



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Some items of interest from “The Burning Bush” of August 1988

As already stated, this year will bring its witness to an end. I plan to discontinue publication from the end of February 2007 which will mark the end of our 37th year of publishing.

During this final year, I hope to reprint some items of interest which will possibly bring back memories of God’s mercies in the past and help to inform younger readers of events that have now passed into history.

*The Editor.*

#### **“A PROTESTANT A DAY” IRA SLAUGHTER**

- \* *Father, Mother and 6 year old son murdered by ‘mistake’.*
- \* *Soldier killed in London.*
- \* *UDR L/Corp. murdered in front of wife and child in Belfast.*
- \* *RUC man murdered in Lisburn.*
- \* *UDR man murdered near Cookstown.*
- \* *Two Protestant workmen gunned down in Belleek.*

IRA bombers ended a family’s holiday trip to the USA in a horrifying massacre. Mr. Robert Hanna, his wife Maureen and young son David were killed when terrorists detonated a massive bomb beside the road at Killeen, Newry on July 23rd.

#### **The Real Target**

It is believed that a judge, Mr. Justice Ian Higgins, who, it appears, travelled on the same plane as the Hannas on their return from the USA, was the IRA’s intended target. It has been reported that the judge sometimes uses a vehicle similar to the one in which the Hannas were travelling when they were murdered.

This vile crime signalled a new onslaught by the IRA. A bomb smuggled into a virtually un-guarded barracks in London killed a soldier, L/Corp. Michael Robbins, on Monday 1st August.

On Tuesday 2nd August, a 3 vehicle UDR patrol was attacked outside Dungannon and six members slightly injured. The same day in Belfast a UDR man, L/Corp. Roy Butler was gunned down while shopping with his wife and child. He was repeatedly shot in the head by a gunman. Eight miles away in Lisburn, a RUC detective, 45 year old John Warnock, a single man, was killed when a bomb exploded beneath his car just after he had left the police station. The next day, another UDR man was murdered. He was Raymond McNichol, a married man with one child. He was shot a short distance away from the previous day’s bombing. On Thursday 4th, two Protestant workmen, Mr. William Hassard and Mr. Fred Love were gunned down on their way home from carrying out repairs to Belleek RUC station. The IRA are now killing at the rate of “ONE PROTESTANT PER DAY”.



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Sorry

While the IRA was apologising for the Hanna killing another of their devices was found in the grounds of Kilrea Presbyterian church. Sunday School children passed within a few feet of the bomb. Had they touched it another horrific massacre would have occurred. All told the IRA have 'apologised' for 18 killings, mostly of Protestants, in the last nine months. But for God's mercy it would be a much higher figure.

### **HANNA MURDER . . . A MAJOR SECURITY LAPSE!!**

**Shortly after the IRA bombing of the Hanna family, a member of the security forces rang Rev. Ivan Foster to give some unreported details of the incident. It was fairly obvious that the informant was expressing the anger felt amongst his colleagues at what was considered a totally avoidable killing. The caller plainly stated that the RUC has tried to dissuade VIPs from using this border crossing because of the possibility of just such an event as that which occurred on Saturday. He also gave the name of Judge Higgins and stated that it was considered in security circles that he was the intended victim.**

#### **Press Contacted**

Rev. Foster immediately contacted Downtown Radio with a statement. The information was greeted with a degree of scepticism. However, some time later, after contacting Judge Higgins, they began to carry the story.

#### **New Dimension**

The disclosure that a judge was the IRA target brought new considerations into the event. The question of how the IRA was able to plant the bomb in the shadow of the army observation towers was now supplemented by two more queries.

- 1. HOW DID THE IRA KNOW THAT THE JUDGE WAS TRAVELLING ON THAT ROAD?**
- 2. WHY WAS THE JUDGE TRAVELLING BY THAT ROUTE AFTER THE KILLING OF LORD JUSTICE GIBSON AND HIS WIFE AT VIRTUALLY THE SAME SPOT FOURTEEN MONTHS PREVIOUSLY?**

#### **Statement**

In his statement to the press, Ivan Foster said, "The foul murder of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hanna and their young son David brings home to us all the tragedy of our Province. No



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citizen is safe in Tom King's (the then Secretary of State for NI) Ulster.

It is futile to condemn the IRA. Such an organization is beyond the effect of public condemnation mainly because the Church to which its members belong is neither consistent nor honest in its attitude toward the IRA. It speaks of them as murderers one day and the next gives them the succour of its ordinances or seeks to justify why young men from its community take up the gun against the State. Public outrage should be directed against those responsible for security policy in our Province.

No section of the roadway is supposedly better guarded than this border crossing. Yet the IRA was able to engage in the not easily concealed act of planting a 1000lbs bomb. Security in Ulster is a bluff and the ordinary citizens are the victims of that bluff.

The sooner the IRA is utterly destroyed the sooner we will all begin to enjoy once more the full ambit of liberty.

### Cromwell

Oliver Cromwell's motto, "Pax Quaeritur Bello"....."Peace Through War", is a guide to the administrators of Ulster today. War must be declared and directed against the IRA, irrespective of the reaction of the republican community or the Roman Catholic church."

Little of the statement was carried. That in itself is a comment on the advances that the ecumenical stupor has made in the world of journalism.

Prominence was given to a plea by the Church of Ireland minister of Hillsborough. As the Hanna family minister he might have felt it his duty to call for the forgiving of the murderers. It is the ecumenical thing to do in such circumstances. IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

Repentance must precede forgiveness. True repentance is manifested by a 'grief for sin, hatred of sin and a turning from sin unto God, with a full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.' Paterson on Q. 87 of the Shorter Catechism.

The lack of that repentance on the part of the IRA and therefore the utter folly and blasphemy of granting them forgiveness will be demonstrated by the next, unfortunately not too distant, atrocity.