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## Surely after 10 years we deserve some answers?

Sunday, 10 August 2008

Ten years on and the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth has yet to be told about the Omagh bombing.

We have either heard or read nearly every facet of grief arising out of the tragedy from the man who lost three generations of his family to the woman who died with her twins still to be born.

Perhaps we haven't heard as much about the young Spanish students who lost their lives. but the hurt felt by their parents and friends can be imagined by most of us, if not by the bombers and their neanderthal associates who run the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA.

For each bereaved family there are different individual dimensions to the tragedy, different fateful or coincidental features which tell the individual tale about their loved one and why they were there that day to be obliterated by the cruel bombers.

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But there is one common desire that each family shares and that is to see the conviction of the principals who planned and carried out the bombing who so far have danced around the security apparatus on both sides of the border.

Are the perpetrators so brilliantly crafty or clever or is the absence of convictions and even prosecutions the cost of preserving the dark secrets concealed in the files of the Garda and MI5?

For it is they who have to answer the allegations that clear information Omagh was being targeted by the Real IRA weren't transmitted to the RUC or why suspicions that the RIRA was looking for a car for a bombing in Northern Ireland wasn't conveyed to the Special Branch in Belfast. Was Omagh the horribly miscalculated cost of keeping bombs away from London? Relatives understandably directed their ire at the RUC in the aftermath of the publication of Dame Nuala O'Loan's critical findings into the Omagh bombing investigation in December 2001.

Ronnie Flanagan, the then Chief Constable, described her report as one littered with "factual inaccuracies, unwarranted assumptions and misunderstandings", but a lot of the mud she and her investigators dished out stuck to the RUC to the delight of many.

In the last two years the Omagh relatives support group has begun to clamour for a full cross border public enquiry to ventilate fully for the first time all the pieces of intelligence information relevant to the planning of the bombing compiled on both sides of the border and in London.

Our politicians and our toothless Policing Board have yet to make that a priority on their respective agendas.

But until they do and the whole truth about what each of the intelligence and security agencies knew before the attack is revealed, suspicions about a 'cover up' by those then in high security and political positions on both sides of the border will persist.

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