



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

“The truth will out”



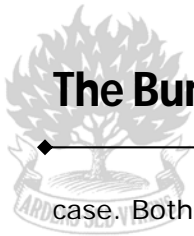
For the Christian living in Northern Ireland, one of the most difficult things to do is to keep a hold upon reality. “Go with the flow” is a modern idiom which more or less means be conformed to the tide of opinion that is currently running. Of course, that is the very thing a Christian must not do. We are forbidden to ape the world. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God, Romans 12:2. Consequently, when all around are changing and altering their thinking to accommodate the latest trends, the Christian finds himself isolated and unsupported. When one tries to evaluate the present developments in church and state in the light of God’s Word, one arrives at conclusions that are far removed from the present accepted thinking. However, let every believer be confident in this: “The foundation of God standeth sure” (2 Timothy 2:19). Time will prove that expediency is never the right course to follow. Most politicians and religious leaders have gone along with the Belfast Agreement and its inherent acceptance of IRA terrorists, without the semblance of genuine repentance or remorse for their murderous deeds, into the political and social structures of society. That cannot be right and the Christian must at all costs resist and reject such an acceptance. Time will yet reveal the gross error in such thinking. Maybe that time is drawing near. A review of a new book on Martin McGuinness may even signal a change in thinking, at least among some.

“McGuinness led IRA at time of Enniskillen bomb.” So read the headline of an article in The Guardian. The following is taken from that review.

“A book out today will shake the Northern Ireland peace process with revelations about Sinn Fein chief negotiator Martin McGuinness’s alleged role as an IRA leader linked to some of the worst terrorist atrocities in the past 30 years.

Mr McGuinness has reacted angrily to the unauthorised biography, *Martin McGuinness: From Guns to Government*, calling it “a load of rubbish”. The book charts the Mid-Ulster MP and Stormont education minister’s rise within the Provisionals, claiming he joined as a 19-year-old in 1970 and was head of the powerful army council in 1987 when the Remembrance Day bomb killed 11 people in Enniskillen.

Husband and wife writers, Liam Clarke, the Sunday Times Northern Ireland editor, and Kathryn Johnston trace Mr McGuinness’s contacts with MI5 and MI6 from the early 1970s to the 1990s, and his part in overseas weapons-buying missions to Libya, Italy and the United States. They claim he was behind the 1970s letter bomb campaign, ordering IRA explosives officer Shane Paul O’Doherty, who perfected the devices, to go to London and send them to prominent people. O’Doherty received 30 life sentences at the Old Bailey in 1976. They also allege Mr McGuinness supervised an operation in March 1987 in Derry, where IRA members shot dead a prison college lecturer, Leslie Jarvis, and used his body to lure two policemen, Austin Wilson and John Bennison, to a booby trap bomb in his brief-



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case. Both died instantly.

In another damaging claim, the authors say Mr McGuinness had intended to create mayhem on Bloody Sunday with a series of bomb attacks throughout Derry, but pulled back when he realised how many soldiers had been sent to the city. Liam O'Comain, the Derry organiser of the Official IRA, is quoted as saying: "I am convinced he is a very ruthless man. Martin wasn't political, he was a gunman who had a primitive philosophy about the soldiers: send them home in boxes." However, Mr McGuinness dismissed the biography as an attempt to return to the "failed policy of demonising the Sinn Fein leadership". He said: "My focus and the focus of the Sinn Fein leadership is on building peace in Ireland, not responding to this nonsense."

Earlier this year, Mr McGuinness admitted he had been second-in-command of the Derry IRA on the day paratroopers shot dead 14 unarmed men on a civil rights march on January 30, 1972 - his first formal reference to his paramilitary history. He is to give evidence to Lord Saville's inquiry into Bloody Sunday, but has insisted he ordered IRA members not to attack soldiers so that the march would pass off peacefully.

But Mr Clarke and Ms Johnston claim he distributed blast bombs to eight members of the IRA youth wing, together with a list of targets which included the historic Guildhall where the Saville tribunal currently sits. When Mr McGuinness saw the huge deployment of troops, he is said to have ordered the teenagers to return their bombs to the garage where they were stored.

Mr McGuinness refused to be interviewed for the book, and in August had issued a press release urging republicans to withhold their cooperation from the authors.

While security sources have long hinted at Mr McGuinness's IRA record, publication of a comprehensive account in the first biography on the Sinn Fein leader comes at a sensitive time.

Details of terrorist links and clandestine talks with the security services will reinforce unionist fears that they have been double-crossed. Although the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, has re-entered the power-sharing government with Sinn Fein, dissent within his bitterly split party is strong.