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# If you think our troubles are over, then think again

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### The most recent violence shows armed dissidents are out there to kill, writes Ruth Dudley

By **Edwards**



Unison

By Ruth Dudley Edwards  
Sunday June 29 2008

I have no soft spot for republican terrorists -- except for the very few who had the decency to repent. By and large, they are vain, tunnel-visioned, self-righteous, blood-thirsty fanatics who think it fine to kill, maim or intimidate in pursuit of their political ambitions.

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Generation after benighted generation, they are also so thick they can't grasp that rather than bringing about a united [Ireland](#), every horrible act of theirs copper-fastens partition.

Sadly, since 30 years ago I wrote a biography of [Patrick Pearse](#) -- whose leadership in 1916 of a secret revolutionary cabal and whose uncompromising rhetoric are still used to justify all manner of wickedness -- a great deal of my mental energy continues to be devoted to those that trumpet themselves as his successors. These days, since the [Sinn Fein](#) project stalled, I'm less interested than I used to be in the murdering or fellow-travelling bastards who have been elected by amoral voters to the Dáil, Stormont and [Westminster](#), but their slow-learning heirs are much on my mind.

The members of the Continuity IRA, the INLA, the [Real IRA](#) or recent tiny splinter groups like Óglaigh na hÉireann or Saoirse na hÉireann, are even stupider than the Provos, who at least after two decades of carnage grasped they were in a cul-de-sac. But just because these people are thick doesn't mean they're not dangerous.

The tiny number of fatalities that have occurred since [Omagh](#) means the violence perpetrated by dissidents in [Northern Ireland](#) and [England](#) is mostly ignored. Yet in the last few months, in two shootings and two bombings, they've managed to injure five members of the PSNI. They may be ill-trained, inexperienced and riddled with informers, but they're armed and keen to kill. Last week, four masked men managed to murder a pizza-deliveryman in [Derry](#). He was not their target, but he got in the way of their vigilante mission.

After reading about poor [Emmet Shiels](#) on Wednesday morning, I spent the day, as I have for several weeks, sitting in a courtroom ([Belfast](#) this time -- sometimes it's [Dublin](#)) observing the progress of the civil case taken by victims' relatives against five men alleged to have been involved in the Omagh bomb of 15 August 1998, that slaughtered 31 men, women and children (two unborn), physically injured hundreds and traumatised tens of thousands.

As another family had their world destroyed outside the court, inside we were hearing about the insane fantasies of key people in CIRA and RIRA in the late 1990s, which were confided to a gigantic American called [David Rupert](#), whom they thought was a republican zealot but was actually working for the [FBI](#).

Rupert was not in court, but we were treated to readings from some of the 3,000 or so detailed emails he sent to his handlers, in which he relates the dissident musings on what evil they might visit on the Brits or the Northern Ireland security forces. They aspire to become cyber-terrorists, contemplate derailing a train carrying nuclear waste, daydream of how they could poison the [London](#) water supply, and brag that they will soon be able to detonate a bomb in England by phone from [Cork](#). There were several moments of comedy: my favourite was when some vain-glorious clown announced he wasn't worried about a delay in launching the devastating atrocity that would magic the Brits out of Northern Ireland, bring down the Free State and create a united Irish utopia under his control. "We've waited 825 years. What's another three?"

These maniacs dream of emulating [Brian Keenan](#) who, to my great pleasure, was cremated last month on my birthday. This bitter Marxist brute -- whose coffin was carried by three of the five Sinn Fein members of the British parliament -- [Gerry Adams](#), [Martin McGuinness](#) and [Pat Doherty](#) -- was highly intelligent, and loved nothing better than planning what were euphemistically known as "spectaculars". He was the evil genius behind the devastation of [Canary Wharf](#) in 1996 with a 1,000lb bomb which also blew the lives out of two newsgagents. (At his funeral, Adams hailed him as "pivotal to peace".)

While the various IRAs don't seem to have leaders of the calibre of Keenan and his colleagues, the dissidents are busily recruiting and some of their volunteers come from universities. There is more trouble ahead. As [Yeats](#) wrote:

And yet who knows what's  
yet to come?

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For Patrick Pearse has said

That in every generation

Shall Ireland's blood be

shed

And so it will, until Irish nationalists finally turn their backs on the cult of 1916, which has caused so much pointless misery on our little island over the past nine decades. The leaders of the dissidents are truly the heirs of Pearse.

What does that say about Pearse? And us?

- *Ruth Dudley Edwards*

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