



**“LETHAL ALLIES: British Collusion in Ireland” - Mercier Press**



The Pat Finucane Centre appeals to everyone on the island of Ireland carefully to consider the implications of its newly-published book which makes clear collusion was systemic in Mid-Ulster and the border region during the 1970s.

We believe both communities suffered as collusion merely served to fuel the conflict. Both communities, on both sides of the border, also stand to gain an understanding of our shared history,

The PFC believes there is now an incontrovertible case for an agreed truth-recovery process which has the potential to heal the divisions which continue to foster hostility between our communities.

Although the book focuses on 120+ specific victims and their families, it also points out that individual RUC officers and UDR soldiers were killed as Catholic confidence in the rule of law collapsed.

The PFC firmly believes that the facts revealed in the book would never have been made public without the skill and integrity of individual HET officers. We believe that, had the PSNI re-investigated these cases, the truth would have remained buried in RUC files. The limited independence enjoyed by the HET has been steadily undermined by the PSNI.

Although the HET was always a flawed and inadequate mechanism for investigating the past (and must now urgently be replaced with a more independent and accountable process) the PSNI will never command the confidence of the whole community in investigating the past and is not compliant with European human rights law on investigating the past.

+++++

**MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF “LETHAL ALLIES”**

“Lethal Allies: British Collusion in Ireland” is the outcome of 15 years of research by the PFC alongside over 120 families who were bereaved between 1972 and 1976. Our research concludes there was systemic collusion between security forces and the UVF at that time in Mid-Ulster and in cross-border loyalist attacks.

Collusion is illegal (under both domestic and international law) and clearly unethical - but it also fuelled the conflict as Catholic confidence in the RUC and UDR collapsed leading to public support, or tacit toleration, of violent republicanism.

This led directly to the deaths of RUC and UDR men as well as the 120-plus Catholic civilians on whom the book focuses.

“Lethal Allies” tells how (various permutations of) a gang of loyalist paramilitaries killed 120 people (mainly nationalists) on both sides of the border.



It establishes beyond doubt that a significant number of the gang were also serving members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR).<sup>1</sup>

The book analyses RUC investigations, links the killings through ballistic and other forensic evidence and explains how the courts dealt with whatever charges were brought.

Where legally possible, it names the perpetrators using previously-unpublished reports prepared for all the families by the Historic Enquiries Team who relied on documentation direct from RUC files.

“Lethal Allies” tells the story of the victims and the effects (psychological, emotional, financial) on bereaved families.

It reflects on the inevitable outcome of these events on the support or toleration given by the Catholic/nationalist community to the aims and methods of the Irish Republican Army.

It analyses the status of targeted victims, finding that in all but one case they were “upwardly-mobile” Catholics who were – either through their own enterprise or hard work – lifting their economic and political aspirations.

At least six of the victims were linked to the SDLP. Only one had any republican links (he was shot dead on the southern side of the border in County Monaghan).

The book recalls the day when 34 people were murdered in Dublin and Monaghan and names those the PFC believes were responsible, critiquing the Irish police (Garda) response and analysing the reports of the investigations ordered by the Irish government under Mr. Justice Henry Barron.

The book also includes a chapter analysing loyalist motivations and methods (“Her Majesty’s Murderers”). It also provides brief biographical details of the main paramilitary personnel.

One chapter (“From Dhofar to Armagh”) recounts the activities of British state forces in successive colonial wars (in Malaya, Palestine, Cyprus, Kenya, Aden etc) drawing parallels with the Irish experience.

It also critiques the thinking of leading British military theorists of counter-insurgency (such as General Sir Frank Kitson and Professor Richard Clutterbuck) and cites opposing theories from human rights, legal and academic sources.

It looks to the future as over 20 families have, as a result of HET reports and other research, now taken formal complaints to the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. Their cases are pending as is litigation in the High Court against the Chief Constable of the PSNI.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ten RUC officers, 2 auxiliary police officers, 10 UDR soldiers, 1 member of the Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve and 2 British Army soldiers, mostly named in “Lethal Allies”



**“Lethal Allies” concludes it can be demonstrated, beyond a reasonable doubt, that there was systemic collusion in these cases and that such denials of human rights never contribute towards peace but merely serve to fuel conflict.**

It is counter-intuitive to suggest that the levels of collusion exposed in this book was a phenomenon limited to the murder triangle and border region. As one HET report found,

‘Members of the Nationalist community had been making allegations of widespread involvement and collusion by members of the security forces with loyalist paramilitaries. These claims were ridiculed, and individual instances previously uncovered had been dismissed by reference to ‘rotten apples’. This investigation in 1978 revealed a much more disturbing picture; the Rock Bar case had the potential to validate claims of widespread and routine collusion.’

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:**

**IRELAND: PATRICK DUNPHY (MERCIER PRESS) +353 87 929 9313**

**BRITAIN: KATE SHEPHERD (OXFORD PUBLICITY PARTNERSHIP) +44 1327 357770**

**PAUL O’CONNOR (PFC) +44 7989 323418**

**ALAN BRECKNELL (PFC) +44 7920 528509**

ends