



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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### What Peter Robinson once thought of the Sinn Fein/IRA man to whom he is politically shackled

On May 8th 2001, Peter Robinson moved a motion of no confidence in Martin McGuinness, the man with whom he presently jointly occupies the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Contrary to the normal use of the word 'Deputy' in this case it does not mean lesser authority or standing but rather the Deputy First Minister is of equal standing with the First Minister. Indeed, he must give his approval to any thing the First Minister seeks to do within his office or the First Minister cannot do it. Not one letter may be sent out by the First Minister without the approval of the Deputy First Minister.

This being so, it is inexplicable that anyone holding the views of Martin McGuinness that Peter Robinson expressed on May 8th 2001 could have supported a power-sharing coalition with Adams and McGuinness of Sinn Fein just six short years later and at the beginning of June 2008, have accepted the post of First Minister and yoked himself thereby to the man he had clearly labelled an instigator of many terrorist murders.

Such political somersaults are the result of putting political power and position before the truth of God and Christian principle.

I have added bold type in order to emphasis some of Mr. Robinson's statements.

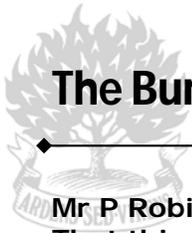
Ivan Foster.  
February 14th 2009.

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Northern Ireland Assembly, [Hansard Report](#), 8th May 2001.

#### No Confidence in Minister of Education

Mr Speaker: Order. A valid petition of concern in respect of the motion of no confidence in the Minister of Education was tabled on Thursday 3 May. Having checked the petition, I regard it as fulfilling the requirements of Standing Order 27 with regard to the vote that is to take place at the conclusion of the debate today. Any vote on the motion will be on a cross-community basis. Members wishing to inspect the petition of concern may obtain copies from the Business Office.



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**Mr P Robinson:** I beg to move

**That this Assembly has no confidence in the Minister of Education, Mr Martin McGuinness MP. I move the motion in the name of the Member for North Belfast, Nigel Dodds, and myself.**

At about eight o'clock on the morning of Thursday 27 January 1972 a car with five police officers was travelling along Creggan Road towards Rosemount RUC station. One terrorist gunman standing in an alleyway opened fire on it. About 40 or 50 yards further down the road two other terrorists, one with a Thompson sub-machine gun, also opened fire on the vehicle. The car was hit about 17 times. As a result of that terrorist attack two police officers were murdered and another injured. One of the men who was brutally murdered came from your constituency and mine, Mr Speaker. He was David John Montgomery, a 20-year-old Protestant from Cregagh. Peter Gilgunn, a 26-year-old married Roman Catholic RUC sergeant with a six-month-old son from Belcoo in County Fermanagh was murdered with him.

The cowards who carried out the attack were following the orders of the then adjutant of the so-called Derry brigade of the Provisional IRA. That Londonderry terrorist group has long been regarded as one of the most murderous and evil, even by the blood-stained, loathsome standards of that organisation. It has been responsible for dozens of murders of innocent people.

Adjutant, of course, is not the entry level for terrorist recruits. Before a command is given, recruits have to earn their bloody spurs. This adjutant rose through the ranks, and, according to newspaper reports, he did so with speed and determination, plying his terror trade with ruthlessness and fury. Again, it was reported in newspapers that, as a trigger man, he was responsible for the death of over 12 soldiers. However, security sources would put the figure much higher than that.

He was an officer in the IRA in Londonderry when hundreds of killings were ordered, and it was only the vigilance of the security forces, the ineptness of his own terrorist gunmen and bombers and the hand of God that reduced the tally.

He did not remain in this local command for long. He catapulted himself up the organisation structure, and eventually he became the terror group's chief of staff. He held that position from 1978 until 1982. During that period alone, the IRA, under his command, murdered 327 people, and he remains one of the seven members of the IRA's Army Council.

**A document was sent to my home recently, and I read it out in the House of Commons. The document outlines the present Army Council membership of the IRA. It indicates that the chief of staff is Thomas Murphy, and the assistant chief is Brian Keenan. The other members are Martin McGuinness, Gerard Adams, Martin Ferris, Patrick Doherty and Brian Gillen. The headquarters staff are as follows: the quartermaster is Kevin Agnew; the adjutant general is Martin Lynch; Bernard Fox is in charge of the engineering department; the director of education is James Monaghan; the director of finances is Patrick Thompson; the operations**



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**officer is Sean Hughes; the director of intelligence is Robert Storey; and Patrick Murphy and Kevin McBride are in charge of internal security - although I suspect that they will have to get new jobs after this. These are the people in charge of the Provisional IRA today. That information is on the record at the of Commons, and it is now on record in this House.**

In the early days of the Assembly, I made a reference in the Chamber to IRA/Sinn Féin. The now Minister of Education rose on a series of points of order and objected to any relationship between the IRA and Sinn Féin's being mentioned. He demanded that you force me to withdraw the reference, Mr Speaker. Happily you did not. In the light of the facts that are now available, the public will look at those weasel words, and **I hope that we will never again have the pretence that Sinn Féin and the IRA are anything other than synonymous. We should never again listen to the Minister of Education or his Colleagues dodge questions about the IRA by insisting that they do not speak for them.**

**According to that document, Mr McGuinness is a member of the Army Council of the IRA, which has sanctioned the murder of thousands of men, women and children in and outside Northern Ireland. Now, while still a member of the IRA's Army Council, Mr McGuinness is the Minister of Education with the responsibility for moulding the minds of thousands of young people.**

Last Friday another murder occurred in Belfast. Patrick Daly, a 38-year-old father of four, was shot in front of his partner and 12-year-old daughter. Apparently, up to 10 bullets were pumped into him, and he was left lying dead on the street. Again, the security forces understand that the IRA is responsible. This assassination will have been sanctioned by the IRA's Army Council. The Minister of Education combines his duties in this House with membership of an Army Council that makes decisions to murder human beings.

**Last week Mr McGuinness admitted that he was a leader of the IRA in 1972.** However, he did not tell us what his present position in that organisation is. He cannot build a convenient wall around one day in January 1972 and answer questions on his activities that day, while blocking out awkward questions about his role in the IRA before and afterwards. His action exemplifies the sheer double standards that he shares with his associates. They demand that the facts be unearthed about incidents that concern them, but he will refuse to give any details about his activity, and that of the IRA, in the periods before and after Bloody Sunday.

He says that he is giving evidence "to get to the truth of what happened on that day". However, he does not want to help anyone get to the truth of what happened at the hands of the IRA on all the other days. He demands to know the identity of soldiers involved in the city that day, but he will refuse to reveal the identities of his IRA colleagues who were in the city on that and other days.

He complained in the 'Belfast Telegraph' last Monday that the army is "trying to get away with murder". Surely that is a charge that could equally be made against him. He claims



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that he wants to give evidence so that he can help the families to come to terms with what has happened. However, he refuses to give evidence about his actions and the activities of his fellow travellers that would allow the families of thousands of IRA victims to come to terms with their loss and hardship.

Are Nationalists the only people entitled to inquiries? Are Unionist deaths and the deaths of members of the security forces less worthy of investigation? Are the families of Unionist victims and members of the security forces not entitled to the opportunity to ask questions and get answers about the circumstances of their loved ones' murder?

**Mr Speaker, I demand an inquiry into the activities of the Provisional IRA in the north-west of our Province during the period when the Minister of Education was in command of that terrorist organisation. People have the right to know the full details, not the selective propaganda droplets offered by Mr McGuinness and the IRA. The Attorney-General may have provided some limited immunity from prosecution to witnesses appearing before the Saville Inquiry, but an admission made outside the inquiry, at a press conference, is not covered by that shield. Therefore, there is no bar to a prosecution of Mr McGuinness. His admission at the press conference is evidence that can be used in a court of law.**

**In the light of the lengths that nations go to in order to ensure that those responsible for war crimes are tracked down and brought to justice, the victims of IRA atrocities demand action. The heinous crimes carried out by the IRA over the last 30 years rank alongside the worst of those brought before war crimes tribunals. In neither case should position or expediency protect those responsible for such grotesque murders. However, the Minister of Education has enjoyed protection from prosecution in Northern Ireland for many years. While the evidence piled up against him, the Establishment wanted him to stay out of prison, as they were negotiating a deal to buy off the IRA through him.**

**That is in spite of evidence from people such as Rose Hegarty, the mother of Frank Hegarty. Mr McGuinness lured her son back from England, gave her repeated assurances of her son's safety and informed her that while her son would have to attend a meeting across the border, "nothing would happen to Frank". Mr McGuinness even told her that he would bring him home himself. Frank Hegarty never returned home alive. He was shot and his body dumped by the roadside. The families of all those who are the victims of the IRA, under the leadership that Mr McGuinness now admits, should now take action against him in the courts.**

His statement and our motion drew different responses, and I want briefly to deal with some of them. Sinn Féin/ IRA's response to this motion was to describe it as a DUP pre-election stunt. Yet the timing was Sinn Féin/ IRA's, not ours. They determined when and how Mr McGuinness made his public statement. We simply reacted to that statement. If it is an election stunt, it is Sinn Féin/IRA's election stunt.

4.15 pm



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There were several strands of reaction to the Minister of Education's statement. First, there were those who welcomed what they described as "the Minister's open and frank confession". The truth is that it was not a confession, it was a boast. He wears his IRA leadership as a badge of honour. He gloats over his association with that terrorist organisation. He has not come clean. He is only providing a snippet to suit his propaganda purposes and aid the IRA's attempt at revisionism.

IRA demands for inquiries are not an attempt to find the facts; they are an attempt to re-write history and justify its campaign of murder and destruction. There was no glimpse of repentance in Mr McGuinness's statement. It was not accompanied by an apology - indeed, it did not even refer to the crimes that he might have committed in that organisation, nor did it list them. Critically, there was no commitment to leave behind his association with that terrorist organisation. His statement was entirely self-serving and cynical.

Secondly, there were those who considered that there was nothing new in the Education Minister's admitting holding a leadership role in the IRA. I will leave the difference between an allegation and an admission to the side, as I do not want to rest my case on that distinction. **I have long known of Mr McGuinness's position in the IRA and the activities in which he was engaged. I know of his continuing role in that organisation, and of the IRA's unbroken terrorist activity.**

**With that knowledge, I opposed, at the time of the referendum and ever since, any role for Mr McGuinness or his unrepentant associates in the Government of Northern Ireland.** No one by their vote would put in to Government someone in whom they had no confidence. No one would set up a Government in which it was an obligation to provide places for people they considered completely unfit to hold office. On that basis I must conclude that the Ulster Unionist Party either knew about Mr McGuinness's IRA association but considered that in spite of his record and previous relationship with the IRA, he and his Sinn Féin/IRA colleagues were suitable candidates for ministerial office and had confidence in them - except, it seems, at election times - or that the Members on the UUP Benches did not know, or were uncertain, of the nature and extent of the relationship that Sinn Féin has with terrorism.

It may be hard to understand, but if there is a change of heart, here is an opportunity to vote accordingly. We all face the question -

Mr Speaker: I must ask the Member to bring his remarks to a close.

Mr P Robinson: **Is our society going to turn a blind eye to the activities of the "Bogside butcher"? Are we going to continue with this unseemly and immoral sham? This House can decide whether it has confidence in Mr McGuinness - I do not.**