



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Weekly Analysis of Published
Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein Comment
(Week Ending 14 May 1987)

1. Loughgall

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In an edition devoted almost exclusively to Loughgall and its aftermath, "An Phoblacht" of 14 May made, inter alia, the following points about the incident:

- It conceded that the IRA's intent was to attack the Loughgall RUC station and provided details of how the digger, loaded with a 200lb bomb, was driven through the perimeter fence of the station, jammed against the building wall and the detonation mechanism set before the security forces opened fire.
- It nonetheless maintained that the IRA were "ambushed" and "brutally slain" by the security forces (the front page banner headline was "Loughgall Martyrs"), although adding that "Republicans do not complain about the way in which the British forces carried out their operation - centuries of British terror have taught us to expect it". It did not address the question of whether or how the security forces knew in advance of the attack and made no reference to the possibility of an IRA informer.
- It repeated the claim made by a number of Sinn Fein and IRA spokesmen that some of those involved in the attack had escaped and were subsequently taken to a "secure location".
- As to the precise location of the individual killings, it said that three members of the group were shot in the van, three beside it and that the remaining two (who had been on the digger) were killed as they tried to escape "by running back in the direction they had come" (one was shot about 20 yards from the van and the other almost 100 yards away).

- It claimed that "some of the Volunteers had deliberately placed bullet wounds to the head as well as their bodies being riddled" and reprinted the statement of the East Tyrone Brigade of the IRA, which claimed that "Volunteers who shot their way out of the ambush and escaped saw other Volunteers being shot on the ground after being captured".

- Echoing comments by Gerry Adams and John Joe McGirl in, inter alia, the "Irish News" of 11 May, it was highly critical of the response of the Irish Government as well as of the Opposition spokesmen, the Catholic hierarchy and the SDLP, characterising their attitude as "blame the oppressed for resisting oppression".

- In detailed accounts of the 8 funerals, it carried the full texts of the various graveside orations. At the funeral of Anthony Gormley, Gerry Adams said that "Margaret Thatcher and Tom King and all the other rich and powerful people will be sorry, in their time, that Loughgall happened". Danny Morrison referred at the funeral of Gerard O'Callaghan to the RUC statement giving the results of the forensic tests on the IRA guns recovered at Loughgall, which showed that the weapons had been involved in eight killings. Morrison suggested, however, that "if you were to carry out forensic tests on the SAS weapons you would find a very, very long list" (he named a number of Republicans who had been shot by the security forces in recent years, including those killed at Loughgall), concluding "we don't hear the forensic results on their weapons". At James Lynagh's funeral, Adams was critical of the fact that the homily delivered at the Requiem Mass by the officiating priest, Fr. Sean Nolan, made no reference to the circumstances of his death: "You would think he had died not of injustice but of pneumonia". Adams also referred to the incident of Emyvale on 11 May involving the Gardai, commenting that Lynagh "would have enjoyed the spectacle of the Special Task Force paddling about in the streams of Emyvale". (The Emyvale incident was the subject of a one-page report elsewhere in "An Phoblacht" also).

2. Sinn Fein document on discrimination in employment

The "Irish News" of 13 May reported on the launching of the Sinn Fein policy document "An End to Discrimination in Employment" (there was no reference to the document in "An Phoblacht"). The document called for the adoption of the MacBride Principles, not just by foreign investors, but by all employers in Northern Ireland. In commenting on the document, Gerry Adams said that the Fair Employment Act and the Fair Employment Agency had failed to redress the situation in Northern Ireland "because they were never meant to". The document argued that the "relevant statutory body" should have sufficient "legal powers to initiate investigations into both discrimination and the provision of equality of opportunity".

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