



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Duncairn Gardens

Dr.
27/4/94

SUMMARY OF POINTS PUT TO RUC ABOUT MARCHES IN NORTH BELFAST

1. Marches along Clifton Park Avenue/Cliftonville Road/Duncairn Gardens are provocative and a cause of public disorder.
2. There has been a major population shift in the last 15 years which must be taken into account when routing marches. The argument of tradition is redundant. The overwhelming majority of people in the lower Antrim Road and Cliftonville are Catholic and strongly object to Orange marches through their neighbourhood.
3. The only people who are inconvenienced by marches following the route outlined are Catholics. The New Lodge, Antrim Road from Carlisle Circus to Limestone Road, Rosapenna, Cliftonville Road and Brookvale are all sealed without warning. Hillman Street is occupied by British troops all day. There are problems with supplies of bread and milk.
4. For Catholics there is no warning of marches. People coming from and going to work and church in Holy Family are seriously disrupted going about their lawful business. Children cannot reach home, parents agonise.
5. Black taxis which ply the route from Castle Street to Ardoyne via the New Lodge and Cliftonville Roads are halted, and their customers, mostly women with shopping and children, are stranded without warning and for an unknown period.
6. These operations are a serious breach of civil liberties, something admittedly which has never concerned the RUC.
7. Traders in Duncairn Gardens lose at least a morning's business on a Saturday, their busiest day. On Fridays they close early if a march is due.
8. People have a right to expect the law to protect them from nuisance, disturbance and disorder. In these instances the guardians of the law actually bring these elements into their neighbourhood.
9. Duncairn Gardens and Roe Street are two of the most dangerous interfaces in the north where there are regular attacks by both communities. To allow members of one community to flaunt their symbols and regalia along these interfaces is unacceptable and intolerable, and is designed to be so. There is no evenhandedness because it is inconceivable that a republican band would be allowed along this route even though their supporters form the majority there.
10. We entirely reject the contention that there would be major public disorder if the marches were rerouted. It appears the police are prepared to risk rioting and damage in Catholic areas in order to appease loyalists, yet will not face down the people whose presence will cause the disturbances.

11. The standard disingenuous police reply, 'The march passed off peacefully', avoids the issue. With up to 500 police and troops a march could be forced through any area. It is the rioting which begins as the last of the security forces withdraw which should concern the police. It's a classic example of blaming the victims for a wrong police decision.

12. Agreement by the police to allow this march through, overriding the earnest wishes of the people of the area, pushes back anything the police may try to do in the realm of public relations and community relations and confirms the view of police bias which exists.

13. We propose that Orange marches be routed down the Crumlin Road, Donegall Street, York Street and Brougham Street to North Queen Street thereby avoiding all but two flashpoints.