

STROKE

CITY:

DERRY /

LONDON-

DERRY

Stroke City:
Derry / Londonderry
James Anderson with photographs by Britt Baillie
Thanks to Róise Ní Bhaoill for editing the photographs

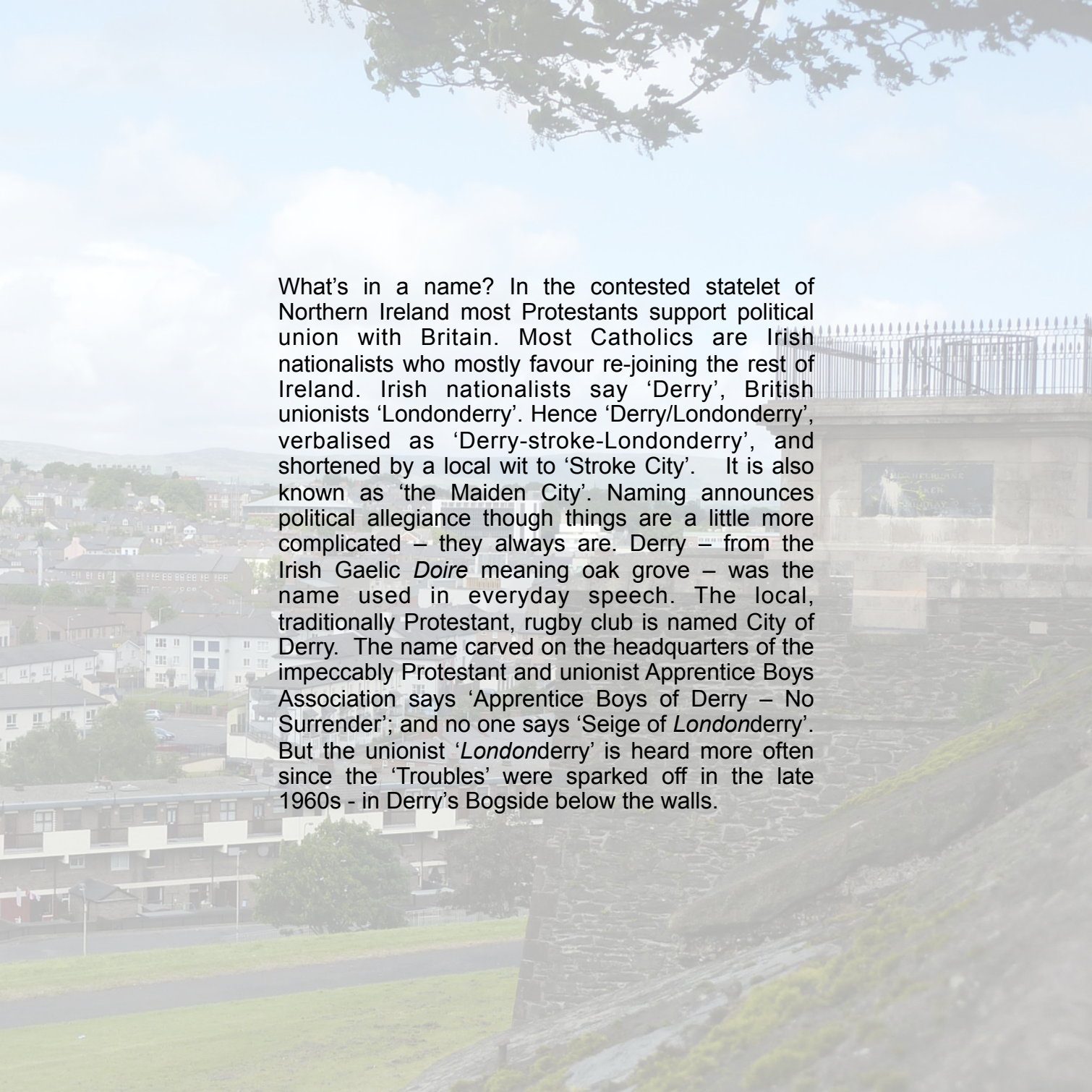
**CAPTURING
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Conflict in Cities: Europe and the Middle East

The background image shows a stone wall in the foreground, likely part of the Derry City Walls. On the wall, there is a plaque with a picture of a white dog. Behind the wall, a residential area of Derry is visible, including houses and a road. The sky is blue with some clouds, and there are tree branches in the top right corner.

What's in a name? In the contested statelet of Northern Ireland most Protestants support political union with Britain. Most Catholics are Irish nationalists who mostly favour re-joining the rest of Ireland. Irish nationalists say 'Derry', British unionists 'Londonderry'. Hence 'Derry/Londonderry', verbalised as 'Derry-stroke-Londonderry', and shortened by a local wit to 'Stroke City'. It is also known as 'the Maiden City'. Naming announces political allegiance though things are a little more complicated – they always are. Derry – from the Irish Gaelic *Doire* meaning oak grove – was the name used in everyday speech. The local, traditionally Protestant, rugby club is named City of Derry. The name carved on the headquarters of the impeccably Protestant and unionist Apprentice Boys Association says 'Apprentice Boys of Derry – No Surrender'; and no one says 'Seige of *Londonderry*'. But the unionist '*Londonderry*' is heard more often since the 'Troubles' were sparked off in the late 1960s - in Derry's Bogside below the walls.

Derry-Londonderry has now won the competition to be City of Culture 2013. Local poet Seamus Heaney hopes for a sea-change and clearly thinks miracles are required. Not everyone is happy that it will be the City of Culture for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Interesting past, brighter future? And where did 'London' and the 'Maiden' come from?

A wider conflict is encapsulated in a small corner of a small city. The past lives on as each side remembers its own victories and sufferings.



City of Culture 2013

Derry~Londonderry

"So hope for a great sea-change
on the far side of revenge.
Believe that a farther shore
is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles and cures and healing wells".

Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate. From 'The Cure at Troy'.

The Walled City – from a plaque at Bishopgate. For nationalists Derry started as Gaelic Doire Cholm Cille, named after St. Colm Cille (or St. Columba) who in AD 546 founded a monastery amid the oaks on a steep hill on the west bank of the Foyle. But from 1600 AD Doire became Derry, fortified outpost of the British empire, pivotal in the final Tudor conquest of Gaelic Ulster and in the subsequent Ulster Plantation. Parts of the countryside were confiscated and ‘planted’ with settlers from England and Scotland – mostly Episcopalian Protestants and Presbyterians respectively. Guilds in the City of London were granted extensive estates; in exchange they had to bank-roll a new walled city – hence Londonderry, and later a city hall called the Guildhall.

To locate subsequent photos: The monument to the Rev. George Walker, a Governor of the City during the Siege of Derry, stood high on the western walls, close to the Apprentice Boys HQ (at ‘1 ‘ on the map). Below Walker’s monument is the Catholic and nationalist Bogside with Free Derry Corner (at ‘12‘). Just outside the walls at Bishopgate (between ‘You are here’ and St. Columb’s Episcopalian Cathedral at ‘7’) is the Protestant working class Fountain community.



The Siege of Derry - a landmark of European not only Irish history. Catholic James II, an ally of France's Louis XIV, was the British king, but Protestant England preferred his Protestant Dutch son-in-law, William of Orange, an ally of the Pope against Louis. Their battles were fought out in Ireland. Irish Catholics, hoping to recover lost lands, mostly backed James and Louis, rather than the Pope's contender. Irish Protestants mostly backed William. When James's forces demanded entry to Derry in December 1688, the Governor Robert Lundy dithered. But thirteen heroic young apprentice boys seized the keys of the city and locked the gates to cries of 'No Surrender'. Every December Lundy's effigy is burned on the walls above the Bogside.

The Siege and suffering lasted until August when British ships broke through to relieve the overcrowded and starving city. But this epic siege had bought time before William defeated James at the Boyne north of Dublin in July 1690.

As the 'Maiden City', besieged but never taken, Derry has loomed large in Irish Protestant and unionist iconographies. But Governor Walker's monument was blown up by the IRA in 1973, leaving only its base to look down on the Bogside.



The Fountain - Derry's only Protestant working class or 'loyalist' community on the west bank of the river is heir to the heroic 'Siege' and continues its message of 'No Surrender'. The red hand on the wall and on the flag symbolises the province of Ulster (six of whose nine counties comprise Northern Ireland). Kerb stones painted red, white and blue are common in loyalist housing estates.

Most of the minority Protestant and mainly unionist population on the west bank left during the 'Troubles', and most of the city's Protestant population now lives in the Waterside across the river. Many say they were forced out though there is a debate about whether some were 'pushed' or in fact 'jumped'. The small residual Protestant population in the Fountain is defiant about not moving or being moved, but there are questions about its viability as a community.

To symbolise and encourage a re-unification of Waterside Protestants and west bank Catholics, a new footbridge across the river was opened as a 'peace bridge' in June 2011. The city's image is improved but effects at the grass-roots remain to be seen. Memories of siege and conflict are all around, defying attempts to change attitudes.



LONDONDERRY
WEST BANK
LOYALISTS
STILL
UNDER SIEGE
NO SURRENDER



Walls or bridges? New walls and fences were built during the 'Troubles' to protect the minority Protestant community of the Fountain, blocking it off from Bishop Street Without, as seen from the city walls above Bishopgate. Originally temporary, then strengthened, these protective barriers are still in place four decades later, and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

As a general point, in ethno-nationally divided cities territorial enclaves, securitised by defensive architecture or unofficially protected by armed paramilitaries, provide relative safety as 'refuges' in times of heightened conflict. But where they are bases for paramilitary groups to recruit and organise, they can become 'prisons' for members of the community they were meant to protect: perhaps more a case of a community 'walled in' than an enemy 'walled out'?

Defiant flying of the UK Union Jack (often with the flags of Ulster, Scotland and different loyalist paramilitary groups) is a general feature of Protestant working class neighbourhoods, matched to a lesser extent by Irish Tricolours in similar Catholic neighbourhoods. Lest anyone forget, the unionist flags say the people and the territory are 'British' not 'Irish', while the Tricolours say the opposite.



Remembering the 'Troubles' - at Free Derry Corner, the Rossville Street entrance to the Bogside. One of the flags is the Tricolour of the southern Irish Republic, and a projected all-Ireland republic. Sometimes burned by loyalists as the flag of a 'foreign country', its colours green, white and orange are meant to symbolise the peaceful union of Irish nationalists and unionists, Protestants and Catholics, or - in the words of Ireland's first nationalist and anti-sectarian movement, the 1790s United Irishmen - 'Protestants, Catholics and Dissenters'. But in those very different days, Dissenting Presbyterians were pioneers of Irish nationalism.

The first killing of the recent 'Troubles' was of an 'ordinary' Catholic by the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force in Belfast in 1966. But the 'Troubles' really escalated in 1968-69. A peaceful civil rights demonstration in Derry was batoned into chaos by the overwhelmingly Protestant police force; and in January 1969 civil rights marchers were attacked by loyalists while the police looked on. This resulted in fighting between police and protesters, the barricading of the Bogside, and the slogan 'You are now entering Free Derry' on a gable-wall (the house demolished but the gable preserved). The 'Battle of the Bogside' followed in August 1969.

**YOU
ARE NOW
ENTERING
FREE DERRY**



Civil Rights, echoing the USA - Ireland's re-unification was low on the agenda of most Northern Catholics by the 1960s. They benefited from British health and education systems and were better off than their Southern counterparts, but they wanted reforms *within* Northern Ireland. However, the ethnocratic Unionist government continued to cast Catholics as 'the enemy within', while loyalists opposed concessions to them as supposedly being at their expense (in the zero-sum logic typical of conflicts). Inspired by the American Civil Rights movement, the explicitly non-sectarian demands were for reforms in housing, jobs and political representation. But unionists mistakenly saw just another nationalist ploy to reunify Ireland. This turned into a self-fulfilling misreading which cost thirty years of 'Troubles' - many Catholics concluded that Northern Ireland was indeed unreformable.

Only owners of property could vote in local elections, hence the 'one man, one vote' demand. Additionally there was widespread Unionist gerrymandering, with Derry the most spectacular case: by manipulating electoral boundaries (and also ceasing to build houses for Catholic families), a city that was 75% Catholic and nationalist, and only 25% unionist, nevertheless for four decades returned a unionist-dominated city council (12 unionists and only 8 nationalists in 1967).

CIVIL RIGHTS

ONE
MAN
ONE
VOTE

JOBS
NOT
CREED

CIVIL RIGHTS

ANTI SECTARIAN

refe

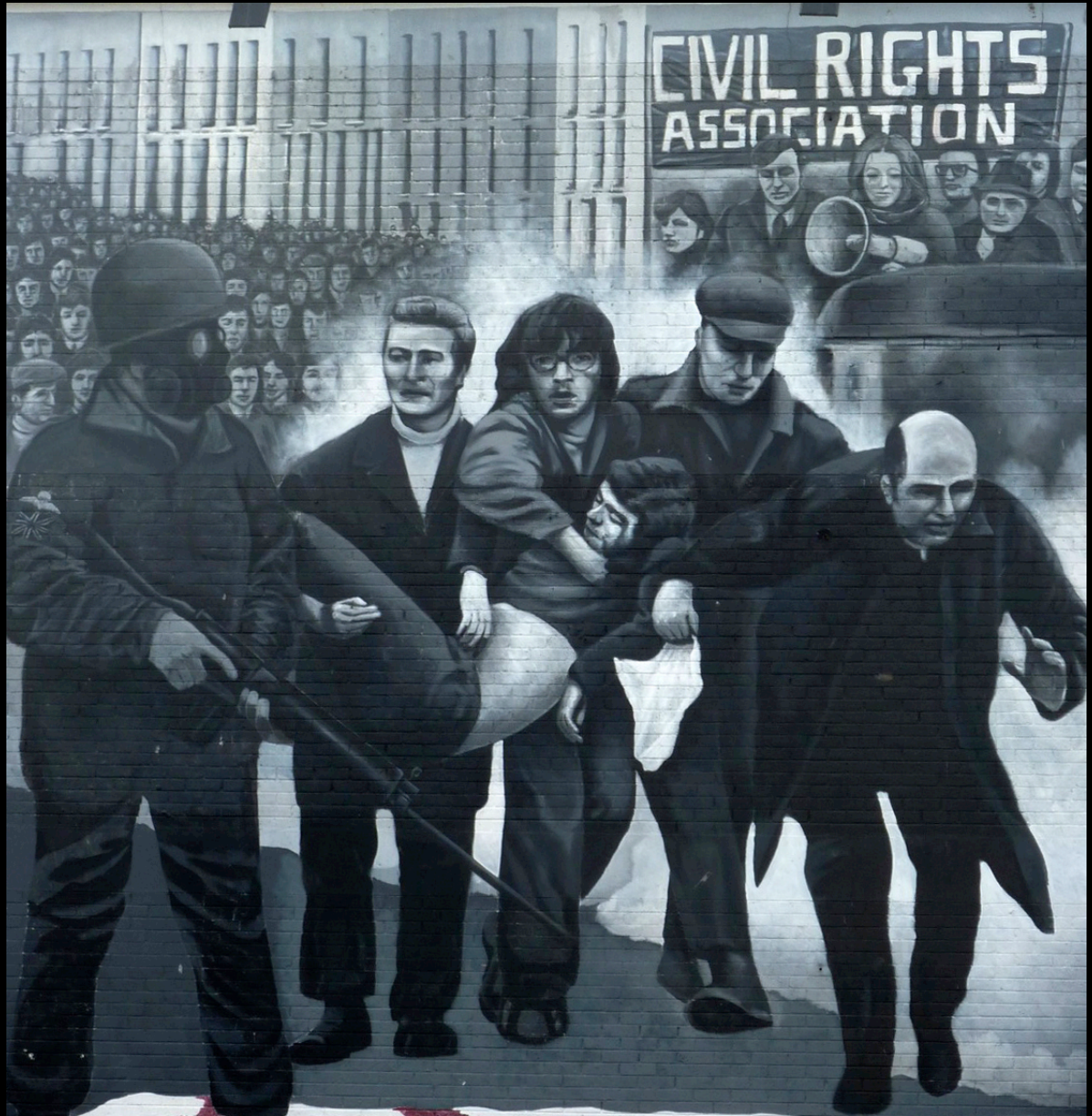
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The Battle of the Bogside - Another siege of sorts, another quite different epic victory to be remembered and celebrated, this battle lasted three days. It was sparked by the Apprentice Boys annual march past the Bogside, now seen by its Catholic residents as a calculated insult. Fighting broke out with the police and supporters of the Apprentice Boys, Rossville Street the main battle ground, the 'battle' involved petrol bombs and tear gas. It seems likely that only the intervention of the regular British Army stopped the reserve police force from escalating to concerted shooting. The Army was initially welcomed – their arrival stopped further assaults and signalled a victory over the local police forces. However, relations with the community soon deteriorated: soldiers took over policing duties for which they were not trained or suited; and they were seen as acting on behalf of the same Unionist regime being blamed for anti-Catholic bias and repression.



Internment and Bloody Sunday - More epics of suffering to be remembered and commemorated, yet another costly mistake by the Unionist government. It embarked on a policy of 'internment without trial' in August 1971, imprisoning people simply on suspicion that they were paramilitaries. In fact most were not, police intelligence was dated and faulty, and moreover the strategy was aimed almost exclusively at the Catholic community despite the obvious existence of active loyalist paramilitaries. The IRA gained hugely as outraged young Catholics queued up to join.

The Bloody Sunday killings of thirteen unarmed civilians by British Paratroopers happened at an anti-internment protest march in January 1972. The tragedy was compounded by a hasty report from Britain's chief judge claiming that those shot had weapons and the soldiers had acted in self-defence. Not true, as relatives always maintained, and as a proper judicial enquiry recently confirmed. Nearly four decades after the shootings the British Prime Minister finally apologised to the families. Shortly after Bloody Sunday the Unionist government was finally disbanded and replaced by Direct Rule from London.



Memorials - Even more than the mural histories, the memorialisation of those who died or gave their lives to the struggle tend to be one-sided. As well as expressing respect for fallen comrades, they typically imply a monopoly of suffering by one's own side. They give legitimacy to one side of the particular struggle or cause, and they can be a powerful means of attracting support and recruits.

The location of this memorial to the 'H Block' Hunger Strikers underlines the iconic importance of Free Derry Corner for nationalists and republicans. Bobby Sands and the other nine republican paramilitary prisoners who followed him starved themselves to death over a four-month period in 1981. They were protesting against being required to wear prison uniforms which would have implied they were 'common criminals' rather than 'political prisoners'. The memorial records their dates of birth and death and how many days they were on hunger strike before they died.

YOU
ARE NOW
ENTERING
FREE DERRY

Vtd. Thomas Ashe, Kilmard Co. Kerry
Died Mourning Glenties 1912
Vtd. Michael Flanagan, Fermanagh Co. Clark
Died Cork Gaol 1740 1860
Vtd. Joseph Murphy
Died Cork Gaol 1840 1860
Vtd. Terence McSwiney, Cork City
Died Britain Gaol 1840 1860
Vtd. Joseph Whilly, Westford
Died Curragh Concentration Camp 1863
Vtd. Denis Barry, Blackrock Co. Cork
Died Newbridge Concentration Camp 20-11-1953

Tháinig siad leis an t-éireann na hÉireann

IRA - Vtd.
Bobby Sands,
Born 10th March 1954
Died 9th May 1981
Age: 27 (69 Days)
IRA - Vtd.
Francis Hughes,
Born 26th Feb 1959
Died 16th May 1981
Age: 22 (90 Days)
INLA - Vtd.
Pete O'Hara,
Born 11th July 1957
Died 21st May 1981
Age: 23 (81 Days)
IRA - Vtd.
Raymond McCreesh,
Born 24th Feb 1957
Died 21st May 1981
Age: 24 (81 Days)
IRA - Vtd.
Joe McDonnell,
Born 14th Sept 1951
Died 9th July 1981
Age: 30 (81 Days)

*Let Our Revenge
Be The Laughing
Of Our Children.*

IRA - Vtd.
Martin Barron,
Born 19th Sept 1956
Died 10th July 1981
Age: 24 (36 Days)
INLA - Vtd.
Kevin Lynch,
Born 25th May 1955
Died 1st Aug 1981
Age: 26 (71 Days)
IRA - Vtd.
Miriam Doherty,
Born 16th Oct 1955
Died 1st Aug 1981
Age: 25 (73 Days)

IRA - Vtd.
Thomas Mc. Eneas,
Born 10th Nov 1957
Died 10th Aug 1981
Age: 23 (62 Days)

INLA - Vtd.
Michael Davies,
Born 28th May 1954
Died 28th Aug 1981
Age: 27 (60 Days)
*I'll Wear No Conspicuous
Uniform, Nor Mandy
Scruff My Time.*

International Solidarity - While seeking support from US politicians and business people, Irish nationalism has fairly consistently identified with various 'left-wing' causes and 'anti-imperialist' movements, which sometimes run counter to US interests. Nationalism is nothing if not adaptable, able to appeal to opposing interests.

Irish nationalists fly Palestinian flags in solidarity with the oppressed people of Gaza and the West Bank. Seemingly in a 'tit-for-tat' response typical of ethno-national conflict, loyalists fly Israeli flags. On another interpretation loyalists have had their own reasons for supporting Israel: they have admired its tough stance against Palestinian opposition, in their opinion how Irish Catholic opposition should be dealt with - and perhaps reminiscent of the 'good old days' before Direct Rule when Protestant Ulster had its own ethnocratic regime?



**THE MUSEUM OF
FREE DERRY**

The National Civil Rights Archive
The Bloody Sunday Trust



Handwritten graffiti: **Chick**



Handwritten graffiti: **Joyle**

Che was Irish! In the mural, the Gaelic phrases say 'you can kill the revolutionary but not the revolution'. Not a view likely to elicit support from the US business community but consistent with the nationalists' rhetoric of leftish internationalism. The Bogside murals feature local heroes and heroines - John Hume, constitutional nationalist politician and Nobel Peace Prize winner, who did more than any other Northern politician to broker the IRA ceasefire; Bernadette Devlin MP, a leader in the Battle of the Bogside. But they also feature Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, as well as Che and the Palestinians. Many of these murals give the impression that the conflict is history.

Ernesto Che Guevara Lynch

Thocfadh
An
Réabhlóideach
Comharú

Ach ní an
Réabhlóid a
Scríosadh



"In my son's veins
flowed the blood
Of Irish Rebel"



6

‘Post-Conflict’ Tourism - The view of conflict as history is reinforced where tour guides are former paramilitary combatants although not all are. Ex-combatants can provide excellent value, talking with first hand knowledge about sites that may have featured on international TV in more turbulent times. They are part of a bigger heritage industry, and Derry’s walls are replete with examples. Here there is a wider ‘official history’ of the city which counters or dilutes the over-riding nature of conflict memorialisation. Plaques tell us about the thousands of Dissenting Presbyterians, the Scotch-Irish, who sailed from Derry to North America in the 18th century to escape Ireland’s Penal Laws (which had made them ‘2nd class citizens’ and the Catholics ‘3rd class’). But we also read about local playwrights, and about Derry’s shirt-making industry which made women the main bread-winners in many families.

‘Make peace, not war, make money’ seems to be the heritage message, though whether the people likely to ‘make war’ are listening is another question. And ‘post-conflict’ tourism? There is a story, perhaps true, that tourists on a tour bus saw another bus being hi-jacked. Ending political violence does not mean that conflict has ended, and anyway the violence has not ended...



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2 pm.
Only £4.00

The Dissident Republican Threat - There are still republican POWs (Prisoners of War) according these slogans on the walls below the Apprentice Boys HQ. The dissidents are increasingly active in Northern Ireland under labels such as the 'Continuity IRA' and the 'Real IRA' (RIRA - *Inset*). They believe the now disbanded IRA and its political wing Sinn Fein have 'sold out' by recognising and working with the British institutions of the Northern Ireland state, the police force, and so on. They have killed some soldiers and policemen, but no-one thinks they can remove the British state from Ireland when the much more formidable IRA challenge ended in a stalemate. Few fear a return to the level of 'Troubles' before the cease-fires and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement which established Northern Ireland's power-sharing executive (where the former head of the Derry IRA is Deputy First Minister). Nevertheless, few doubt that these dissidents could do serious damage, and especially if loyalist paramilitaries were also drawn in. They too are still active in parts of Northern Ireland though more in drug trading, internal rivalries and obstructing police investigations of past murders. Republican dissidents pose the bigger military and political threat.



A bomb in the bank - The day before these photos were taken, dissidents placed a large, timed bomb in this branch of the Santander Bank, in the central Diamond of the walled city across from the British War Memorial. Luckily staff and customers were evacuated before the bomb exploded, though if its timing mechanism had been defective it could have killed a lot of people. At the time the Chief Executive of Derry's City Centre Initiative, Jim Roddy, was on his way to Belfast to participate in a discussion about conflict and economic development at our Urban Conflicts conference. Contacted by the police, he had to turn back to deal with the fall-out from this assault on his city's economic development and business interests. The struggle for something they call a 'normal' city continues... the future is brighter, but there are still clouds over Derry-Londonderry.

In the words of novelist William Faulkner, 'The past is not dead. It's not even past.' It lives on in the present, and memories of victories and sufferings continue to weave their sometimes deadly spell.



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