



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Martin McGuinness — A Self-Acknowledged Murderer



**Martin McGuinness**

**It has been a long established point of international law, that those who issue the orders to carry out an illegal act are as guilty as those who actually perpetrate it. It was for this reason that the judges at the Nuremburg trials of Nazi war leaders sentenced many of them to death by hanging.**

Martin McGuinness has acknowledged in a submission to the “Bloody Sunday” inquiry that he was a senior figure in the Londonderry unit of the IRA in January 1972. That makes him culpable for the murder and terror carried out by that unit and for the actions of all other terrorist units under his command as he rose higher up the ranks of the Provisional IRA. McGuinness’s acknowledgement of his IRA role, something he frequently denied, will surely create moral and ethical problems for his Ulster Unionist Cabinet partners. How can they maintain any profession of political integrity while working in coalition with a self-confessed murderer of many of their members and supporters? Sadly, we all know the answer to that question!

**The following articles are from Irish Nationalist newspapers and show something of the response to McGuinness’s acknowledgement of his IRA leadership.**

#### **Census day reminder of woman’s murder By Seamus McKinney (Irish News)**

FOR many people in Northern Ireland, the 10-yearly census will be forever overshadowed by one of the most ruthless and cruel murders of the troubles.

Twenty years ago in Derry, as she collected census forms, 25-year-old mother Joanne Mathers was brutally gunned down.

After a brilliant academic career at Queen’s University, the young woman graduated with a first-class honours degree. But rather than pursue a high-profile career, she opted for marriage and motherhood.

In 1981, she was living with her farmer husband and their two-year-old son just outside Strabane when she took on a part-time job as a census collector.

On the evening of April 7 1981, Mrs Mathers was working at Anderson Crescent in the Gobnascale area of Derry. She was about to call at a house when a masked man ran up to her and grabbed her clip board before placing a gun against her head and firing.

Mrs Mathers ran past the householder she was about to see and into the house. He closed the door but her murderer smashed through the door and grabbed a bundle of census forms before making off. Within seconds, Mrs Mathers died.

While no group claimed responsibility for the murder – the IRA and INLA actually issued statements denying any involvement

– it took place against the backdrop of the hunger strikes and some of the worst violence



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witnessed in Northern Ireland in many years.

Since 1983 a special Joanne Mathers Memorial Award has been presented annually by the departments of education and the environment in recognition of the murdered woman's work as a town planner before her marriage.

### **McGuinness' reign marked by 29 security killings David McKittrick. (Irish Independent)**

AN ANALYSIS of the two-year period in which Martin McGuinness was second-in-command of the IRA in Derry shows that 29 members of the security forces were killed by the IRA in the city in that time. Twenty-four regular soldiers, three members of the Ulster Defence Regiment and two policemen died in the city during 1971 and 1972. This represents one of the IRA's most sustained and deadly local offensives against the security forces throughout the troubles. . . . . It is accepted in both republican and security circles that Mr McGuinness was one of the organisation's most senior members in Derry for some time before Bloody Sunday.

But while the IRA may have been inactive on Bloody Sunday, its Derry Brigade throughout the early 1970s was one of the organisation's most destructive units. It not only killed large numbers of troops but also methodically demolished large swathes of Derry city centre in bomb attacks. An RUC Special Branch document released to the inquiry described IRA tactics as "alternating destruction by explosives and arson in a creeping infringement in towards the city centre."