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## Opinion

### Let's not speak of how the media and Provos collude

Thursday, January 25, 2007

Rewriting history is what failed terrorists always do, says Kevin Myers

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I have had some revolting experiences in my life before, but few to compare with hearing the murderers and torturers of Sinn Fein-IRA denounce the "human rights abuses" by the RUC. To listen to the man who was in charge at the time of the abduction, murder and secret burial of the widow and mother of 10, Jean McConville, condemn the RUC for collusion is surely the most nauseating banquet of humbug and cant that the peace process has served up to us so far.

Martin McGuinness, to be sure, had nothing to do with Jean McConville's death, but he is a self-confessed leader of the IRA. So how is it possible that on the One O'Clock News on RTE, Sean O'Rourke could have interviewed him about allegations of RUC collusion with UVF killers without even once mentioning this fact? Instead, he was treated as if he and Sinn Fein had spent the past decades peacefully campaigning for police reform. The rewriting of history proceeds apace: Provisional Sinn Fein, apparently, was actually a civil rights organisation which merely sought justice for the nationalist peoples of the north. And if anyone is going to challenge that fiction, it's apparently not going to happen on RTE radio.

Now it is true that late in the interview, Sean O'Rourke did point out to Martin McGuinness that the alleged collusion between UVF men and RUC officers occurred during an IRA campaign. But he didn't even once advert to the known truth that a primary engine for that IRA campaign was his guest of honour, the fine fellow denouncing the RUC.

So let us consider the activities of Martin McGuinness, police reformer. I do not know if he was personally involved in the murder of two police officers - Peter Gilgunn, a 26-year-old Catholic, and David Montgomery, a 20-year-old Protestant - in Derry, in January 1972. But we do know from the Saville enquiry that he was second in command of the IRA in Derry at the time, so he cannot be innocent of all legal and moral responsibility for their deaths.

Moreover, within two weeks, he was promoted to be in charge of the IRA in the city - at around the same time as a Catholic bus driver and off-duty UDR man, Thomas Callaghan, was abducted from his vehicle in Derry, bound and gagged, and then murdered by the IRA.

No doubt poor Thomas Callaghan was shot as part of the Sinn Fein campaign for policing reform.

We might ask the families of RUC constables David Dorset and Mervyn Wilson whether they were murdered as part of that same campaign for police reform. They were certainly re-formed, which is usually what happens to human bodies when they are blown up, as these two young men were, by an IRA bomb in January 1973.

As the IRA's commanding officer at the time, it is, I suppose just about possible that Martin McGuinness knew nothing whatever about this operation, and that when he heard about it on the news he cried: "What. Two peelers dead? Now how the flip did that happen?" But do you know, I somehow doubt it.

And maybe as A Concerned Citizen Seeking Better Policing, he was appalled and amazed at the killings of RUC Constable William Baggley and his daughter, RUC Constable Linda Baggley, who were murdered within 100 yards of another in Derry City, but 30 months apart, in the mid 70s. However, if he was, he has kept his views to himself.

Now, I know nothing whatever about the activities of RUC Special Branch. No doubt they were murky indeed - but not nearly as murky as the deeds of the Provisional IRA, which was alone responsible for the deaths of almost 50% of the people killed in the Troubles.

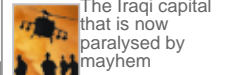
Members of the RUC were directly responsible for 1.4% deaths, and I'm certainly prepared to concede that some collusion probably increases that proportion, but not very much, for most loyalist paramilitary murders were of innocent Catholics, and no collusion was required to kill these poor wretches.

However, I'm more than ready to have my mind changed. So let's hear it all. Let's hear how many Special Branch and MI5 agents were allowed to remain as active loyalist terrorists. And let's hear about the last days and hours of the 50 or so alleged informers murdered by the IRA.

And then, let's hear how many of their interrogators and executioners were also working for the British. Scapatucci and Donaldson we know about: but who else? Half the army council, probably. And who knows? Maybe Martin McGuinness was not just a police reformer, but a police informer, too. Then let's hear about

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Bloody Friday, and Jean McConville and Patsy Gillespie, Ireland's first, though involuntary, suicide bomber, and all those other atrocities that their authors are never confronted with on RTE and the BBC, even as they are so freely denouncing the RUC.

Rewriting history is the first thing that failed terrorists have always done whenever they look back at their failed and bloody campaigns. They turn their banquets of murder and depravity into peaceful crusades for justice. It is up to journalists not to allow such historical fictions to prevail.

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