

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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[redacted] called on me, at their request. Their main objective was to let the Taoiseach know that, since the visit last month of [redacted] the minority population in Belfast and Derry had come under IRA control. There was now little chance of winning away support from the IRA, in those areas, in favour of non-violent political leaders.

They attributed this development to the British Army. Its leadership had changed from an independent man who had standards and an appreciation of the limitations of military solutions (Farrar-Hockley) to a mere carrier-out of orders (Ford). Down the line, men like Kittson (Brigadier with local command in Belfast), who had previously been available at short notice and had been ready to act on reasonable complaints about Army conduct, had in the past month become completely unavailable. Juniors take complaints but no action follows.

Army conduct on the ground had become progressively intolerable and the paratroops, in particular, were hated. It could be taken that no intimidation was now required to mount the all-night watch on the perimeters of minority areas to provide an early-warning system against the approach of Army units.

Army partisanship was apparent. The barricaded Protestant areas in Belfast were almost totally ignored now and the right of the Protestant community to protect their areas, to stop cars, search them and turn back anyone they wished appeared to be accepted by the Army. Openly the barricades were manned by persons carrying sticks only but, at whistle-call, an armed back-up force stood by behind nearby doors.

Army public-relations effort was only evident in dealing with the majority. [redacted] contrasted the apology, the gifts of flowers etc. in the case of the shot Derry girl with the appalling lies by Army HQ about the firing at St. Agnes' Church.

Internment and its associated brutality had contributed. Brutality (or fear of it) and the initial incommunicado period had for some time been operated successfully as a positive intelligence weapon against internee and their relatives. It was paying off.

In 1969, when the the IRA said that the British Army were the enemy, they were derided by the majority of Catholics. Since then the conduct of the Army and their worsening public-relations effort had ensured that they were now accepted as the enemy by all city Catholics. My callers contrasted the situation in the Glens, where there was 100% Nationalist feeling but where, because there was no Army presence, there was no violence nor IRA recruitment.

Water-supply and transport services were the problems of the day for the CCDC. Ballymurphy was badly hit and [redacted] school there was closed on Thursday and Friday for lack of water to flush toilets. The CCDC was also committed to reinstating the barricades in the Catholic areas and had warned Mr. Howard Smith to that effect.

At a recent and long-delayed interview with General Tuzo and Mr. Smith the former was altogether unhelpful and the latter remained silent throughout.

Individual points made by the callers were:-

- notwithstanding prior warnings, there was considerable disappointment arising from the Chequers' talks;
- my callers asserted that the RUC would never <sup>again</sup> walk the Catholic areas in Belfast and Derry;
- a brutality case taken now to the Human Rights Commission might inhibit the Army's use of internment for intelligence purposes - both had been involved in the case of Wm. Shannon arrested over a week ago, whose wife was nearly demented from wrong information or none furnished by the various authorities:

releases as a result of the inquiries of the advisory committee would be minimal, but, if a bargaining counter were required by Mr. Faulkner, up to a hundred or so could be released by reference to the recent decision in the McElduff case; my callers were convinced that direct rule had already been decided upon by the British and accepted by Mr. Faulkner - action to be delayed until the EEC debates were over. They supported this view by instancing the big build-up in the staff of the UK representative's office in Belfast and the lack of recent initiative from Mr. Faulkner, as if he did not wish to prejudice whatever future he might then have in politics by any offer of concessions to the minority.

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