

# WHAT HAPPENED IN DERRY

**Fannion McCann**

DERTHY — 30th January, 1972. Patrick Joseph, beloved husband of Mrs Teresa Doherty, 15 Hamilton Street.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

DONAGHEY — 30th January, 1972. Gerald Vincent, beloved son of the late Charles and Barbara Donaghey, 27A Meenan Park (formerly of 24 Wellington Street).—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

BUDDY — 30th January, 1972, at Altnagelvin Hospital, John Francis of Wigan, 17½ years, third son of William and the late Maureen Doherty, 21 Central Drive, Derry.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

GILMOUR — 30th January, 1972. Hugh Plus, beloved son of Henry and Catherine Gilmour, 23 Garvan Place.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

KELLY — 30th January, 1972. Michael Gerald Kelly, beloved son of Geraldine.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

NASH — 30th January, 1972, at Altnagelvin Hospital, William, beloved son of Alexander and Bridie Nash.—R.I.P. His remains will be removed from his late residence, 38 Lawrence Gardens, Creggan, this (Tuesday) evening at 6.30 p.m. to St. Mary's Church. Requiem Mass tomorrow (Wednesday) at 10 a.m. Funeral to City Cemetery immediately afterwards. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

GRAY — 30th January, 1972, murdered by British forces of occupation, shot dead by a coward's bullet, James Joseph, eldest son of James and Sarah Gray, 20 Drumcliffe Avenue.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

MCDAID — 30th January, 1972. Michael, beloved son of John and Kathleen McDaid, 25 McConnell Street.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

MC ELHINNEY — 30th January, 1972. Kevin, beloved son of Laurence and Bessie Mc Elhinney, 44 Phillip Street.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

MCGUIGAN — 30th January, 1972, at Altnagelvin Hospital, Bernard, beloved husband of Brigid McGuigan.—R.I.P. His remains will be removed from his late residence, 20 Iniscarn Crescent, Creggan, this (Tuesday) evening at 6 p.m. to St. Mary's Church. Requiem Mass tomorrow (Wednesday) at 10 a.m. Funeral to City Cemetery immediately afterwards. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

YOUNG — 30th January, 1972, at Altnagelvin Hospital, Sean Plus, beloved son of Thomas and Elizabeth Young.—R.I.P. His remains will be removed from his late residence, 120 Westway, Creggan, this (Tuesday) evening at 6.15 p.m. to St. Mary's Church. Requiem Mass tomorrow (Wednesday) at 10 a.m. Funeral to City Cemetery immediately afterwards. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

MCKINNEY — 30th January, 1972, William Anthony, eldest son of Michael and Annie McKinney, 62 Westway.—R.I.P. Funeral arrangements later. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on his soul. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for him.

**Socialist  
Worker  
pamphlet**

ON 30 JANUARY thirteen people died on the streets of Derry. That day is now known throughout the world as 'Bloody Sunday'. The question remains: Why did it happen?

Did the IRA use the cover of 20,000 people to engage in a fight with the British Army? Did certain members of the British Army go beserk? Was it part of a military plan carefully worked out beforehand? This pamphlet attempts to set out the facts and to decide which of these three possibilities meets the case.

I cannot claim to be neutral in the argument. I was in Derry. I saw the army open fire. The facts as explained here may be unpalatable to many of the British people. They are, nonetheless, facts.

Nobody will convince me that the Paratroop regiment is incapable of discipline in crisis. The British people do not pay vast sums of money for the upkeep and training of a crack regiment that loses its head at the sight of 20,000 unarmed marchers.

I know the IRA did not open fire. That I am prepared to swear. That this pamphlet sets out to prove. We are then left with the question of the British Army's military strategy. The British people may believe 'their' army incapable of such cold-blooded murder.

Let's get the facts straight. The British Army may well be composed of their sons, men and boys from working-class families, individuals who join the army for many and varied reasons. That is not to say it is the army of the British people. It is the armed force of the British ruling class. It serves the political and economic interest of that class only.

The function of the British Army in Northern Ireland is not to maintain the peace. We have never, in the fifty years of Stormont rule, had peace. While Stormont exists we can never have peace or justice.

The British Army is not protecting the Catholic community. At this moment it is persecuting that community. What, then, is it protecting in Ireland? It is protecting the economic and political interests of British imperialism. It is protecting the investment of ICI, Chemstrand, Courtaulds, Rio Tinto Zinc and all the other parasitic capitalists making their wealth out of the labour of Irish people, North and South.

The same army, were it ordered to do so, would defend the power stations against miners' pickets. It would do so with equal candour and callousness. Whether you, the British people, are prepared to face and stomach the facts or not, the facts remain.

The ruling class respects and recognises only its own power. In defence of 'democracy' and 'peace' they will break every democratic right, every law, every concept of peace and justice they themselves ever set up. In Northern Ireland we have been batoned and beaten on the streets. We have been intimidated, interrogated, interned. We have had our Bloody Sunday. It has not been the first Bloody Sunday. It may not be the last.

What happened in Derry on 30 January was done in the name of the British people, in the interest of the British ruling class. Condone it or fight it. You cannot stand in the middle.

# Bernadette Devlin

*The factual material in this pamphlet is drawn from three main sources: numerous eye-witness accounts; published and unpublished newspaper accounts; and from the writer's personal involvement in the events described.*

***The account of the march and of the actual shooting will not be clear without constant reference to the maps. As is argued in the text, it is necessary to know exactly where things happened in order to understand why they happened.***

THIS PAMPHLET sets out to discover how and why the Civil Rights march in Derry on Sunday, 30 January, ended in a massacre.

The march left the assembly point late. It was scheduled to set off from Bishop's Field in Creggan, a Catholic housing estate, at 2pm, but the organisers waited for the arrival of outside contingents which were being delayed at army checkpoints at the edge of the town. It got under way, about 10,000 strong, at 2.50pm and headed down Southway towards the Brandywell area.

The march, a protest against internment, was in contravention of a government ban on parades. The marchers disregarded the ban, because they considered that this, too, was an example of political repression. It was assumed that at some point the army would stop the march reaching its objective—Guildhall Square. When this happened it was planned to go to Free Derry Corner, in the Bogside, to hold a meeting.

The march was led by a lorry from the back of which members of the executive of the Civil Rights Association tried, with limited success, to keep the ranks in neat marching order. The young marchers in the front ranks resented the hectoring tone of the instructions to 'keep in line, six abreast please', and cheerfully ignored them. They did not relish, anyway, taking instructions from an organiser from Belfast.

Derry has been the cockpit of the struggle in the Six Counties. It is a focus for Catholic discontent and republican sentiment. And Derry Catholic working-class teenagers are very conscious of the fact.

Singing, chanting and cheering the march swelled as it passed through Brandywell along the Lecky Road towards Bogside. As it turned into Westland Street, it had grown to 20,000 and by now there were hundreds in *front* of the lorry.

From Westland Street the column turned right into Lone Moor Road, then right again into Creggan Street. At this point it was leaving 'Free Derry', the 'no-go' area. The march was momentarily subdued in anticipation of an army attempt to stop it here. But soldiers in Windsor Terrace watched from fifty or sixty yards away, and made no attempt to intervene. Down Creggan Street, past another army detachment, and into William Street.

By this time the lorry, which was supposed to be in the lead, was about 50 yards behind the front line of marchers. In Lower William Street the front ranks came in sight of a formidable army barricade which blocked the street from wall to wall. They hesitated. The lorry was at the junction of William Street and Rossville Street.

The organisers realised that it would be impossible to drive the lorry through the dense crowd to the front, turn and lead the marchers along Rossville Street to Free Derry Corner. It turned directly into Rossville Street and most of the marchers behind followed.

Those who had been in front of the lorry and who now confronted the Army barricade were confused. The lorry had gone out of sight, and nobody knew what was supposed to happen now. After some parleying with army officers behind the barricade and aggressive demands to 'Let us through, it's our town',

stones and bottles were thrown at the soldiers. The army replied from behind the barricades with rubber bullets, CS gas, and a water-cannon spraying coloured dye.

In other contexts this might be counted a violent confrontation. But in William Street in Derry it was very much par for the course. A local Irish Times journalist commented: 'Ah well, another friendly wee Derry riot'.

It was now about 3.50pm; the first shots were about to be fired.

## 2

AT THE TIME of writing the Tribunal of Inquiry under Lord Widgery is beginning its hearings in Coleraine. Its effect is not to discover and publicise the truth, but to prevent the truth emerging.

Lord Widgery arrived in Coleraine to hold a preliminary sitting on Monday, 14 February. He came in a British Army helicopter. He was accompanied by Mr E. B. Gibbons and Mr Michael Underhill. Mr Gibbons and Mr Underhill are appearing for the Army at the tribunal.

Lord Widgery is totally unsuited to the task of examining impartially the evidence before him. He served in the Royal Artillery rising to the rank of Lt Colonel. He was a Brigadier in the Territorials by 1952. Now, as one of the most prominent members of the British establishment, he earns a salary of £16,000. He is not the *class* of man who could assess objectively the weight of evidence from British Army officers as against that from Irish working class civilians.

Even if he were to make some preternatural mental leap into unimpeachable 'objectivity' his tribunal could not get at the important facts.

Outlining the scope of the inquiry at the preliminary hearing on 14 February, he said 'The limits of the inquiry in space, are the streets of Londonderry where the disturbances and the ultimate shootings took place, an area of perhaps one mile in radius. The time within which the inquiry is concerned to make investigation can be expressed as the period beginning with the moment when the march taking place in Londonderry on that day first became involved in violence of one kind or another, and ending with the conclusion of the affair and the deaths.'

Thus his original intention was to exclude *any* investigation of whether the soldiers in Derry on 30 January were acting according to a prepared plan. He did not intend to ask, much less strive to discover, who drew up any such plan and who approved it. The organisers of the march, the overwhelming majority of Bogsiders and the families of all the dead men decided immediately to boycott the inquiry, thus draining it of all residual credibility.

As a result of this, and under intense political pressure, Widgery announced slightly extended terms of reference at the first proper sitting of the tribunal on February 21. He now said that he would investigate 'the orders given to the army, and especially the paratroopers'-but that he would not examine 'the political or military thinking behind those orders'.

But it is precisely the 'political and military thinking behind those orders' which is important. One will be interested to discover which officer ordered soldier A to take up which position, and whether soldier A followed such instructions to