



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Are liberals waking up to Republican duplicity

The author of this article which we copied from the 'Belfast Newsletter' of 25th November, is, I believe, a man of 'liberal views'. I don't think that I misrepresent him when I say that. He would not be identified as one from the 'right' in the political field here in Northern Ireland. There are indications within the article of Mr Ringland's preference for the 'liberal' understanding of problems that have beset our Province. For example he says: 'It should also be borne in mind that the British government genuinely wants the people of this Island to live peacefully together.'

I hold no such understanding of the British government's objective! Whether we live in peace is of no real consequence to London. Rather, I believe that shoving us under a 'United Ireland' and out of its hair, is its real intent. Whether that results in peace or the slaughter of the Unionist population is of no concern to Westminster.

That was made evident in London's political attitude that, in truth, tolerated IRA terrorism for some thirty-odd years when 'mass murder' was largely ignored!

Trevor Ringland's critique of the outworking of the "Belfast Agreement' of 1998, which forms the basis of both the ill-fated Ulster Unionist/SDLP power-sharing executive and the present power-sharing 'carbuncle' in Stormont, is all the more interesting.

He cannot be accused of being a loyalist fanatic. Rather he has been a supporter of the power-sharing principle.

However, this article highlights that he is beginning to see through the falsity of the whole 'Belfast Agreement' and its compromise with the terrorists whose assent was needed for any power-sharing arrangement to even get off the ground.

It appears to be dawning on the 'pro-Belfast Agreement camp' that, as it was with Hitler's duplicity in secretly rearming pre-war Germany, the Republican terrorists here in Northern Ireland, with the aid of Nationalist politicians, have safeguarded their position in politics and are bent on 'sterilising' their terrorist crimes!

How late in the day is this awakening to the evil deceitfulness of Sinn Fein and their terrorist cronies!

Note: highlighting of significant statements is mine

Trevor Ringland: Ignoring mass murder is not how 1998 deal was sold to us – if it was, it would have failed

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's interim report on the 'legacy' of Northern Ireland's past gives the impression its members listened, but did not hear.

By Trevor Ringland Wednesday, 25th November 2020,

Its dismissal of the government's revised plans, and promotion of the considerably discredited Stormont House Agreement, will encourage those who shout the loudest about the past – but not the majority of victims of terrorism.

The government's proposals actually have the potential to restore balance and faith in the investigation of past crimes through the existing criminal and civil justice system.



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If the system is properly resourced and motivated, it would be able to start almost immediately, carrying out reviews and working with families on an assessment of whether a prosecution or civil action was realistic for each case. The only drawback of following this straightforward structure comes from competing political interests with regard to legacy.

In particular, republicans see an opportunity to sanitise the crimes of the IRA and portray the state as the main aggressor during the Troubles.

In order to preserve that movement's involvement in the political process, we've seen political interference in existing and effective truth and justice mechanisms, a lack of proper compensation for innocent victims, reconciliation undermined, human rights abused and a lack of balance.

That is the real scandal as regards 'legacy'.

If the 1998 agreement had been sold on the basis that most murders would have to be ignored, I doubt it would have received majority support from across the community. However, that seems to be what has been asked of us, not directly, but by obfuscation.

The result could well be a missed opportunity for genuine reconciliation and the deepening of hatreds that otherwise could have been eased.

It remains the case that over 700 murders of members of the security forces are unsolved. Most democracies prioritise the investigation of such crimes. And they were crimes!

The perpetrators would try to argue justification saying that they were politically-motivated but such politics was malign and deeply flawed.

There is too much tolerance of those still wedded to the use of violence and sentencing for those caught and convicted should reflect a more serious approach.

I am part of the community on this Island that believes the use of violence outside the law to promote a constitutional preference was wrong, totally unjustified, and unnecessary. This view was upheld by a majority during the worst years of terrorism.

To quote the late Maurice Hayes, "there was nothing achieved through violence that could not otherwise have been achieved through peaceful means".

His words apply to events 100 years ago, as much as to more recent times.

In many respects we are an Island of unnecessary conflicts.

The report cites various values, like reconciliation, that it claims were enshrined in the Stormont House Agreement. You can see far better examples of reconciliation every day in Northern Ireland.

Indeed, the real help that people need to support such efforts from all our political parties is constructive politics based on making this place work socially and economically for all of us.

It should also be borne in mind that the British government genuinely wants the people of this Island to live peacefully together.



19/05/98: David Trimble, U2 frontman Bono, and John Hume on stage at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast to promote a YES vote in the referendum



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So it is up to those of us who share it, even if we remain constitutionally apart, to determine what sort of future we want for ourselves and our children.

Allowing a twisted narrative to be promoted that justifies the murder of your fellow Irish, who also happen to be British, is no basis for a prosperous future, and nor is their demonisation by too many who should know better.

There is much room to improve how we all offer constructive leadership towards a genuinely shared future.

With a real commitment to building a shared homeplace, as well as acceptance by local political parties and the two governments of things they wish "had been done differently or not at all", we would have a more solid basis on which to build our future.

We would also then be in a better position to decide, after each review process, whether a prosecution was necessary or not and to have a wider discussion about 'legacy' as to also what might be best for our children's futures.

The common saying that "it was the final straw that broke the camel's back" should be borne in mind. The remarkable tolerance and grace shown by the innocent victims of the 'Troubles' has been taken for granted by the Governments and others, and so I would caution against the addition of any further 'straws'.

Instead I suggest they should listen to those that can help remove some.