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# The blanket

## A Journal of Protest and Dissent

### Collusion

#### Questions, Like Victims, Not Forgotten

Martin Galvin • 6 February 2007

#### COLLUSION QUESTIONS LIKE VICTIMS NOT FORGOTTEN

"We will have you up at the Battery for a free drink," my friend joked with words mixing Tyrone wit and Republican spirit, at my news of traveling to Dublin for weekend meetings between the Irish Northern Aid executive and Sinn Fein leadership. The same British ban used as a pretext for the Royal Ulster Constabulary murder of Sean Downes during their attack on a peaceful rally in Belfast, would insure that we might meet in Dublin, or more likely Monaghan, but not in the Battery Bar in Ardboe, County Tyrone.

"Our friends have been about this last week," he continued. It was a sort of Republican speak or code, meaning that the Royal Ulster Constabulary backed by British troopers had been patrolling heavily in the Ardboe area.

He added, "I may be back in the Bronx with you but will say more when I see you." These words were ominous. My friend, Liam Ryan, had spent years in New York saving hard earned dollars with a dream of going home to Ardboe and buying a business such as the Battery Bar on scenic of Lough Neagh. He had married happily and was the proud father of a young son. For Liam to hint at leaving Ardboe meant that he was under serious threat which he would not talk about on a likely tapped telephone line, but would explain when we met.

I would never see him again. The following evening the crown forces which had

There is no such thing as a dirty word. Nor is there a word so powerful, that it's going to send the listener to the lake of fire upon hearing it.  
 - Frank Zappa



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been flooding the Ardboe area, would suddenly disappear. At closing, as Liam Ryan stood by the door, a loyalist death squad would arrive at precisely the correct time and place. Liam Ryan would be murdered as he attempted to slam the door shut and protect those patrons still inside. One of the customers would also be killed by a rifle powerful enough to permanently scare the structure. There would be little doubt that RUC patrols had picked and pinpointed Liam Ryan for death. It was taken for granted that the RUC had scouted, guided, cleared and shielded the arrival and escape of the murder gang. The RUC would eventually arrive, with smug smiles belying any pretense of sympathy, as they dismissed any chance that anyone might ever be caught or identified

My friend had been murdered . His son would grow up without a father; his wife was heartbroken, his parents, brothers and sisters devastated.

It is hardly a unique or even unusual tale. There were literally hundreds of such British arranged collusion murders. Some would even make use of informer agents like Denis Donaldson or Freddie Scappaticci. Each could be told from the grieving perspective of children, spouses, family, and friends.

However all such crown collusion murders put together were not enough to slow much less sidetrack , Sinn Fein's compliance with the British imposed timetable for endorsing the re-named RUC, despite Nuala O'Loan's public confirmation of RUC complicity with UVF killers in such murders. .

## HASTE

Less than a week before the special Ard Fheis arranged to complete the formalities of a party vote for the RUC-PSNI, the much delayed O'Loan report surfaced with curious timing. Her inquiry was narrowly limited to the Mount Vernon UVF. As many as fifteen murders and a host of other crimes were tallied by this particular RUC run murder gang, directed through the paid RUC agent Mark Haddock, during six years of Blair, and one year of Hugh Orde.

The report raised serious political questions which not so long ago would have sparked accusations by Sinn Fein that the SDLP's acceptance of the RUC made them apologists for British injustice and party to a British regime which was inherently irreformable. Now the party loudly criticizes RUC-PSNI collusion as British state terrorism but then hurriedly jumps to endorse the colluding RUC-PSNI state terrorists.

Rather than raise crucial questions and refuse to give formal ratification for the RUC-PSNI without satisfactory answers, the party seemed in haste to vote quickly, lest more revelations make the promised Sinn Fein backing of the RUC-PSNI undeliverable. The questions and political implications however like the victims will not be forgotten.

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How high up the British chain of command does complicity with the loyalist death squads extend? Was it merely the RUC operational command in the Mount Vernon UVF area investigated by O'Loan which was guilty? Was this an aberration or isolated instance confined to the local RUC operational command which somehow ran amok unbeknownst to their RUC superiors, much less top levels within the British government? Were its tactics perhaps copycatted by a few rogue agents in other areas? Are all other sections of the constabulary untainted or purged of collusion by Orde's self-described root and branch reform?

### ALTERNATIVE

Is the truth far more sinister? Were the O'Loan findings actually the tip of an iceberg of crown collusion in murders like that of Liam Ryan and hundreds more, sanctioned and approved from the top within British rule? Was this the outworking of a policy of planned and premeditated use of what British military theorist Frank Kitson called counter gangs? Was this a coordinated strategy used by the British across the six counties and indeed when deemed appropriate extended to Dublin, Buncrana, and Monaghan? Did some who today command and direct the RUC-PSNI crown constabulary with the backing of Sinn Fein, gain promotion through the ranks by their willingness and ability in directing loyalist murder gangs? What are the political implications if Sinn Fein has embraced a crown constabulary which is thusly commanded, molded and trained as its latest installment payment of the price of admission to Paisley's Stormont?

### PATTERN

One need only take a cursory glance at the intricate pattern seen by nationalists and Republicans over and over again , across the six counties and beyond for decades to answer these questions. At times and especially early in the struggle, the targets would be random Catholics who could often be picked up and taken to the killing ground without fear of RUC intervention.

Often the targeting followed the same nightmare pattern seen in the murder of Liam Ryan. Nationalist areas would be heavily patrolled for hours or days. Homes would sometimes be entered, searched and mapped. Movements were carefully monitored. Suddenly the area would clear. Sectarian killers would arrive with precise information that indicated a level of scouting well beyond the capability of the loyalists. The assassins would then withdraw and travel home without arrest, capture or interference by the RUC with its many agents and British troop backed patrols. The RUC would arrive, feign sympathy and take little action other than perhaps harassing the mourners.

This integrated pattern was not limited to Mt Vernon or Ardboe but was seen again and again right across the north. It involved picking and pinpointing victims. RUC and British troop patrols would often be assigned to saturate and surveil locations. Loyalists would seem to be scouted and guided to targets in hostile and unfamiliar areas. Routes had to be cleared by an OOB or out of bounds notice, directing all

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crown force units that a special operation was underway and that all others should keep clear. Those RUC assigned to investigate such murders would be advised not to trouble themselves or if necessary to conduct a whitewash.

In some instances such as the murder of courageous solicitor Rosemary Nelson, explosives were supplied. At other times, such as the murder of another courageous civil rights solicitor Pat Finucane, there was a joint operation between various branches of the crown forces, with the intelligence provided by a British Army agent, weapons by an RUC agent etc

On special occasions, the crown through its RUC directed loyalist murder gangs sanctioned strikes across the border. Eddie Fullerton would be killed in Bunrana. The Dublin and Monaghan bombings were carried out by crown agents with crown provided explosives and are still being covered-up by Britain's refusal to cooperate with a Dublin government inquiry.

### **SANCTIONED**

How could crown collusion in so many murders at such a high level of cooperation over so wide an area and so long a period been perpetrated without the continuing sanction of the commanders of all British forces including the RUC? Does anyone seriously suggest that such murders could have been committed without the approval of the British direct rulers, cabinet and prime ministers? Does anyone believe that the crown would not have detected a pattern, ordered a halt and made examples if things were not going according to plan? Much like the Diplock courts which fulfilled Kitson's call for kangaroo courts to jail unwanted political opponents, rather than safeguards of justice, the loyalist murder gangs were used as counter-gangs by the crown to murder and terrorize. Those who actually directed the murder and terror were the same RUC who orchestrated the perjury and jailing of other victims. Those RUC most proficient and willing to perform such duties were promoted . Now they command a RUC-PSNI gifted with the formal backing and endorsement of Sinn Fein. Some will be invited to job fairs in Republican areas soliciting recruits to be assigned to their charge to be molded and trained.

### **TIMING**

The timing of the O'Loan report was no accident. The delays hearken back to stalled requests for funding in 2003. A preliminary report was completed in September 2005. Supplementary reports were issued in March 2006 and October 2006. Some have claimed that British stalling tactics backfired and delayed the publication of the report until an untimely few days before the Sinn Fein vote.

In fact Republican cynics believe that the report may have been precisely timed for release in accordance with British interests. The British wanted a pledge of endorsement for those enforcing British law in Ireland emblematic of all the political cover that the mantle of Sinn Fein acceptance would bring to the crown constabulary. Such an endorsement followed by revelations of crown collusion in

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the murders of nationalists, could have led to charges of fraud and cover-up . Instead the party embraced the RUC-PSNI with all of its blemishes and blood stains. Compelling questions about the numbers of serving constables involved in collusion or about other RUC-PSNI command areas were not asked nor deemed important enough to delay the vote owing to constraints of a British timetable or concerns about the potential impact of the answers.

## **INSPIRED**

Republicans, who will not endorse the RUC-PSNI with its blemishes and blood stains, are now asking other questions. Who has put manners on whom? Are we turning the page or have some Republicans been turned? Are we pulling the levers of safeguards and reforming the crown constabulary from within as another step towards a re-united Ireland, or have some been pulled by the levers of a British establishment copper-fastening its rule in Ireland? How can Sinn Fein expect the British to take seriously any party led campaign on behalf of the victims of crown collusion with loyalist murder squads, when the party has just voted to bestow its mantle of acceptance on the RUC-PSNI who colluded with loyalist murder squads? What hoops will the party not jump at the behest of the DUP to enter a Paisley led Stormont or to get back each time Paisley steps in and out of Stormont like Lanigan's Ball? Will full cooperation with the RUC-PSNI mean that Raymond Gilmore is welcome but that Concerned Republicans who just say no to the RUC-PSNI are not?

These like the questions about RUC-PSNI collusion murders will not be forgotten or silenced!

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