

A failed political entity



Studies in unionism
and civil rights



"A FAILED POLITICAL ENTITY"

**STUDIES IN UNIONISM,
THE CIVIL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN,
DISCRIMINATION, and
THE WAY FORWARD.**

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Editorial

THIS IS THE FIRST booklet in a series proposed to be published, aimed at exploring the current condition of public affairs in Ireland, and its origins, and also of exploring the options available to the Irish people in the next decade.

For each booklet, people of experience and commitment will contribute a varying range of opinions and factual analyses, aimed at increasing understanding of our problem, not of scoring partisan points.

The main thrust of this first booklet is a consideration of the peaceful and non-violent Civil Rights struggle of twenty years ago, the official state reaction to that struggle and the development of the thinking of the participants of that struggle.

Most of the participants in the Civil Rights movement in the late '60s felt a genuine hope that the state could be reformed and that, in the fullness of time, the normal democratic current of affairs would evolve people of goodwill to lead the community into equality and fraternity. However, it transpired that this was precisely what the taut, tightly-controlled ideology of the Unionist state could not tolerate, and it reacted with a savage violence.

In the end, we came to the conclusion that the Unionist state could not be reformed; could not develop; could not change. It would have to be abolished.

Vincent MacDowell.

Edited by Vincent MacDowell.
Cover photo by Coleman Doyle.

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Introduction

BY KEVIN BOLAND

MANY PEOPLE who are seriously and constantly concerned with bringing the long Irish struggle for freedom from foreign domination to its only possible conclusion are inclined to despair of this generation of people in the 26 Counties. This attitude is not justifiable. The people have reacted angrily and spontaneously on a number of occasions during this present phase, which started as provoked resistance to a new manifestation of British oppression, exercised, in the first instance, by the surrogate regime in the Six Counties and later by direct British government action and by the British Army. This initial resistance to the new wave of British brutality has developed, inevitably and predictably, into a positive effort to establish the democratic rights of the Irish nation by the only methods to which Britain has ever responded in the long drawn-out dissolution of its empire.

Successive 26-County governments have developed a pattern for dealing with these periodic outbursts of public anger. The first stage is to create the impression that they, themselves, are reacting with the same angry indignation as the people. The second stage, when the people have come to accept that the government have taken the matter firmly in hand, is to set about "smoothing out" the differences that have arisen and to revitalise the alliance, in the common cause, by further developing Irish participation in the on-going British military effort to sustain the unjust and undemocratic remnant of the Union.

In the present period of public anger, initiated by the apparently deliberately provocative and nationally humiliating series of events starting with the decision on the Stalker/Sampson Report and on the Birmingham Six Appeal, this second stage was ushered in with unusual formality in a truly remarkable speech by the Taoiseach in the Dail on

the 17th February 1988. This speech was made in moving the following amazing resolution.

"That Dail Eireann takes note of recent developments affecting Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations and re-affirms its determination to take any and all action necessary to ensure the full use of the procedures and structures set up by the Anglo-Irish Agreement and to secure the achievement of the goals of that Agreement."

The process of re-vitalising the alliance, disrupted by what the Taoiseach refers to as the "emotive" reaction of the people to the appalling situation outlined by these events, continues with every day that passes, and we have had the "best ever" meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference, at which still greater harmonisation of the Irish and British "security forces" was arranged. This time, however, reaction to fresh incidents of arrogant British injustice continues to demonstrate that the sense of outrage among the people, which started with the Stalker/Sampson Report, still survives the continuous efforts of the Irish government to assuage it over a period of more than seven months.

A foreward to this booklet is not the place to analyse the motion quoted above and the Taoiseach's speech on the occasion, in the context of the pre-election position, which he established formally and in the full glare of publicity, as Fianna Fail policy on national issues such as the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Single European Act and the Extradition Act. (I deal in more detail with these matters in my book *Under Contract with the Enemy*.) Here I want to point out only that the mere fact of these shameless convolutions is rigidly excluded from public mention by the national media of "communication". The people of the 26 Counties are brain-washed, day in and day out, by their national newspapers and by radio and TV, into the belief that there is virtually unanimous approval in principle of government policy on all these matters and that harassment and discrimination of every kind against the section of the national majority in the Six Counties are long since things of the past. It is in this atmosphere of the manipulation of news to accord with British propaganda and of rigid censorship of views not in line with the Irish/British Alliance that the lack of public awareness of and concern about the factual state of affairs in the Six Counties must be judged. They are prevented from knowing the facts by the media of "communication". It is only occasionally that an instance of the continuous harassment of the section of the national majority coerced into the remnant of the

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Union breaks through the paper and air-wave wall such as, for instance, the public murder of Aidan McAnespie in Aughnacloy by the British Army.

The task of circumventing the censorship and British-aligned management of news is a major one and it appears to be tackled only incidentally at present by organisations dealing with the full range of issues in the Six Counties or with other specific aspects of national policy and sovereignty. In these circumstances, the Dublin '68 Committee decided to try to make available to the public information on the facts of the situation in so far as the ordinary citizen in that part of our country, who is identified as a member of the nationalist community by his or her religion, is concerned. This booklet, *A Failed Entity*, is our initial effort in this regard. As the reader will see, Vincent MacDowell has procured the services of a number of people of the highest calibre to contribute articles dealing with different aspects of the factual conditions affecting the daily lives of the ordinary members of the nationalist community twenty years after the public and passive demand for minimal basic civil rights was made. These people are not fellow members of any organisation. The bond between them is their unassailable personal records of unselfish dedication to basic principle related to the common good but irrelevant to their own circumstances, except as members of the community. The overall picture that emerges from their contribution is of a substantial deterioration in regard to civil rights and of a whole community, which after twenty years of repression remains absolutely determined never again to accept the status of inferior citizens, prescribed for them by the unilateral action of the British parliament, in carving out six Irish counties, carefully selected on the basis of a sectarian head-count, for continued attachment to Britain, without even the dubious justification of the jointly enacted Act of Union.

All the indications are that, if the facts of the situation can be made available to them, the general public will not be apathetic, but will see they have an important role to play in creating the conditions in which peace in Ireland and goodwill between the Irish and British nations will be possible, by insisting on a new approach based on the prior acceptance of the principles of justice and democracy.

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BY VINCENT MacDOWELL

THE PROVINCE OF NORTHERN IRELAND is a failed political entity. The Unionist Party held untrammelled power for over fifty years, and during all that time had never made the slightest attempt to defuse opposition to its policies or to understand or ameliorate the position of the substantial minority of the population who felt aggrieved and insulted by its inception. On the contrary, the Unionists ruled by force and fear and electoral fraud. They gloried in the evocation of impotent fury in the Irish minority, by constantly pressing on the nerve of bigotry, by ensuring maximum political temperature of bitterness at elections and annual demonstrations and by the constant practice of a finely-honed system of apartheid, long before the term was invented elsewhere.

In the end, the Unionist Government and Parliament was swept away by an exasperated Imperial Government which could not longer tolerate the international odium it aroused. To understand the failure of Unionism it is necessary to glance briefly at its triumph, and its response to even the most minimal challenge from Irish democracy, during the period of its unbridled power.

On the evening of April 24th 1914, a freighter crept along the grey cliffs of the Gobbins, at Islandmagee, County Antrim. As the ship emerged from the fog and nosed into the docks at Larne, the RIC Barracks, the railway station and all crossroads, were occupied by armed UVF units, without any resistance whatever. Lines of hundreds of motor cars were marshalled into position to receive and distribute the deadly cargo of a re-named *Clyde Valley* — 35,000 German rifles and a million rounds of ammunition.

With the landing of that poisonous cargo, violence had erupted onto modern Irish politics. The Orange Order and the Unionist Party, which are indistinguishable, had served notice that they proposed an armed

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insurrection against the United Kingdom: "We will kick the King's crown into the Boyne" rather than submit to a democratic decision of Parliament and implement Home Rule.

The news sent a shock of horror throughout the country and spurred on the Irish Republican Brotherhood to emulate. Soon a private yacht, the *Asgard*, owned by Erskine Childers, sailed into Howth with 900 Mausers aboard and another yacht, *Kelpie*, owned by Conor O'Brien (uncle of Conor Cruise of that ilk!), carrying 600 guns, later landed at Kilcoole. The Irish Volunteers and the Ulster Volunteer Force squared up to one another. The sudden onset of the Great War in Europe providentially avoided a bloodbath in Ireland, and soon both sets of Volunteers found themselves betrayed by their leaders — Carson and Redmond — and they mingled their blood on the distant battlefields of Flanders and Suvla Bay.

The Rising of 1916 swept Redmondism into the dustbin and the subsequent general election of 1918 gave the clearest possible indication of the people's feelings. Sinn Féin won 73 seats, the Unionists 26 and the Nationalists 6 from a total of 105. The Irish MPs refused to attend at Westminster and met as Dail Eireann in Dublin, electing a government headed by Eamon deValera which included Countess Markievicz as Minister for Labour, the first woman Cabinet Minister in the world.

The British Government and the Unionists refused to recognise the result of the election and made war upon the elected government. The Unionists organised a military statelet in a rump of the province of Ulster, where they had a local majority, and they launched a ruthless pogrom in many areas against the Catholic population, in order to force as many to flee as possible. A guerrilla war ensued in the South of the country.

Eventually the British Government tacitly admitted defeat in the South at the hands of the IRA and, after the usual poisoned negotiations, Dublin Castle was handed over to Michael Collins in July 1921. The pogrom continued in the North, until Collins encouraged the shooting of Twaddell and other prominent Unionists and of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson at his home in London. The pogrom taps were turned off once it was clear that retaliation would not be at street level, but on the highest in the land.

An embittered Carson, manoeuvred out of the leadership in the North and relegated to the backwater of the Lords in London, spoke the

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epitaph for the whole sordid story of the Orange years when he told the Lords:

"I was in earnest. I was not playing politics. What a fool I was. I was only a puppet and so was Ulster and so was Ireland in the political game that was to get the Conservative Party into power".

For ten years a carnival of reaction ensued in Ireland, North and South. Then came the Great Depression of 1931 and the worldwide political earthquake that produced Roosevelt and Hitler also shoehorned Fianna Fail into power in the South. In the North the change was slight. But even the slightest change is anathema to the Orange neanderthals. The grotesquely gerrymandered statelet seemed insulated against any upheaval and the constant outpourings of bigotry seemed capable of forever ensuring against any common union of interests between the Protestant and Catholic divisions of the population. But, ever so slowly, the waters began to rise around the Unionist fortress. Catholics in Belfast and Derry began to vote solidly for Labour, whilst in the rural areas they usually voted Nationalist or Republican. In the Dock division of Belfast, the Unionist candidate for parliament, a typical chinless scion of a Unionist minor landed aristocratic family, by name Clarke, was narrowly defeated by the Labour candidate, Harry Midgley, of later shameful memory. In Pottinger, in the East of the city, a sturdy boilermaker of republican, socialist, Presbyterian principles, named Jack Beattie, was elected. Only two out of 52, but it stuck in the Orange gorge.

The lambeg drums began to beat their familiar rhythm of hate and the marches became even more provocative. The political temperature rose steadily for two years, then, in 1935, a surgically precise pogrom was launched and screaming mobs of Orangemen, intermingled with uniformed 'B' Specials with rifles, began to eliminate the slender Labour majority by burning out the Catholic houses on the edge of the constituency. The ghettos were quickly reduced, the RUC generally standing by and directing traffic, and several hundred houses were burned. As a child of eight, living in the Dock constituency, in Alexandra Park Avenue, I have an enduring memory of clinging to my mother's skirt at the door of our burning house, whilst a screaming mob of Orangemen and Specials threw stones and rivets at us to force us back into the flames. I felt the blood from my mother's face drip across my forehead, from where a drunken man had run up and hit her with a broken brick, whilst vomiting curses.

We were a specially marked house, as we had a lodger, Bob Rooney — Lawyer Bob — who worked for the International Labour Office and

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was a noted Labour supporter. Some of the arsonists in the crowd were people whom he had defended before the Dole and Outdoor Relief Tribunals. Fourteen Catholics were murdered, many were wounded and burned, and many people fled in that pogrom. In the aftermath, several thousand slept in tents in MacRory and Falls Parks. In the next general election, the Unionists had safe majorities in the two seats.

For the next thirty years, the political slum that was Northern Ireland festered in decay and the indifference of a world occupied by war and reconstruction. Then came the Civil Rights upsurge of 1968.

On the surface, the Civil Rights demands were innocuous enough. The main demand was "One Man – One Vote" in reaction to the situation prevalent in Local Government in the North whereby Company Directors and owners of property could have twenty or more votes, related to their rates, whilst thousands of adult couples with grown families had no votes at all because they lived in Local Authority housing. The primal importance of local government was that it controlled the supply of housing, quantity and location, and who occupied it. It also had a substantial input into employment through contracts and direct employment. But, in the background, lurked a potent and perennial Unionist nightmare.

The Unionists had always lied about the vital statistics of Northern Ireland. They flourished nonsense figures like "A million Loyalists", talked about the minority as if they were an insignificant one and used all the stratagems of discrimination to prevent members of the minority from getting jobs, houses or education. They also used all possible pressures to promote emigration. Despite all their efforts, the population figures inexorably approached parity and the chilling truth was disclosed by Captain O'Neill, Unionist Premier in the '60s, that the minority now numbered 42%, but that, worst of all, 55% of all children attending primary schools in 1968 were Catholic. This was the key to the inexplicable violence of the Orange and Unionist community to the moderate aims of the Civil Rights movement, for a fair electoral system. "If these Civil Rights agitators got their way, then the Catholic vote would control local government in ten years – and Ulster was doomed".

Captain O'Neill made a feeble attempt to come to terms with reality and sought middle-class Catholic support for the Unionist position. He met Lemass and had tea with a few Reverend Mothers in an attempt to open a dialogue, but the result was fury in the Lodges and he was soon ousted from office. The decision had been made to rely on the tactics of force and intimidation that had served Unionism so well in the past. The

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government and security forces set out to club the non-violent Civil Rights agitators off the streets and reinforce the lesson with a dose of pogrom in the Catholic ghettos to teach the croppies to lie down again. Beginning with the Derry baton charge in October '68, there followed a year of repression and harassment. In August '69, the Unionists opened the throttle on a full-scale pogrom in Belfast. Nine people were killed, nearly a hundred were wounded and four hundred houses were burned out in the traditional arenas of the Upper Falls, Ardoyne, Short Strand and the Markets. Mobs of Orange rioters stormed the areas with 'B' Specials armed with rifles at their head, in a repeat of former years. There followed the largest movement of civilian refugees in Europe since the war, as the two communities drew apart in fear and loathing.

The non-violent Civil Rights Movement was swept into oblivion and the newly-born Provisional IRA arose from the ashes of burning Belfast. A network of Citizens' Defence Committees was established and appeals made to the South for help. The government of Jack Lynch proclaimed that they would not stand idly by and several ministers, particularly the Minister for Finance, Charles J. Haughey, the Minister for Defence, Jim Gibbons, and Kevin Boland and Neil Blaney, worked assiduously.

Haughey and Gibbons were the key movers in an official but inept attempt to get a consignment of defensive small arms to the Citizens' Defence Committees. However this attempt came unstuck, the British screamed threats at Lynch and, in a complete volte-face, Haughey and Blaney were arrested by the Special Branch and put on trial along with an Irish Army officer, a naturalized Flemish emigré and a member of the Belfast Citizens' Defence Committee. Blaney was released and Gibbons pedalled backwards from the whole operation with extreme velocity. Haughey was a sacrificial lamb, demanded by London, to appease official British anger. The rest is history.

The Unionists relaxed, having achieved their objective. But times were changing and the cork could not be put back into the bottle so easily. The new IRA proved to be tough and audacious, quick to learn and adapt, and impossible to defeat. A tenacious and bitter struggle ensued, now seventeen years in existence. In the end, the Unionist failure to govern in a civilised manner was too much for the finer British sensibilities! In the wake of the Sunningdale fiasco the Unionists lost their parliament and government.

The Brits showed a more sophisticated approach to the problem of preventing the minority from securing Local Government power. They

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reformed the electoral register, allowed the minority to greatly increase its representation and win several important councils, including Derry City and then they took away all significant powers from the local councils. Housing – the key to electoral power – was taken away from the remit of local councils and concentrated in a Housing Executive run by British civil servants from Stormont. Education, contracts, all security and police matters were reserved to the government. But there was no government in the Province, all executive functions being exercised by British civil servants overlooked by a handful of Ministers of State from Westminster. The political problems had been solved, from a British viewpoint, and the only task remaining was the security one, for which the assistance of the Southern Government was necessary and was soon forthcoming. The only significant difference was that the Unionists no longer controlled the streets or the security forces and this meant that there could never be an effective pogrom again, as the defensive capability of the IRA precluded the old-fashioned mob attacks. The pallid alternative – which was adopted – was the seemingly endless but sporadic campaign of sectarian murder of Catholics, mostly without any political affiliation.

For sixteen years after the pogrom of '69, the embattled Unionist Party still nourished faint hopes of ultimately recovering its lost hegemony. The Anglo-Irish Agreement was the end of those hopes and a clear indication that their traditional allies had set upon a new course, leaving them behind. This was the moment for an intelligent and confident Unionist leadership to realise that the ultimate political settlement in Ireland must be made between the Irish people – between Unionists and Republicans – without outside interference. A confident Unionist leadership could have negotiated a dominant position for itself in a New Republic, with practically veto powers over the formation of any Irish government, by virtue of its block of 25% of the deputies in the Dail. But, unfortunately, the once-solid Unionist monolith was riven into three parties, two of them bitterly contesting for leadership and emulating each other in bitterness, bigotry and virulence. The Unionist community settled into a sulkily internecine competition.

Rumour flew upon rumour across the Northern firmament. The British are pulling out! They are selling off Shorts and Harlands! They are selling out the Harland and Wolfe Shipyard! The Electricity Board The Housing Executive! The Airports! Where will this greedy woman stop? Will it ever end?

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Demographic experts, with chilling objectivity, compounded the Unionists fears. Forecasts for the 1991 census indicate that parity has been reached, and worse! The projections are that 60% of all children in primary schools will be Catholic. The figures are illuminating, as are the following extracts from the previous census returns.

	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991 (projected)
Protestant:	893,596	901,077	899,208	792,843	700,000
Catholic & Not-stated.	477,325	578,965	602,434	689,116	750,000
Totals.	1,370,021	1,420,042	1,469,642	1,481,959	1,450,000

In the intercensal period 1961/1971, the Protestant population fell through death or emigration by only 1,869. In the next intercensal period, 1971/1981, this figure had leapt to a staggering 106,365 and is projected to be 92,800 in the current intercensal period. This appears to reflect the comparatively much greater Protestant emigration during the period under review, mainly to Britain, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada. In contrast, the Catholic and unstated figures for the same periods showed a rise of 101,496 for the first period and 68,672 in the second, with a projected 60,800 for the current period.

The following cautions should be borne in mind when observing the above table:

1. Protestants normally state their religion in the Census.
2. About one-third of Catholics, living in mixed areas, never state their religion on Census forms for understandable security reasons.
3. In the 1981 Census, the IRA called for a boycott and mounted a campaign against the Census takers. Many were attacked and one was killed. In consequence, many thousands of Catholics did not complete Census forms and the total is therefore understated.
4. All Protestants do not vote Unionist. Many Catholics do not vote at all. Many Catholics would vote to maintain the Union, especially if the Unionist Party was out of business.
5. It seems that parity has already been achieved and the 1991 Census will confirm that Protestants are in a minority in the Six Counties. However, the totals include children and infants, and it will be a further seven or eight years before the Unionists lose their combined voting majority.

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6. Taking all the data into consideration, there is no possibility of the Six Counties entering the 21st Century, now only twelve years away, as a separate self-governing entity.

The Westminster Guarantee — once a solid reassurance — begins to look like a death-trap to the Unionist ideologists. The Anglo-Irish Agreement pledges both governments to introduce legislation to give effect to a majority vote for a Constitutional change, and by 1998 the voting majority will be Catholic. Destabilisation and confusion is the hallmark of Unionism in this crisis. It is to be noted that the British and Irish governments and all political parties — except the Unionists — have guaranteed to respect the wishes of the majority and, in particular, to support the concept of "unity by consent". The entire Unionist and Orange establishment have maintained an ominous silence on this vital matter. The British, who are a numerate people, have obviously taken all the projections into their long-range planning. However, the government and politicians in the South have not understood this background and have been taken by surprise by the sustained virulence of Unionist opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which the UK intended as mainly a security reinforcement and the then Southern government intended as a political prop to the SDLP. The Agreement has merely succeeded in disappointing both governments and infuriating the Unionists, whilst being regarded by growing numbers of nationalists as a sham and a fraud.

It is now possible to delineate the salient features of Unionism, as expressed by their actions rather than their protestations, throughout the half century of their rule. They are totally apart from the normal political groupings found elsewhere in Europe and the inability to comprehend this fact leads to the confusion of many orthodox Irish political leaders. Unionists, in the mass, are distinguished by a mental fog of racial and religious superiority, which occasionally reaches the intensity of a cancer and this is reinforced by an extraordinary degree of political and military organisation. The Unionists are unique in that, from about eight years of age the child is exposed to a militaristic and jingoistic atmosphere, which moulds the mind into imperialist and racist channels.

There is a multitude of uniformed semi-political and quasi-religious organisations. Scouts, Brownies, Guides, Junior Orangemen, Church Lads Brigades, Apprentice Boys, Young Unionists, B Specials, RUC, RUC Reserve, UDR, RAFVR, Territorial Army, RNVR, Brass Bands, Silver

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Bands, Drumming Clubs, Supporters Clubs, The Loyal Orange Order, The Black Institution, The Purplemen, The Freemasons — all endlessly duplicated in every village and town, ensuring that there are few aspects of the normal citizen's life where the state ideology does not impinge. The Unionist is everywhere surrounded by the milieu of an embattled people, manning the walls or settling behind the laager, incessantly reminded to be on their guard against the machinations of the 'lesser breeds without the law'. The net result is a psychosis, a schizophrenia which hampers the citizen in understanding normal life. Many Unionists think that the rest of Europe is just like Ulster in the degree of political organisation and cannot comprehend the low intensity of feeling on matters political there.

The consequence of all this conditioning is a widespread feeling of contempt and loathing for the minority, whose bare existence the Unionist grudgingly tolerates. The condition of the Irish minority was accurately described by Peter Barry, then Minister for Foreign Affairs architect of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and a moderate man given to understatement, as, "a nightmare". One usually awakes from a nightmare the next morning, but the Northern Nationalists have to endure it for a lifetime. The Reverend Albert McElroy, Presbyterian Minister and former Liberal leader has written:

"Leaving aside the second half of the 18th Century — the period of the Irish Volunteers and the United Irishmen — the Protestants suffer from a folk-fear of the Catholic church. It can and does reach obsessional dimensions. One need only read the correspondence columns of the Belfast papers, when the theological or political controversy erupts, to realise how deep the neurosis lies. The measure of popular support for something so crudely illiterate and philistine as Paisleyism is a symptom of the disease".

However, the ideology and conditioning was never 100% effective. Always, as in the era of the United Irishmen, there were sturdy independent-minded Protestants who reckoned not the cost, but stood for justice for all, with the special insight of those who bestride the divisions between peoples into each side's needs and desires. Such were those in the United men, whose subversive connections with Irishmen in the Royal Navy led to the mutinies of Spithead and the Nore — "The Floating Republic" — and almost paralysed the British war effort against the French Revolution. And later days saw deeds as brave....

In the early Forties, the gallant Captain Denis Ireland founded the

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Ulster Union Club, an organisation of public-spirited Protestant Nationalists, which strove against the tide, to considerable effect. A contemporary was the crack IRA unit – HQ Coy. of the Northern Command – in which I had the honour to serve as a Volunteer. Five of our seven company officers were Protestant, as were eight of the Volunteers, and many suffered terms of imprisonment from three to fourteen years.

Many of the early active members of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association were Protestant. I cannot praise too highly the stalwart band who performed Trojan service in the early years – Betty Sinclair, Edwina Stewart, Madge Davidson, John Turnley – and many others who were not born to revolt but achieved subversion through conviction, and whose quiet bravery should never be forgotten. They did not sleep in the security of the ghetto each night but ran the gauntlet of abuse, misunderstanding and often stones and the threat of the bullet from the darkness. John Turnley paid for his courage with his life, as did several others.

On the other hand, a similar bigotry is not evident in the Catholic psyche. Both North and South, the Catholics have regularly demonstrated that religion is of little consequence in the assessment of a political figure – it is the politics that count. Accordingly, Catholics in West Belfast voted solidly for Jack Beattie, a Presbyterian, during his long political life as a thorn in the side of Unionism. There is a nostalgic harking back to the time of the Volunteers, a totally Protestant organisation, who packed St. Mary's Church to support Catholic Emancipation and there is a potent folk memory of Protestant leaders, Tone, McCracken, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mitchel, Martin, who suffered for their republican principles, and of Parnell, who came nearest of all to achieving the dreams. The rights of man and the dream of a free republic is a truly Protestant legacy to the Irish Nation. In the South, two out of five Presidents were Protestant, many Protestants have been elected Dail deputies for almost entirely Catholic constituencies, and, twice Jews have been elected Lord Mayor of Dublin.

The political reality of Unionism is their very primal refusal to join in normal political co-operation and compromise. They can use democratic resources and facilities to great effect, but they have no regard whatever for the normal democratic concept of the pendulum, or acceptance of the possibility of an actual electoral defeat, or of having to share in a coalition government. The whole concept of equality is totally alien. We have seen that three times during their period of rule they did not hesitate to use extra-legal murder and arson to frighten their opponents and

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cement their power – in 1920 at the inception of the State, in 1935 in reaction to the spread of socialist ideas and in 1969 against the non-violent Civil Rights demands for a fair electoral system. There is not the slightest doubt that they would do the same again, if they had the power.

The parameters of a sound national policy emerge from this study. In the first place, the Unionist Party is wounded, perhaps mortally, and a wounded beast is always the most dangerous. There can be no possible internal solution in the Six Counties. There should be no further futile hunting for a power-sharing devolved government. We must listen to the Unionists as they proclaim from the housetops that they will never share – "Not an Inch". They mean what they say!

There can never again be a Unionist government, with control of the streets and the security forces. Unionist policy and outlook must be changed totally. It may be that the leadership and political structures must also be changed, to signal a break with the past, and the current split in the Unionist community will certainly widen. Determination and knowledge and compassion was never more necessary in the Irish Government and in the Northern Nationalist community, but this must be the last generation of Irish children to have their lives distorted and stunted by partition.

It is always better to light a candle than to curse the darkness and we must face an uncertain future with the belief that it is possible to overcome in the end. First, it is necessary to identify the real enemy. It is not the deluded mass of our Loyalist fellow countrymen, who have been conditioned to behave as a foreign garrison in a country in which they are not foreigners. The enemy is imperialism itself, not its dupes, certainly not the common people of Britain who were its first victims and who spent their blood freely across four continents for the final aggrandisement of a tiny aristocratic oligarchy, the real and perpetual rulers of England. As Fergus O'Connor, O'Brien and the Chartists realised, the unity of the democracy of England and Ireland is the key to the overthrow of imperialism.

We should always act and strive as if the unity of minds that Tone sought can be brought about in this generation. "To break the connection with England, the source of all our evils, this was my aim. To substitute the common name of Irishman for the denominations of Catholic, Protestant, Dissenter, these were my methods." It happened once, it can happen again, if we will it so.

We must promote the cause of Civil Rights for all in the forefront of

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all our endeavours. We do not intend to invert the apparatus of discrimination and have the Catholic tribe on top of the Protestant tribe. Rather we seek the new Republic in which a pluralistic community can achieve peace and harmony and a common prosperity and there is at least as much work to be done in the South as in the North.

"What matters if at different times

Our Fathers won this sod.

What matters if at different shrines

We worship unto one God.

In fortune and in name we're bound

by stronger bonds than steel

and neither can be safe or sound

but in the other's weal".

If we hold steady in that faith we can achieve a new constitution in a new republic, "cherishing all the children of the nation equally, oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, that have divided a minority from the majority in the past."

Hope lies in the knowledge that the Northern Loyalists do not form a homogeneous mass, as they so often pretend. The bigoted bellowing, the sly discrimination, the casual killing is in fact confined to a sleazy minority of the sturdy Protestant people who, in the main, disdain to be involved. Street bullying is the last thing on the mind of the average Protestant citizen but they are unwilling to speak out and declare themselves as Lundy's, or as weak on the union. The private revulsion against the murderers is quite strong and can grow into repudiation if a strong and, above all, fair approach is made to seek an honourable settlement. There is a very high proportion of genuine Christian people, imbued with a strong religious faith, a detestation of violence and a full sense of charity to all people. There has always been this important leaven and in the 1790s they formed the spearhead of the Republic. Once they can be convinced that Home Rule is not Rome Rule, they can be won again for the Rights of Man and the approaching anniversary of the First Great Revolution is the appropriate time to set our hands to this task. It would be dishonest not to state firmly that a prerequisite to any peace or progress in the North is the ending of the intercommunal killing on all sides and the beginning of a healing process, commencing with a drive for amnesty and an end to all political imprisonment. But all wars must end sometime and it is time that the talks that will mean reality — the talks between the Republican and the Unionist paramilitaries — began, with honesty on

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both sides and a willingness to listen to each other.

The attitude of the British is, as always, crucial. The best thing they could do at this time is to express their desire to see a united, democratic Ireland, with a pluralistic constitution guaranteeing Civil Rights for all, for the British to join in as guarantors of the security of the state and all its citizens and to couple this with a five-year staged withdrawal plan. We do not suggest that we should hold our breath until this happens. Unfortunately, Britain has always behaved as if her best interests lay in keeping Ireland weak and divided. We do not wish for an 'Algerian solution'. We do not seek the Flight of the Colons — we would all be the poorer if these vigorous, skilful people emigrated in a sullen mass. But we can never compromise in the struggle for justice and equality. The day of the Herrenvolk; the Master Race; the Ascendancy, is over!

It should be a fundamental national objective to reduce and isolate the British involvement in Irish affairs, until it shrinks to nothing. We share many things with the British, which are part of our common tradition and have made us what we are. We are forever enjoined by the banal facts of geography — the flood tide that emerges from the Western Ocean washes all our shores in an equal stream. Our weather comes from the same quarter.

We share, albeit unwillingly, a common language and an intertwined history and our ancient quarrel is essentially a family conflict and all the more bitter because of it. But we must prevail, whatever the cost, in the struggle for justice, peace and independence. We will be steadfast friends and honest partners of the British, once we are equal and free, but the British military and political presence in Ireland must end.

In pursuance of this objective, any Irish government worthy of the name must pursue an independent policy in international affairs and, in particular, spurn the siren voices coaxing us into Cold War military alliances based upon the outdated concepts of the '50s. The total legal, diplomatic and political offices of the United Nations and of Common Europe should be pressed to the utmost in order to advance our rightful claims and any deficiency or shortfall in our presumed friends should be noted and every effort made to improve. We have several serious complaints against Britain, aside from the major national question. The treatment of Irish prisoners in Britain is abominable, the continued pollution of the Irish sea by British commercial nuclear processors, the contemptuous parade of nuclear submarines ten miles from Dublin, the contemptuous seizure of Rockall — all these demand to be raised in every

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forum, every Parliament, every international court and pressed to a conclusion.

But above all, Belfast must never become another Beirut! The potential menace of another mass pogrom must be faced with due gravity and sensible steps taken to prevent it. The defensive capacity of the IRA is limited to certain clearly defined enclaves such as the Falls and Andersonstown. The presence of the Southern Army would exacerbate the position in areas other than the solidly nationalist districts contiguous to the Border counties. Other sources of security must be found for the hundreds of thousands of isolated and vulnerable citizens of both communities under threat of murder or hostage taking. A disciplined, objective, professional peace-keeping force would need to be deployed across the North in the period of transition. We should be assiduous in preparing the climate of opinion in the United Nations for the eventual replacement of British troops in the North by a UN peace-keeping force.

British troops in the North can never be accepted as honest brokers, holding the ring against the warring tribes. To be fair, outside of the British gutter press, few people still pretend that this was ever their function. But there is, and will continue to be, a dire necessity for a trustworthy security force to patrol the Northern streets, to police the boundaries of chaos. The UN owes us this one...

But if we hold that Northern Ireland is a failed political entity, can we honestly refrain from examining the status of the South? Accepting that the most minimal criterion for the performance of a state is the degree of economic welfare of the majority of its citizens, where does the 26 Counties stand? The state falls at the first hurdle.

At the present time, it is estimated that approximately 30,000 people are emigrating each year in search of employment and the current official Dole list tops 250,000. In addition to the registered unemployed who emigrate and thus appear on the statistics, many more leave without formality. On May 31, the British authorities announced that the wave of applications from young Irish citizens seeking university education in Britain — free education — has reached a flood. In 1985 there were 1,600; in 1986 there were 2,800; in 1987 there were 6,000; by May 31 this year the current years total was 17,000! The estimate is that by 1992 there will be 30,000 young people seeking free education abroad and it is almost certain that they will only return on holiday. This in addition to the 'normal' stream of emigrants.

The approach of 1992, with the total integration into the EEC, threat-

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ens the actual existence of an independent Irish state and nation. There will always be a government of sorts in Dublin, with all the trappings of a state — civil service, army, prisons, etc — but the bulk of the Irish still living in the country will be waitresses, chauffeurs and labourers. There will be a small trading middle class but the economic structure of the nation state will be seriously distorted. The Conquest will have returned, more insidious and almost impossible to reverse. The time to build a defensive mechanism is now. It is time to waken the nation from the trance of the FitzGerald/Haughey years and to counter the puerile bleating about a future Golden Age in Europe!

The salient features of the current right-wing consensus in the South are savage cutbacks on essential public services, the too-hasty repayment of previous external borrowing and the enormous cost of supporting Thatcher's war against a section of the Irish people. A large part of an alternative would be the re-staging back, by a factor of five, the repayment terms on external loans, and the reversal of the stringent 'cuts' policy. Maintaining employment, and closing off the emigration wound is a more urgent national task and would be immediately understood and accepted by a majority of the Irish people.

A parallel with a previous crisis in our history leaps into mind. Deep in the national consciousness is a folk-memory of 'Black '47', when the potato crop failed but Ireland continued to export corn, meat and pork to Britain. The common people starved in their millions, but the official establishment leaders, in the name of fiscal rectitude, exhorted them to 'pay the rent'. The pigs and corn went to the landlords, while the people went on the workhouses and death. Only the lucky ones survived to emigrate in poisonous hulks to America.

Today, the Haugheys, the Dukes, the O'Malleys and all the establishment's hack communicators exhort us to 'pay the rent' to the international bankers, whilst cutting back hospitals, schools and almost every civilising service that the state provides. At the same time, £31,000,000 is being spent directly on Border security and much more again on prisons, Garda overtime, and Special Branch surveillance. An immediate amnesty for all political crimes which did not involve actual bodily harm would be a popular and economical measure, as would be the requirement that the British defend their own border with their own troops.

There is enough crime on the streets of Dublin to keep the security forces of the state fully occupied. The brushfire of drug addiction and its concomitant wave of car thefts, burglaries and muggings of old people;

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the daily fears of people in isolated areas; the breakdown of public tranquillity almost everywhere in the state — all this is a more proper concern of an Irish government than helping to govern Ireland "with an economy of English lives" in Churchill's mordant phrase about the Treaty.

The ironic conjunction of the approaching possibility of an end to the 800 years of British occupation, with the dismal economic outlook from 1992 onwards, fore-shadowing a period of decline, should spur every citizen to search for new paths to a just, peaceful and prosperous future. But time is short.

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Northmen, Southmen, comrades all

BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN MORGAN (RETIRED)

THE BRITISH have grown tired of the Northern Unionists. They have outlived their usefulness and are now an embarrassment. Some new arrangement is needed.

For too, long, Britain has utilised these scapegoats to advance its aims. A potentially vibrant people have been reduced to the level of white settlers. Heretofore, they have acted as Britain's apologia for its continued occupation in Ireland. Now, even they see through that. They know everything is up for grabs. At the consultative level they are being spurned.

Nationalists are now being courted. Some have been seduced. Meanwhile, they are privy. Or more so, at least.

How come all this? Why have the Loyalists come to grate? Are the colonists to be reduced to the condition of the colonised? Are favours to be transferred?

There are military and political reasons for the continued British occupation. One related to the strategic importance of Ireland; the other to the paradigm the Six Counties can provide. Britain, no longer a sovereign nation, is not the arbiter regarding the first; its military and high-Tory elements provide the nexus for the second.

Recent events have shown the awesome affinity of the USA and Britain, Thatcher's mad Malvinas escapade got full support from Reagan. His murderous attack upon Libya, in full breach of international law and moral precepts, gained her backing.

But Uncle Sam is sailing first class, while John Bull goes steerage. In fact, Britain now constitutes a giant, static, US aircraft-carrier, berthed off the continental mainland. The US has nuclear bases under its utter control, situated there. These it mans, secures and guards. These it will activate, if and when required. The dual-key is a myth. The US is in the driving seat, while Britain controls nothing on American soil and has no say regarding much of its own.

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A geographic fact intrudes. A fact, sad for Britain and disastrous for Ireland. It is that Ireland intervenes between Britain and the wide Atlantic. It separates Britain from its ally, friends and master, the USA. How can this be compensated for? That is the crux.

Britain has always considered Ireland's location as a threat to its security. From its empirical perspective, as a nation hell-bent on conquest, expansionism and the pursuit of power, Ireland presented a dilemma that could be solved only by occupation. There are some eight hundred years of history to bear witness to this.

After its limited withdrawal in 1922, Britain ensured a foothold in Ireland, principally by continuing to occupy the Six Counties and using the Loyalists there as a pretext. From this base it could retake the remainder of Ireland, at will, should the occasion demand.

In the present strategic environment, Ireland presents an attractive proposition to NATO vis-a-vis its possible confrontation with the Warsaw Pact. Whether such confrontation be considered from the aspects of nuclear warfare or those of conventional military exchanges, the same conclusion applies — Ireland is vital to the NATO war effort.

There are various, sound, military reasons for this: domination of the Atlantic; protection of North American reinforcement convoys; provision of vital airport and seaport facilities; protection of NATO's European west flank (Britain); increased early warning and reaction facilities; control of the Irish Sea and the safety of nuclear-submarine bases in the Clyde estuary, to name but the more prominent.

As the relief convoys from North America to Europe (the Atlantic Bridge), air and sea, would pass, preferably, south of Ireland, in order to fully stretch the Warsaw Pact reaction capability (which would emanate from the Kola Peninsula through the GIUK or Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap), it is obvious that, in fact, the South West of Ireland, including Shannon Airport particularly, Bantry Bay, Cork Harbour and airport, now constitutes the key terrain; that is to say, the desirable strategic location from a NATO perspective.

From there NATO could achieve the maximum military effect to prosecute its war effort and negate that of the Warsaw Pact.

The Six Counties are now of secondary strategic importance. They provide the foothold from whence the invasion of the Republic could be launched and Ireland retaken by Britain, this time for NATO.

But would it not be preferable, from any perspective, if Ireland were

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to willingly cede these strategic facilities? And how could this be achieved?

The Irish people, as far as can be gauged, have an antipathy to military alliances. All the available evidence is that they wish to remain neutral and non-aligned and, by so doing play a vital role in the world as impartial advocates of peace and unity, rather than become muted, bit-playing mimics, as would be their lot as members of an Alliance.

There are forces at work to circumvent this. There are some people, Irish and foreign, with vested interests. There are some who stand to make material profits or career advancements. There are politicians of the old Nationalist persuasion, North and South, who would have us aligned, in the Redmondite tradition. They are becoming more numerous, more macho and more vociferous. (It is an interesting exercise to conduct an in-depth analysis of the advocates of NATO.)

It is here the ground begins to shake beneath the Six-County Loyalists. Their fortress starts to crumble. Their cosy statelet, for so long (they imagined) lovingly cultivated by Britain, could now be the sacrificial offering.

A united Ireland for membership of an alliance! Not, perhaps, NATO. That has a discordant ring to it. How then to package commercially? The defence of the EC is one means. (There are variations.) Gradually but inexorably, Ireland would be inducted into an interdependent western Europe, with a communal defence commitment. Just an extension of our present duty to defend out national territory, they would have it, though it is conceivable defence could transpire to be a euphemism.

But, of course, we would not, alone, be allowed to defend our territory. In fact we could not. The Alliance (EC) would man and control bases in Ireland, just as the US does now in Britain. Only more so. We would lose all political sovereignty and, no doubt, the mighty would try to contrive a strategic, military status quo, wherein the strong would stand to gain the most immunity at the expense of the weak.

More importantly though, the world would have lost another neutral voice. We would no longer be untrammelled. We would be reduced as a nation and a people. We would have sold out for a doubtful mess of pottage. The Soup Kitchen mentality would have prevailed. Instead of gaining Six Counties, we would have ceded 32. World-wide confrontation and destruction would be a step nearer. Roll on Armageddon!

There is the other reason as previously stated, why Britain maintained the Six-County statelet. (Though it is not the over-rider.)

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There, her military can experiment with tactics, weaponry, military equipment and paraphernalia. There too her troops can be battle-in-doctrinated and training methods tested and evaluated.

Internal Security Systems, counter-insurgency methods and operational procedures, formations and structures, communications, espionage, counter-espionage, military and political intelligence gathering, collection and analysis procedures can be honed and sharpened. Leadership, especially at Junior Officer and NCO levels, can be assessed in the low-intensity war which Britain conducts in the North and, perhaps most importantly, it provides the opportunity for co-operation and interaction between the arms of the Security Forces, ie, the military and the police.

For the most Gung-Ho of British generals, Kitson, forecast the need for such for Britain. He envisaged the uprising of the British proletariat and the need for the Security Forces to be prepared to put down these inner-city layabouts and malcontents, with the restoration of Law and Order so that the Queen's writ might run. This guru of British militarism and high Toryism has a large constituency in an army based upon caste and privilege.

This unholy vision is more likely now, with the trade unions mostly castrated and the Thatcherite partition of England, between the wealthy South and the devastated North, a fait accompli. But should the deprived proletariat rise, will their brother, the British Tommy, put them to the bayonet? That could present the elitist, overbearing establishment with a problem.

Next there are those long slumbering giants, Scottish and Welsh nationalism. Three times, in succession, the Scots have voted for a Labour Government and three times they have got a Tory one. They may soon vote SNP in numbers. Should the breath of freedom touch Scotch and Welsh lips, will England permit them to secede? Or will the Security Forces be turned upon these Celts, too? Practice with live targets in the North may be a preparation for the latter.

But, all that aside, the military benefits of the Northern killing-grounds would be willingly sacrificed for a shackled, 32-County Ireland. This would be especially appealing to the US and would be gift-wrapped to ally Irish-American sensitivities.

In such a malign scenario, is there anything the Republic can do? Can we avoid being pawns like the Northern Loyalists now are, and in so doing, help them, too?

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If Ireland is to fulfil her destiny, she must, firstly, declare her unequivocal neutrality. She must then seek a defence mechanism, within her physical and fiscal constraints, to buttress this neutrality. This mechanism must dissuade a potential aggressor.

It must be based upon denial of the strategic facilities that exist. This entails that the Defence Forces be organised, armed, trained and deployed in relation to the facilities. The denial method is that the facilities be prepared for instant demolition in the event of invasion or immediate threat of same. (Implementation can be related to the fiscal situation by gradualism based on systematic priorities.)

Thus an invader would encounter resistance on or near the installations he sought; followed by the destruction of the installations, at the appropriate moment; compounded by severe harassment by the Defence Forces as he sought to re-build; with the assurance that the rival alliance would blitz him, on the installations, while he is at his most vulnerable.

This constitutes our only chance of preserving neutrality, dissuading potential invaders and, meanwhile, working at the optimum level for universal peace. It is our opportunity to abandon any vestige of insularity, and become outward looking and truly international.

It can be extended to the whole of Ireland if the Northern Loyalists would now grasp their opportunity and, before their final rebuff, preempt the British and tell them to go home.

It is time they ended their ethnic schizophrenia. The Last Tribe of Eireann will never be accepted by the Anglo-Saxon. It, too, is Celtic. This is a generic fact. It makes no-one superior or inferior. It just means their place is with us and the Tricolour embraces all.

Then, at long last, Ireland would be permitted to fulfil her role with dispassion and impartiality. Then, too, Emmet's epitaph could be written and a last Te Deum celebrated for the dream of our Protestant visionaries.

"It is time"

DISCRIMINATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

"Most of the people on the march hadn't really thought about civil rights: they had come, with a sort of friendly curiosity, to hear something."

BY OLIVER KEARNEY

THE OCCASION was the first Civil Rights March in the Six Counties, held on a warm sunny evening on 24th August 1968 from Coalisland to Dungannon. A twenty-one-year-old university student, Bernadette Devlin, was one of the marchers.

Twenty years later, the student who walked to Dungannon had suffered a term of imprisonment for helping to defend her community against the armed forces of the state, had physically assaulted a British Minister on the floor of the House of Commons after thirteen of her countrymen had been shot down by British Paratroops on their own streets and had narrowly survived the attempted assassination of herself and her family by Loyalist death-squads, trained by the British Intelligence services.

The people she represented at Westminster as an elected MP have suffered twenty years of warfare, bloodshed and military repression in the towns and villages of the Six Counties. Ten thousand regular combat troops of the British Army, supplemented by twenty thousand armed police and locally-recruited militia, police a community with heavy armour and helicopters; thousands of civilians have been interned without trial; the jails have been flooded with a steady flow of young men and women, victims of a perverted judicial system which has no parallel outside of South Africa.

The partitioned states of Ireland, North and South, have become militarised social machines, devoting vast resources to protecting an artificial border which had destroyed the Irish economy for sixty years

and induced every conceivable abuse of human rights throughout Ireland and Britain, in the name of maintaining law and order.

If the sum total of suffering endured by the Irish people (in Southern Ireland, in Britain, and most particularly in Northern Ireland) as a result of this conflict could somehow be quantified and set alongside the achievement of full civil rights and social justice, the twenty-one-year-old who walked to Dungannon and the thousands of others who joined her in peaceful street demonstrations might possibly say, "It was a terrible price to pay — but it was worth it!"

The dreadful reality is that, today, twenty years after those modest demands for a fair allocation of voting rights, housing and employment were made upon the Unionist state, the situation of working-class Nationalists has worsened incomparably with their situation in 1968.

The following tables of statistics reflect only a global view of the reality of the Catholic Nationalist economic situation in the Six Counties twenty years after the commencement of the Civil Rights campaign and sixteen years after the British Parliament re-assumed direct responsibility for governing this area of Ireland.

District Council	Religious Composition of the Working age of Population (Ages 15-64)		Percentage of Catholic and Protestant Unemployed			
	Catholics		Protestants & Others		Cath	Pro
AREA	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
Antrim	8,313	29.7	19,654	70.3	19.8	10.2
Ards	3,928	10.9	32,191	89.1	17.8	9.8
Armagh	12,939	43.4	16,891	56.6	24.2	10.0
Ballymena	5,927	17.5	27,886	82.5	19.1	10.3
Ballymoney	3,782	26.6	10,435	73.4	24.6	13.9
Banbridge	5,128	27.6	13,456	72.4	21.6	10.6
Belfast	69,421	36.3	121,997	63.7	26.0	15.1
Carrickfergus	977	5.4	17,178	94.6	15.7	14.7
Castlereagh	2,581	6.4	37,947	93.6	7.8	10.8
Coleraine	6,365	22.1	22,471	77.9	22.6	14.1
Cookstown	8,054	49.6	8,197	50.4	38.0	13.8
Craigavon	18,045	39.6	27,483	60.4	26.2	10.4
Derry	33,889	65.2	18,059	34.8	29.1	12.9
Down	18,309	56.9	13,865	43.1	16.8	8.9
Dungannon	12,867	50.3	12,736	49.7	32.6	12.4
Fermanagh	16,074	52.1	14,682	47.7	26.2	10.6
Larne	4,136	22.8	14,048	77.2	25.2	12.4

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	Number	%	Number	%	%	%
Limavady	8,302	51.9	7,696	48.1	27.3	13.5
Lisburn	4,922	9.3	48,101	90.7	19.8	9.1
Magherafelt	9,934	53.1	8,765	46.9	27.1	14.7
Newry & Mourne	32,167	72.5	12,191	27.5	30.3	13.8
Newtownabbey	5,590	12.0	41,190	88.0	15.4	10.7
North Down	3,473	8.4	37,665	91.6	10.3	7.0
Omagh	15,455	61.1	9,844	38.9	23.4	10.8
Strabane	12,064	58.0	8,749	42.0	32.8	19.4

Sources

- (i) Department of Economic Development – 'Guide to Effective Practice' 1988
 (ii) 1981 census data – R. Osbourne and R. Cormack – 'Religion, Occupation and Employment' pub. Fair Employment Agency 1987.

Note: As the official statistics show, the proportion of Catholic unemployment is maintained with near-mathematical precision in virtually every District Council area of the Six Counties, with the proportion rising from 2:1 – 2.5:1 in areas where Working Age Catholic population approaches the Protestant population within percentages of 30% – 50%;

Measured by any standard, such geographical precision in maintaining inequality represents a remarkable feat of social engineering and heavily underlines the persuasive nature of a system of discrimination amounting to economic apartheid.

Measured against the repeated protestations of British commitment to equality and fair employment, the official statistics declare the British government "liars". They also demonstrate the abject failure of the Fair Employment Act (N.I.) 1976 and the flaccid Agency which was created by it. After 16 years of direct British rule, after 12 years of FEA activity in combating discrimination, the average Catholic male is 2.5 times as likely to be unemployed as his Protestant counterpart, while the average Catholic female is twice as likely to be unemployed.

This extraordinary phenomenon is not, however, a recent by-product of civil unrest of "The Troubles" reflecting a 'hardening of attitude' on the part of Protestant employers. It is not, as the FEA and Unionist spokespeople proclaim, a growth in the 'equality of misery' caused by a shrinking economy. Above all, it is not an accidental or coincidental product of unprofessional employment practices.

It is the continuing and outward manifestation of the very foundat-

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ions upon which the Partition of Ireland rests and the Orange state was built.

"From its inception the Northern Ireland Government, which was set up when Ireland was partitioned by the 1920 government of Ireland Act and which consisted entirely of Orangemen and Unionists, determined on terrorising the Catholics and reducing them to the level of second-class citizens. Soon the Prime Minister Sir James Craig, was boasting that he and his colleagues has established a "Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people." (2)

The twenty-one-year-old and her friends and neighbours who set out to walk from Coalisland to Dungannon on that August afternoon in 1968, and the thousands of others who followed them onto the streets to demand fair employment and Civil Rights were quite unconsciously challenging the very legitimacy, the very existence of the state. It was for that reason that the state reacted with such ferocity, plunging the entire community into the long agony of twenty years of warfare.

The British Government had, of course, outlawed discrimination in Northern Ireland since the state was established. Religious Discrimination was declared illegal by the Government of Ireland Act (1920). It was again declared illegal by the Constitution Act (NI) 1973 and it was again declared illegal by the Fair Employment Act 1976. Indeed, it is perhaps the most notable feature of British rule since 1920, that the British Parliament has been so singularly unsuccessful in getting its legislation right in the field of religious discrimination. (It has never experienced similar problems in writing emergency laws for the abolition of human rights and the legal protection of its armed forces in operating such laws).

Its most glaring example of failure has been in the Fair Employment Act 1976, because this was peddled to the international world for ten years, not only by British diplomats, but by some Nationalist politicians who climbed to prominence on the backs of the Civil Rights programme. This flaccid little organ, established in 1976, under the direction of a former Unionist politician was described in an *Irish News* editorial of 23 April 1986 thus:

"Catholics believed at (its) inception, and many still believe, that it was a cosmetic exercise designed to hide the unacceptable features of the old Unionist hegemony and specifically to cover from world view the grossness of job discrimination practiced against them for two generations."

By the time the FEA was in operation, it had available an analysis of

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the 1971 census by E. Auger, which found that Protestants were disproportionately represented in non-manual and skilled manual jobs. Catholics were shown to be disproportionately represented in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs.

"Even in industries that are heavily Catholic, such as construction, the census data shows Catholics are concentrated in the lower status jobs within the industry. In 1971, Catholics represented about 50% of skilled workers and labourers in construction but only 18% of construction managers." (3)

Nusight, September 1969 reported:

"The figures for employment of Catholics in the Government and Public sectors show that the 35% Catholic minority may have a fair chance of a job in the lower paid grades and the unskilled jobs. In the white collar grades recruitment of Catholics is less than their percentage of the population and Catholics are less likely to be promoted as fast or as far as their Protestant colleagues." (4)

The report also declared that more blatant and overt discrimination and exercise of patronage existed at local council level, where the representation in employment was generally overwhelmingly Protestant.

To tackle this problem, the FEA instituted a "Declaration of Principle and Intent" which, when signed by employers, earned the reward of a Certificate of Equal Opportunity Employer from the Agency. After 12 years of operation the Agency has still not succeeded in persuading 17 of the 26 District Councils in the Six Counties to sign the Declaration. The Declaration has also been refused by one of the two universities, a major Education and Library Board and about two-thirds of employing organisations.

Possession of the Certificate has been required since 1983, to enable employers to tender for contracts with the Public Service. (This particular provision was introduced by the Northern Ireland Civil Service in an effort to head off an investigation of its own employment imbalances by the FEA). Since 1976 no employer has been refused a Certificate once having signed the Declaration. The charade of presenting this ineffectual cosmetic measure to the international community as the answer to the Civil Rights programme would undoubtedly have continued unchallenged, had it not been for the emergence of the MacBride Principles in November 1984.

This set of 9 Affirmative Action Principles, endowed with the name of Ireland's greatest international statesman of the 20th century, Sean Mac

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Bride, was formulated in the US, following unsuccessful efforts to block a US Defence Department contract for Shorts Plc. The multi-million dollar contract had been opposed by the Irish National Caucus and American legislators because of Shorts appalling record of anti-Catholic employment practices, documented by Father Brian Brady, one of the co-sponsors of the MacBride Principles.

Father Brady, a human rights activist of long standing, had devoted vast time and effort to researching and documenting anti-Catholic discrimination in the engineering industry and worked closely with the Campaign for Social Justice for many years before the twenty-one-year-old student, Bernadette Devlin, first set on the road from Coalisland to Dungannon.

Protesting against the placing of contracts by semi-state bodies in the Irish Republic (such as Aer Lingus, Bord na Mona, and the ESB) with engineering firms in the Six Counties, Father Brady declared on 23rd May 1983:

"All who are interested in building peace in Northern Ireland on the foundation of respect for human rights are depressed by (the placing of these contracts). The engineering industry in Northern Ireland is notorious for denying Catholics the right to work. Throughout the aircraft, shipbuilding and marine engineering industries, less than 5% of the employees are Catholic. The firms in the vanguard of anti-Catholic discrimination are Harland and Wolfe, Short Bros. Mackies, and Davidson (Sirocco Engineering Works)..."

"Of particular interest was the news that Davidson (Sirocco) had clinched a six-figure contract with Bord na Mona. Sirocco is situated in the Catholic Short Strand area of East Belfast. Of its 850-900 employees only 4 are Catholic (0.4% of the workforce).. It is surely not without significance that Sirocco is a subsidiary of the South African company, Abercom Investments of Johannesburg. The racial apartheid of South Africa and the religious apartheid of Northern Ireland make congenial bedfellows." (5)

It was entirely in keeping with his record of human rights activism that Brian Brady should join with Sean MacBride (both now sadly deceased) and with John Robb and Inez McCormack to sponsor a programme of affirmative action which is designed to redress generations of structured and pervasive anti-Catholic discrimination in employment. Had Brian Brady and the Irish Caucus succeeded in blocking the Shorts

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contract, it is possible that the MacBride Principles would not have been drafted. Their efforts were frustrated principally by the influence of John Hume, who argued, in association with Garret FitzGerald, in favour of the company. They argued that it would be wrong to prevent jobs being created anywhere in Northern Ireland and that Shorts would adopt an affirmative action programme to recruit more Catholics. (It is a matter of official record that the "Affirmative Action" programme actually produced a **reduction** in the proportion of Catholics being employed. The company and the Fair Employment Agency which monitored the programme, could not explain this phenomenon.)

Brian Brady's profession, health and age did not permit him to join Bernadette and the scores of thousands of nationalists who walked with on the streets singing "We Shall Overcome", but as the Civil Rights movement was driven off the streets by state violence and military repression, the tireless old priest continued with his research. It was with an acute perception of the inability of the Six-County state to ever provide equality and social justice, that Brian Brady gave his name and blessing to the campaign to promote the MacBride Principles.

The programme enshrined within them is remarkably a simple, yet comprehensive challenge to a British government which proclaims to the international community its commitment to equality.

The British government reaction of this challenge has been revealing.

Since the MacBride Principles were promulgated in November 1984, the British government has spent more money in total opposing their promotion in the United States, than has been spent in funding the Fair Employment Agency since 1976. US legislators and their families have flown to Britain and to South Africa for free holidays. Administrative assistants at state level have been bribed directly by British Consular staff. Teams of selected spokespersons have been flown from the Six Counties to every corner of the United States to lobby and testify against the adoption by State Legislatures of the MacBride Principles as a condition of continued investment of State Employees' Pension Funds in US companies doing business in the Six Counties.

The British representatives have included such noteworthies as Paddy Devlin (former SDLP stalwart); James Eccles, former Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbanas in Ireland; Sister Genevieve Farrell OBE, former headmistress of St Louise's Comprehensive School; John Cushnahan, (former leader of the Alliance Party, and now employed as a

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'Public Relations Consultant' by the Department of Economic Development); Robert Cooper, Chair of the FEA; Rory Galway, Director of the FEA; Fiona Cassidy, Legal Advisor to the FEA; and Howard Burns and Hazel Morrissey, both employed by the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union.

Concurrently, the British government have produced, since June, 1985, a series of glossy publications, each more expensive than the other, proclaiming their intentions on job discrimination. Next year, 1989, the British government plans to produce new legislation to eliminate discrimination, which will do all the things that the laws of 1920, 1973, and 1976 failed to do.

The proposed new legislation has already been critically examined by US legislators long-practiced in applying affirmative action laws and by human rights experts in Britain, who have scathingly evaluated it as another exercise in applying external cosmetics to the cancer of economic apartheid in Northern Ireland.

The reality of the MacBride Principles programme is that it has exposed Britain's Achilles heel in the Six Counties, as surely and as decisively as did the Civil Rights programme of 1968. **Equality and social justice cannot be provided to the Nationalist Community in the Six-County state.**

The State was created for the specific purpose of guaranteeing the perpetual domination of the Unionist community, economically, militarily and politically, over their Nationalist neighbours, in return for continued support of Britain's right to rule in Ireland. Anything which threatens that domination (however marginal it may be for the Loyalist working classes) threatens Britain's control in Ireland.

It was essential that Civil Rights marchers be driven off the streets by the regular and irregular armed forces of the Unionist state, even at the cost of provoking a civil war, because a young student and her neighbours who walked from Coalisland to Dungannon had begun, quite unconsciously, to attack the very foundations of the state by demanding equality.

And it is equally necessary for the British Government, twenty years later, to bribe, corrupt and propagandise US legislators and to intimidate, threaten and silence Six-County Nationalists supporting the MacBride Principles. For the MacBride Principles demand to-day what the twenty-one-year-old student was demanding at the RUC barricades

outside Dungannon on 24th August 1968 — Social Justice and Economic Equality for all the people of the Six-County state.

That is a demand which the British Government cannot meet, without acknowledging that the foundations of the Six-County state and the roots of the unnatural and obscene partition of the island of Ireland are rooted in violence, sectarianism and injustice.

The sole distinction between the two programmes is that the MacBride Principles face Britain with the implied threat of economic sanctions first across the USA and subsequently throughout the international community, including even the Irish Republic. For the MacBride Principles campaign is already developing in the Republic, in Britain itself, and on the European continent.

Across the two decades of bloodshed, repression and dreadful suffering, the Nationalist community of the Six Counties, inspired by the moral force and irresistible impetus of the MacBride Principles, raise their voices once again in that battle-cry of the oppressed peoples of the world — that battle-cry of Martin Luther King in Alabama; of Nelson Mandela in Soweto; of Bernadette Devlin in Derry...

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"

It is time for the British Government to declare to the nations of the world that it will no longer defend economic apartheid, it will no longer order its young soldiers to die in the gutters of Belfast protecting the sectarian dominance of bowler-hatted clergymen commemorating a battle fought in 1690.

It is time for the British Government to declare to the nations of the world that social justice and equality will finally take root in Ireland. It is time to go!

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The MacBride Principles

THE FULL TEXT of the MacBride Principles is reproduced below. Also below, printed in light print, is the amplification to the Principles issued by Dr MacBride in 1986.

In light of decreasing employment opportunities in Northern Ireland and on a global scale, and in order to guarantee equal access to regional employment the undersigned propose the following equal opportunity/affirmative action principles:

1. Increasing the representation of individuals from under-represented religious groups in the workforce including managerial, supervisory, administrative, clerical and technical jobs.

A workforce that is severely unbalanced may indicate prima facie that full equality of opportunity is not being afforded all segments of the community in Northern Ireland. Each signatory to the MacBride Principles must make every reasonable lawful effort to increase the representation of under-represented religious groups at all levels of its operations in Northern Ireland.

2. Adequate security for the protection of minority employees both at the workplace and while travelling to and from work.

While total security can be guaranteed nowhere today in Northern Ireland, each signatory to the MacBride Principles must make reasonable good faith efforts to protect workers against intimidation and physical abuse at the workplace. Signatories must also make reasonable good faith efforts to ensure that applicants are not deterred from seeking employment because of fear for their personal safety at the workplace or while travelling to and from work.

3. The banning of provocative religious or political emblems from the workplace.

Each signatory to the MacBride Principles must make reasonable good faith efforts to prevent the display of provocative sectarian emblems at their plants in Northern Ireland.

4. All job openings should be publicly advertised and special recruitment efforts should be made to attract applicants from under-represented religious groups.

Signatories to the MacBride Principles must exert special efforts to

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attract employment applications from the section of the community that is substantially under-represented in the workforce. This should not be construed to imply a diminution of opportunity for other applicants.

5. Layoff, recall, and termination procedures should not in practice, favour particular religious groupings.

Each signatory to the MacBride Principles must make reasonable good faith efforts to ensure that layoff, recall and termination procedures do not penalise a particular religious group disproportionately. Layoff and termination practices that involve seniority solely can result in discrimination against a particular religious group if the bulk of employees with greatest seniority are disproportionately from another religious group.

6. The abolition of job reservations, apprenticeship restrictions and differential employment criteria which discriminate on the basis of religion or ethnic origin.

Signatories to the MacBride Principles must make reasonable good faith efforts to abolish all differential employment criteria whose effect is discrimination on the basis of religion. For example, job reservations and apprenticeship regulations that favour relatives of current or former employees can, in practice, promote religious discrimination if the company's workforce has historically been disproportionately drawn from another religious group.

7. The development of training programmes that will prepare substantial numbers of current minority employees for skilled jobs, including the expansion of existing programmes and the creation of new programmes to train, upgrade, and improve the skills of minority employees.

This does not imply that such programmes should not be open to all members of the workforce equally.

8. The establishment of procedures to assess, identify, and actively recruit minority employees with potential for further advancement.

This section does not imply that such procedures should not apply to all employees equally.

9. The appointment of senior management staff member to oversee the company's affirmative action efforts and the setting up of timetables to carry out affirmative action principles.

In addition to the above, each signatory to the MacBride Principles is required to report annually to an independent monitoring agency on its progress in the implementation of these principles.

Sean MacBride – Dublin
Dr. John Robb – Ballymoney

Inez McCormack – Belfast
Fr. Brian Brady – Belfast

"A FAILED POLITICAL ENTITY"

A Fianna Fail voice

C.J. HAUGHEY T.D.

"I WANT TO AVAIL of this opportunity to state that I fully endorse the MacBride Principles. I welcome the efforts and initiative of concerned Americans who wish to see something done about the chronic discriminatory patterns in employment in Northern Ireland."

The regrettable position is that fourteen years after the imposition of direct rule in Northern Ireland, the situation in most sectors of employment are as bad as they ever were. The purpose of the MacBride Principles is to ensure that if there is to be American investment, if there are to be American orders, the firms concerned will have to act fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion in regard to employment."

Address to Dail Eireann – 7th April 1986

Extradition —

A Fianna Fail appeal

Are we really like other European countries? How many other European countries have part of their national territory under foreign military occupation, bolstering up a system based on apartheid-like discrimination against the Catholic and nationalist people? How many other European countries have their citizens locked up in foreign prisons for crimes they didn't commit, as Irish citizens like the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four are locked up in England? How many European governments would stand idly by, as Coalition and Fianna Fail governments have, while Britain heaps injustice after injustice on the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four and so many other Irish people?

How many other European countries would extradite its own citizens to the foreign power occupying their national territory; France wouldn't extradite Irish Citizen Harry Fly, wanted by the British for possession of weapons, because they accepted that he wouldn't get a fair trial in an English court. Yet our government, the government of Fianna Fail "The Republican Party", is prepared to hand over to Maggie Thatcher anyone her regime wants?

In the words of one of our greatest statesmen and patriots, Sean MacBride, "We really are a servile people and a servile government." Can anyone imagine that if we occupied part of Britain, they would extradite their citizens for trial here? Would their people be called "terrorists" or "freedom fighters"?

The Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act 1976 is a unique arrangement between Irish and British governments. Under this Act a person who commits a crime in England or Northern Ireland can be charged, tried and sen-

tenced in our jurisdiction. This Act has only been used once, in the Tuite case. The British are prepared to protect loyalist fire-bombers and charge them under this Act as they did as recently as June 1988. The Irish government are not prepared to use this Act and ensure its citizens have a chance of getting a fair trial and, if convicted, can serve their sentences in their homeland, close to their loved ones. Instead they are prepared to operate the evil 1987 Extradition Act and ensure that its citizens, especially political activists, do not get a fair trial and suffer all the injustices that Irish people and especially Irish republicans, have always and will in the future, suffer in English-controlled courts and jails.

Isn't it time to stop the grovelling and stand up to Britain? Instead of deserting the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four, we should be waging an international campaign on their behalf. We should be exposing the fact that one of the Guildford four (Paul Hill) has spent over 1,500 days in solitary confinement. This is twice as long as the total sentence served by the only British soldier ever convicted of killing a Nationalist civilian. Private Ian Thain is not only out after two-and-a-half years, he's back in the British army. And maybe they'll give him a medal and promotion like they did the British commander on Bloody Sunday, when 13 civil rights marchers in Derry were shot and killed.

Our government and our party should be exposing the whole litany of British injustice against Irish prisoners in Britain and against the Nationalist people in the North.

We should be refusing to hand over our citizens through extradition and not letting the institutions of this state be used as a cog in the machine of British injustice. Of the three people currently facing extradition, two are escapees from the notorious H-Blocks (Paul Kane, Dermot Finucane). The other is former Westminster MP Owen Carron, who met Charles Haughey at the time of the hunger-strikes in 1981.

Paul Kane was imprisoned in the H-Blocks on the word of the infamous supergrass Christopher Black. He was held for several years just awaiting trial and escaped. The Black case later collapsed and all the people jailed on his word were freed. So Paul Kane should never have been imprisoned in the first place.

Dermot Finucane escaped from the H-Blocks after being sentenced to 18 years for possession of a rifle. Compare this with the two-and-a-half years served by Private Ian Thain for killing a nationalist.

Robert Russell has been extradited for escaping from the H-Blocks and has already spent 11 of the last 15 years in jail.

None of these people would have been in any trouble if it wasn't for the political situation in the North. None of them should be extradited. Most immediately, the government appeal in the Patrick McVeigh case should be dropped and Mr McVeigh should remain a free man.

The Fianna Fail Committee Against Extradition/Coiste Fianna Fail In Aghaidh Eiseachadtha calls on all Fianna Fail members to do all they can to help to stop extradition and to stick up for the nationalist and republican principles our party was founded on. Stand up for Irish people and against British injustice which has brought so much misery to so many of our people for so long.

"The rule of law"

**PART OF A LECTURE GIVEN TO
CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION, SUMMER 1988,
AT THE MANSION HOUSE, DUBLIN**

BY ULICK O'CONNOR

THERE ARE MANY INHERENT flaws in the history of British administration in Ireland but there is one key element which has always undermined any authority that the British government in Ireland might have had. This has been the fact that consistently British Governments have refused to apply the rule of law in Ireland.

It was the refusal of the British Government in the summer of 1914 to arrest those officers in the army who had defied orders to proceed to Ulster and confront the Ulster Volunteers that hardened the determination of Sinn Féin to instigate the Rebellion of Easter 1916.

The Attorney-General of the time, James O'Connor, has confirmed how he had warrants prepared for the arrest of the Ulster leaders who had armed against Home Rule, but the Government refused to enforce them. Home Rule was an enactment of Westminster and to defy it was treason. But the establishment which ultimately runs British affairs, the Monarchy, the aristocracy and old families, were able to see to it that anyone acting in their interests (and it was not in their interest to have Home Rule in Ireland) would be protected. It was no surprise then in 1972 when thirteen civilians were shot down by the British Army without cause, that the Lord Chief Justice of England would preside over a tribunal which exonerated the soldiers concerned. The Widgery Tribunal was an elaborate farce. But it was predictable that, once again, the British establishment would not enforce the rule of law while their own agents were engaged in dealing with Irish matters. Once again in 1974 when

it seemed that there might be a modicum of self-government in Northern Ireland which would relate to the whole community, the underground forces which support the establishment got to work. The alleged Ulster Workers Strike was yet another defiance of a Westminster enactment, but nevertheless the British government gave in and predictably accepted one more breach of the rule of law.

Therefore, it is really amazing that anyone should have been surprised at the suppression of the Stalker Report on the "Shoot-to-Kill" policy in Northern Ireland. This is in keeping with the traditional British attitude towards Ireland. Stalker had discovered serious breaches of the rule of law, but these breaches had occurred when the British administration was dealing with Ireland. Any student of Irish history should have expected that no action would be taken.

Let us consider the effect of a refusal to enforce the rule of law. High-minded people who hope to achieve self-determination by constitutional methods are faced with the impossibility of realising their hopes when they see those who break the rule of law in defiance of self-determination exempted from the consequences of their actions.

It was the refusal of the British Government in 1914 to enforce the rule of law that led to 1916 and, in my opinion, it was the refusal of the British Government to enforce the rule of law in 1974 that has led to the present impasse today.

Britain has created the present situation in Northern Ireland by her refusal to react positively to constitutional agitation, and to the rightful claims of that section of the community which has set about achieving self-government by peaceful means. Violence in Northern Ireland is a British creation. The refusal by successive governments there to enforce the rule of law has resulted in institutional violence.

What is the solution? It is unlikely that Britain will ever enforce the rule of law in Ireland against those who are on the side of the establishment. It is therefore by a campaign initiated to force Britain by pressure of world opinion to withdraw from Ireland that further slaughter can be avoided. One is forced to the conclusion that the refusal of Britain to enforce the rule of law against Unionists in Ireland is so inherently part of their system that it will never be changed.

World opinion, however, if the ingredients of the Irish situation are analysed and sufficiently well presented, could be, as it was between 1919-21, an important factor in enforcing Britain to ultimately accept a just settlement and finally withdraw from the whole island.

An preas & an comhrac

LE UINSEANN MAC EOIN

TÁ SÉ SUIMIÚL FÉACHAINT conas mar a d'athraigh preas na hÉireann insan fiche blian ó thosaigh na Cearta Sibhialta i 1968 agus a lean ar aghaidh ó 1970 mar cuid de'n "armed struggle".

Ó aimsear Austin Currie agus an "sit-in" ag Caledon (Meitheamh 1968) bhí an preas, raidió agus telefís go spleodrach — ach amháin na Dílseoirí — ar thaobh Naisiúntoirí an Tuaiscirt. Do phreab sé sin ón nós sa ndeisceart le beith ag "imirt politics" le ceist na teorann; thainig sé eascaí i gcónaí ag polaiteoirí Bhaile Átha Cliath bheith ag tabhairt amach faoi Stormont gan mórán a dhéanamh faoi.

Bhí an preas go fóill taobh thiar de Chearta Sibhialta ag aimsir máirseail Oileán an Ghuail go Dún Geanainn i Lúnasa 1968, agus go mór ag Doire, Deireadh Fomhair an 5ú lá an bhliain céanna. Cuimhnigh ar ghriangrafanna na h-aimsire sin a lasraigh tintreacha i muintir na hÉireann.

Ansin tharraing siad siar ón imeall, mar a déarfá, agus votáil daoine éigin Terence O'Neill mar "man of the year". Rinne na h-udaráis i mBaile Átha Cliath — Jack Lynch, Iveagh House? — tréan-iarracht an corráil a mhaoladh. Do mhol said gan "sit-down" i nDoire i Samhain; bhí said go cruaidh i gcoinne mairséail Peoples Democracy ag deire na bliana (Burntollet), agus bhíodar patuar i gcás an cruinniú óllmhór ag Iúr Chinn Trá i mí Márta. Ba é sin an chéad uair, go fheictear domsa, nuair ba léir go raibh lamh stiúrtha (Iveagh House?) ar an roth. Ba é sin an chead uair freisin nuair a thosaigh na ranna stáit ag glaoch 'Northern Ireland' ar an limistéar sin. Creid nó ná chreid, ach thugadar Six Counties air go forleathan go dtí sin.

Aríst, arbh iad na "policy makers" in Iveagh House a chinn ar na teoracha seo a thabhairt? An é Iveagh House agus preas na hÉireann is chiontach chun go bhfuil beagnach trí mhíle anois marbh tar éis fiche bhlian nuair ab fhéidir an cheist seo a shochrú sul a raibh aoinne marbh agus an fhaid go raibh Harold Wilson i gcumhacht? Bhí Wilson ann go dtí Meitheamh 1970, agus níor mharaigh an IRA saighdiúir go dtí Márta 1971 nuair a mharaigh buíon as Ard Eoin triúr acu.

Bhí sé soiléir i rith an Falls Curfew i mí Iúil 1970 nach raibh an preas ach go doicheadallach taobh thiar den bpobal ar a raibh cos ar bholg á imirt

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orthu agus lean sé mar sin go deire ré FF agus tús Chomhrialtais Liam Cosgrave i mí Feabhra 1973.

Cuimhnigh ar na litreacha comhbhróin ó Bhean Uí Loinsigh chuig gaolta aighdiúir agus an phoiblíocht a tugadh dóibh.

Do ghriosaigh said Doire i mí Eanáir 1972 an preas agus lucht an media go léir ar thaobh na Náisiúntóirí arís; bhuel, sin mar a cheapadh, ach ba léir go raibh ciorcal i mBaile Átha Cliath a bhí 'shocked' go raibh na Sasanaigh comh mí-thuigsionach. Mar sin de do ghlacadar go fonnmhar le bealach éaló an Widgery Tribunal, agus chomhairligh siad chuile dhuine freastal air agus fianaise a thabhairt. Ag an am céanna do tharraing siar Jack Lynch an toscar poiblíocht a chur sé cúpla seachtain roimhe sin go dtí na Stáit.

Is dócha an gníomh is measa a rinne preas — a bhí go soiléir anois fé stiúradh (ach go h-indíreach) na Breataine — ná an milleán a chur ar an IRA i gcás an bhombáil ar Áth Cliath i Nollaig 1972 agus i mBealtaine 1974. Níor chreid mórán é, ach ní dhearna an preas aon iniúchadh ná follow up ar na Dílseoirí a rinne é, ná na Sasanaigh a bhí taobh thiar díobha.

D'fhéadhfa a rá anois go bhfuil an preas in Éirinn comh meatha san tar éis fiche bhlian nach fiú cach a' dhiobháil é i gcás an cómhac is fuide idir Éire agus Sasain sa stair truaigh-mhéileach eadrainn. Agus is léir go leanfar leis an cómhac nó go mbeidh sochrú fiúntach agus fad tearmach ar fáil.

Sé an chúis go bhfuil an preas comh meatha is atá ná go bhfuil daoine "muiníneach" i gceannas ar an eagarthóireacht; tá tuairisceoirí náisiúnta go leor ann, ach níl siad i gceannas ar aon róinn *sensitive*. Cúis eile, ná an saol cumarsáide; caithfidh na meán claoi le'n ré mar atá gan tacaíocht a thabhairt do réabhlóid. Cúis eile ná go bhfuil a lán des na *political correspondents* ag fáil deontaisí ó pholaiteoirí agus foinsí nach iad; tá tuairisceoirí agus colúnaí ag fáil íocaíocht ó Sasain, ó MI5. Agus féach, an mbheadhfa ag súil le tacaíocht ó Fitzpatrick agus a chuid ar an *Irish News*, ó uinéirí an *Irish Times*, ón milliúnaí O'Reilly nó ó chomhlacht an *Irish Press* atá ar tí báthadh toisc droch stiúradh cumarsáide?

Mar sin de thug sé misneach éigin dom a pheiceál nach bhfuil Breandán Ó hEithir, nia le Liam O'Flaherty, "caillte" go fóill sa cholúin aige san *Irish Times* le déanaí: chuir sé i gcuimhne dúinn an méid seo as *Daily Express*, Deireadh Fomhair 1971:

"The policy of internment has been a 'roaring success' a senior officer in Belfast told me yesterday. Enough arms to equip two full battalions of

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600 men have been seized as a direct result of the interrogation of suspects by the Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Branch."

Agus mír eile ó *Manchester Guardian*, Eanáir 1972:

"We are definitely winning if we haven't won already. Sporadic violence will continue for a long while probably... Their recruits are 16 year old boys. It turned out an easier job here than it was in Cyprus and EOKA weren't up to much either."

Críochníonn Breandán mar seo:

"Tá sé fanach a bheith ag iarraidh deireadh a chur le foréigean an IRA le imtheorannú le feachtas míleata, le ráiteasaí foclacha nach ndéanann ach ceirín a chur le consias an dreama a chuireann amach iad... ná ar mhódh ar bith nach mbionn bonn polaitiúil faoi a lagóidh an tacaíocht nach bhfuil déanamh dá uireasa ag eagraíocht ar bith de shamhail an IRA.

"Is feidir an tacaíocht sin a mhealladh uathu agus cúrsaí an Tuaiscirt féin d'athrú ach níl aon iarracht den tsórt atá riachtanach dá bheartú. Go dtí go dtarlóidh sé sin níl seans dá laghad nach mbéifear ag comóradh agus ag comórath, ag damnú agus ag damnú, agus ag cangal círe na sean-teoiricí smolchaite céanna faoi cheann fiche bliain eile.

"Tuirse cogaidh? Tig a dhearmad anois agus ar aon tslí ní réiteodh sin an fhadhb is nuaf sa gcás: an chaoi go bhfuil polaiteoirí dá n-iompar féin amhail agus dá mba é an IRA an fhadhb. Más acu a bhí lár an stáitse idirnáisiúnta, ón Astráil go dtí an Iar-Ghearmáin, an tseachtain seo caite ní hé an bhfeabhas mar eagraíocht faoi rún is cúis leis ach teip iomlán na bpolaiteoirí. Ach is easca a bheith ag damnú an IRA ná bheith ar thóir reiteach polaitiúil."

Is léir go n-aontaíonn an *Sunday Tribune* leis nuair a deireann:

"The IRA is winning the war in Northern Ireland."

Agus fiú amháin General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley:

"Planting and exploding a bomb in a barracks takes courage and cunning, akin, in these days of Armada commemorations, to singeing the King of Spain's beard."

Ach cá fhaid go n-admhaoín an preas agus rialtas Átha Cliath nach *international terrorism* — abairt na Sasanach — atá ar síuil ins na Sé Chontae ach *guerilla war*, agus go gcosnaíonn sé muintir na Fiche Sé Chontae dhá mhilliún an lae?

D'fhogair na Francaigh nuair a bhí an cogaidh ar siuil i Algeria: Algeria is a part of Metropolitan France. Ach tar éis naoi mbliana i 1962 bhí orthu géilleadh dó mar náisiún. Cá fhaid nó gó nglacadh na Sasanaigh agus preas Átha Cliath, nach ionann le Finchley tuaisceart na hÉireann?

Contributors

- Kevin Boland** _____ Former Minister in several Fianna Fail Governments. Resigned from the Dail in 1969 when pressed to vote confidence in Jack Lynch. Chairperson of '68 Committee.
- Vincent MacDowell** _____ Former Vice-Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1969. interned for 3½ years as a teenager Belfast.
- Lt. Col. John Morgan** _____ A professional Army officer, now retired. Keen student and writer on international affairs. Active in CND.
- Oliver Kearney** _____ Secretary of the Fair Employment Trust (Northern Ireland) and a tireless lobbyist for the MacBride Principles in the US.
- Ulick O'Connor** _____ Author, Poet, Wit, Raconteur, Playwright, Barrister, Amateur Boxer — the quintessential Renaissance Man.
- Uinseann MacEoin** _____ Architect, Town Planner, Environmentalist, and author of *Survivors*, *Harry*, and other books.

The Dublin '68 Committee has produced a car sticker — "End Discrimination — Support the MacBride Principles" — available from local committees or P.O. Box 2279, Dublin 6. Price 80p (including postage).

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