

BLOODY SUNDAY

British Injustice Then...

25 years ago, British soldiers opened fire on a peaceful civil rights protest in Derry, the second largest city in Northern Ireland. The protest had been called to draw attention to internment without trial, a policy whereby people could be held in prison camps for years at a time with no charges ever being made. This policy lasted until the mid 1970s, and hundreds of innocent Irish people were imprisoned for years because of it.

On January 30, 1972, the British Army killed 14 innocent people, 6 of them children under British law. Several were shot in the back or the back of the head as they sought shelter. Others were killed as they tried to help others or held their hands up to indicate they were unarmed. None of the dead or wounded were armed. No shots were fired at the British Army.

Britain's Prince Charles is commanding officer of the regiment that carried out the massacre. He has never apologized for their actions. Nor has the British government or Army.

The British Army officer commanding the troops on Bloody Sunday was named to the Queens "Honours List" and given a knighthood one year after the massacre.

The coroner who held the inquest on those who died on Bloody Sunday made the following statement in August 1973: "These people may have been taking part in a march that was banned, but that does not justify the troops coming in and firing live rounds indiscriminately. I would say without hesitation that it was sheer, unadulterated murder. It was murder."

Today, the denial of civil rights continues, and internment without trial takes other forms. Those opposed to British rule in Ireland are subject to special police powers of arrest and detention and a vindictive, discriminatory legal system that has shamed Britain in the eyes of the world.

But why should you care?

A GENERATION LATER

British Injustice Now...

The injustices of the past are hard to put right. However, the injustices of the present must not be allowed to continue unchallenged. If we who enjoy freedom in the US do not stand up for justice and freedom for all people, who will?

INJUSTICE: Matt Morrison, an Irish man who has lived in St. Louis for 11 years, is in the last stages of deportation. As a teenager he witnessed the Bloody Sunday massacre and saw the British Army kill children; now he worries about his own American-born children, Matthew and Mary Kate, and wonders whether they will be safe.

ACTION: Contact your Member of Congress and ask him or her to ask the President to suspend the deportation. E-mail President Clinton at president@whitehouse.gov and ask him to suspend the deportation.

INJUSTICE: Roisin McAliskey, the daughter of one of the leaders of the demonstration attacked by the British army, is being held in a British prison, despite the fact that she has not been charged with any crime. She is 6 months pregnant, has asthma and an ulcer, and is being held in a prison with no obstetric facilities. She is kept in a cell with no access to natural light or exercise for 24 hours a day.

ACTION: Call the British embassy in Washington at 202-898-4343 and ask that Ms. McAliskey be granted bail or moved to a prison with adequate obstetric facilities. E-mail member of Parliament Timothy Kirkhope at timothy@leedsne.demon.co.uk or write him at 460a Roundhay Road / Leeds, ENGLAND LS8 2HU and ask him to encourage the authorities to grant Ms. McAliskey bail. Friends have already put up \$300,000 to secure her bail.

OPPORTUNITY: Congress has called for a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs for February 6, 1997. It will be held from 10:00 am until noon in Room 2200 of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC. Matt Morrison and his wife, Francie Broderick, will attend with 3 other Irish-American couples facing deportation. The Committee will also study current injustices in the way Irish people are treated in Northern Ireland.

ACTION: Contact your Member of Congress and ask him or her to attend the hearings or send a staff member. Ask your Member of Congress to join the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs.