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Some haven't gone away, you know



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Gregory Campbell was part of a delegation which recently met the PSNI Chief Constable, Hugh Orde, to discuss the brutal murder of Paul Quinn in Monaghan, and he also sought an urgent meeting with the Independent Monitoring Commission.

Paul Quinn came from a village I know very well and was buried in the graveyard near St. Patrick's Church in Cullyhanna, where I have often had occasion to stand in prayer.

Even during the heights of the Troubles, South Armagh republicanism was of a 'dissident' nature –“ locals casting a cold eye on Belfast and Dublin –“ and that feeling of insularity and isolation still pervades the locality.

Former Sinn Fein Councillor Jim McAllister summed it up for me when he wrote: "I do not agree with Sinn Féin, but I am not a 'dissident' republican. I am a republican with a different viewpoint, to which I am entitled."

Perversely, those different viewpoints give Gerry Adams a kind of detached moral high ground, from which he can say that "I do not believe that there was any republican involvement in this murder. This murder is in our view linked to fuel smuggling involving criminals." Gerry is reminding the South Armagh 'different viewpoint' rump that 'real' republicans would not stoop to such brutality.

It appears that virtually every bone in Paul Quinn's body was broken as he was bludgeoned to death by iron bars and pick-axe handles and a number of his friends, who had been abducted as part of the plan, were forced to listen to him, begging for his life. They were even taunted about it; one assailant shouted: "Can you hear your friend squealing?" Jim McAllister said that "Paul wasn't a man to bow the head or take instructions, and in this area you've got to do what you're told or shut up."

Therein lies the real truth of the matter –“ having spent 35 years ostensibly freeing themselves from British Army rule, South Armagh has not achieved the kind of freedom where alternative vices are heard

or tolerated.

McAllister adds: "There has been a backlash in the community. I think there is an element of fatalism setting in among young men and they don't see what direction politics is going. There is anger."

The fact remains that 10 psychopaths who obviously enjoy their 'work' are still swaggering in the Armagh/Monaghan border and may kill again.

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