a *****. The Belfast men might have been involved. I'll say roughly, there's 12 there and 2 more. Out of the 12, I'd say about 5 were involved.

So that's under 50%?

But not only that. Of the 330 men they took in, the IRA themselves said that they only got about 12 that were involved. They were taken in if they were involved in Irish culture, if you were an Irish speaker, if you were a civil rights man. It was the police that were responsible for that.

The intelligence was inadequate?

Yes. The intelligence was very bad. And in a sectarian state, the RUC had a lot of grudges like Paisley's men. There were a lot of grudges against Catholics...the British didn't tend to understand that... No, the real IRA men, the really big IRA men are very quiet about it and if they meet the Army they say 'Oh, hello officer', you know. And they don't get involved in these punishment beatings.

How did you set about hunting the missing guys?

I was ringing the Northern Ireland office, the Home Affairs at that time. They were helpful enough most of the time but they didn't seem to know themselves

What did they tell you, then?

They'd talk to you, they'd say 'We'll try and find something out for you'. I must say they were polite enough. But when I started to publicise this stuff, they burst out in protest. One of them rang me up, said 'You're going to get to the newspapers!' I said 'Of course I'm going to the newspapers! These people have no protection, there's nobody speaking up for these people and they have got to have somebody speaking up for them and they are entitled to information about their nearest and dearest. What kind of state do you think you've got here?'

Did they try to stop you publishing?

No. ...The papers got it then in November and the Irish government took it up with the information that we gave them. A little later some of the men were released. Paddy Joe was interned for about 9 months! When they were released there was a Dublin psychiatrist who interviewed them to make estimations about how much they were damaged, he was one of the few university people who took any heed of us.

Did you get a fair understanding of what the five techniques actually entailed?

We used to always ask them...I'd say 'what was the [white] noise like?' and the nearest I got to it, they said 'It's like those coffee machines in Italy' - you know in Italy, this steam 'SHSHSHSH' noise. The noise was very powerful like gushing noise, the coffee machine was like that

Was Paddy Joe damaged by the experience, do you think?

No, he was a very cool customer. ...They didn't get any information [from him] - he had no information to give them anyway. There were great stories, 'oh they got guns

and dumps' and all that. Not a bit of it. Apart from the Belfast fellows. Nobody else had any information.

How counterproductive was this issue, do you think?

The British army was a bit tough but they got better, much better in the 1980s. Later on if you got stopped by the UDR, they'd make you get out of the car, take off your shoes and stockings and stand in the road and insult you in every way. Further down the road you'd meet the British army. They'd say 'Hello mate, are you going to your work? Oh, all right, mate.'

Some of the twelve ended up seriously psychologically damaged?

Oh, definitely. Sean *** was. **** Shivers was badly damaged, I knew him. They were sort of, they had this just, frightened uncertain look about them. You could see it in them, their faces and the way they talked. ***** came out of it - he and they were dedicated volunteers. They would come away from it because they were dedicated volunteers and they expected to be tortured. They were soldiers. ***** and his family had that tradition. McGuigan was badly damaged. I didn't know so many of them personally. Donnelly, the Derry boy, he came out of it all right. I think Daly would have said they were all damaged. I think it stirred Paddy Joe up a bit all right. It's hard to put in a nutshell. There'd been a fright...they had a scare. All those men had that, that scare was with them. You would look at them and see that there was something there that had happened to them, that had changed them irrevocably. This scare in the back of their minds, [they were] scared of it happening again, perhaps. Paddy Joe would have overcome this 99% but the others, especially McKenna and Shivers, that scare was really at the top of their mind. They were just scared people. I don't know what the psychological term for that is. They were terrified of that thing happening again. To be removed from your home at some hour in the morning, brought to an army barracks, moved around the country, hoods over their heads the whole time...

They would be cruel men because the RUC, in spite of the bad boys there, essentially they were dealing with their own, Irish people. Brits would be quite callous about the whole thing.

Various army people have argued that this was the application of Big Boys' Rules. Isn't there something in that?

Yes. But did you not hear about the Geneva Rules and the rules about torture? Or the UN rules about torture? We kicked up hell! And that was a very important point was the participation of doctors in this stuff. There were doctors there, examining these boys. And that's a horrible thing, doctors: 'how far can you go?' That's very bad. Any doctor walking in should have said 'Stop! Not allowed!' And there was a big tightening up in medical ethics because of what happened.

On a more current note, are you shocked to see the same sort of treatment being used in Iraq?

Yes, I'm very shocked. But I'm not surprised. What did shake me a very great deal was Guantanamo Bay. That really shocked me. They actually set it up so formally. Those poor devils in aeroplanes, tied up in chains and ropes, couldn't even go to the toilet, put on a plane for a 12 hour journey and putting it down in Cuba, then being carried around on those stretchers, two men leading them along. The Americans are crazy. That will haunt them for years. But they won't care. But they will care – eventually.

Did the Brits care in Northern Ireland, do you think?

They didn't like the bad publicity in America, the hunger strikes

Back to 1971: your main informants about this were the wives of the missing men?

It was when I went down to Belfast to see Father Brady and he brought it up: 'Some of these men are missing!' And then the wives were coming in to this little committee that we had set up, the priests, and we put it together, that there were men missing. I think it appeared in the Irish news that some men were missing.

Meanwhile Conway had been to see [Edward] Heath?

After about a week, they were put back into Crumlin Road prison. They would have arrived back there about 16th, 17th August, you know, and he got the message out to Cardinal Conway. He knew about it. He already had the information.

How did he react?

I was glad to see that he had the information. Conway wouldn't tell you what he was thinking. He'd want to hear what you thought... He was a cautious man but he really could have wrecked the Brits if he'd put it to the pulpit, said 'This is what's going on'. He should have done, in a way. He should have taken the leadership off the Provos. Hit the Provos *and* the Brits.

The IRA were canny in exploiting the issue, the way things played out?

Oh they were. And they're still at it! But then, we expect bad and illegal conduct from the outlaws but we don't expect it from the in-laws.

News of the incident must have created a huge stir?

Absolutely. Just like a bombshell to the Catholic community

The IRA are bad boys. But it doesn't do. Torture goes on and on. It never stops. And they *love* the hooded bit.

It is important, not just for the Irish but for the other countries, too. Guantanamo Bay – My god almighty! It mostly wrecked the rest of their lives. Scared. Uncertain. Shattered nerves. Fear.