



The blanket

A Journal of Protest and Dissent

Collusion: Dirty War Crime

Mick Hall • 28 January 2007

There is a clip in one of Peter Taylor's films about Loyalism in which a leading Loyalist says the following or something very similar, "God did not sprinkle looney dust over our community one night and the next day we woke up and went on the rampage, killing and maiming any Catholics we came across." Indeed they did not. Reading the NI Police Ombudswoman Nuala O'Loan's conclusions after her enquiry into collusion between the Mount Vernon UVF and members of the RUC Special Branch, it becomes pretty clear the only looney dust that was contributed to what was already a highly combustible situation was put there by the UK Security Forces, and with the full knowledge of powerful people within the heart of the UK State apparatus, who coldly calculated that if enough innocent working class Catholics were murdered, it just might turn their community against the PIRA or at the very least put pressure upon its Army Council to enter into peace talks.

Thus the order went down the Security Forces' chain of command to entice the more psychotic members of the UVF and UFF to set up murder gangs. The quid-pro-quo was to be immunity; not only for the murders these people carried out on behalf of their new patrons, but also for their criminal activities as a whole. Plus, if their collars were felt by an over keen or off message member of the RUC, the terrorist would be babysat throughout their ordeal. An additional sweetener was offered up to keep these depraved warriors of the UK State on side. They would be offered the opportunity to rake in a tidy sum by touting on their own community. Not being the type of people to look a gift horse in the mouth, by the time the armed conflict came to a halt in 1997, two thirds of the leadership of the loyalist paramilitaries were in the pay as registered touts of either the RUC/PSNI, FRU or MI5.

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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Shamefully, in the past week it is becoming increasingly clear that it is not in the interest of the north's main political parties to demand a public enquiry into security force collusion in criminality. Thus we have had the despicable spectacle of the Unionist parties, who have based themselves throughout the troubles on supporting the rule of law, denigrating Nuala O'Loan and the report she has issued, whilst defending those serving PSNI officers who have refused to be questioned by the Ombudsman's officials. This is today's equivalent of cheering on those members of the security forces who burned down the Stevens inquiry team's Carrickfergus office as they were about to arrest Brian Nelson, one of the FRU's [British army intel unit] key agents who was acting as an intelligence officer for the Ulster Freedom Fighters.

Sinn Fein, despite much huffing and puffing down the years on the issue of State collusion in criminality, has been little better. Seemingly they are fearful if they're successful in demanding an inquiry, it will undoubtedly open up the question of the degree of collusion that took place between the security forces and rogue members of the PIRA. What we have is both the Northern Irish media and its new political establishment, the DUP and SF, jointly attempting to move collusion into the dustbin of history. All so that they can, they claim, move on and get to work tackling the real problems the people of the north face in the here and now.

Such an argument is complete and utter hogwash. A society that does not understand and learn from its past is doomed to repeat it. It looks very much like the political strategy that led to the UK's security forces colluding in criminality with mass murderers is once again taking place, only this time it is not in Ireland but Iraq. Could it be that the security services have exported their evil strategy from the north of Ireland to the meat grinder of a society that is post invasion Iraq?

Almost every day Shia Death Squads are going about their business killing scores of Iraqis, who just happen to be Sunni Muslims. The UK media, much as it did when something similar happened to working class Catholics in the north of Ireland, puts these murders down to psychotic terrorists working independently of the main parties and who it is claimed are bent on provoking civil war.

But if we take a step back, the main insurgency against US/UK forces comes from within the Sunni community of Iraq, whilst the murder gangs are almost exclusively Shia. Admittedly, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian and Al Qaeda leader in Iraq, set the whole thing in motion, but he is no longer alive and since his demise Sunni insurgents have been ordered by their leaderships not to participate in sectarian attacks on the Shia Iraqis. [It looks increasingly like al-Zarqawi may have been a CIA asset all along]

It is also a fact that these Shia Death Squads are linked with the Iraqi Interior Ministry, which is responsible for the Iraqi police and numerous intelligence organizations (which act as liaison bottlenecks with the US/UK occupation authorities). Just as the Death Squads in the north were undoubtedly linked to the RUC Special Branch, and in all probability MI5 and army Intel, something similar may well be occurring in Iraq. There is a commonality between current events in

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Iraq and what happened in NI back in the 1980s early 90s.

This is yet another reason why there must be a public enquiry, or at the very least a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which will look into the whole sorry business of UK State collusion with death squads in the north of Ireland — no matter if those involved are serving members of the PSNI, or any other State institution, or were members of the UDA, UVF or IRA.

If the UK State is not prepared to order such an inquiry, due to the similarity of what went on in the north with what is occurring in Iraq today, the international community has a duty to instigate such an inquiry. For collusion in murder by a State is surely a war crime, and there is one thing that all the main political parties in the north now appear to agree on: that the frightful years between 1969 and 1997 can now be described as a war.

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