

## Fake News and the Advance of Revisionism

There is not a day that goes past when we hear some breaking news, whether that is from a local, national or international source, that turns out to be 'fake news'. This can be purely satirical humour with no hidden agenda, or it may have more cynical motives. It is nothing new and has been used to undermine the opposition whether in politics, war or in business. The Nazis used it through the colourfully named Third Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda which was under the control of their Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels. They used both print and broadcast journalism to promote their agendas, thereby agitating the population against the Jewish minority that ultimately resulted in the murder of over six million Jews. This may be an extreme analogy but nevertheless, this is how it transpired.

A few years ago I was at a conference in St Mary's College, Falls Road, Belfast, when a republican responded to my comments that terrorists in Northern Ireland were responsible for 90% of deaths during the Troubles. He replied by claiming that the 30% attributed to loyalists were all caused by the British, and that they (republicans) would also change the 60% credited to them.

In 2019, we can clearly see how they are working hard on their revisionist agenda. It is immaterial whether they use fake news, innuendos, insinuations, or quite simply downright lies. The fact is, put it out there and some people will believe it. Keep saying it and more people will believe it.

I am not naïve enough to believe that in the duration of the Troubles, the British are blameless for wrongdoing but I do not believe they were responsible in the way republicans would claim.

Two cases in mention are the atrocities committed by PIRA in Enniskillen in 1987 and the Shankill in 1993. Under the '30 year rule' the Irish government released a letter purportedly from a 'MI5 agent' that allegedly was sent to a member of the Irish government a week after the Enniskillen bomb. This supposedly disgruntled agent claimed that MI5 had interfered with the bomb prior to it going off. If we can recall in 1987, PIRA claimed at the time that the Army caused the bomb to go off prematurely by interfering with the radio signals to the device. When that was exposed as a lie as the device was triggered by a timer, they made a further attempt at deflection, by fabricating a letter and sending it to the Irish government. Clearly the Southern government also saw no basis in this and did not release it into the public domain at that time. The letter is poorly written, filled with spelling mistakes, and the anonymous 'agent' referred to his friend, the traitor Michael Bettaney (he also spells his name wrong). If I was being cynical, I would question why the Irish government released the letter at this time, but publicised no other documents relating to Enniskillen. I'm sure it had nothing to do with the recent failed new inquest application by the Belfast law firm KRW!

There was a similar allegation that the Shankill device was interfered with, and that story was ran by both a daily and Sunday newspaper. It was claimed that the device's timer was changed, causing it to go off prematurely. Supposedly it was a directional device that was to be attached to the ceiling of the fish shop. The bomber, Begley, had actually sat it on the counter; it was set to go off soonest to prevent the people upstairs from escaping, and it had no means of attaching it to the ceiling. PIRA, according to the newspaper, had deciphered stolen Special Branch documents that revealed the authorities alleged involvement. No-one has seen these documents, and PIRA only decided they had de-ciphered them over ten years after they were stolen. It now transpires that PIRA had actually previously planned to bomb the Shankill in 1992 and that operation was thwarted by the authorities.

The reality is, this was fake news by PIRA in an attempt to rewrite history. It causes confusion, mistrust and distress, leaving the victims and survivors in a worse state. History will not look at PIRA kindly, so they must rewrite the history as we know it. PIRA, as usual, had no regard for human life. They had their perceived targets at the Shankill and in Enniskillen; any civilians caught up in these attacks would be classed as collateral to them.

We can relate to the many, many times following a murder, that they have claimed their victim was a serving member of the Security Forces or was a member of a paramilitary group, knowing some with believe it, and it will legitimise the murder in the eyes of their supporters. By introducing a constant stream of fake news, it will leave the people not knowing who to trust, thereby the Provisionals can claim what they wish. We must continue to expose the terrorists for what they are.

**Ken**



# Advocacy for Innocent Victims Newsletter



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**Dear Member,**

Christmas has passed once more and we fall back into our usual routines. Unfortunately that includes going to the many services and memorials to remember our dead, struck down during a vicious sectarian period of strife.

SEFF had a group attending the service at the Kingsmill memorial on 5th January, 43 years after that awful incident. Barry McElduff, one year on from his shameful mocking of the Kingsmill victims, is being ushered back into politics by Sinn Féin. That adds further insult to the victims not helped by the refusal of the PPS to bring the case to trial.

17th January is the anniversary of the Teebane atrocity, and a service at the memorial site will be held on Sunday 20th Jan. We continue to strive to seek truth, justice and acknowledgement for the victims and survivors of that heinous act.

We recently met the RoI Minister for Business, Heather Humphries. The delegation included victims of republican and loyalist terror. We impressed upon her that the Republic must do more to support all innocent victims of terrorism, both north and south, and stop being selective of whom they advocate for.

AfIV will be meeting the new An Garda Commissioner in Dublin on Friday 18th January.

**Yours Faithfully**

**Ken Funston,  
Advocacy Manager**

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**Definition of Victim/Survivor of Terrorism: A general Comparison Between Spanish and Northern Irish Law**

In the following article I am going to compare the definition of victim of terrorism, outlined in Spanish law, and the Northern Irish one. The Spanish definition can be found in the law *29/2011 of Acknowledgment and integral protection of victims of terrorism*. The Northern Irish definition is defined by the *Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006*.

Both laws regulate in each country the rights of the victims and survivors of terrorism, so with this article am intending to compare who is entitled in each country to those rights, and therefore, considered a victims and/or survivor of terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

For the Spanish law, victims of terrorism are **those who have suffered (experienced) a terrorist action**. But, what does a terrorist action means? According to this law; a terrorist action is defined as **an action carried out in Spanish territory by individuals integrated in organisations or criminal groups, who aim to undermine the constitutional order or disrupt severely the public peace**. This law also states; a victim of terrorism can also be an individual subjected to a terrorist action (act against constitutional order and public peace) when the perpetrator does not belong to such organisations or criminal groups.

Therefore, the victims of terrorism in Spain are:

- The deceased or those who have been physically or psychologically harmed by a terrorist action and are considered victims of terrorism (according to previous paragraph).
- Those bereaved, such us: partners, parents, sons and daughters, grandparents and siblings.
- Those who are subjected to material damage.

In the context of Northern Ireland, the 3<sup>rd</sup> article of the 2006 order states that a victim and/or survivor is someone who is or has been **physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident**, which means; “an incident appearing to the Commission to be **a violent incident occurring in or after 1966 in connection with the affairs of Northern Ireland**”.

A victim/survivor is also someone who provides a substantial amount of care for the individual directly harmed and/or someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of this article it is stated that a victim/survivor can also be an individual who have been psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of witnessing a conflict-related incident or the consequences of such an incident; or providing medical or other emergency assistance to an individual in connection with a conflict-related incident.

What seems to be clear from this brief approach to the definition of victims of terrorism in both territories is that; the “terror act” is differently defined. In Spain they name it as a “terrorist action” and they stress the clear intention of the perpetrator (being part of a criminal group or not) of hurting the state/democracy/legal grounds (undermining the constitutional order and disrupting the public peace); while in Northern Ireland it is called “conflict-related incident”, and it marks 1966 as the date when these violent incidents started to be considered as “conflict-related incidents”.

This second definition seems to be broader at different levels. First of all, there is no appreciation of the aims of the violence, like in the Spanish scenario, therefore anybody who have been subjected to violence in connection with the affairs of Northern Ireland from 1966, can be considered a victim/survivor of terrorism. Secondly, the Northern Irish definition also includes those who take care of the direct victim and professionals from the emergency services; while the Spanish law does not mention these two groups.

Nevertheless, the Spanish definition does not mention any specific conflict or terrorist group, so, any type of terrorism perpetrated in Spain (ETA, GAL, Jihadist, etc.) would fall into its remit, while the Northern Irish one seems to be specific for the “Troubles”, therefore victims of terror attacks perpetrated in Northern Ireland and not in connection with the “Troubles” would not be protected by this order.

**Aitor Martinez**

<sup>1</sup> It is important to highlight that the circumstances of the conflict in both regions are different, therefore I am not intending to compare both conflicts, but only point out the similarities and differences of the conceptualization of victims of terrorism in both territories.

**News Years Resolutions?**

It is that time of year again when we all start our 2019 New Year’s resolutions. But new years resolutions are notoriously fragile and ephemeral. I have made my fair share of New Years resolutions in the past. Just recently I read that studies show that only 25% of those who make resolutions fail in the 1st week. Another 40% break with their resolutions within the 1st month. And those who fail at keeping their resolutions experience lowered self-esteem, sadness and depression. In addition to thinking about eating healthier, exercising more, and kicking those old habits, how about thinking of some self reflection?

In the past I have actually made New Years resolutions to **not** make any resolutions. Sometimes it is not the best time to make any resolutions. If you did not make resolutions it is not a problem either. And if you already broke them do not worry about it. We continuously make reflections and try to develop ourselves. This does not only have to be at the start of a new year. Sometimes failing with resolutions can give us more insight in our own behaviour and our strengths and weaknesses. Following the WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Program) program myself, I have learned to use SMART goals. Be **S**pecific, use the w-questions, why do I want this resolution? Make **M**easurable goals; how many/much? Is it **A**chievable? Try to avoid un**R**ealistic resolutions. And give yourself **T**ime. Learning a new language myself, I have learned a saying which was very helpful to me in times: What is meant for you won’t pass you by. And very fitting for ones New Years resolutions is the Chinese proverb: do not push the river, it flows by itself. Try to go into the new year with positive thinking. Instead of saying ' I will never' maybe use 'I am going'. Be assure that when you are ready you **can** do it. It’s up to you!

**Rachel Glover**