

Bloody Sunday March For Justice 2013

End Impunity

Bloody Sunday March Committee

(Tuesday 27th November 2012)

Setting the Context

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry

When the serving British Prime Minister David Cameron used the words, '*Unjustified and unjustifiable*' on June 15th 2010 to describe the British army's actions on Bloody Sunday, for many of those who stood silently listening in Guildhall square that day, or sat watching live TV coverage of the events in Derry those three words, allied with the Bloody Sunday Inquiry's own finding that all of those killed and injured were completely innocent, represented the high-water mark of the campaign.

Now when we look back at that day and reflect on its significance there is no doubting that in realising two of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign's original three core demands the Saville report marked an enormous achievement in the campaign's long struggle for truth and justice for the dead and wounded of Bloody Sunday.

For many the damning findings contained within the Inquiry's report and its implicit vindication of the relatives campaign represented an end in itself.

Others however, while seeing Saville as a hugely significant milestone on a long and arduous road, viewed it as the means to push on and argue for due process and accountability.

Through Saville the British government effectively binned the first inquiry into Bloody Sunday under Widgery when they acknowledged the innocence of all of those murdered or injured that day. Finally admitting what many people had known all along. However the question that still remains unanswered is, who is to be held responsible, and what is the next step to be in pursuit of justice?

Arguments for and Against Ending the March

This then was the backdrop to a public debate that was initiated by the announcement of the Bloody Sunday Trust that the 39th anniversary march on 30th January 2011 would be the campaign's last.

While it initially sounded as if the families and the march organising committee were of one voice, it soon emerged that there was a diversity of opinion within the families, the wider campaign and the city as to whether or not the annual Bloody Sunday March should continue into the future. Those who felt the march should end argued that June 15th 2010 represented victory for the campaign. They felt it marked the point when the campaign should move from a broad based civic society one, galvanised each year by the march to a private legal one that was best left to the DPP, the families and their legal representatives.

Those who held the alternative view felt that ending the march was premature and the march should continue, at the very least until those responsible for the murder of their loved ones were held to account.

Bloody Sunday 40th Anniversary

As a result of all of the above when last year's 40th anniversary march did take place, it was in an atmosphere of considerable controversy within the community. Its theme was 'March for Justice'. It was organised by Kate and Linda Nash - whose brother William was murdered on Bloody Sunday and whose father Alex was also wounded that day - together with their friend Helen Deery and with the support of others in the city and beyond. More than 5000 people took part. Liam Wray whose brother Jim was also shot dead on Bloody Sunday, addressed the crowd alongside Kate. They each reaffirmed the original civil rights/human rights ethos of the march and said that it should be maintained as the national/international platform to speak out not just about Bloody Sunday but other human rights issues both here and across the world.

They declared that they would march again and continue to march each year and at the close of the rally made a public appeal from the platform for those interested in helping to organise subsequent marches to come forward.

Bloody Sunday 2013 – End Impunity

Since that time last year a number of local political and human rights activists have joined with Kate, Linda and Helen and in recent weeks have come together the committee that will organise next year's march, along with the planning of a number of satellite events under the theme of 'End Impunity'.

In keeping with the history and spirit of the annual march and its programme of justice based events next year's march will continue to act as an inclusive platform for the many seemingly disparate ongoing campaigns concerning the people of these islands and beyond, a moment to come together, make connections and raise our issues in solidarity.

To this end the march committee intends hosting two key events on Saturday, January 26th. The first entitled '**Cover Up**' will explore and contrast the experiences of justice based campaigns that will include: Bloody Sunday, Hillsborough, The Miners Strike of 1984 and the cover up perpetrated by the Catholic church with regard to its priests around the issue of child sex abuse.

The second event, entitled '**End Impunity**' will examine three major campaigns for truth and justice: Bloody Sunday, Ballymurphy – which saw the killing of 11 eleven people by the paras in Belfast in July 1972 and McGurks Bar – which saw 15 people killed in a bomb attack by the UVF in Belfast in 1971.

It is now nearly 41 years since the streets of Derry became a killing ground for the British Army's 1 Para. Although the murder that day took place in broad daylight in front of the world's cameras, up until 2010 a high level cover-up had smeared the innocent and in the two and a half years since not one person has been arrested for their part in the crime.

Today as we remember the dead and wounded we also remember Bridget Bond of the 'Derry Civil Rights Association' as she stood in Rossville St. on the 26th January 1974 to unveil the monument to the victims of Bloody Sunday. Its inscription reads, "*Their epitaph is in the continuing struggle for democracy*".

Join us next year in that continuing struggle!

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Website Launch: We also today launch our website: bloodySundaymarch.org where you will find additional detail on the events, as well as related articles and web-based educational resources. Through the site we will also keep you updated on developments including march and event speakers in the coming weeks.

For further information contact: Kate Nash on **07849 244827**