

**TWO**

**SEVEN**

An analysis of fatalities attributable to civil disturbances in Northern Ireland in the twenty years between July 13, 1969 and July 12, 1989.

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MICHAEL  
McKEOWN

Murlough  
Press

# TWO SEVEN SIX THREE

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*"I leave parchment to continue this work, if perchance any man survive and any of the race of Adam escape this pestilence and carry on the work which I have begun."*

John Clyn O.F.M., Kilkenny, in the time of the Great Mortality (1349).

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## FOREWORD

In the mid Summer of 1970 at a time when approximately forty people had been killed in the disturbances which had erupted in Northern Ireland during the previous year, I began recording what I considered to be the salient characteristics of each killing. I was prompted to engage in that exercise because I had wished to compare the level of violence in Belfast at that time with the level operative in the 1920-22 period. I had already observed that reputed authorities on the earlier period such as Dorothy McArdle and Hugh Sherman, cited totally conflicting figures, and so I resolved to compile a comprehensive data base about the current violence which might facilitate later researchers in achieving a more balanced interpretation of the scale and nature of the violence which had erupted.

I had at the time no notion of the magnitude or the duration of the task I was taking on. However by Autumn 1972, when I published the first analysis of my data, I decided to title it as "The First Five Hundred" as an indication of my belief that the fatality figures were going to soar further. After the publication of this report I occasionally published further analysis in journals and other media and made my data freely available to any enquirers. Consequently the figures have been used from time to time by other agencies in T.V. programmes, newspapers and magazines. Although at several points, some aspects of the data have been challenged, the figures have, I believe stood the test of public scrutiny.

In 1981 I was invited to join the Irish Information Partnership, a voluntary group established to compile a database of all matters relating to Northern Ireland and British/Irish relationships. Since that time I have furnished this organisation with details of my own data which have been incorporated in Agenda, the biannual report published by the I.I.P. This co-operation with the I.I.P. has proved very beneficial in enabling me to cross check and verify my own records and I would like to take this opportunity to record my appreciation and gratitude for the assistance of the I.I.P. personnel over the period since this co-operation began.

As the twentieth anniversary of the outbreak of violence approached, I formed the intention to attempt an historical analysis of the violence based on the data available to me. My intention was to go beyond classification to interpretation. That intention reflected

in part, a belief that such an extended period was sufficiently long to permit an holistic overview of the nature of the Northern Ireland violence, and in part to distance myself from the cumulative tragedies by offering a personal interpretation before retreating into a bastion of silence. It is my firm intention to write nothing further about the Northern violence and I do not believe there is any need to elaborate my reasons for that decision.

In pursuing my self appointed task of recording and classifying these fatal details I have had the assistance of many individuals who brought to my attention items which might otherwise have escaped my notice. I hope they will accept this reference as an acknowledgement of their contribution, and that they will feel that this study vindicates their well intentioned contributions.

Finally I would like to thank my wife, son and daughter not only for their tolerance over twenty years of what a British Army officer once called my "macabre interest", but for their practical assistance in the retrieval of data, the recording and classification of that data and ultimately its programming.

I know that they will feel that their efforts will have been worthwhile if this study contributes anything to a further understanding and that understanding in turn promotes a greater commitment to the values of tolerance, compassion and compromise.

## A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

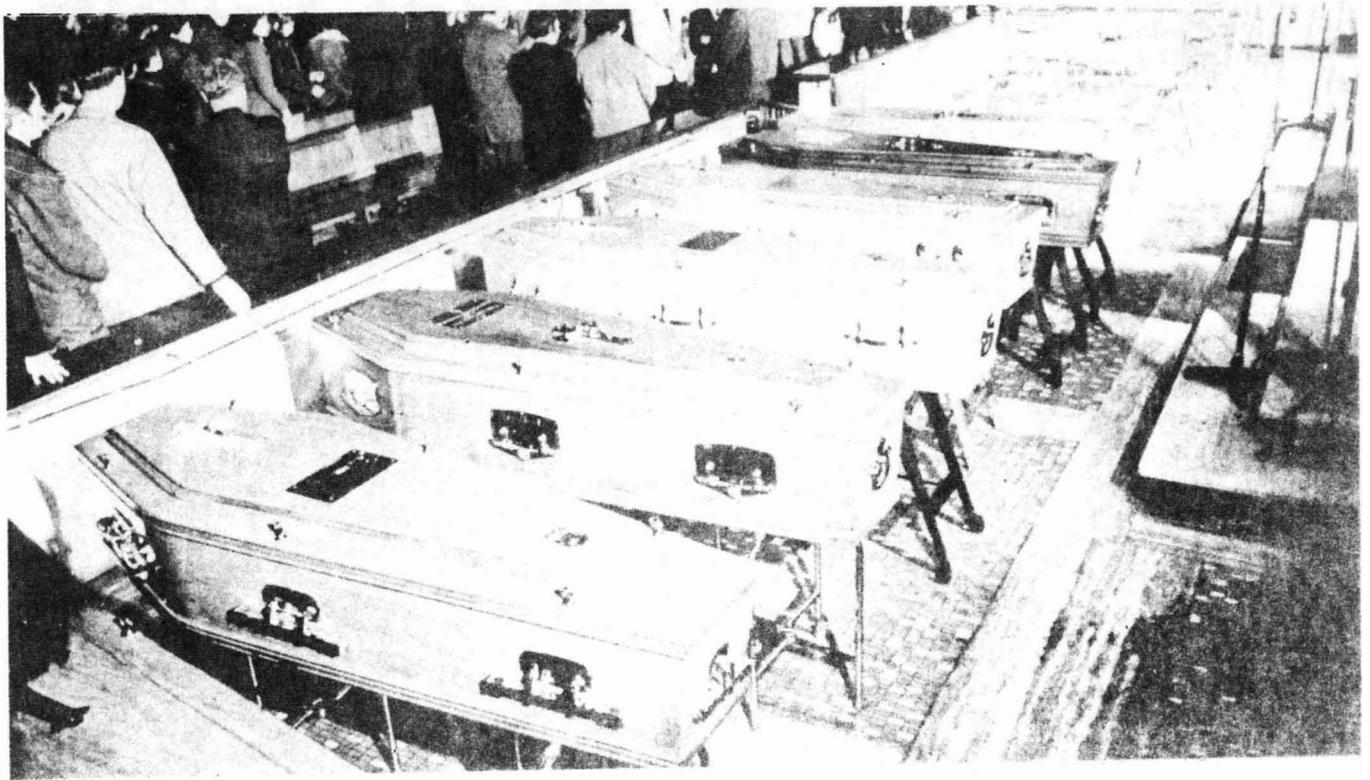
In this study I have attempted to denominate each of 2,763 fatalities occurring within the twenty year period by reference to five salient characteristics surrounding these deaths. These characteristics which are explained more fully in the text are:

1. The status of the victim i.e. whether he or she was a member of the Security Forces, a paramilitary member, an assassination victim, etc.
2. The agency responsible for the fatal incident.
3. The Westminster constituency in which the fatal incident occurred.
4. The religious affiliation of the victim where appropriate.
5. The context of the violent incident in which the fatality occurred.

While most of these characteristics are a matter of public record, certain judgements about the context of violent incidents are personal and subjective. While I accept that some readers may dispute the validity of some of the distinctions I have drawn I would contend that they will find they are consistent throughout. In determining the accuracy of the data pertaining to each case the highest level of credibility has been accorded to evidence emerging from judicial procedures such as criminal trials, civil actions, official tribunals and coroners' inquests. Claims emanating from paramilitary organisations and partizan spokesmen including security force personnel have been taken into account only when supported by strong corroborating evidence such as death notices or funeral arrangements. Anecdotal reports have been ignored.

In some cases it has not been possible to make a judgement about each of the five characteristics under study. Even in Northern Ireland, for instance, it has not always been possible to establish the religious affiliation of a victim. In certain cases the status of a victim was ambiguous, e.g. he might have been both a member of the Security Forces and a political activist. In such circumstances status was attributed on a personal judgement as to which was the more determinant consideration. It can consequently be stated that while some sub-totals do not correspond exactly with the overall totals there have been no cases of double entry.

(AI)



*Realities of Life and Death: Northern Ireland 1969-1989*

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*Belfast War Zone*