

## DUPLICITY January, 2018:

Current events are not history, but they can affect our understanding of history! Those familiar with the situation in Northern Ireland are aware of **Now vs Later** news stories wherein accusations made in the **Now** as front page news, cause political ramifications while in the **Later** phase, retractions appear, buried somewhere on a middle page. For example, the Silent Valley Reservoir explosions in March-April, 1969, which crippled Belfast's water and power infrastructure, were blamed on the IRA. Yet later, when a member of the UVF was killed as his bomb went off prematurely, it was learned that the UVF were responsible for all the prior explosions to incite government action against Republicans.

In 1972, when Derry's Bloody Sunday hit the press, accusations crowded the headlines of IRA gunmen and bomb-throwers among the demonstrators. Yet, 38 years later, in June 2010, the British Prime Minister David Cameron had to admit to the House of Commons that: *What happened on Bloody Sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable. . . the first shot was fired by the British Army. . . none of the civilian casualties were armed. . . no soldier fired in response to threatened attacks by nail or petrol bombers and many soldiers put forward false accounts to justify their firing!*

In 1974, Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn revealed that, while working for MI5, they committed crimes in the Republic of Ireland to discredit the IRA. They had pulled Ireland's biggest bank robbery in the name of the IRA to force the Dublin government into more repressive measures against Republicans and the Dublin government played right into their hands. They also revealed they'd been assigned to assassinate IRA leader Sean MacStiofain, but failed and that they had permission to shoot British soldiers if they interfered with their mission. Finally faced with the evidence, England shamefully admitted that the Littlejohns were their agents. But that story was smothered by the arrest of six so-called IRA men for a brutal bombing in Birmingham.

Of course, we later learned that the Birmingham 6 were wrongly imprisoned for 14 years from 1975-89; the Guilford 4 were also released in 1989 and the Maguire 7 in 1991. However, at their arrests, headlines assured the public that justice had been done! Only in the **Later** do we learn the truth like the November 2014 revelation of the existence of a Military Reaction Force, an undercover of the British Army active from mid-1971 to early 1973 which a former member described as *a legalized death squad* hitting UVF men in the name of the IRA and IRA men in the name of the UVF.

With countless other examples in mind, reports in recently released state papers should be no surprise. However, though they are current events, they affect history! Among 230 documents released by the Northern Ireland Public Records Office in August, 2016 are some which show that in early 1987, the English and N.I. gov'ts were fixated on the best way to 'handle' Irish Taoiseach Charles Haughey.

In 1970, Haughey as Finance Minister, had managed a fund of £100,000 that was set up to aid the Nationalist community in the north. Then, Haughey, Kevin Boland and Neil Blaney were accused of using the funds to import arms for the IRA. They were tried along with Army Officer, Capt. James Kelly, and businessman Albert Luykx, who allegedly bought the arms. All were cleared but it destroyed their careers. Blaney and Boland resigned but Haughey remained to lead Fianna Fail to victory in 1979. In 1989, Mr. Haughey also aided the Suffolk County AOH by procuring an obelisk of Wicklow Granite for a monument to IRB leader and architect of the 1916 Rising, Tom Clarke, which now stands at his Manorville, homesite. Although Haughey had a number of political enemies, he was respected by many; yet recent state papers show that he was, understandably, not held in such high esteem by the English.

Two weeks ago, on 29 December 2017, previously classified documents held by the Irish National Archives were made available to the public for the first time under the 30-year rule and completed a scenario. One was a 1987 letter to then Taoiseach Charles Haughey from the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force. The letter revealed that MI5 had approached them with a request to assassinate him. The correspondence, signed by Capt W Johnston read, in part: *In 1985 we were approached by a MI5 officer... he asked us to execute you.* That letter fits with the earlier release by the Northern Ireland Public Records Office in 2016 noting concern with the best way to 'handle' Haughey. Apparently, they had settled on a way. The UVF claimed that they were supplied with details of Mr. Haughey's cars, his private yacht, plus aerial photos of his home in north Dublin and his holiday home on the island of Inishvickillane, off Kerry. According to the letter, the UVF were asked to accept responsibility if Mr. Haughey was killed, but it doesn't say by whom – perhaps, the Military Reaction Force? But, they refused saying: *We have no love for you [Haughey] but we are not going to carry out work for the Dirty Tricks Department of the British.* The letter explained that the UVF had killed 17 men based on information supplied by MI5 between 1972 and 1985, noting: *MI5 were double crossing us all the time we were working with them. We executed some of our best men believing them to be traitors.*

So, what else is there to learn? The English government have admitted 'losing' thousands of papers from their National Archives, most pertaining to the Troubles in Northern Ireland. One Belfast victims' campaigner, whose father was shot dead by the British Army in August, 1971, said he is not surprised by the news. He said: *This has been going on for many, many years. We have been trying to get material from the archives relating to the Ballymurphy Massacre, and many times we have come against files that have been closed for years.* And so it continues; stay tuned, we are sure to learn more tomorrow as hopefully more papers are found and released!