

Ex-British agents 'amazed' by findings of bombings inquiry

Sunday, April 08, 2007 - By Colm Heatley

Two former British intelligence agents whose information led to a re-examination of the 1974 Dublin-Monaghan bombings said they were "amazed" the inquiry by senior counsel Paddy McEntee did not find evidence of collusion in the Garda investigation into the atrocities.

John Weir, a convicted loyalist killer and former RUC man, and Fred Holroyd, a former British Army intelligence service captain, have independently alleged the attacks were carried out with the collusion of the British government.

They were not interviewed by McEntee.

McEntee forwarded both men copies of his inquiry into the Garda handling of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings weeks before it was made public.

The pair were shown aspects of it which related to their past evidence.

Both men have consistently alleged that the bombings, which claimed 33 lives, were organised and executed by senior members of the British establishment and that they had personal and regular contact with some of those involved.

It was primarily their allegations which led to calls for a re-examination of the attacks in the early 1990s.

Weir, a former RUC man, was convicted of the sectarian murder of Catholic shopkeeper William Strathearn in 1977 in Ballymena, Co Antrim.

He worked with the Glennane gang, an Armagh-based loyalist militia controlled by the British Army, which a joint Oireachtas report, made public last year, said was responsible for dozens of sectarian murders in the Republic in the early 1970s.

Weir said: "I understand Paddy McEntee's report was specifically focused on the Garda investigation into the bombings, but if you want to get to the truth you have to look at who ordered them, who planned them, who gave them the go-ahead."

"He forwarded a copy of the report to the Irish embassy where I live and I told him a number of 'facts' he had included about me were totally wrong.

"I have evidence that the security forces in Northern Ireland knew in advance of the Dublin-Monaghan bombings, and they were carried out by loyalists working for the British and were planned by the British. I have names and dates, and all of that information, and I have absolutely no reason to lie.

"But to get to the truth you have to look much higher than the people, the loyalists who carried them out - this goes to the top of the British establishment."

Among those who Weir says was responsible for ensuring the attack went ahead was the late Robin 'The Jackal' Jackson, a notorious Portadown-based UVF leader, and another man, a UDR member, who was also employed by the British intelligence services.

Weir said he offered McEntee the chance to interview him when he was in Dublin almost three years ago, but McEntee refused the opportunity.

"I am sure I would have had information that would have been useful to him," he said.

Fellow whistleblower Fred Holroyd, a former British Army intelligence captain, told The Sunday Business Post, he was "fed up giving information to inquiries that didn't look in the real direction".

"With the Dublin-Monaghan bomb I can remember how it was talked about beforehand, and how it was common knowledge in certain intelligence sections of the British Army that the attack was going to take place."

Both men said they would co-operate with any future inquiry into the Dublin-Monaghan bombings.

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