**BIRMINGHAM PUB BOMBINGS 21 NOVEMBER 1974.**

 **Preliminary discussions and matters of research**

**1. Introduction.**

The Birmingham Pub Bombings 21/11/1974 ‘BPB74’ in which 21 people were murdered has been the subject of legal proceedings in the Crown Court, Court of Appeal and a Coronial Inquest. It is not intended to go into detail at this point on all the above issues suffice to say the following,

(i) 6 men were convicted of the BPB74 in 1975 and were acquitted on Appeal and were freed on 14/03/1991,

(ii) The work of Chris Mullin detailed in his book, ‘Error of Judgment’ was instrumental in the B6 appeal. Mullins work is currently the subject on Court proceedings in Birmingham.

(iii) To date no-one has ever been convicted of the murders.

Chris Mullin’s material featured on persons X, Y and Z, Young Planter and a Seamus McLoughlin as being the real suspects involved in the BPB74.

The families supported by J421 are involved in communication with the Westmidlands Police and the Home Office regarding ongoing issues.

**2. Major-spectacular Atrocities 1972 to 1998 by PIRA**

This discussion focuses on Republican atrocities as it is suggested that the British Government has had a different approach to investigating and pursuing same as opposed to loyalist atrocities. (This does not take away from the murder carried out by the Loyalist state in collusion with the British state) The latter murders have been the subject of themed investigations by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland PONI,

(i) (a) OP Ballast Report 2007 police informants and members of a UVF unit in North Belfast and Newtownabbey and murders they committed,

(b) Loughlinisland Police Ombudsman Report 2016, revised 2020, and the wide remit and approach by the Ombudsman’s Office into the weapons used and the role and activities of Army Agent Brian Nelson,

© the Police Ombudsman’s 2022 report into Police Handling of certain Loyalist Paramilitary murders and attempted murders in the North West of Northern Ireland during the period 1989 to 1993,

(d) The Police Ombudsman’s report, Operation Achille 2022 into Police Handling of Loyalist Paramilitary murders and attempted murders in South Belfast in the period 1990-1998.

No such themed investigations has been carried out by the PONI into Republican atrocities from a themed and global approach.

**3. PIRA ‘Spectaculars’ 1972-1998 and the context of talks between PIRA and the British Government.**

From 1972 through to 1998 the following *‘spectacular’* incidents took place almost all at a time when the British Government were in talks with the PIRA.

Claudy Bombings 31/07/1972-9 dead-‘Bi-lateral talks’ on 7/07/1972 broke down by 14/07/1972.

Bloody Friday 21/07/1972 9 dead-----------------------------ditto------------------------------------------------------

Birmingham Pub Bombings 21/11/1974-21 dead-escalating violence in NI, opposition to the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act-the BPB74 on 21/11/1974 and at the time the NIEP and POT enacted.

Kingsmill Massacre 05/01/1976-10 dead-as a result of the Feakle Talks-clergy-PIRA suspected Gove input-December 1974 a ceasefire was declared in 1975 however Kingsmill murders broke the ceasefire on 5/1/1976.

Enniskillen Bombing 08/11/1987-11 dead-no known peace talks however communication between British Government and PIRA

Docklands Bombing 09/02/1996-2 dead-from 1989 British Government and PIRA communicating.

Omagh Bomb 15/08/1998 29 dead-Belfast Agreement-peace.

**4. Suggested Research Area**

It is suggested that research areas in the following would be well merited due to the fact that there has been a plethora of TV interviews, documentaries, Court hearings into and around those suspected of carrying out the BPB74 and the circumstances into the deaths. A question continues to sit within the murders of the 21, Did the police know they had got some or all of the wrong suspects? If they did know this, was it at the time of the arrest of the B6 or after?

Therefore 2 areas of research which it is suggested has influenced how the British Government continues to deal with the BPB74 murders

**(i)** British Security Policy in respect of Terrorism 1969-1998-was the British Government constantly in peace talks with PIRA, was the BPB74 allowed to take place with the knowledge of the state within a policy to eventually get a peace deal or to infiltrate PIRA at Army Council level which would eventually lead to an outcome the British Government wanted-however atrocities such as BPB74 was the collateral damage as well as the other incidents noted above?

**(ii)** British Security Policy 1998 to 2022-in respect of the BPB74 - is there a difference in how the Government Security Services-Police investigated the BPB74 as opposed to loyalist atrocities post the Belfast Agreement.

**(iii)** Research into the Crown Court Trial in 1975 of the Birmingham 6 and the subsequent appeals, focusing on evidential matters in all cases and concluding if the B6 should have ever been convicted of the BPB74 and was there political Government interference into the investigation into the murders as a result of the BPB74?

**5. Conclusion.**

On speaking to J421 family members they cannot understand the different approach/investigation into the murder of their loved ones, did the Government/police and other statutory bodies know on 21/11/1974 who actually bombed Birmingham? Families believe they did but allowed 6 innocents to be incarcerated for 16 years to satisfy public opinion and service a deeper state security policy at the time of the bombings.

The families have sat through an Inquest which was not allowed to touch on the perpetrators issue and matters pertaining to same was out of scope of the Inquest.

On their journey they have believed there is something more orchestrated at deep state level which has resulted in the murders of their loved ones not being properly investigated, a miscarriage of justice and protection of those who carried out the bombings to serve a state policy. Therefore and thus the suggested areas of research.