Our Loved Ones

Jim McCann – 19 year old Jim was the youngest of eight children and an upholsterer. Jim had survived a murder attempt only a few months earlier by a British army sniper when he was shot in the back and left for dead.

Jim Sloan – Jim was the second oldest of 7 children and was 19 years old when killed. He was a cooking apprentice. Like his friend Jim McCann, he had also been a victim of conflict related assaults. Married to Winnie only five weeks earlier Jim never knew his new bride was pregnant and was to have a son born later in 1973.

Tony ‘TC’ Campbell – TC was murdered on the night of his 19th birthday. He was one of five children. He was a keen footballer, good looking and very popular. TC was murdered on his way home after a night out celebrating his birthday in Newington youth club’s disco. His body received 17 bullet wounds.

Brendan ‘Fat’ Maguire – 32 year old Brendan was the youngest of seven children. He worked on Belfast Docks and was well liked by his work colleagues. He lost his life trying to assist the injured.

John Loughran – An Asphalter by trade 33 year old John was one of seven children. Married to Anne they had three children and were expecting their eighth child when killed. John also murdered by loyalists in 1979. The Inquiry Panel were deeply shocked by the state’s failure to investigate the killings and the wounding. The Inquiry Panel further highlighted that serious questions still remain around collusion in the killings of Jim Sloan and Jim McCann, asserting that there is evidence that the occupants of the car were military personnel.

What becomes clear in the New Lodge Six killings is a pattern of state cover-up. In that sense the Community Inquiry highlighted wider questions about the nature of the conflict and the extent of state criminality.

The full report can be accessed at http://www.thenewlodge.com/history/newlodgeSix.html. This report contains the truth.

What Now?

Our society needs a comprehensive truth recovery mechanism which supports families to uncover the truth of what happened to their loved ones. In the absence of any such truth process, and a lack of will from the British government to engage seriously in the debate the six families affected by this egregious crime and the perpetuation of the lies that surround it are left with only questions. The PSNI Historic Inquiries Team are not independent and have refused to engage the six killings as one incident.

The families having placed their report and the findings of the community inquiry in the public domain for ten years and having received no acknowledgement whatsoever will now seek recourse through the domestic legal system. This is an imperfect way forward. However no other recourse is available.

Thank You

The families would like to thank the New Lodge Memorial Committee and the original New Lodge 6 Time for Truth Committee and David Baker for hosting www.thenewlodge.com.
On the night and early morning of the 3rd and 4th of February 1973, six men were shot dead in New Lodge area of North Belfast and one man gravely wounded. Two of these men - Jim Sloan and Jim McCann - were killed in a “drive-by” shooting at the top of the New Lodge Road at around 11pm. Within minutes of this British forces opened fire on the junction of New Lodge Road and Edlingham Street from both the direction of Duncairn Gardens and from the British military observation posts on top of the flats in the New Lodge Road. Tony ‘TC’ Campbell, Brendan ‘Fat’ Maguire, John Loughran and Ambrose Hardy were killed in these attacks with Charlie Carson severely wounded.

At the time, the British army stated that six gunmen had been killed and one wounded in a “gunbattle” with their troops in the New Lodge area of North Belfast. Witness statements from the local community and the families of the six men directly contradict this account of events. Eyewitnesses maintain that all of these men were unarmed and were attacked without provocation. Indeed, these eyewitnesses maintain that all of the six men were either out for a Saturday night or while assisting the injured. These events were never properly investigated. There has never been a full accounting of this tragedy.

One in ten of those killed during the years of conflict in the North of Ireland was killed by the state. Very few British army, RUC or other state actors were ever charged with murder, punished or disciplined for what they did. The killings were carried out with impunity. It is equally true that many others from the neighbouring Unionist and Protestant communities lost their lives during the conflict - these losses too bring a painful sense of loss that must be acknowledged. Very over 100 lives lost by a combination of loyalist and British state forces - the Greater New Lodge community experience speaks to a story of state execution, collusion and naked sectarian killings over a 35 year period. This started with the death of Patrick Corry who died four months after being hit on the head with batons by a Royal Ulster Constabulary patrol in 1969; through to the McGurk’s Bar Bombing in December 1971, when 15 people were killed, and the killing of 18 year old Peter McBride by the British army on 4 September 1992. The New Lodge community has a particular conflict narrative that remains to be told - this includes lives lost, imprisonment and discrimination.

It is extremely difficult to accurately convey the enormity of the devastation and pain of lives lost in the conflict. The New Lodge community takes inspiration from families in Ballymurphy, Derry, the Ormeau Road and Loughinisland who also campaign to expose state murder. We are bound in common pursuit of truth and justice.

Relatives for Justice provide an holistic range of support services for the bereaved and injured of our conflict. This includes legal/advocacy and emotional/wellbeing support. Please contact us if you need advice or someone to talk to about any issues this leaflet might raise for you.

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