

Press Release - Press Release - Press Release For Immediate Release

Bloody Sunday March Committee Editorial We Shall Overcome

The Bloody Sunday commemoration has become Ireland's largest annual human rights event. This year's program is the most wide-ranging and inclusive so far.

There will be a dozen events spread over seven venues in the week leading up to the annual March. These will include discussion on why "Past is Present" with Miami show-band survivor Stephen Travers, Eugene Reavey, whose brothers were murdered in 1976, Alan McBride, who lost his wife Sharon, in the Shankill bomb in 1993 and Ann Morgan, sister of Seamus Ruddy, one of "The Disappeared".

Former Long Kesh internee, Francie McGuiggan, Catalanian activist Omar Merino, Palestinian campaigner Fadl Mustapha will speak about the reality of internment here today and in other countries across the world.

Former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis will join Bernadette McAliskey on the stage in the Guildhall to deliver a public lecture titled "Bloody Sunday, Brexit and the Democratic Process."

James Orr, Friends of the Earth NI, Fidelma O'Kane of Save Our Sperrins will speak on the threat to our environment from gold mining in the Sperrins and industrial scale factory farms.

An "open mike" session on "Brutal Justice" exploring attitudes to "punishment" beatings and shootings, will hear from journalist William Allen whose nephew Andy was shot dead, Social Worker Lecturer Sean Roddy, local author John Lindsay and academic Deaglan O'Donghaile.

"We Shall Overcome", a panel comprising Joe Delaney of the Grenfell Tower disaster, Liam Wray, whose brother Jim was murdered on Bloody Sunday, Becky Shah of the Hillsborough Justice Campaign and Suresh Grover of the London-based Monitoring Group, will compare and contrast their knowledge and experience of public inquiries into State injustices and coverups.

The Derry launch of former hunger striker Richard O'Rawe's acclaimed book on Gerry Conlon, "In The Name Of The Son", will take place in the Central Library.

Full details of these and other events see our website, bloodysundaymarch.org

We welcome debate on all these topics during the week. Everyone, irrespective of their political views, is invited to come to the events and offer their different views on how best to mark Bloody Sunday and on the connections between it and other State atrocities worldwide.

We don't have to agree on everything. It would be strange if we did in this argumentative city. But its more important than ever that we stick together.

The Crown Prosecution Service in England will make decisions before the end of March on the charging of paratroopers who opened fire on Bloody Sunday. This will cause major controversy: former British soldiers backed by Tory politicians and high-ranking officers will mount loud demands for no prosecutions. Additionally the families of those killed at Loughlinisland await a decision on the Ombudsman's recent report confirming collusion in the killing of their loved ones.

We should speak with one voice, demanding not only that the shooters be put in the dock but that the politicians and top brass that sent them to Derry be also brought to book.

We should remember that the original bloody Sunday March was broad-based. The speakers waiting on the platform at Free Derry corner when the shooting broke out were Briget Bond of the NI Civil Rights Association, the Labour peer, Lord Brockway, SDLP MP Ivan Cooper, Presbyterian Minister Terrence McCaughey and Bernadette Devlin (McAliskey).

Bloody Sunday was experienced in Derry as a communal wound, the pain of which still throbs and won't ease until all the families and surviving wounded can feel that truth has been told and justice done.

Bloody Sunday differs from the other massacres in the North which stand like grave-stones marking the passing of the years of conflict. The killing took place at close quarters before hundreds of local people who had earlier marched for civil rights and against internment, stunned by horror, outrage and grief inflicted by men uniformed to represent the British state.

The massacre cannot be put down solely to ancient Irish hatreds. It was rooted in imperial history, in the scorn of Empire for the lives of plain people. Hence the Tory Government's sigh of relief when the Inquiry under Lord Saville pointed the finger of blame at a bunch of squaddies and one undisciplined officer. That's not good enough.

We are also acutely aware that the grief of Derry is no different in human rights terms from the grief of Ballymurphy, Greysteel, Loughinisland, the Shankill, Kingsmills, Birmingham, etc. etc.

We urge everyone who seeks justice to come out and show their support and solidarity with this years programme, march and rally. Together we shall overcome.