

## By Joan Trevor

**T**WENTY-FIVE years ago British paratroopers fired on an unarmed demonstration in Derry, killing 14 Catholics who were marching in a protest against the internment of Catholics, that is, against the indefinite imprisonment of people who had been neither charged nor tried. Internment had been introduced in August 1971 in response to the bombing campaign of the Provisional IRA. A dozen more Catholics were that day.

In the early afternoon of 30 January 1972 a crowd of thousands of Nationalists leaves Derry's Creggan housing estate. They know that at some point the army will stop their march, and at William Street they come up against an army barricade. Youths in the crowd throw bottles and stones and the troops reply by shooting rubber bullets at them and canisters of CS gas. One soldier on a nearby rooftop shoots at and wounds two people.

The crowd, now 20,000 strong, diverts to "Free Derry Corner" on the fringe of the Catholic Bogside area for a rally. Suddenly, the army moves in from different directions and begins shooting. There is no clear evidence that anyone shot back. The paratroopers picked off people in the crowd as if they were in a shooting gallery.

The official enquiry into the bloody events in Derry that day — the Widgery Tribunal — did a whitewash job. Against all the evidence of other eyewitnesses it upheld the army's claim that British soldiers had come under fire from the crowd and shot back only in self-defence.

In the face of mass photographic and eyewitness evidence to the contrary, the army said they killed only those involved in attacking them. Lord Widgery, the supposedly neutral judge, asked the *Sunday Times* and *The Observer* not to publish reports by their own journalists which said otherwise; the editors obliged. Thus "exonerated", the soldiers got off scot-free. No one has ever been brought to book for the mass murder in Derry that day.

For certain, many of the marchers were sympathetic to the IRA's military campaign against the British army, and all marched illegally — the government had banned the march — but, for certain too, the British soldiers that day behaved like mad dogs, shooting at random, as the eyewitness accounts testify. They shot and killed even people who came to help the wounded.



# Bloody Sunday, Derry J Fourteen dead, no

Now, twenty-five years later, some politicians — Labour, and Tories — are calling for a fresh enquiry to take account of all the evidence discounted or not known at the time. John Major admitted in the House of Commons that those shot on Bloody Sunday were "innocent" — which is to say that the army murdered them in cold blood. But even after a quarter of a century, there is no formal official recognition that mass murder was committed. Twenty-five years on, you would think, it might just be safe to dredge the dirty pond, but no.

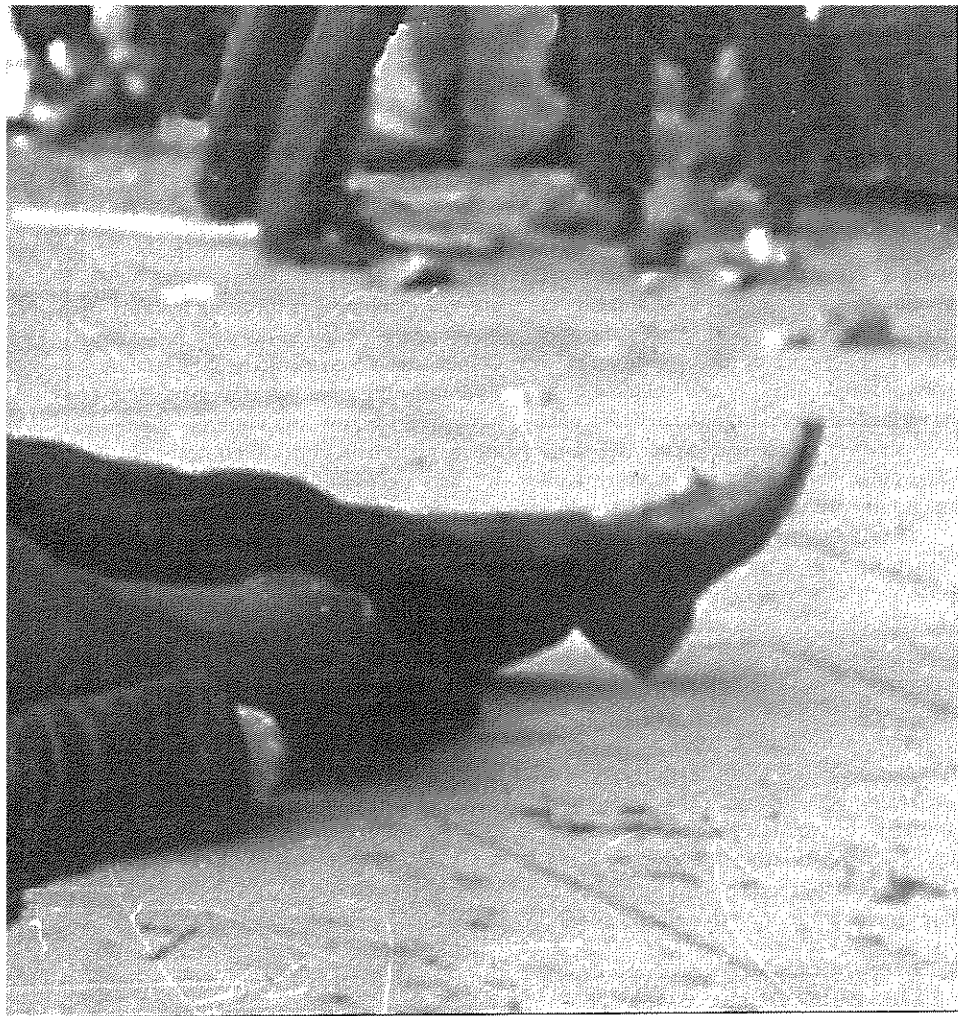
They still do not think it safe to lay

the blame for mass murder where it belongs — with the state, with the soldiers who pulled the triggers, and with their officers who allowed them off the leash, the soldiers had grown bitter with arrogant national hatred of Derry's Catholics: that is what made this senseless massacre possible.

The blame lies also with the soldiers' political masters — with the Heath government and its civil servants who, even if they did not want a massacre, decided on a show of strength against the Catholics.

Responsibility lies with the British

***“The Establishment bluster about violence but will not do ju***



**F**ATHER Daly, a Derry parish priest, on three people shot down in Rossville Street: "Two of them have since died, one a young boy. I saw his father try to get to him but he was shot down, too. The father is still in hospital, injured. It was impossible to step out. They were lying behind the barricade. I could only get about 10 yards towards them but I administered the last rites from there."

"Then the paratroopers arrived — about 10 or 20 of them — and they pushed about 10 of us against the wall. We couldn't move one way or another. Bullets were ricocheting near us. The paratroopers pulled us away pretty roughly into a courtyard. There was a paratrooper beside me. People were fleeing away but he aimed at least eight shots indiscriminately at them. I grabbed him and shouted, 'For God's sake stop!' but he shrugged me off."

"What really frightened me was that some of the troops seemed to enjoy it — I heard men laughing and making crude jokes as I saw people falling."

**“W**E saw four wounded people lying at the end of a patch of waste ground.

"We put our hands in the air to show we were unarmed and waved white handkerchiefs. We managed to walk as far as where the people were lying. Then a soldier opened up with a machine-gun. One man was shot in the leg, and another had a scalp wound. We had to lie on top of the bodies of the wounded."

*Tony Martin, a ship rigger*

**J**OE Docherty of Derry describes the death of Barney McGuigan: "The passageway cleared and I saw two soldiers. This brought them into sight of the people huddling in the high flats. I saw a soldier taking aim at Barney McGuigan who was walking over to shelter. He fired and Barney fell... I came out and went over to Barney. He was lying in a pool of blood with his right eye and face shot away."

# January 1972

## Nothing said

establishment. Their response to Catholic discontent had been to ignore it, while they could — until the Provisional IRA appeared.

Even now, twenty-five years on, those who bluster about violence will not do posthumous justice to those killed on Bloody Sunday or give their families the satisfaction of hearing an open, formal admission of guilt from them.

Nothing is more certain than that the killers of those fourteen men and boys who went out on a peaceful protest on 30 January 25 years ago will not be brought to justice.

*Justice to those killed.* ”



A mural in Derry commemorates the Bloody Sunday massacre.