

~~PAT MCA~~ 11a. P/A: 233/92

UNDER/ SEC 252/8
-7 AUG 1992
CENT SEC

FROM: R C WEST
SIL DIVISION
28 JULY 1992

- cc PS/Mr Mates(L+B) -B
- PS/PUS(L+B) -B
- PS/Mr Fell -B
- Mr Ledlie -B
- Mr Thomas -B
- Mr Bell -B
- Mr Alston -B
- Mr Watkins -B
- Mr Leach -B
- Mr Archer, RID -B
- (w/o enclosures)
- Mr Maccabe

1. Mr Rickard (Amended to be slightly more forthcoming, in terms based on Mr Brooke's 8 April letter to Lord Bethell on the same subject. SLR 7/8)
2. PS/Secretary of State(L+B)

MINISTER'S CASE 3000: BLOODY SUNDAY JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

The Prime Minister's Private Secretary wrote to you on 23 July, enclosing a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from Mr John Kelly, Chairperson of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign.

2. The Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign has the support of the relatives of the 14 men shot dead on "Bloody Sunday"; Mr Kelly is, we think, the brother of Michael Kelly, who was killed on the day, aged 17. The Campaign's objectives are to pressurise the Government to repudiate the Widgery report, to acknowledge those killed or wounded as wholly innocent, and to bring about the prosecution of the soldiers concerned.

3. You will recall that the Prime Minister wrote to Harry Barnes MP (on behalf of New Consensus) on 10 March explaining why the Government does not believe it would be right to review or

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re-open the conclusions of the Widgery Tribunal. A copy of the letter is enclosed. Mr Kelly, who has seen the letter, criticises the Prime Minister's reference to the "wholly conflicting" nature of the evidence presented at the Tribunal, and for the ambiguity of the language used to discuss the guilt or innocence of those who were killed. He asks the Prime Minister to "publicly and unambiguously acknowledge that all those killed or injured on 30 January 1972 were totally innocent"; to "publicly repudiate the Widgery report in its entirety"; and to "see to it that those responsible for British Army actions on that day be prosecuted". He argues that the failure of successive British Governments to establish the truth of what happened on "Bloody Sunday" has seriously undermined faith in and respect for the law.

4. A draft reply to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary, for your signature, enclosing a draft letter to Mr Kelly for the Prime Minister's signature, is enclosed.

(Signed)

R C WEST
SIL DIVISION
28 JULY 1992

CH/SIL/19857

DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE

<p>TO:</p> <p>J S Wall Esq 10 Downing Street LONDON SW1A 2AA</p>	<p>ENCLOSURES:</p>	<p>COPIES TO BE SENT TO</p>
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FOR SIGNATURE BY:..PS/SECRETARY OF STATE.....

Thank you for your letter of 23 July, enclosing a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from Mr John Kelly, Chairperson of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign.

The Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign is a newly formed organisation, which has the backing of the relatives of the 14 men who were shot and killed on "Bloody Sunday", whose 20th anniversary was on 30 January this year. Mr Kelly is (we believe) the brother of Michael Kelly, one of those shot dead, aged 17. The purpose of the campaign

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is pressurise the Government to acknowledge the innocence of those who were killed or injured on "Bloody Sunday"; to repudiate the Widgery report; and to bring about the prosecution of the soldiers who opened fire.

Mr Kelly writes to express "widely held dissatisfaction as to the Government's continued inaction" and to take issue with the points made in the Prime Minister's letter to Harry Barnes MP of 10 March, which sought a review of the findings of the Widgery Tribunal. I enclose a copy for reference. He criticises the Prime Minister's stated reasons for not re-investigating the conclusions of the Tribunal - which broadly vindicated the actions of the soldiers involved and suggested that some of those deceased or wounded had probably been firing weapons or handling bombs in the course of the afternoon - and seeks from the Prime Minister an unambiguous assessment of the guilt or innocence of those who were killed. He argues that "the lack of will shown by successive British Governments to arrive at the truth and administer justice in the case of Bloody Sunday has seriously undermined our faith in and respect for the law".

My Secretary of State judges that it would be unwise for the Prime Minister to go beyond existing statements on this matter. I attach a brief draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature.

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DRAFT LETTER

FILE NUMBER

ADDRESSEE'S REFERENCE

TO:	ENCLOSURES:	COPIES TO BE SENT TO
Mr John Kelly Chairperson The Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign 1 Westend Park Derry City Ireland BT48 9JF		

FOR SIGNATURE BY:..PRIME MINISTER.....

Thank you for your letter of 2 July.

You asked me to take a view on a number of matters relating to "Bloody Sunday". A Tribunal of Inquiry was established in 1972, which reached particular conclusions as to those events. I have explained why the Government does not think it would be right to review or re-open that Tribunal. It would in any case be quite wrong for me retrospectively to cast judgement on the guilt or innocence of any individual or individuals involved in those events.

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As you will be aware, the Government in 1974 issued a statement ~~in~~ which sought to remove any imputation of guilt from those who died.

More generally, the Government is conscious of the depth of feeling to which "Bloody Sunday" still gives rise. The events of 30 January 1972 constituted a terrible tragedy: no-one can dispute that. One of the aims of the development of the Government's security and wider policies in Northern Ireland has been to ensure that, as far as humanly possible, a tragedy like "Bloody Sunday" should never be able to happen again.

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