



Hundreds injured in a night of teenage terror

49 YOUNG PEOPLE DIE

IN DISCO

INFERNO

By JOHN COSTELLO

A FLASH FIRE ripped through a crowded north city night spot early this morning, bringing horrific casualties in one of Dublin's worst disasters ever.

Garda and ambulance chiefs reported 25 confirmed dead, 24 more feared dead and up to 200 injured—some 25 of them very seriously.

The horror broke on over 700 dancers at a disco in the Stardust Hotel in Kilmore Road, Artane just after midnight.

By some eyewitness estimates the huge building was ablaze in three minutes, leaving the dead and injured with virtually no chance to escape.

Fire brigades and ambulances from all parts of the city screamed through the streets, ferrying the many injured to hospital.

Most of the casualties were taken to Jervis Street Hospital in the city centre by relays of hard-pressed ambulance crews. Later other city hospitals were pressed into service.

Shortly after 3 a.m., it was clear that the tragedy was one of the worst disasters to hit Dublin in modern times.

Garda authorities said that a "major alert" had been called and all the city's emergency services swung into action soon after midnight when word of the disaster broke.

Residents of northside communities reported that they heard a loud blast after midnight and saw flames and smoke belching into the sky.

Tom Brady, Assistant Editor of the Irish Independent was wakened at his nearby home. He said: "It sounded as if there was a shot outside my house."

"There was a series of loud sharp blasts, and then I saw the smoke and flames," he added.

It later emerged, however, that the blaze was not caused by an explosion as first suspected from reports phoned in by residents of nearby neighbourhoods in Coolock and Artane.

One of the lucky young persons, Harriet Reilly, of Ballymun, who was inside the disco hall at the time, but managed to escape before the fire raged out of control, told me:

"I saw a little flame by some curtains at the back of the hall. I raised the alarm, but no one paid any attention."

"The building looked like a sheet of cardboard going up," she added.

Harriet's report was confirmed by 19-year-old Dave Mulligan, of Cromcastle Road, Artane. He said he was the first to flee from the holocaust.

He thought someone started a fire behind some video screens in the disco hall.

Ray Coleman, of Highland Park, Artane, told me his brother was still inside the raging inferno about 3.30 a.m.

He found a pick-up van parked nearby and tried to hack his way through the windows of the hall. He managed to get one girl out, but two others he saw he wasn't able to help.

Passer-by Mick Reilly, who lives in the neighbourhood also joined in the futile rescue operation. But he was unsuccessful in face of the raging flames and thick smoke.

Other young people I spoke to at the horrific scene were Terry Condon, Frederick Phelan, Raymond Morgan and Paula Kenny—all from Donnybrook and all safe but terribly shaken by the disaster.

Scores of other residents in the Artane-Coolock areas rang the Irish Independent with similar reports.

One distraught father ran to say he had two daughters at the disco, but could get no information from the hard-pressed authorities.

The Stardust was running a disco—the Danny Hughes Disco Show. The hotel was fully licensed for the occasion and a meal was being served. The final of the K-Tel Disco competition was being held.



Bodies were taken away in a fleet of ambulances.



Danny Hughes

Paisley slates banana republic

EVERY last drop of Ulster blood would be willingly shed before we entered your priest-ridden banana Republic," the Taoiseach, Mr. Haughey was warned last night by Rev. Ian Paisley, as thousands of Loyalists cheered.

The Loyalists had turned up in Omagh, Co. Tyrone last night to support the first of the 11 rallies which Mr. Paisley has called in protest against the Anglo-Irish negotiations.

The parade by the 3,000 Loyalists was more than a mile long and was accompanied by the Orange bands, who played all the way to the town's Orange Hall.

Mr. Haughey, "Godfather of the intended destruction" and "yellow-conspirator of Margaret Thatcher" was the main target of Mr. Paisley.

More than 90 p.c. of the crowd was unable to get into the hall and loudspeakers were used so that they could hear Mr. Paisley.

He claimed that at the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis today he expected Mr. Haughey to "spew out his venomous hate towards the Loyalist leader read out the new 'Ulster Covenant' and

asked members of the crowd to raise their hand in support. As he was speaking, stewards were preparing to collect cash towards the campaign and appeals were being made for sums up to about £30,000.

There were cheers as he challenged both Mr. Haughey and Mrs. Thatcher over the Dublin talks.

"Charles Haughey, you can cajole the vacillating British Government into trying to give you a say in Ulster's affairs. You can even succeed in getting the Prime Minister to sign a blank cheque which gives you a blank cheque of involvement in Northern Ireland's future."

"You can smugly congratulate yourself on how far you forwarded your Republican dream of annexation of Northern Ireland and you can even crown it all by hypocritically creating the pretence that Protestants would be ever so wonderfully treated in your penny-ha'penny Republic, but at the end of all your bluff and bluster and blarney, you still have the Ulster Protestants to contend with."

Rev. Ian Paisley has been accused of continually betraying Protestantism and those concerned about unionism. In an outspoken attack on the Democratic Unionist Party leader over his recent gathering of 500 men on a Co. Antrim hillside the Church of Ireland Gazette says the gesture had probably given the Provisional IRA their best recruiting figures since Bloody Sunday.



Young people stand around dazedly after the fire... and a distraught woman is comforted.

Bruce Arnold



Bruce Arnold

ON this, the fiftieth, and biggest Fianna Fail Ard Fheis, Bruce Arnold writes:

"Charles Haughey has been Taoiseach for 15 months, and has so far done very little. He has a majority of 18, and he believes that there is to be a turn-up in the economy."

"He has a programme of action going with Mrs. Thatcher from which he promises great things. There are other promising rumblings of activity which have yet to come to fruition. There is the Capital Investment Programme, which, under the new guise of an 'Investment Plan' will have to be seen to be believed, and I mean that in every sense of the phrase."

The inimitable Arnold—Page 6

Rescued boy on raft from river

A 10-year-old boy was recovering in his home in Limerick last night after being swept down river in a flimsy wooden raft.

Stunned onlookers watched as Francis Hogan, Sandmill, clung for his life to the raft, which was believed to have been left near his home by students celebrating Rag Week. He was suddenly swept along the Abbey River by strong currents. As the raft neared shore, boatmen Paddy Lysaght, Corbally and Michael Collins, Nicholas St. who had followed by the boy down river, pulled alongside and brought him to safety.

Petrol men agree to independent opinion

OIL WORKERS threatening a repeat of the strike that caused chaos at the petrol pumps last year agreed last night to submit their productivity claim to an independent expert.

The move came after five hours of talks yesterday between officials of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the oil company employers.

But the seven-day official strike notice served on behalf of the 830 workers—tanker drivers and depot yardmen—was not withdrawn.

They voted overwhelmingly yesterday to take strike action, so the countdown to another petrol famine ticks on.

The independent go-between agreed upon last night is Mr. John Horgan, Deputy Chairman of the Labour Court.

He was nominated by the steering committee of the Employer-Labour Conference, which met union and employers at the Department of Labour yesterday.

He will assess the men's productivity claim, which is at the heart of the dispute.

Mr. Horgan will chair a special technical committee whose brief is to try to bridge the money gap between the assessments by union and employers of what the oilworkers' productivity is worth.

Agricultural price talks

Foreign Minister Mr. Lenihan will continue his round of discussion with fellow-EEC Foreign Ministers, when he visits Brussels on Wednesday, Paris the following day and Bonn on Friday week. The discussions, like those previously held with his Danish and Dutch counterparts, will centre of the forthcoming agricultural price review and a report on the development of Community policies.

Sunken ship not touched

The wreck of the Nellie N, blown up by the IRA off Moville last weekend has not yet been touched. Last night, Donaghy deputy Paddy Harte said he will ask the Minister for the environment next week if any claims for damages have so far been received for the boat, reckoned to be worth about £3m. and, if so, what was the amount of the claim and who lodged the claim.

One calculation by the union side set this at £42 a week, while the employers' side came up with a figure of £7.

The steering committee consisting of Mr. Con Donovan, chairman of the Irish Work Study Institute; Mr. John Donovan and Mr. Michael McNamara will examine the productivity reports of the two assessors and try to reconcile them, Mr. Horgan pointed out.

"Obviously we will have to

work as quickly as we can. I will be studying both reports over the weekend and hopefully the committee's first meeting will be on Monday," Mr. Horgan said.

Mr. Horgan hopes to meet with union and employers early next week in a bid to hammer out a peace formula.

The strike ballot, which some sources say was as large as 25-1, gives the ITGWU a clear mandate in the threatened official stoppage.

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