COLLUSION

British State Sponsored Murder

Spring 2004

Fact File

Introduction

The murder of citizens through collusion with Unionist death squads is a British state policy in Ireland. Collusion is the control, resourcing and direction of loyalist death squads by British state agencies. Those who sanctioned the policy of collusion have never been held accountable.

Collusion has not ended. The British apparatus which operates the policy of collusion continues in existence. Until the mechanisms have been dismantled, the strategy disowned and the truth revealed collusion cannot be consigned to the history books.

Collusion - a British State Policy

Collusion has been part of the Six County state since its creation. British forces and unionist paramilitaries have routinely shared intelligence, weapons and personnel. But in the 1980's, under the premiership of Margaret Thatcher, collusion became much more controlled and refined. Specific mechanisms were established to control and direct the loyalist death squads.



State sponsored murder was established as a formal, politically sanctioned, tactic at the heart of British policy in Ireland.

Brian Nelson

The case of Brian Nelson is illustrative of this British state policy and the levels at which it was sanctioned and protected. Nelson was a British agent placed inside the UDA who rose to the rank of UDA Intelligence Officer. At this level he controlled all intelligence information used in identifying targets for the UDA killer gangs. In an investigation of Nelson's role, the BBC's Panorama team said, "By our count, at least 80 people listed on Nelson's targeting files were attacked. 29 were shot dead."

Official Cover-Up

The cover up of Nelson's role involved the then British PM John Major, who, prior to Nelson's trial, met the trial Judge Basil Kelly and the head of the British judiciary in the north, Chief Judge Brian Hutton.

It involved the then Attorney General Patrick Mayhem, who constructed a plea bargain to ensure that Nelson's role was never scrutinised in open court and to ensure the minimum penalty for his actions. It involved the British Defence Minister and former NIO Secretary of State Tom King who provided a character reference for Nelson.



"unlawful involve
the security force
– Sir John Stevens

Official Policy

The actions of these agents and agencies were not the work of mavericks. If that had been the case the British state would have logically moved to expose and prosecute those involved. On the contrary, the British state went to inordinate lengths to protect their agents and to conceal their activities. The activities of these agents was, without question, official government policy.



Brian Nelson British Agent

Directing the Unionist Death Squads

The British state, through agencies like the British Army intelligence unit, the Force Research Unit, and the Special Branch, rearmed, reorganised and directed loyalist death squads. Hundreds of people were killed as a result of this policy of state orchestrated murder.

Re-Arming the Unionist Death Squads

In late 1987, a number of loyalist paramilitary groups co-operated to import a large consignment of modern weapons into the north of Ireland. Central to this operation were a number of British Intelligence agents working both in South Africa and within the Loyalist groups, including Brian Nelson. British intelligence encouraged, facilitated and was at all times fully aware of the progress of this operation.

The deadly arsenal of weapons imported included:

- 200 modern automatic rifles;
- 90 Browning semi-automatic pistols;
- 500 fragmentation grenades;
- 12 rocket launcher's;
- 30,000 rounds of ammunition.

Supplying unionist paramilitaries with modern weaponry had an immediate and deadly impact on the number of killings in the north of Ireland. Within six years of the arrival of these weapons loyalist murder gangs had increased their capacity to kill by 300%. In the six years prior to the weapons shipment, loyalists killed 71 people. In the subsequent six years loyalist killed 229 people.

Resourcing the Unionist Death Squads

Through a network of agents the British state identified targets, supplied intelligence and provided back up to the killers. For example, through their agent Brian Nelson, British Intelligence up-dated and refined all the UDA's intelligence files to ensure that their targeting, to quote a British intelligence report, was 'more professional'.

British State Assisted Murder

The British Army unit, FRU had the authority to ensure loyalist gunmen had a clear run to and from their target. All Brutish military and police patrols were withdrawn from designated areas, leaving a free run for the assassins.

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British State Protection for the Killers

Special Branch ensured that any investigation into the killing did not result in prosecutions, through the exercise of the Walker criteria, allowing them total control over investigations, arrests and prosecution.

The British state established an effective murder machine that enabled them to commission the killing of citizens within its own jurisdiction and beyond. The British justified collusion by arguing that they were 'taking the war to the IRA'. In reality, once the machinery of murder was up and running no one was safe.

The Victims

Directed by British state agencies, loyalist death squads killed:

- Sinn Fein elected representatives;
- Sinn Fein activists and members of their families;
- Civil rights activists;
- Election workers;
- Defence lawyers;
- Irish language activists;
- Catholic civilians.

They killed to cover their agents' tracks. They killed agents who had outlived their usefulness and loyalists who knew too much. And they sacrificed their own soldiers and members of the RUC to retain their agents' cover.

For decades the British government denied that a policy of collusion existed. However, **after 14 years, the third enquiry by John Stevens uncovered, in his words, "collusion, the willful failure to keep records, the absence of accountability, the withholding of intelligence and evidence, and the extreme of agents being involved in murder".**

The report also concludes, "nationalists were known to be targeted but were not properly warned or protected".

This "unlawful involvement of agents in murder" he concludes, "implies that the security forces sanction killings".



Conclusion

Hundreds of people were killed, and many more injured and maimed, in a campaign of British state-sponsored murder.

The British government has never accepted its responsibility for the deaths which resulted from this policy.

The politicians who sanctioned this policy have never been called to account for their actions or for their culpability in the murder of citizens.

No member of the Special Branch or British Military Intelligence has been indicted for these crimes.

The policy of collusion has never been reversed. It remains intact today.

The British agencies, which executed this policy, remain in place today.

The policy of employing the loyalist death squads was not the actions of rogue agents or individuals who overstepped their responsibilities. It was a policy endorsed at the highest political level.

The victims of collusion and their families have a right to the truth about collusion and the true role of the British state and its agencies in Ireland over 30 years of conflict.



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Fírinne

Fírinne (the Irish word for truth) is the campaign for the truth about collusion between British state agencies and Unionist death squads in the killing of citizens in Ireland.

Fírinne wants to see:

- The policy of collusion ended;
- Full disclosure by the British government of all information on its policy of collusion;
- The dismantling of the structures and agencies which implemented this policy of state murder;

Contacts:

- e-mail Fírinne at: afi_fhirinne@yahoo.ie;
- donations to An Fhirinne, 1a Cullingtree Road, Belfast BT12 4JU, Ireland.