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Features

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## Haddock on the bottom rung of collusion ladder

North Belfast News

By Mark Thompson

19/01/2007

The Ombudsman's report into Mark Haddock, 'Operation Ballast', once again puts the spotlight on state collusion in over 20 murders. It follows the Irish government Oireachtas Committee Report – the Barron Inquiry into Dublin/Monaghan bombings – the Glenane Report into collusion in Mid-Ulster's murder triangle – and the three reports by John Stevens. This aside from the almost monthly occurrence of collusion being evidenced by bereaved families.

However, the focus should not just be Mark Haddock. He was the dime a dozen killer at the bottom of the chain.

Evidence about collusion to date consistently points to a highly-sophisticated British government political and military policy of infiltration of loyalism for the purposes of murdering Irish nationals.

The irony is that Haddock killed numerous unionists. It is evident the British authorities permitted these killings.

Irrespective of whoever was killed human rights must be defended and culpability established beyond the role of Haddock and his handlers. Independent investigations must be pursued to the highest authority especially within the British Cabinet and MI5 establishment in Whitehall that sanctioned that policy. To concentrate only on Haddock, while important, would be an error and a grave injustice.

Since April 2003 the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) has had 25 files relating to members of RUC Special Branch and the British army's Force Research Unit (FRU) including one relating to a civilian – loyalist.

At the time of the limited publication of Stevens' Report in April 2003 the British Government said that; '...it's important that the criminal justice process takes its course.' It is equally evident that they have worked to prevent and frustrate due process.

This should not surprise us. Much effort has been deployed to keep the lid on collusion including the Inquiries Act 2005 that is specifically about preventing an inquiry into the murder of Pat Finucane.

Since 2003 there have been no prosecutions taken and the PPS is being strategically used as a last line of defence for 'British national interests' – hiding the truth about Britain's dirty war in Ireland including those responsible for running it.

We need to go right to the heart of British government policy on collusion.

We equally need to end the beyond scrutiny status of the PPS which is part and parcel of the policy of collusion acting against due process.

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We also need to ask why is this current British government going to extreme lengths to protect a Tory regime that refined and developed the strategic policy of collusion during the mid 1980s onwards? The full truth about all the activities in which RUC Special Branch, and secretive military units such as FRU, must be exposed and those ultimately responsible held accountable. The activities of Mark Haddock are particularly disturbing. Obvious questions are did the PSNI continue to run him as an agent and was the Chief Constable Hugh Orde made aware of his activities when he took over the reins? All of these issues must be clarified and underline the importance of comprehensively addressing the full truth about collusion before it further contaminates future policing. Now is the time for truth and accountability. Transitional justice requires this. Victims demand nothing less. Mark Thompson is the director of Relatives for Justice.

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