

Bloody Sunday

Extract from *Provos*, p. 114, by Peter Taylor, a journalist with a lifetime's

To this day, it is difficult to convince Nationalists in the city that the killing of their fellow citizens was anything other than premeditated murder by the army, authorised by Stormont and the British Government. How else, they ask, would soldiers slaughter thirteen innocent people taking part in a peaceful anti-internment march?

The only explanation that makes sense to them, and there remain few voices to the contrary, is that there were orders from on high to teach the rebels of 'Free Derry' a lesson they would never forget. This lesson, as the evidence of their eyes told them, was to send a good number of the marchers back home in boxes.

After much research, I do not believe this 'conspiracy' theory to be true. 'Bloody Sunday' was a dreadful mistake and should never have happened, but there were no orders or directives from on high instructing the paratroopers to do what they did.

But 'Bloody Sunday' cannot be seen in isolation. It was a tragedy waiting to happen. For many months there had been endless rioting in the city. Every day, at tea time, there would be a confrontation at the corner of William Street and Rossville Street between soldiers guarding the entrance to the city centre and the rioters operating out of 'Free Derry'. Day der day soldiers would stand there being pelted by rioters and the stone throwers would get in plenty of practice. The junction was known, with good reason, as 'aggro corner'.