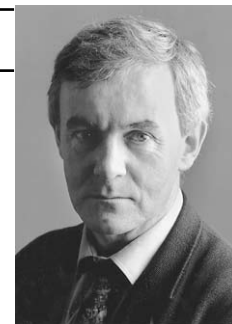


---

## Interview: Sean McPhilemy

---



# Book on British terror in N. Ireland banned in Britain

*In our July 24 issue, EIR reviewed The Committee: Political Assassination in Northern Ireland, a book in which author Sean McPhilemy documents collusion between prominent “citizens above suspicion” in the Protestant community in Northern Ireland (working through a private group called “The Committee”), and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), in planning and carrying out the murder of Catholics and/or Republican paramilitaries. On July 20, Jeffrey Steinberg and Mary Jane Freeman interviewed McPhilemy in Washington, D.C., as he began a ten-city U.S. tour to promote his book.*

**EIR:** Two critical questions remain to be answered after reading your book: How high up does the coordination and control go between the RUC, loyalist paramilitaries, and “The Committee”? And, is it conceivable that British intelligence was unaware of all of these events?

**McPhilemy:** I see the book as phase one. It is an interim report on a murder conspiracy conducted by what might be called the elite, the security elite, in Northern Ireland. You’ve got to put yourself back to what it was like in 1989, 1990, 1991. The IRA [Irish Republican Army] terror campaign had been going on for about 22 years. From the Loyalist perspective, the IRA had succeeded in forcing the British government into signing the Anglo-Irish agreement, which, for the first time, gave Dublin, as a right, to be consulted in the way the province of Northern Ireland is governed. They saw that agreement, correctly, as a decisive transformation of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland. So, what you might call the Ulstermen — the people who had run the province for their own benefit from 1920 — decided that they should look forward to the day when the ultimate betrayal by Britain would come.

Now, there are 13,000 people in the RUC. There’s an additional 30,000 military presence back then. So, to answer your question, is it conceivable? My own judgment is that it is *inconceivable* that British intelligence is unaware of a group that is meeting every four to six weeks to organize murder of Republicans.

Now, the Committee made one very bad mistake. They had in their midst a man who revealed the existence of a murder conspiracy to a national television network — a pretty stupid thing to do.

The Committee’s second bit of misfortune was that this man blurted it out to my company, because once I heard it, I appreciated the significance of the story, and I was determined I would pursue it until the truth came out. So, I think it is a most important question: How high up did the knowledge go? In the book, there is a chapter called “Ken Kerr.” Kerr and I were in touch for about 18 months. He reported that he was a double-agent on the Committee working for British intelligence. I would be astounded if there wasn’t someone working on that Committee working for British intelligence, whether it was Ken Kerr or someone else. And, I would even go so far as to say, it is highly unlikely that they relied on just one member.

**EIR:** The book made a tantalizing, but brief reference to a kind of triangle of gun- and drug-running that financed the death squads in Northern Ireland, involving South Africa and certain Israeli networks. Is there anything more you can say on that?

**McPhilemy:** Jim Sands, the source, told me that he had only been abroad once, and that was to Israel on a weapons expedition. This man Sands is uneducated, but cunning, and clearly in a supportive role, like a message boy, for more important people. He told us that a member of the Committee ran an insurance company in Portadown, which was the conduit for the money to South Africa which financed the importation of weapons. It is not disputed that there was a huge consignment of weapons in 1987 financed by a bank robbery.

**EIR:** When you say it is not disputed, what is the evidence?

**McPhilemy:** The evidence is that the police caught one man with some of these rifles. But, most of the consignment mysteriously made its way to where it was intended. It is a complicated story. I decided to be very focussed, and to rely on the actual direct testimony of my source. I thought the best way to persuade people of the truth of the story, was to let them hear what I had heard, by way of copious quotations from this man about meetings that he had attended. This way, you read the first-hand testimony of a man who had participated in a murder conspiracy. I drew a distinction between events he said he witnessed, and the reports he gave us of, let us say, attacks themselves, because he was more of a political strategist and not a military type, so he didn’t go on any of the

attacks. Similarly, I doubt very much that he would have been involved in any of the money laundering or bank robberies or anything like that. He took part in the political discussions that directed the operations.

**EIR:** I don't know if you saw some recent news articles in which a former high-ranking Israeli intelligence official named Rafi Eytan said that he had been brought in by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, apparently in the early 1980s, to bring Israeli hit squads and similar capabilities to bear against the IRA in Northern Ireland. It seems to me that it buttresses the story-line in your book.

**McPhilemy:** Well, it certainly is not out of character with Margaret Thatcher, that she would have considered such a thing.

**EIR:** You raise in the book the Brian Nelson case, which was featured earlier this year in the British press. There are so many parallels between the Nelson case, his being provided RUC Special Branch files to facilitate hits on Republicans, and the *modus operandi* of the Committee—the differences being the time frame, and that the British Army was directly involved in the Nelson caper instead of the RUC.

**McPhilemy:** One point Sands forcefully made, in essence, was: “We don't trust the Brits.” Meaning, “We are Ulster Protestants, and we are preparing for an independent Ulster because we don't trust them. Look, they signed the Anglo-Irish agreement,” so he said. “Anything we learn from British intelligence or its sources, such as information they learned from Nelson, we will use. But it is a one-way flow. We don't let any of these people come to Committee meetings.” Of course, Sands didn't know who might be present at those meetings. First of all, he didn't know the names of everyone. But even those who did know the names, like Billy Abernethy—presumably, Abernethy, the chairman, would have known the identity of everybody. That does not mean that British intelligence wouldn't have somebody present.

However, to answer your point directly, we quizzed Sands about the Pat Finucane murder. He said that documents had made their way, via Brian Nelson, to the Committee. But, he told us, Nelson was never invited to attend a meeting. Yet these documents were used to help the Committee come to the conclusion that Pat Finucane was too close to the IRA, and that he should be murdered. They then decided to murder him. Sands was quite specific about the Finaghy Orange Hall meeting at the end of January 1989, where the decision was taken.

It is very simple, in a way, this book of mine. At its core, it sets in context the story of this group. And my source on it, I'm certain, was telling the truth. He didn't have the intellectual capacity to invent and fabricate as he would have had to do. It was an immense piece of good fortune to have found him. Fortunately, all the conversations, the audio and video, are in existence. These will be provided to my attorney in

New York, who is dealing with the Prentice brothers' lawsuit against me filed here in the United States. There are seven videotapes with Sands talking directly in front of the camera, talking about all the murders that he helped to plan, with the people listed in my book, and others.

Now, I have survived seven years of black propaganda against me. I'm perfectly capable of surviving another few years, until the whole story is out.

**EIR:** It says in the book that Abernethy was the head of the Belfast office of the National Westminster Bank, which is a subsidiary of—

**McPhilemy:** I didn't say he was the head. He's a senior manager.

**EIR:** Okay. What is his role there? What kind of responsibilities does he have? It is a rather important bank in the history of the oligarchy.

**McPhilemy:** Oh, it's a very important bank, the National Westminster Bank. It is intriguing to me, that since my book has come out here, two or three months ago, as far as I'm aware, nothing has been done about it. One of the interesting things is that the book has sold more than 20,000 copies. It has had extensive coverage both in the Irish community in the U.S. and in the nationalist papers in Ireland. But, you have total silence about the book on the BBC, on the other British television networks, as far as I'm aware. Up until now, no mainstream British news organization has referred to it at all. It is not as if I'm unknown, or that I don't have a track record.

**EIR:** When was your film production company, Box Productions, founded?

**McPhilemy:** In 1986. I have been a television producer for more than 20 years. I exposed an American entrepreneur in Belgravia, England, who was planning to export toxic waste to Africa. He departed from Belgravia shortly thereafter. I don't want to say more about it.

I also showed that the European Airbus A320, which was supposedly a superior aircraft to the Boeing 737, was relying upon unreliable software, and that it was going to crash, which it promptly did. There were fatal crashes in Strasbourg and Abstein on the German border, and at Bangalore, where everyone was killed. That was a successful investigation, which showed that the attempt to leap-frog Boeing by using untested technology was highly irresponsible. European Airbus was incandescent with rage against us, but I said, until these questions are answered, there will be a question mark over the safety of that aircraft. That shows you that we have, or had, a very wide remit.

**EIR:** Did you look into the Lockerbie disaster, the downing of Pan Am Flight 107 over Lockerbie, Scotland on Dec. 21, 1988, in which 270 people were killed?

**McPhilemy:** I'm still looking into the Lockerbie matter. I'm

most interested in it. I think I have a very significant lead. But that is for another day.

**EIR:** The Good Friday Agreement will bring into being a Commission on Policing, and the Tony Blair government has appointed Chris Patton to head it. Do you know if your evidence on the Committee is being considered by that Commission, or whether anyone will seriously look at the evidence, since they are now reevaluating the role of the RUC and how it should be structured?

**McPhilemy:** One of the most significant, and so far, unreported developments — and there is no reason why you couldn't break it as a news story — is that when I was investigating the Committee, I interviewed this man Ken Kerr. Kerr, unquestionably, was a member of this Committee. That was my own, and others', judgment, based on 18 months of conversation with Kerr. He knew all the people who are listed in the book, and many more. He's given me the names of police officers who were involved in the Committee. It is my view that a lot of what he gave us, which remains unpublished, is true. But, it was deliberately polluted with demonstrably false information which, if I had not been extremely cautious, would have sabotaged my whole project.

Part of that deception by Kerr involved extracting £5,000 from me. He told me, "I'll give you a tape recording of a Committee meeting," and further, a tape of "me reporting to my handler within British intelligence on the activities of the Committee, but I want money for it" — although he was clever enough not to specify how much. When I had established that the tape recording was a fake, I discussed it with my solicitor [attorney], and he said we ought to report the deception operation to the RUC, give them a copy of the tape, and see what they do.

The RUC, supposedly, carried out an inquiry, and they submitted a report to the director of public prosecutions in Northern Ireland. Last week, they informed us that there will be no prosecution. So, I infer from that that it is perfectly acceptable to the RUC and the director of public prosecutions, for a man to admit his involvement in multiple murders, unsolved murders, and to extract £5,000 from an investigative journalist, and it gets the green light from the authorities in Northern Ireland.

**EIR:** So, would it be fair to say that you don't place an enormous amount of confidence in Chris Patton's ability?

**McPhilemy:** I will be amazed if there is a serious investigation by the Patton inquiry into the allegations in my book. I believe that what we have is political management of a thorny issue, which is that the nationalist population of Northern Ireland do not trust the RUC.

**EIR:** The recent events around the Orange Order standoff at Drumcree have a character of cleaning out some of these networks. Indeed, some of the people named in your book, Mr. Monteith and Mr. Black, were arrested. Rev. Hugh Ross

was covered in the news expressing his hard-core "no surrender" position. Yet, all this Orange Order activity has been isolated in a certain way, and the RUC came off looking good, in terms of the way it handled the standoff. The other two things in that profile are the death of Billy "King Rat" Wright and Robin "the Jackal" Jackson.

**McPhilemy:** Yes, let me just — this is all very complicated material, as you know. So, we have to just disentangle these things. The first thing to say about Sands, is that he gave us 19 names back in 1991. The RUC responded to the revelations, condemning them as "outrageous." As I say in the book, it is not my allegations that are outrageous, but the facts themselves.

We asked, Channel 4 asked, Box Productions asked for a public inquiry. The inquiry was put in the hands of the RUC itself. Far from arresting anybody, the RUC turned 'round and said that the whole program was a "hoax." Further, that the hoaxster was Sean McPhilemy. This was amplified by the *Sunday Times*, and millions of readers read how the British television audience, and the wider public, had been hoaxed, by me. They also said in their report to Channel 4 that some of these names do not exist. But, it now turns out that they *all* exist. It's true that a man called Cecil Kirkpatrick, mentioned in our dossier, did not exist. But, they failed to tell Channel 4 that there was a man called Cecil Kilpatrick that existed, and he was on the executive of the Orange Order, and the Ulster Independence movement. It's also true that there's no Will Davison. But, there *is* a Will Davidson. So you can see, they are clutching at straws to escape from the evidence.

Sands told us of 19 murder conspirators. But he also told us, most significantly, that the whole operation is managed by an illegal police force within the RUC, run by a group called the Inner Circle. There has been no investigation of that, and I wager there will be no investigation of that by Chris Patton, even if he had the resources, because it would lead to the abolition of the RUC, which I discovered to be, in large part, a terrorist organization, not a police force.

**EIR:** Do you believe that there is an effort under way, at the same time that the attempt to discredit you escalates in the court and so on, to engage in damage control, because the Committee operation does stand exposed, by forcefully eliminating some of the people, and perhaps taking some of the leaders and putting them in jail or —

**McPhilemy:** Well, as you rightly say, three of the hit-men are gone. Billy Wright was murdered, very publicly —

**EIR:** — and quite suspiciously —

**McPhilemy:** — and very suspiciously, in the Maze prison. We were told that Robin Jackson was dying of lung cancer. I don't think anybody was in a position to say whether it was true or false. The next thing we hear is that he's dead and buried. Died on a Saturday, buried on a Monday, and I've discovered that the undertakers were not local. They came from many miles away. It is deeply suspicious how it can all

be done at such speed. Incidentally, I'm told, that one of those standing at the grave site as Jackson was lowered into the grave, was Monteith.

Then, a man named R.J. Kerr, who figures in my book —

**EIR:** — was blown up.

**McPhilemy:** Yes, was blown up. The suspicion now is that it was aviation fuel that was in the canister. As we know, it wouldn't be too difficult to — one small shot into a canister of that and you are vaporized.

Always ask: Who benefits? Who benefits from the death of these people? Well, all those who feared what they might reveal, benefit.

Let me just say. It is extraordinary that a mainstream journalist, which is what I am, should publish a book in the United States (which has had great success) about a murder conspiracy involving the State in Northern Ireland, and it has gone completely unreported in Britain. That in itself is a phenomenon, I believe. It is such a small world now. On the internet, there is a whole website devoted to that book. It has become a political matter. In Northern Ireland, there isn't a lawyer or judge in Belfast, according to what I've been told, who has not read that book.

**EIR:** Do you have any indication of the response from British Prime Minister Tony Blair's, or Dr. Mo Mowlam's, his Northern Ireland secretary, circle to your book?

**McPhilemy:** No one has approached me and said, "That's an interesting book, could we talk about it? We would like to know how we could investigate these allegations, that the police have been helping to murder Catholics in Northern Ireland." It is a scandal! They are hoping that the book will go away. Well, it is a misplaced hope, because I'm here for a two-week promotion, in ten cities. I don't think Irish-Americans are going to allow this to be suppressed.

**EIR:** There is an active Irish-American caucus in Congress. Have you gotten any feedback from those quarters? This is something which bears very much on U.S. British policy. President Clinton has placed a certain foreign policy stake in his Presidency on moving the Northern Ireland issue off dead center. Obviously, the Kennedy family; Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) is a very prominent voice in Congress for the Irish-American community. Do you have any sense of where it might go here?

**McPhilemy:** You would be aware that the Good Friday Agreement is built upon the conversion of David Trimble, from Orange extremist into the De Klerk of Northern Ireland. But, you will also be aware, that in my book, I reveal that Trimble sat down with Billy Abernethy, the chairman of the Committee, at the time that that man was running death squads, murdering Trimble's own constituents. Can there be a lasting peace in Northern Ireland without a Truth Commission to establish the full facts about David Trimble? I doubt it. I believe that it will prove not to work unless the truth is exposed and confronted. Only then, when people say, "I'm



*British Prime Minister Tony Blair. From Blair's circles, McPhilemy comments, "no one has approached me and said, 'That's an interesting book; we would like to know how we could investigate these allegations that the police have been helping to murder Catholics in Northern Ireland.'"*

sorry. We must not do these things again," and they have reformed the police so that it cannot happen again — only then can you expect to have a lasting peace.

**EIR:** Have you gotten any feedback on the book from, say, the Sinn Fein people in Northern Ireland?

**McPhilemy:** I haven't talked directly to any of them. But, I understand that they have not found it unhelpful.

**EIR:** Why did Channel 4 back down from a libel action against the *Sunday Times* et al.?

**McPhilemy:** They told me, and I have no reason to doubt it, that they see the libel courts as a lottery, and thus not a desirable way of establishing the truth. One couldn't disagree with that, except that in the absence of any remote possibility of an official inquiry into these murders by the British government, it was the only forum that I thought I could possibly succeed in winning in. As it turns out, I was right. I won my libel action against the *Express*, and now the *Sunday Times* is in the frame for a enormous apology — and a check-writing ceremony, one hopes.

**EIR:** Then, of course, there is a venue here in the United States, which is another opportunity.

**McPhilemy:** Before we come to the action in the United States, I would like to make the point: If I win against the *Sunday Times*, which I'm confident I will, it will be accepted in the High Court that the program was not a hoax. That immediately puts the RUC in difficulties, because it was the RUC which was the first organization to accuse me of hoaxing. That is, that their verdict will be undermined. That, in turn, means that the original allegations presented in my documentary are back, unanswered. It is a controversy that will not go away.

**EIR:** Can your documentary be shown anywhere else, or must you wait for the legal proceedings to be completed?

**McPhilemy:** The copyright is owned by Channel 4, but there is no reason why it shouldn't be shown anywhere that Channel 4 is prepared to show it. My understanding is that Channel 4 won't show it.

**EIR:** What is your best hope for where things go from here? You've got the court actions in Britain and the United States. Obviously, this is a major factor in how the peace process proceeds in Northern Ireland.

**McPhilemy:** It is extremely important that I force the *Sunday Times* to apologize, and retract the hoax allegation. Once that has happened, it changes everything, because it will be established, beyond dispute, that the two newspapers, the *Sunday*

*Times* and the *Sunday Express*, had printed lies about the program, and about me. That then puts into play the allegations first disclosed by Sands, that the RUC was running death squads.

The success the book is having is already changing the landscape, and it is becoming extremely difficult to do a piece of spin-doctoring on the image of the RUC. It makes it impossible to pretend that the RUC is the vehicle for the future. In my opinion, it has got to be abolished. There will not be a peace settlement in Northern Ireland. The Catholics of Northern Ireland—and not just the Catholics, but since it was Catholics who were murdered—they will not give their allegiance to such a police force. That means that the Good Friday Agreement will not work, if the attempt is to play down the significance of what the RUC was involved in. Also, as I've said, Trimble will have to deal with the allegations in my book; that he sat down with Billy Abernethy and John McCullagh of Ulster Resistance while they were involved in the murder of his own constituents. It is not possible to pretend that the past did not exist. That, of course, is what the British government is trying to do, and therefore they are pretending that the book has not been published. I want to see it widely read everywhere, because until it is accepted that that is what happened, I will have failed in my objective, which is: to bring about a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland based on the truth.

**EIR SPECIAL REPORT**

# The True Story Behind The Fall of the House of Windsor

**Reprints of EIR's 1994-1997 groundbreaking exposés**

What political battles lie behind the assassination of Princess Diana? Why do 22 out of 30 top terrorist groups have their headquarters in London? *EIR's* series on the House of Windsor is indispensable for understanding today's news.

- The Coming Fall of the House of Windsor** (Oct. 28, 1994)
- The Sun Never Sets on the New British Empire** (May 24, 1996)
- Britain's "Invisible" Empire Unleashes the Dogs of War,** (Aug. 22, 1997)
- Epilogue: Can the House of Windsor Survive Diana's Death?** (Sept. 12, 1997)

Order from:

**EIR News Service**  
 P.O. Box 17390 Washington, D.C. 20041-0390 Order number EIR 97-004 **\$75**

