

EIGHT DAYS OF TORTURE

"This is the story of what happened to one of those man, Mick Montgomery of Derry, who was active in the civil rights movement and later became the first republican councillor for Derry City. He is a member of the IRSP. On August 9, 1971, Mick was dragged from his bed by British soldiers and thrown into a Saracen armoured car while his wife and children were left crying helplessly. Mick was driven to nearby army barracks where he recognised members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch. He was taken from there by furniture van to Magilligan camp (later to be an internment centre) and left, with others who had been lifted to stand two hours in the rain. His request to see a solicitor was refused. He was questioned twice in six hours and refused to answer questions other than his name and address.

'WHITE NOISE'

A hood was then placed over his head by members of the RUC and he was put into a helicopter which rose from the ground several feet. Mick was then thrown out! He was returned to the 'copter and flown to another place and told to lean against the wall on his fingertips. After examination by a British Army doctor he was placed in a room where there was a continual noise like that of escaping steam. He was told to lie on the ground and his legs were forced apart until it felt "like my back passage was splitting". He passed out. He awoke and his testicles were massaged with the sole of a rubber boot until they were swollen. Mick was again forced to stand against a wall resting on his fingertips. At some time a tube was inserted in his anus and he passed out again.

HOODED

"His requests for water were granted – but instead of being allowed to drink it the security threw it over the hood – making breathing even more difficult. Another factor that made breathing difficulty was that while being beaten Mick had vomited and the vomit accumulated inside the hood. During much of this period no words were spoken by the torturers and Mick had the idea that this was to confuse, whether he was being tortured by the RUC or the British Army? By this time he had lost all track of time. At certain periods he was taken for interrogation and asked about the IRA and left wing groups. At one point he heard the click of a revolver and was told that his wife and children had been shot. During some of the time Mick was hallucinating. At intervals he was allowed to sleep and was 'fed' when bread was forced down his throat. He was told he was in the Channel Isles and one day that he was going home. Ha was taken by helicopter (after being shaved and deodorised) not home but to Belfast's Crumlin Road Jail. In jail he was examined by a doctor and Mick asked him what day it was. The doctor replied that it was a Tuesday and Mick had expressed disbelief. August 9 was a Monday and Mick knew he had been held for more than 24 hours. He had – it was the Tuesday of the following week and the ordeal had taken over eight days!".

It was factual reports such as this which drove the nationalist population onto the streets to cry out for justice. Few would have believed, if told, that only two days earlier in London moves were afoot to impose the death penalty, without trial, upon all those who dared to march against repression through their own city streets.

THE SKIES WEPT

On January 28th, a special meeting of the British Cabinet's Defence and Overseas Committee attracted the top brass of the British Ruling-elite, including William Whitelaw, as well as other Cabinet Ministers. Such an august gathering of British establishment figures were hardly discussing a mere snatch squad arrest operation, and it would seem clear that two major factors were on their minds. 1) How best to maintain Brian Faulkner in power and preserve the puppet parliament at Stormont; and 2) How best to bring to an end the Free Derry no-go area which for more than a year held out the British occupation forces and their lackeys since internment, which was a continuing insult to establishment ideas of 'good order'. No doubt, listening to the advocates of Kitson, on item 2 it was hoped that they could separate the fish (the IRA) from the water in which it swam (the people), and thereby draw the liberation forces out into the open to defend the people and maintain the liberated zone known throughout the world as Free Derry or Bogside. Some comments made at the time, particularly those of none other than Lord Balneil, give a great deal of credit to this theory. It may take many more years for the full story to see the light of day, but one thing is sure, on all three points the British did not succeed, for not only did Faulkner fall but his puppet parliament as well; the IRA was not so foolish to oblige the Cabinet and its generals by coming out openly on the streets in the fashion the latter desired, and the events of Bloody Sunday merely hardened the resistance of the people against British imperialism in Ireland.



● 1st Paras searching houses in Belfast following the escape of internees.

In retrospect it is easy to pin-point some ominous signs which appeared prior to Jan 30th. A meeting organised by Ian Kyle Paisley was suddenly called off, and this was coupled with a warning for 'all Loyalists' to steer clear of the city centre. On Tuesday, Jan 25, the GUARDIAN, in a front page headline, gave a clue as to what type of uniformed thugs would be in Derry on the following Sunday. It reads "CO'S WANT PARAS RES-TRAINED" and was written by Simon Hoggart in Belfast. **Continuing Hoggart's report;** "At least two British army units in Belfast made informal requests to brigade headquarters for the Parachute Regiment to be kept out of their areas. SENIOR officers in these units regard the paratroop's tactics as too rough and on occasions, brutal. One officer in a troubled area, whose commanding officer made such a request, said: "The Paras undid in 10 minutes community relations which it has taken us four weeks to build up". News of the requests, which to say the least is extraordinary within the British Army, came after the Parachute Regiment had completed its own investigations of the weekend's events at Magilligan internment camp, when reporters saw paratroopers club demonstrators and fire rubber bullets at point blank range. Since the requests were made paratroopers have not been used in these sensitive areas of Belfast which are thought to be beginning to calm down. This is because the army believes the absolute minimum of force must be used to prevent the local community from becoming more disaffected with the army Undoubtedly the regiment is the one most hated by Catholics in troubled areas, where it has, among local people at least, a reputation for brutality a captain in one regiment whose CO has not made a request said: 'They are frankly disliked by many officers here, who regard some of their men as little more than thugs in uniform. I have seen them arrive on the scene, thump up a few people who might be doing nothing more than shouting and jeering . . . they seem to think that they can get away with whatever they like. . . .'

So spoke a Brit captain, but his last sentence was certainly proven correct, insofar as none of the Bloody Sunday murderers ever faced trial, and their Commanding Officer, Col. Derek Wilford was decorated by the English Queen for "outstanding service to the Crown", less than twelve months later.

● Some take cover, others lay dead and dying.





● Blood pours from a victim.

THE MARCH & SLAUGHTER

IT WAS A RARE DAY OF SUNSHINE, as the crowd, numbering several thousands, with women and children among them, gathered in Creggan. A jovial "Fair Day" atmosphere prevailed as the marchers moved in disarray through Bogside toward William Street and the Guildhall. The march had started off from the Bishop's Field, a determined but still good-humoured demonstration of the deep-seated abhorrence of internment without trial. The Stormont Government's ban on parades was shattered as the parade moved over a three-mile route that took the crowd, growing in numbers as it went along until over 27,000 people were involved, down Southway into Lone Moor Rd., down Stanley's Walk, along Lecky Rd., back up Westland St. and along Laburnam Tce., and Marlborough Tce. and down Creggan Street into William Street. Civil Rights Association banners were carried by the marchers and the younger participants bore cards with the names of the Derry internees.

STONES AND BOTTLES

AS THE PARADE reached the William St. – Rossville St. junction the lorry carrying Civil Rights officials turned into Rossville St., but the crowd continued on down William St. until it came up against an army barricade at the old City Cinema site. Stones, bottles and pieces of wood were thrown at the troops but the confrontation never reached serious proportions. It was, in fact, a minor incident compared with some of the confrontations between troops and rioters that the city has known. A girl steward was led away bleeding from a head wound after being hit by a stone. An army cannon then moved up to the barricade and sprayed the demonstrators with purple dye. The crowd scattered into Chamberlain St. and other entrances to the Bogside. The majority of the marchers had by now moved to Free Derry corner. The paras, supported by Saracens, moved into Rossville St. on what, according to an army spokesman later, was an arrest and search operation. The Saracens roared into the car park at the high flats as the stragglers in the crowd fled in various directions.