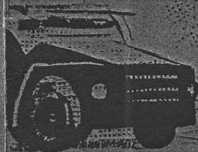


STRUGGLE in the NORTH



by
MIKE FARRELL



"The Orange Order was not founded to safeguard religious freedom but to deny religious freedom, and it raised this religious question not for the sake of any religion but in order to use religious zeal in the interests of the oppressive property rights of rack-renting landlords and sweating capitalists."

—James Connolly

"If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain.

"England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole army of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs."

—James Connolly in *Socialism and Nationalism*, 1897

This pamphlet is the first of a series which the Peoples Democracy will publish dealing with the current situation and the way forward.

PREFACE

After 50 years of political paralysis the Civil Rights movement has thrown Irish politics, North and South of the Border, into the melting pot. The Unionist party's grip on the North has been severely shaken and the instability of the Northern State has been exposed. The August pogrom in Belfast has jolted the people of the 26 Counties out of their apathy and reopened the whole "Irish question" with a vengeance.

Since August, however, the political vultures have been gathering. Groups which played no part in the struggle for Civil Rights are trying to cash in on the results of the campaign and extract from it what political capital they can. The self-styled "moderates" like the New Ulster Movement, who accepted the set-up in the North without protest until the C.R. campaign began, now see the writing on the wall for the old-guard Unionists and hope to replace them.

In the South the Fianna Fail party, which had conveniently forgotten about Civil Rights while they were making friends with O'Neill and his cronies and which greeted the emergence of the Civil Rights movement very coolly, have suddenly rediscovered the Northern question and the theory that Partition is the root cause of the problem. The section of Fianna Fail led by Messrs. Blaney and Boland is busy making allies in the Northern C.R. movement in order to influence its policies. Meanwhile they show no more concern than before about Civil Rights in the South—about the homeless, the unemployed, the emigrants, and the "Special Position" accorded to the Catholic Church and Catholic morality in the Southern laws and Constitution.

With these late starters canvassing their solutions to the problem of the North, it is time that some of the organisations which have been active in the Civil Rights movement from the start outlined their views. This pamphlet is an attempt to express the attitude of the Peoples Democracy, which has from the beginning been one of the most active and militant of the groups involved in the Northern struggle.

Where the other solutions offered all avoid the fundamental economic problems, the P.D. firmly holds that both Partition and religious discrimination have been used to make possible the wholesale exploitation of the Irish people, North and South, by small groups of businessmen and speculators and their British overlords. Even with Civil Rights conceded there would still be unemployment, slums and emigration on both sides of the Border. Accordingly, the Peoples Democracy rejects both the concept of a reformed and liberalised N. Ireland, and of a 32-County Fianna Fail Federal Republic, as merely tinkering with the surface of the problem. This pamphlet maintains that the only real solution is the creation of an Irish Socialist Republic—as Connolly argued 60 years before.

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Chapter One

THE ORANGE ALLIANCE AND THE NORTHERN STATE

After 12 months of the Civil Rights struggle in N. Ireland, most people in the 26 Counties and in Britain are at least aware of the gerrymandering, discrimination and repression which have characterised the Northern State from its beginning. This is some advance on the position where press and television in the South ignored the Northern situation and any attempts to raise it at Westminster were ruled out of order. However, there is still great confusion even in Ireland about the meaning and significance of the events in the North. To many people it appears to be no more than a religious war.

The current situation in the North has its roots in the period when Home Rule agitation was gathering strength in the rest of the country. The Home Rulers were anxious to put tariffs on British imports coming into Ireland to facilitate the development of Irish industry. The Northern manufacturers in Belfast and Derry and the smaller towns saw their livelihood threatened by this. Tariffs on British imports to Ireland would mean tariffs on Northern exports to Britain and this would cut off their established markets and leave them only the tiny Irish domestic market to cater for.

The manufacturers and businessmen found ready allies among the landowning aristocracy but by themselves these groups could have offered little resistance to the Home Rule movement. They had to seek support elsewhere. A century before, the landowners had been threatened by a revolt of the peasantry in the United Irishmen's rebellion. They had defeated it. The United Irishmen had begun to unite the Catholic and Presbyterian tenant farmers. The landowners formed an alliance with the Orange Order, a Protestant tenants' defence society in County Armagh, where hunger for land had driven a wedge between Catholic and Protestant tenants. This alliance divided the peasantry on religious lines and the active opposition to the rising it produced among the tenants secured the position of the landowners for another 100 years.

The same strategy was tried again. Already sections of the workers in the shipyards and the mills had a vested interest in opposing Home Rule because their jobs were at stake as well. To win the support of the small farmers the Orange Order, which had been neglected—and even suppressed at one stage—was courted again. The industrial workers were mainly Protestant, the Orangemen of course entirely so. So were the landlords and industrialists who were leading them. The resistance to Home Rule thus became a Protestant alliance, though by no means all Protestants supported it.

To cement the alliance the system of discrimination began. Preference was given to "loyalists" in private employment, in the leasing of land and in appointments under the local councils. The most convenient vehicle for administering this discrimination was the Orange Order. In Ulster, like the rest of Ireland, jobs were

scarce and emigration was high. Accordingly, the influence of the Order grew and with it the Orange alliance against Home Rule.

It was the Orange Order which provided the backbone of the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1912 and which later provided the members of the new B Specials in the 1920s. The N. Ireland State was founded on this unnatural combination of landlords and employers with workers and small farmers within the Orange Alliance. It was always clear who was in charge, though. The Ulster Unionist M.P.s all came from the upper classes and the officers of the U.V.F. were all members of the landowning families. The first companies of B-men were raised by Sir Basil Brooke in Co. Fermanagh and by the Clark family in Co. Derry, and in Derry one of the Specials' duties was guarding the Clarks' mills at Upperlands—where most of them worked, anyway.

When the Northern State was established the Unionist bosses were at last masters in their own house. They were no longer subject to the scrutiny of Dublin Castle, which was susceptible to pressure from the Nationalist party in the South. Once in power they had two important tasks to accomplish. One was to reward their faithful supporters: among the working class and small farmers; the other was to ensure the continuity of the Orange Alliance. Freed from Dublin Castle control, they were able to discriminate on a grand scale. Discrimination had gone on previously in private employment and in the giving of leases, but now it moved into the public sphere.

Under the new régime local government became very important. County Councils were responsible for road-work and employed quite a number of workers. A job on the roads in the winter provided a useful supplement to a farmer's regular income and kept the spectre of emigration from the door. Local councils also allocated new public housing, and the chronic housing need is shown by the fact that even today almost half the houses in N. Ireland have no baths or hot water, one-quarter have no toilets, and one-fifth have no running water at all. This is after a big post-war housing effort. In 1921 rural and urban housing was quite intolerable.

Jobs and houses were—and are—valuable commodities in the North. Under the tolerant, not to say approving, eye of the new administration those local authorities which were already Unionist controlled systematically discriminated in favour of "loyalists" and Orangemen. But some important local authorities were not under Unionist control. This was quickly dealt with. One of the first acts of the new Parliament was to abolish Proportional Representation for local government elections and re-draw the electoral boundaries. The result was a massive gerrymander in which Fermanagh and Tyrone County Councils, Derry Corporation and over 10 Urban and Rural District councils changed from Nationalist to permanent Unionist control despite anti-Unionist majorities in their areas. Nor did the process end in the 1920s; just after the Second

World War the boundaries of Armagh Urban District Council were re-drawn to wipe out the Nationalist majority. As recently as 1967 there was a local government reorganisation in Co. Fermanagh which repeated the gerrymander of the 1920s.

Discrimination by the local Councils—and the gerrymandered ones were the worst—gave Protestant workers and small farmers a privileged position compared with their Catholic neighbours, and served to keep them loyal to the Unionist leadership. The lack of any supervision and the certainty that there could never be any change in political control made the local Unionist bosses quite blatant and unashamed in their corruption.

Even today these factors are as important as ever. Since the war traditional industries have declined and there has been a steady reduction in the number of small farmers. For the Catholics this has meant unemployment or emigration; the Protestants have been shielded from it by the growing pay-roll of the local authorities which has been used to soak up "loyalist" unemployment. Thus in Co. Fermanagh only one out of 68 school bus-drivers is a Catholic, and the overwhelming majority of Enniskillen's 2,100 unemployed (17 per cent) are Catholics. The Catholic majority in Fermanagh decreases by 200 every year through emigration despite the higher Catholic birth-rate.

Another factor which became important in the 1950s as traditional sources of employment declined was the Ulster Special Constabulary. The B Specials were originally formed as a Unionist private army in the 1920s and had a long record of thuggery and murder. During the I.R.A. campaign of the 1950s most of them were on patrol several nights a week and some were mobilised full time. The B-men's allowances made a welcome addition to the weekly income in many a "loyalist" family. With over 40,000 unemployed, 10,000 B Specials were not irrelevant to the local economy. It was even hinted that few well-chosen explosions tended to prolong the period of mobilisation. As well as this, B-men got preference in recruitment for the R.U.C. and today almost a third of the R.U.C. have entered through the Specials. The Specials are entirely Protestant and are recruited through the Orange Lodges, so here again is an economic incentive to loyalty and membership of the Orange Order.

In this way the gerrymandering and discrimination which have marked N. Ireland since it was established are not just the expression of blind hatred of Catholics by the Unionist bosses but serve a clear economic purpose. In fact the people who run the Unionist party have rarely displayed much personal hostility to Catholics and the first Attorney-General of the new state was a Catholic. In an area where unemployment had never dropped significantly below 7 per cent, and 13 per cent West of the Bann, and where housing standards are chronically bad and the average household income £4 below that in Britain, discrimination has served to keep the loyalty of the Protestant workers and farmers by shielding

them from the worst effects of the chronic depression and giving them a privileged position within the working class as a whole.

It is this whole system of injustice which enabled profits for the local industrialists to remain high and enabled them to ward off any demands from the working class for them to shell out some of their ill-gotten gains to wipe out poverty and unemployment. That the Unionist bosses have always feared such a demand from a united working-class movement is shown by the fact that when P.R. was abolished for Stormont elections in 1929, Craigavon made clear that his purpose was to prevent the growth of Labour and independent—working-class—Unionist representation. Moreover, the Special Powers Act, a peculiarly gruesome piece of totalitarian repression, has been used not only against Republicans—as is widely known—but also against strikers during the outdoor relief agitation in 1932 and during the last war.

The history of the Northern State is this. At the end of the last century the industrialists and landowners of the North, fearing the economic consequences of Home Rule, formed an alliance with the Protestant workers and small farmers to oppose it. They bought their allies' allegiance with a combination of preferential treatment in the disposal of jobs and land-leases and the cynical whipping-up of religious bigotry. When they got control of their own state the same money-grabbing crew set up an apparatus of gerrymandering, discrimination, thuggery and repression. This had two immediate purposes. One was to put down any activity by the anti-partitionists—mainly Catholics—and to force as many as possible to emigrate, leaving the rest in poverty and without any political leadership. The other purpose was to divide the working class by buying the allegiance of Protestant workers and gulling them into believing they held a privileged position when in fact they merely had a smaller share of the general poverty and exploitation.

Both immediate purposes had a common long-term aim: the perpetuation of the easy flow of money into the pockets of the Unionist ruling class. The conflict in N. Ireland is neither a religious nor a tribal war, but a struggle against those who have cynically used religious hatred to protect the profits of a privileged élite.

Chapter Two

O'NEILLISM AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

Over 40 years the Unionists' control tightened. The system of discrimination was perfected and the opposition gave up complaining about it. The Special Powers Act, once an annual affair, was made permanent and was joined in 1951 by the Public Order Act giving the Government and police complete control over demonstrations and meetings. Help came, too, from an unexpected quarter. After the war the Labour Government passed, against opposition from the Unionists at Westminster, legislation creating the Welfare State. Once passed, however, the Unionists claimed credit for it in N. Ireland and it provided another strong incentive for loyalty to the Union among the Protestant workers—and gave many Catholics second thoughts about joining the 26-County State.

Anti-Unionist political activity had almost petered out. For a long time it went in cycles. With a sudden burst of energy some new, more militant, Nationalist or pseudo-Republican group would spring up, contest elections and take their seats at Stormont in the midst of popular enthusiasm. They would soon tire of trying to make any headway against the entrenched and immovable Unionist bloc there and their reverse sectarianism would ensure that they could never win more than the fixed number of Catholic seats. They would lapse into inactivity, drawing their salaries and making the routine protests about the treatment of "Our People" around election time, when they would contest only the Catholic seats. Few oppressed groups can ever have been afflicted with a more talentless and gutless set of self-appointed "representatives" than the Northern Nationalist Party.

Frustrated at the total ineffectiveness of the Nationalists, the Catholic population would turn again to violence until that was proven ineffective too. By the 1960s this pattern was well established and after another round of fruitless violence N. Ireland faced complete political stagnation.

But in 1962 Captain Terence O'Neill succeeded Brookeborough as Prime Minister. Unlike his predecessors, he had not been connected with the forging of the Orange Alliance or the establishment of the Northern State. He had been Minister for Finance and he was sensitive to economic trends. By now the traditional major industries, shipbuilding, the linen mills, rope- and shirt-making, were in decline—the very industries the Northern State had been established to protect. Unemployment was still a major problem and likely to get worse. New industries were badly needed but the local market was too small to attract them. Economics dictated a new look at relations with the South. Sentiment and tradition might oppose links with the 26 Counties, but then N. Ireland was not set up by Carson and Craig to serve sentiment and tradition. It was established to protect the interests of their industrialist friends. If those interests changed then N. Ireland had to change too, and it was hard luck on those who had been foolish enough to believe

the bigoted nonsense their leaders had told them.

In 1965 after considerable behind-the-scenes manoeuvres Sean Lemass came to Belfast to meet O'Neill. A succession of cross-Border meetings followed and Ministers and civil servants got down to working out the details of practical co-operation. A year later the South signed the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement and the Border was practically abolished. There was talk of a federal united Ireland with close constitutional links with Britain.

But Lemass and later Lynch, as leaders of the ex-Republican Fianna Fail party, could not openly sell the Northern Catholics down the river. They could not have even met Lord Brookeborough with his sectarian record. There was little danger in meeting the colourless O'Neill but a condition of further co-operation was that there should at least appear to be a change in the treatment of the Northern Minority and that O'Neill should have the support of some respectable Catholics. So O'Neill began a round of Catholic convents, patting children on the head and shaking hands with Reverend Mothers. Prominent Establishment Catholics who were doing well out of the Northern system felt emboldened to come out and praise O'Neill in public.

For a while it worked. Liberal papers like the *Belfast Telegraph*—well aware of the economic arguments behind the scenes—praised the improvement in community relations and turned O'Neill into a heroic figure. No one mentioned a pathetic little ad. which had appeared in the same *Telegraph* in 1959 seeking a Protestant domestic servant for the O'Neill household. But there was a serious flaw in this strategy. It was based on a double confidence trick. On the one hand it involved convincing the Protestant population that the Border and their privileged position were not at stake. On the other hand it involved convincing the Catholics that inviting a few nuns and bishops to the Governor's garden party meant an end to poverty and discrimination. To the extent that one group was fooled while the other was bound to rebel. The strategy was doomed to failure.

The Orangemen reacted first. O'Neill was denounced as a traitor and a Lundy, and an obscure Bible-thumping bigot called Paisley began to gain support. O'Neill had to face several votes of confidence inside the Unionist party and as early as 1966 an Orange Fascist group murdered a young Catholic barman in Belfast.

The Catholics, demoralised and disorganised as they were, were taken in for longer. The ultra-Orange opposition to O'Neill helped; it was easier to see him as a radical reformer when Paisley was denouncing him as such. McAteer and the Nationalists totally failed to grasp and point out the hollowness of O'Neill's liberalism. They led the chorus of praise and urged their followers to support O'Neillite candidates against Paisleyites and other ultra-Unionists in elections.

Gradually, however, the realisation spread that for all O'Neill's honeyed words nothing was changing in the narrow and bigoted world of Derry Corporation or Fermanagh County Council.

Attempts were made to draw the attention of the Captain's "reforming" administration to these abuses and there was no response. O'Neill's confidence trick had one important effect, however. It had raised people's expectations and when they saw their hopes were not going to be fulfilled they were not content to sit back and accept it. Moreover, the civilised tone of O'Neill's speeches made it hard to believe that his Government would react to public protests with the crude brutality of the Brookeborough régime. There was now a Labour Government at Westminster which claimed at least to support the opposition in the North. Convention prevented the discussion of N. Ireland at Westminster but massive protest demonstrations could hardly be ignored.

Already socialist groups like the Derry Labour Party and the Young Socialist Alliance in Belfast, refusing to be taken in by O'Neillism, were using extra-Parliamentary means of protest like picketing and squatting to draw attention to the housing situation. In August 1968 the N. Ireland Civil Rights Association held a protest march in Dungannon. They were then invited to hold another in Derry to be organised by the Housing Action Committee, the Labour Party and the Republican Club. The opposition to O'Neillism was still confined to people on the Left. Eddie McAteer advised against the Derry march and against defying Craig's ban when it was imposed. Nor were all those involved equally determined. When the ban was announced the N.I.C.R.A. Executive decided to cancel the march, until forced to go ahead by a declaration that the Derry Labour Party, Housing Action Committee and Republican Club and the Belfast Young Socialist Alliance would march without them. The rest is history.

The savagery of the R.U.C. in Duke Street dealt O'Neillism a hefty blow. It demonstrated graphically how little Unionism had changed and it shook the Catholics' faith in O'Neill. It had another important effect as well. It shook the students in Queen's University to whom the Border was irrelevant but who suddenly found on their own doorstep the sort of huggery that shocked them in Chicago, Paris or Vietnam. October 5th gave birth to the Peoples Democracy, which combined a core of the Young Socialist Alliance with a lot of hitherto apolitical people brought up for the first time against the realities of life in N. Ireland.

But it was still possible for people to believe that the real problem was just the pace of reform, that O'Neill had listened too much to the hard men in his party and was moving too slowly, and that the real villain of the piece was the moronic bigot Craig. The occupation of Armagh in November gave most people their first glimpse of Orange fascism in the open and severely frightened them. It encouraged support for O'Neill as the easiest way out of the situation. When O'Neill sacked Craig and made his melodramatic television broadcast, the Derry Citizens' Action Committee, the N.I.C.R.A. and, of course, Eddie McAteer announced a truce. It looked as if O'Neillism was going to be reprieved. The

first threat of fascist attack had frightened the C.R. movement into silence.

The P.D., however, rejected O'Neill's sham reforms and the attempt to re-create the myth of reforming Unionism and set out to march to Derry. The Burntollet ambush, the Bogside invasion and O'Neill's reaction to them—when he condemned the marchers more severely than the attackers—further undermined the myth and the Civil Rights campaign began again. Without this resumption there would have been no "one man one vote" and no Cameron Report.

But by now the Civil Rights bandwagon had begun. In Derry a Citizens' Action Committee had been formed after October 5th, but containing very few who had been involved in organising the original march. They quickly tried to assume the leadership of the Civil Rights movement. McAteer and the Nationalists declared their support as well, despite the fact that the emergence of the C.R. movement was a condemnation of their ineffective and sectarian record. Throughout the North local Civil Rights committees attracted the support of ambitious would-be Catholic politicians. It was this group which had made the truce with O'Neill in December and gave the most lukewarm support to the March to Derry—McAteer openly opposed it.

The Government's advisers urged a last calculated attempt to salvage O'Neillism—the policy of winning Catholic support for the régime without remedying the abuses and thereby destroying the Orange Alliance. A snap General Election was called and O'Neillite candidates were nominated against Unionist hard-liners while Paisleyites stood against official Unionists including O'Neill himself in Bannside. Nationalists and anti-partitionists were left alone. The logic was that the Nationalists and "moderate" Civil Rights supporters, unchallenged in the Catholic areas, would urge support for O'Neillites elsewhere. O'Neill would gain massive Catholic support and use it as a mandate to isolate and ignore any further Civil Rights agitation.

The P.D. sensed this strategy and nominated candidates in eight constituencies, against Unionists and Nationalists, and against both O'Neill and Paisley in Bannside. The P.D. argument was that there was no effective difference between O'Neill and Paisley or between either of them and Eddie McAteer. The O'Neillites were successful in winning the support of the Establishment Catholics, who flocked to assist the "moderate" Unionist candidates. In Co. Fermanagh Nationalist Councillors campaigned for the liberal Unionists and Captain John Brooke canvassed support for Nationalist M.P. John Carron against the P.D. candidate. But the P.D. tactics were successful. O'Neill did not win back the confidence of the Civil Rights supporters and P.D. candidates everywhere did well against the O'Neillites. The message that there was no difference between Orange and Green Tories began to sink home as well, and the P.D.

candidate in South Down came within 200 votes of his Nationalist opponent.

After February O'Neillism was finished. The balancing act was over. It was no longer possible to satisfy both the Civil Rights movement and the Unionist party. It was only a matter of time until O'Neill was deposed and replaced by Chichester-Clark, a more representative Unionist figure. And so did the march of economic necessity—dictating closer links with the South and, accordingly, reforms in the North. But the Civil Rights movement continued and it was also only a matter of time before Britain would have to intervene to force the inevitable modernisation of the Northern State.

The contribution of the P.D. throughout the campaign was both to expose the confidence trick of O'Neillism and to continually drive home the message that there should be no compromise with the Unionist régime and no let-up in the C.R. campaign without the total dismantling of the whole apparatus of discrimination, gerrymandering and repression. At the same time the P.D. warned clearly that such measures would expose the Protestant working class to the worst rigours of the North's economic depression and split the Orange Alliance wide open. Even at this stage the P.D. candidates argued that the only real solution to the Northern problem was the creation of an Irish Socialist Republic.

Chapter Three THE PROTESTANT BACKLASH AND THE FASCIST THREAT

The Northern State has suffered from chronic depression since the 1920s. Despite the systematic use of discrimination as a shield against the worst of the misery, tens of thousands of Protestant workers and farmers earn low wages and live in depressing hovels. In the overwhelming Protestant Shankill Road, 96 per cent of the houses have no hot water, bath or wash-hand basin and have only an outside toilet. In the Ballymena Rural Council area, 83 per cent Protestant and in the heart of Captain O'Neill's Bannside constituency, 55 per cent of the houses have no toilet of any kind and 47 per cent have no running water.

The privileges enjoyed by people like this are derisive, but it is precisely these people who feel most threatened by the Civil Rights demands. They fear they may lose their place in the housing queue to larger Catholic families, and already in Belfast redevelopment is proceeding faster on the Catholic Falls than the Protestant Shankill. An end to discrimination and the scrapping of the Specials brings the ever-present dole queue nearer. Faced with a militant campaign to destroy the system of discrimination, the Protestant poor could react with nothing but fear.

Well aware that the granting of the C.R. demands would break their hold on the Protestant working class, the Unionists did everything to mobilise their traditional support against the new movement. Craig announced that the C.R.A. (the N.I. Civil Rights Association) equalled the I.R.A. and that the whole movement was just an I.R.A. plot to include the North in a 32-County Fianna Fail Republic where poverty and unemployment would be even greater and the Protestants would bear the brunt of it.

It didn't work at first, but repeated often enough, and loud enough, in every tone of voice from the Etonian accent of Captain O'Neill to the raucous bellowing of Paisley, it was bound to make some impression.

Paisley and Bunting organised the mobs in the streets but Craig and O'Neill provided the intellectual justification for their thuggery. The fear and alarm of the Protestant masses was gradually turned into hate by this cynical campaign of misrepresentation.

At first the militant Protestants were a tiny minority and counter-demonstrators had to be imported into Derry and Armagh to block Civil Rights marches, but by April as many counter-demonstrators as marchers turned up for a Civil Rights march in Omagh, while Paisley's 6,000 votes in Bannside showed the strength of his support in the country.

But it was not simply a question of mobilising a superior force to oppose the Civil Rights campaign. The Stormont Government was not master of its own destiny. O'Neill was still aiming for closer economic links with the South and could not afford to smash the C.R. movement out of existence. Besides, the Labour Govern-

ment was watching from Westminster. They were anxious to develop better relations with the South as well, and were embarrassed internationally by their Stormont puppets. Both Stormont and Westminster decided it would be best to buy off the "moderate" Civil Rights leaders with token reforms.

The trouble was that already the Stormont Government had declared that the C.R. demands were designed to subvert the Constitution and that the movement was the I.R.A. in disguise. Allegations of discrimination and abuses had been dismissed as lies and fabrications. Now the Government appeared to be capitulating to I.R.A. pressure and selling out the Constitution on the basis of lying allegations. The effect was strengthened by the fact that when each set of reforms was introduced the Government declared that any further demands could only be the work of revolutionary Republican and Socialist extremists. Yet within a few weeks even more demands would be granted and an even more hysterical scream of hatred directed against those who continued the struggle.

It was little wonder that frightened Protestant workers and farmers whose only real crime was to have believed what their leaders told them felt that they were being abandoned and betrayed. Already in February the feeling of betrayal showed itself in the high vote for Paisleyite and hard-line Unionist candidates.

The crunch came over the issue of "law and order", and the suppression of what the Government described as Republican insurrections. On April 19th the R.U.C. invaded the Bogside in Derry for the second time, savagely beating Samuel Devenny, who later died as a result of the injuries he received. The next morning the Bogside was filled with R.U.C. in riot gear. It looked like a Unionist army occupying hostile territory. The Bogside evacuated the area and prepared to fight the police. Open war loomed for a couple of hours and then Porter, the Minister of Home Affairs, backed down and withdrew the R.U.C. It was an obvious defeat for the Government. They had decided to assert their authority in the Bogside and cow its people into submission. Then they had to back down. That was the end of the road for O'Neill.

That night there was a series of explosions at reservoirs and transformers. The Government blamed the I.R.A. and badly frightened the Protestant population, whose main concern became security and "law and order". That week O'Neill won his narrowest ever vote of confidence from the Unionist party and the Standing Committee, and resigned. It is now known that the explosions were the work of the U.V.F. to oust O'Neill.

The leadership contest was confused. Faulkner, normally associated with the right wing of the Unionist party, had declared for "one man one vote", because the business interests which he represented accepted the need for reforms to avoid a clash with Westminster. Chichester-Clark supported the O'Neill policies but promised firm government. As an army officer and a prominent

Orangeman he seemed likely to supply it. Clark won by one vote. The assumption was that he would carry out the agreed reforms but would go no further and would put down any more Civil Rights agitation. No prominent figure could be found to oppose the reforms announced and defy pressure from Westminster, but at least they felt they must assert their authority at home. The Unionist leaders hoped to appease their followers who felt betrayed by a policy of "law and order".

But by now it was out of their hands. A series of provocative Orange marches through the 80 per cent Catholic town of Dungiven during June escalated the temperature, and on July 12th rioting broke out in several towns including Belfast and Derry. By August 13th an explosion was inevitable if the Apprentice Boys marched in Derry. The flaunting of Orange Ascendancy in the centre of a city which had suffered so much from the Unionist régime, with so little redress, was bound to produce a riot. The Government knew it but could do nothing. They had used the Orangemen for years to whip up sectarian passion among their supporters; they could not ban them now. Nor could they admit that there was a part of the Northern State where they could not enforce their will.

The explosion came and developed into a battle for the Bogside. The sprawling slum beneath the walls where Stormont's neglect was seen in its starkest form had become a symbol of defiance to the Unionists and their police. They were determined to smash the resistance of the Bogside and conquer its people. The R.U.C. mounted a determined assault on the area. All semblance of police discipline and impartiality was abandoned as police fired C.S. gas and stones and fought side by side with Paisleyite civilians using catapults and petrol bombs. Towards the end the invading force was joined by Specials wearing handkerchiefs over their faces and carrying pick shafts, rifles and sub-machine guns.

The Bogsideers fought heroically and held their own. It was clear the R.U.C. could take the area only by using guns—they had already fired a couple of times. Faced with the prospect of a massacre in Derry and the full-scale Civil War it would have started off, Westminster had to act. By five o'clock on August 14th, British troops were in the streets of Derry and the motley Unionist army of R.U.C., Paisleyites and Specials was forced to withdraw. The troops did not enter the Bogside. For the Bogsideers it was a partial victory. For the R.U.C. and the Unionist régime it was a resounding defeat.

The Unionists had staked their reputation on capturing the Bogside. Free Derry had been described as an I.R.A. plot and there had been talk of treason. Already there had been reforms which threatened the break-up of the Unionist system. Chichester-Clark had promised there would be no further capitulation to "rebel intrigue". Now a whole area of Derry had defied the Stormont Government and got away with it. There was a part of "loyal Ulster" where Stormont's writ no longer ran. The Unionist

rank and file reacted with all the rage of people who had been betrayed.

On August 14th the Government had mobilised the Specials. In Belfast they put them on the Shankill and the approaches to the Falls. It was a crazy action. That night the Shankill Road erupted. Eleven months of pent-up fury and frustration, touched off by the defeat in Derry, egged on the mobs who swarmed down the side streets leading to the Catholic Falls. Inevitably the undisciplined Specials and the embittered R.U.C. joined in, and so began the worst pogrom since the 1930s. Two days and nights of terror and the subsequent campaign of intimidation left eight people dead, 500 homes destroyed and 1,500 families homeless.

The British troops moved into Belfast as well and things gradually quietened down. But the Unionists had still not learnt their lesson and Chichester-Clark and company, the men responsible, called the events in Belfast a Republican insurrection and with peculiar heartlessness claimed that Catholic families had burnt their own homes. They attacked the barricades, erected to protect defenceless people, as Republican aggression. Nothing could have been better calculated to inflame the frightened, crazy mobs and to prevent decent Protestant workers from grasping the real nature of the pogroms going on around them.

The first demand of the "loyalist" rank and file became the removal of the barricades and the reassertion of "law and order" in Bogside and on the Falls. They grew steadily restive as the Stormont régime appeared as a rubber stamp for Westminster decisions and General Freeland, the British G.O.C., became the effective Prime Minister of N. Ireland. Then on October 10th came the Hunt Report. It recommended that the R.U.C., Stormont's political police force, be disarmed, have their uniforms changed, and be subject to a civilian authority which would contain Catholics. Worse still, the Specials, the armed Protestant militia which was both a source of employment and the Orange State's last line of defence, was to be unceremoniously scrapped. And the Government accepted it.

On Saturday, October 11th, the "loyalists" of the Shankill Road with supreme irony hurled themselves against the R.U.C. and British Army in a desperate cry of fear and betrayal. They were quickly and brutally crushed. Today they are filled with a sullen smouldering resentment.

The Protestant working class had been taught all their lives that they held a privileged position and might have to fight to retain it. Since the privileges they had were contemptible they could only assume that to lose them meant disaster. They were not to know that they were being cynically exploited by a gang of money-grabbing industrialists and that they had really more in common with their Catholic fellow-workers than with the political cut-throats who were leading them. Suddenly they saw the whole system of discrimination and Orange hegemony being dismantled.

all around them. They saw the people they had been told were traitors and murderers being listened to and even dictating to their Orange Government. Finally they saw the Specials, their last line of defence, being disbanded. To the Protestant workers their world was collapsing around them.

In Germany in the early 1930s people saw their world collapsing around them too after the great slump. Adolf Hitler promised them stability and law and order. He blamed their troubles on an "alien" minority and his armed thugs promised to suppress any agitation or disturbance. Hundreds of thousands of confused and frightened people supported Hitler and the Nazi party. Craig, Paisley and McKeague preach the same gospel. The danger is that Protestant workers and farmers, betrayed by their leaders who have lied to them for so long, will turn in despair to Orange Fascism.

Chapter Four REACTION FROM THE SOUTH

One of the most remarkable effects of the Civil Rights campaign in the North has been the extent to which it has exposed the new partitionist mentality of Jack Lynch and the rulers of the Southern State. When the Civil Rights movement erupted in Derry on October 5th, 1968, many people in the North were astonished at the lack of support from the Fianna Fail Government in the South. Official reaction in Dublin was distinctly cool. Jack Lynch made no major speech warning the Unionists to reform themselves or threatening economic retaliation if there were any more attacks on Civil Rights demonstrations.

It was only under considerable Opposition pressure in the Dail that Lynch agreed to seek a meeting with Harold Wilson to discuss the situation. And he came out of that meeting saying: "I believe the Northern Prime Minister is anxious to promote Civil Rights." He didn't see Wilson again, though the crisis deepened from month to month. It was 12 months and a fortnight almost to the day before the Dail held a full-scale debate on the Northern situation and even then that debate was forced upon them by the August pogrom in Belfast. It still took place after the debates on the August events in Stormont and Westminster.

At no stage until very recently did Fianna Fail announce any major policy on the Northern situation or take any initiative to solve the crisis. At every lull in the Northern struggle the Southern Government appeared to heave a sigh of relief and hope that things would quieten down again. Every sham concession by the Unionist régime and every conciliatory gesture designed to buy off the timid and faint-hearted in the C.R. movement was welcomed gratefully in Dublin.

The hand of the Fianna Fail Government could be seen in the policy of R.T.E., which has always been under strict Government control. Reporting on the North was as subdued as possible, and very superficial. No attempt was made to analyse the composition and objectives of the Civil Rights movement as a major new force in Irish politics. The criticism of the ineffectiveness and sectarianism of the Nationalist party which was implied in the very existence of the C.R. movement was ignored. R.T.E., which had the resources and the personnel, did no original research into gerrymandering and discrimination and the reasons for them and made no attempt to examine the relative economic and social position of the Catholic and Protestant sections of the working class. The only programmes which made any real effort to analyse the background to the Northern crisis were by the British companies.

On the other hand, R.T.E. had a flirtation with Paisley and Bunting with the result that Bunting described R.T.E. as his favourite channel. Both were interviewed with kid-glove methods and allowed to make the most outrageous statements without query. The effect was to portray them as amiable and harmless

cranks rather than dangerous Fascists and to reduce the seriousness of the Northern situation in the minds of Southern viewers.

On the face of it this lack of interest by Fianna Fail—which still has “The Republican Party” in brackets after its name—was hard to understand. Viewed against the pattern of events over the previous decade it became readily comprehensible, however.

The rank-and-file Republicans who had fought in the Civil War were out to really break the link with the British Empire. Some were conscious Socialists but all were radicals and wanted not just to declare a paper Republic but to break the economic stranglehold of British imperialism over the Irish economy. Fianna Fail were swept to power in 1932 by a wave of popular anger at a very concrete example of British economic imperialism, the extortion of thousands of pounds every year from Irish farmers in the form of the Land Annuities.

When De Valera came to power he withheld the Annuities and imposed tariffs on British exports to the 26 Counties. The result was the Economic War when Britain taxed the import of Irish agricultural produce and almost crippled the Irish economy. The whole affair was a lamentable failure. Only dynamic economic growth would have enabled the 26-County State to withstand a British economic siege. Growth would have required capital for investment and this could only have been obtained by stopping the export of private capital for investment abroad and halting the drain of profits by taking over British-owned firms in the South. De Valera was not prepared to do this and so his policy of economic independence was doomed to failure from the start.

In 1938 Fianna Fail admitted defeat and made terms with the British Government. The British handed over the Southern ports, but De Valera agreed to pay them £10,000,000 and promised no further interference with British exploitation in the 26 Counties. For the next 20 years the Free State economy stagnated until in January 1957 unemployment had reached the figure of 95,000 and emigration stood at 50,000 per year. That year Fianna Fail returned to power with De Valera ageing, and effective leadership in the hands of Sean Lemass.

In 1958 Lemass decided on a drastic change of policy. All hope of achieving economic independence would be abandoned in favour of a policy of attracting foreign investment, American and German as well as British, to Ireland. By the beginning of the 1960s it was clear there would have to be a new relationship with Britain. The domestic market in the 26 Counties was too small to make it profitable for foreign firms to set up factories there. But access to the British market would be a great incentive. So it was necessary to seek economic reintegration with the United Kingdom and this became the policy of Lemass.

There was one major stumbling-block to closer relations with Britain, however: the North. It was not long since the last I.R.A. campaign and feeling still ran high about the Border issue. It was politically impossible for a Southern Premier to establish friendly

relations with Britain without some change in the Northern situation. It was also difficult for a British Tory Government to be too friendly with the South without some political rapprochement between Stormont and Leinster House. The replacement of Brookeborough by Terence O'Neill was a political godsend for the Lemass administration. Brookeborough had too long and bitter a record of Orange bigotry for negotiations with him to be possible at all. O'Neill had no such record and had his own economic reasons for wanting a rapprochement with the South.

There was no concrete action for some time. O'Neill made conciliatory speeches towards the Catholics in the North and towards the Southern Government and gradually phased out some of the more visible aspects of Orange repression. The internees were released, the B-men demobilised and the R.U.C. began to leave aside their guns for traffic duty. O'Neill even began to play cat-and-mouse with Eddie McAteer, the leader of the Nationalists.

All this made it possible for the Lemass Government to put out the view that things were changing in the North, in preparation for the Lemass-O'Neill meeting which took place in 1965. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement signed one year later paved the way for the complete reintegration of the 26 Counties into the economy of the United Kingdom. The political settlement could not come far behind.

When Jack Lynch succeeded Lemass at the end of 1966 he was committed to the same policy but went even further in his appeasement of the Northern régime. At a Press conference after his selection by the Fianna Fail party he was questioned about discrimination in the North. He said: “He was aware there had been discrimination but that he believed that steps were now being taken to remove it and he was hopeful of the new régime in the North.” Of Captain O'Neill he said: “I think that he is a most enlightened man who is striving hard for co-operation among all the people of the North” (*Irish Times*, November 18th, 1966). Few comments can look so ironic placed beside the events of the last year in the North.

The entire strategy depended upon an immense confidence trick, however. The Fianna Fail party had to be able to convince latent Republican opinion in the South that the Unionists were reforming themselves and that the Catholic minority accepted the O'Neill régime. On the other hand, O'Neill had to convince the backwoodsmen in his party that there was no sell-out of the Orange Ascendancy. The strategy adopted was the one of conciliatory speeches and empty gestures to the minority but no real change in the vital fields of local government, jobs and housing.

The Civil Rights campaign shattered the myth. People in the South learned the reality of the Northern situation and the nature of the cruel and corrupt Unionist régime their Government had been flirting with. The Catholics in the North shook off their apathy and realised their strength. They determined to fight for

their demands and to take nothing less. The Protestant working class began to realise how they were being betrayed by an unscrupulous clique of political gangsters. Irish politics, North and South, were thrown into the melting pot and the steady and unnoticed progress of the Fianna Fail Government in reintegrating the 26 Counties into the United Kingdom was brought to an abrupt halt.

It was no wonder the reaction of Jack Lynch and the Southern political establishment to the Civil Rights movement was distinctly cool. In fact they wished it had never begun.

Chapter Five

THE FEDERAL SOLUTION

The grim days of August shattered the complacency of 26-County politics. Even a public misled over a period of years by a clever public relations job on the "reforming" policies of Captain Terence O'Neill and the new deal in the North could not look on unmoved at the spectacle of the all-out attack on the Bogside. Already there had been stirrings in the Cabinet and for some time Messrs. Blaney and Boland had been toying with the idea of ousting Lynch by starting up militant sectarian anti-partitionist campaigns in the country. Lynch had to act and act fast. The alternative was a palace revolution in the Fianna Fail party and the possibility of a revolt by the people.

Lynch made a dramatic television broadcast on August 13th and moved the Free State Army to the Border under the guise of setting up field hospitals which nobody used. It satisfied the desire for immediate action, and the next day the British troops arrived in the streets of Derry and the siege of the Bogside was lifted. But that night and the following night the terror began in Belfast, more horrifying by far than anything that happened in Derry.

Lynch's troops remained on the Border. He made no further television broadcast. His bluff had been called. He had no intention of using the troops; in fact the Southern Government had not the least idea of what their troops could do in the North. It was left to the British Army to impose an uneasy peace in Belfast, and the Dublin Government shifted attention as far as possible from the scene by raising the issue at the United Nations in New York—3,000 miles from the scene of the troubles.

Later on more information came to light about the role of the Free State troops. When the siege of the Bogside was at its height a deputation from the area went to one of the Irish army camps in Donegal and asked, not for guns, but just for gas-masks to protect themselves from the C.S. gas with which the R.U.C. were saturating the area. They were refused. This was in sharp contrast to Lynch's declaration of support on television. Clearly the rattling of his rather rusty sabre was mainly for domestic consumption in the 26 Counties and designed to head off any more militant action by unofficial groups. Jack Lynch was always an improbable ally of the petrol-bombers of the Bogside anyway.

The raising of the issue at the United Nations was an equally cynical manoeuvre. Dr. Hillery, the Minister for External Affairs, made an impassioned speech about Britain's responsibility for the crimes of the Unionist junta, but the effect was destroyed when the *Irish Times* published a photograph of him in friendly conversation with Lord Caradon, the British delegate, just before the debate. It was later revealed that the Irish delegation had privately agreed with the British delegates that the issue would not be voted on. Perhaps the real attitude of the Fianna Fail Government was revealed on the Saturday after the worst terror in Belfast when the Gardai cleared the streets in Dublin after a demonstration with

one of the worst baton charges in the history of the state. The demonstration was in solidarity with the people of the North.

The basic aim of Lynch and Co. remained the same throughout the crisis: economic reintegration into the United Kingdom. Previously the best way to achieve this had appeared to be a detente with the Unionist régime, ignoring the skeletons in their cupboard no matter how loudly they rattled their bones. Now, however, the lid was off the Northern cesspit and it could no longer be ignored. Opinion in the South was roused and had to be placated. At the same time the year-long crisis had shaken the Northern Orange State to its rotten core and its days were clearly numbered. The British Government had finally decided that the Unionist régime was a serious embarrassment and were only too anxious to rid themselves of it. Hints were dropped by Callaghan, and Labour back-benchers openly spoke about a new solution to the age-old Irish question.

Jack Lynch took the hint. In a major policy speech in Tralee he enunciated his Government's new line. Partition was the root cause of the trouble in the North and there would never be lasting peace there until Partition was abolished. At the same time he ruled out any use of force to end the Border. Any solution must be agreed on between London, Belfast and Dublin. He spelt it out a little more clearly when he spoke in the Dail debate on the Northern situation. The answer to the problem was a Federal solution whereby the North could retain its economic links with Britain and its own laws and "customs," while the South would continue its own development policy. This solution would remove the last barriers to a close and friendly relationship between the South and the United Kingdom. In other words, the North would remain under direct British economic control while the progressive sell-out of the South to British and U.S. investment would continue. The new solution would be the political recognition of the reality of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement. Its logical outcome would be a Federation of the British Isles controlled from London. The Federation itself would be a rogues' charter for uninterrupted exploitation on both sides of the Border.

To get away with such a gross betrayal of a long anti-imperialist tradition it would be necessary to parcel up the new package in some sort of green wrapping and adopt a pseudo-patriotic stance. That was why Jack Lynch suddenly rediscovered the evils of Partition and the British Government turned a blind eye to the antics of some of his Ministers. But behind the public posturing the private sell-out was very real.

Chapter Six JACK LYNCH'S POLITICAL SLUM

As the crisis deepened in the North throughout the year there was a gradual change in the attitude of the Dublin Government. It was first noticeable in the conduct of Neal Blaney, recognised as representing the far right of Fianna Fail. As early as the February General Election Blaney was speaking of the "Nationalist people of the Six Counties" and urging them to support the green Tories of the Nationalist party. After the election Blaney attended a dinner in honour of the defeated Eddie McAteer and lavished praise upon him. Blaney was also to the fore in arguing that the real issue in the North was not Civil Rights—or the economic system that had created the discrimination—but the "unnatural Partition of Ireland".

Fianna Fail had realised that the Civil Rights movement was there to stay and that the Catholic working class in the North were not going to be fooled by O'Neillism any longer, that they were off their knees and would insist upon their rights. The struggle would continue and Fianna Fail could not be neutral any longer. But if the Northern Catholics were not going to be fooled by O'Neill they would have to be fooled by someone. The alternative was that by pressing their demands for jobs and houses to the limit they would wreck the Northern State and bring the whole rotten Tory system North and South crashing around the ears of Lynch and the Unionist junta. So Eddie McAteer was resurrected and backed by Fianna Fail, loudly protesting their anti-partitionist allegiance. Every time there was a new crisis in the North R.T.E. produced McAteer, wound him up and set him off.

The resurrection of the Nationalist party served a number of purposes. It would steer Civil Rights supporters in the North away from militant action and from the contamination of socialist ideas. It would also avoid criticism of the conditions in the 26 Counties by the Northern movement. Austin Currie, the youngest of the Nationalists, had clearly stated at a meeting in Dublin that he was not prepared to criticise the Southern Government. The continual portrayal of the Nationalists as the leaders of the Civil Rights movement would obscure the radicalism of that movement and falsify the real situation in the North, emphasising partition rather than imperialism as the root cause of the trouble.

Fianna Fail were more than anxious that criticism from the North should be prevented and that knowledge of economic demands of the Civil Rights movement should be suppressed in the South. If attention were focused on the demands "One Man One Job" and "One Family One House" it could only lead to comparisons with the situation nearer home. The 10,000 homeless families in Dublin could compare unfavourably with the figures for Belfast even after the pogroms. Where the North has 40,000 out of work, or 7 per cent of the working population, the South has 60,000 or 5.4 per cent. Where 6,000 people emigrate from

the North every year, 20,000 go from the South. At the same time if the role of socialist groups and Housing and Unemployed Action Committees in building the movement in the North were fully grasped it might lead to a growth in support for corresponding groups in the South.

Jack Lynch could ill-afford a closer look at his own political slum. The 26 Counties suffered from unemployment and bad housing as chronic as any in the North. The unemployment benefits, pensions and health service which relieved some of the misery North of the Border were much poorer in the South. The pensioner, widow and man on the dole all had to make do with a pound a week less than their Northern counterpart.

Even the much criticised repressive apparatus of the Unionist regime had its parallels in the South. The Offences Against the State Act provided the same powers to arrest and jail without trial, to ban newspapers, magazines and Political organisations. Admittedly the Southern Act requires a few more legal formalities before it's put into operation, but it makes little difference to the man who is detained. Recently, perhaps anticipating the long-overdue revolt against conditions in the South, the Government has even tried to bring in further repressive laws in the Criminal Justice Bill and the Trade Union Bill. The Criminal Justice Bill is designed to curb freedom of protest and the right to demonstrate and it also seeks to outlaw the withdrawal of rents and rates. The Trade Union Bill aims to shackle the unions in the South by outlawing unofficial strikes and making it almost impossible to have an official strike.

With these Bills passed the South would have, if anything, a more up-to-date set of special powers than the Stormont Government. At the same time they would have a brutal and efficient political police force to operate them. The Southern Special Branch is already notorious for its persecution of left-wingers and republicans. There have been constant reports throughout the C.R. campaign of Gardai receiving instruction in organised thuggery from the R.U.C. and of both Special Branches co-operating in identifying the Northern "subversives".

Not to be outdone in anything by Stormont, the 26-County Government even have their own minor form of religious discrimination. Article 44 of the Southern Constitution accords a "special position" to the Catholic Church, while Article 41 and the Criminal Law Act of 1935 prohibit divorce and contraception to non-Catholics—and indeed to those Catholics who want them too.

The creators of the poverty and misery in the South are only hypocrites if they claim to support any genuine Civil Rights movement in the North. The oppressors of the homeless in Dublin cannot be the saviours of the oppressed in the North. Their dishonesty is there for anyone to see: In supporting the Nationalists, however, they need have no qualms since the Nationalists have no

intention of trying to overthrow an economic system out of which most of them are doing well. Fianna Fail also know that in supporting the Nationalists they are helping to head off any extension of the C.R. cause to the 26 Counties.

Chapter Seven THE WAY AHEAD

In the North the Unionist Government are attempting a desperate balancing act. On the one hand they are being forced to reform by the threat of economic sanctions from Britain. On the other they know that if the reforms are implemented they sound the political death-knell of the Unionist party. The role of Chichester-Clark and Co. is limited to trying to delay and water down the reforms as much as possible and by equivocation and downright lies trying to head off a split in their party. Some sort of split is inevitable, even if it is only a drop-out of the right wing and the old Unionist party, as an Orange alliance of Protestant workers and farmers led by the gentry and the manufacturers is unlikely to be a serious force in the future.

Apart from the Unionists there are three main strategies for solving the Northern problem being canvassed at the moment. They are: (1) the "Moderate" solution, (2) Militant Anti-Partitionism, and (3) a 32-County Socialist Republic.

The Moderate Solution

The voice of the self-styled "moderates" is the New Ulster Movement or the Parliamentary Associations, but they would gladly widen their ranks to include John Hume, M.P., and the right wing of the N.I.C.R.A. and most of the Unionist M.P.s. There is no effective difference between the policies of the "moderates" and the bulk of the N.I.L.P., Liberal Party or National Democrats. They represent the new middle classes and professional people, Catholic and Protestant.

The "moderates" accept the necessity for the reforms and would usually go a bit further than the Government. They believe that when the reforms are completed N. Ireland will become a civilised democracy and in this new atmosphere the Unionist party will wither away. Then the moderates will take over—which is why most of them are interested at all.

They see the real danger as coming from the extremists—on both sides. The Unionist extremists, McKeague, Paisley and occasionally Craig, endanger the passage of the reforms. If they create sufficient disturbance there will have to be a compromise. The non-Unionist extremists—usually the P.D. or the Republicans—are dangerous because they may reject such necessary compromises and expose the fraud behind a lot of the Government's promises. The P.D. in particular may also start to agitate about economic issues and create industrial unrest just at a time when a period of peace is required to re-establish profit margins and allow a continuance of the policy of attracting outside investment.

For the "moderates" peace is the paramount necessity, and if it is necessary to back-pedal on the reforms to obtain it then this must be done. In the main, however, equivocation is the best way of dealing with grass-roots Unionist discontent. The Orangemen

should be assured that the Specials are not being disbanded and that the Border is not at risk. After a while the moderates hope that this discontent will wear off, and if it doesn't that the British Army will deal with the malcontents. Ultimately most of the moderates accept the necessity for a Federation of the British Isles and total integration of the local economy and that of the South into the British one.

The British Government support this policy. They realise the necessity for the reforms if the revolt of the Catholics is not to continue and spark off a movement in the South which will finally break the stranglehold of Britain on the Irish economy. Reform is seen as so important in Whitehall that they have been prepared to force it down the throats of the Stormont clique and have made a conscious decision that if there are any minor revolts by the Protestant workers they must be smashed as quickly and viciously as the Shankill Road eruption on October 11th.

Throughout the crisis Britain has maintained the friendliest relations with the South, and Wilson supports the idea of Federation. The Unionists are a stumbling-block to this, both because they are likely to choke if forced to swallow it and because they make it politically difficult for Lynch to deal with a Stormont administration. Accordingly, Britain would like to see the Unionists replaced by a religiously mixed coalition. This would also serve the purpose of winning Catholic loyalty to the *status quo* in a way the Unionists never could.

Jack Lynch and those sections of his Cabinet dedicated, to the final sell-out to British and American capital support the moderates too. They hope for peace in the North as soon as possible before the trouble can spread South. But some sections of Lynch's Cabinet don't accept this policy.

The Militant Anti-Partitionists

The Nationalist party and the "Civil Rights for Catholics" section of N.I.C.R.A. have always been interested in the C.R. movement mainly as a stick to beat the Unionists with. They have opposed the C.R.A. taking a stand on the economic discrimination which affects the Protestant working class and Austin Currie, M.P., and Aidan Corrigan have stated at meetings of the Monaghan Civil Rights group that they are not prepared to criticise the lack of Civil Rights in the 26 Counties.

The real aim of this group is the ending of Partition by submerging the North in a 32-County Fianna Fail Republic, and they have increasingly spoken of Partition as the real evil from civil rights platforms. Before 1958 the allegiance of the Catholic population had been divided on important issues of principle between the Socialists and Republicans on the one hand and the Nationalists, Hibernians and Green Tories on the other. The anti-partitionist group saw the C.R. movement as a way of mobilising and uniting the entire Catholic population and seizing the leadership by rigidly

excluding all politics except criticism of the Unionists.

The anti-partitionists never expected, the Unionists to accept so many reforms. They saw the Unionists merely as a group of power-hungry religious bigots; they had no conception of the economic interests which were pushing the Unionist leaders in the direction of closer links with the South. They expected, instead, the Civil Rights campaign to be met with total repression and the Unionists to be incapable of reforming themselves, so that ultimately Britain would be glad to hand over the North to Dublin. Now the anti-partitionists are alarmed. They are afraid that if the reforms go through quickly many of the Catholics who have supported the C.R. movement will be satisfied and the N. Ireland State will become more stable than ever before.

The anti-partitionists' strategy is to try to carry the united Catholic movement established in the struggle for Civil Rights into a struggle to end Partition and link this movement with ambitious ring-wing elements in Fianna Fail like Neal Blaney and Kevin Boland, who see this new Anti-Partition League as a way to power in the South. A condition of this unity and financial and other help from sections of Fianna Fail would be that there must be no criticism of the 26 Counties. An example of the new alliance in action is provided by the Monaghan Civil Rights Association and the newspaper *Voice of the North*, which are financed by Fianna Fail and have a distinctly sectarian flavour.

To consolidate the new alliance it is necessary to start the campaign before the reforms go through, and so the anti-partitionists are militant. They are anxious to keep up a barrage of criticism of the Unionists so that no one will think the struggle is over. It is even in their interest that there should be occasional outbursts by the Unionist rank and file since it will reinforce their message that there will be no peace until Partition is ended. Such outbursts would either be crushed by the British Army or provide an opportunity for the Irish Army to intervene.

The anti-partitionists regard the Protestant section of the community as a single united group. The only difference they see between Protestant employers and Protestant workers is that the workers seem more bigoted. Neither worker nor employer plays any real part in their strategy.

The Basic Flaws

Both the "moderate" and the militant anti-partitionist strategy suffer from basic flaws which will render them ineffective.

The "moderates" fail to understand the significance of the discrimination and gerrymandering in N. Ireland. They believe that bigotry has been fostered and pandered to by the Unionist leaders solely in order to achieve political power. They rightly recognise that if the reforms are implemented the Unionist party can no longer survive in its present form. But after that they think it is merely a question of a few discontented bigots who will gradually

come to their senses.

The "moderates" fail to realise the living conditions of the Protestant working class. The rioting on the Shankill can only be understood against the housing figures for the areas. Slums breed violence and the need to find scapegoats. The Shankill reacts more violently to Chichester-Clark's sell-out because the Shankill is a slum and because for so long the wealthy leaders of the Unionist party have pointed to the Catholics as the scapegoat.

The long-term prospects are even worse. Again the "moderates" fail to understand that by removing discrimination in jobs and housing they are removing a buffer which has shielded the Protestant workers from the worst effects of the economic situation in the North. Time will not soften the blow for these people; it will only sharpen it as the full force of economic depression begins to bite. At the same time the wiping out of abuses at the local level means destroying the patronage and the power-base of local Unionist officials, councillors and committeemen. It means creating a whole group of disgruntled petty officials who could provide the leadership for a formidable right-wing movement.

The noble idea of building a just and equal society—which excludes them—is not likely to attract the inhabitants of the Shankill, nor are polite discussions about peace and fellowship on the Malone Road. The Protestant backlash is the rock upon which the "moderates" will founder. Those who were silent for the last 50 years, who were afraid to stand up to Brookeborough or Craigavon, will quail before the spectre of Craig or Paisley.

The "moderates" only answer to the Protestant backlash if it becomes strong enough will be to back-pedal on the reforms. But if they do they will face a Catholic revolt as well. The Catholics have been shaken out of their torpor, they have realised their strength and have suffered too much in this struggle to be satisfied with blunting the teeth of injustice. The "moderates" have no way out of the dilemma.

The anti-partitionists founder on the same rock as the "moderates": their failure to understand the Protestant working class. Already there are stirrings of Orange Fascism in the North. The anti-partitionists have no solution but to campaign increasingly about the Border. If they think about the Protestants at all, they believe that the reforms will split the Unionist party, leaving only a tiny rump of militant extremists. Their hope is that the British Army will smash the Protestant extremists, and if not the Irish Army will have to. The rest of the Protestants will be apathetic, disheartened and leaderless. The hope is that they can be bullied into a united Ireland and once there will gradually fade away like the Protestants in the South today. Meanwhile the Northern anti-partitionists will inherit the Unionists' positions of privilege in a united Ireland ruled by their allies, Neal Blaney and Company.

The problem is that the 1,000,000 Protestants in the North are not like their co-religionists in the South in 1922, who were mainly landed gentry or professional people who had little to lose from

an independent Irish Government which had no intention of changing the economic system. The Northern Protestants are overwhelmingly working class. Though they have little enough in the North, they stand to lose even that in the South where the social services are worse and the housing crisis more acute. They fear that history may bring its own retribution and the discrimination used against the Catholics in the North might be used against them in a united Ireland. With Neal Blaney at the helm they could be right. Resistance to reform is widespread, defence of the Border would be almost universal.

The anti-partitionists also fail to understand the nature of their new-found British allies. The British Government want economic stability in N. Ireland and they reckon that the best way to achieve it is by reform. They are not motivated by any concern for civil rights; if they were they would have forced the Unionists to reform long ago. Accordingly, if the Protestant backlash becomes strong enough Whitehall will come to terms with it as they did with the white racists in Rhodesia. British intervention in the North is not for the good of the Irish people and they are dubious patriots who base their political strategy on the prospect of British troops shooting Irish workers, even if they are Fascists.

The anti-partitionists' alternative to the use of British troops to put down the Protestant extremists is the use of the Irish Army. Nothing could be crazier. The use of the Irish Army under the direction of a movement uniting all the Catholics of the North and to secure a Green Tory united Ireland would spark off a communal bloodbath in the Six Counties. The Catholic alliance would probably win but it would be at the expense of the desolation of the North and the decimation of the Ulster Protestants. Perhaps that's what they want.

The Socialist Strategy

The fundamental flaw in the approach both of the self-styled "moderates" and the militant anti-partitionists is their refusal to face the economic realities of N. Ireland. Discrimination and patronage have been used to buy the support of Protestant workers and farmers and cement them into an unnatural alliance of exploiter with exploited in the Orange Order and the Unionist party. Now that the apparatus of discrimination is being dismantled that alliance is about to collapse. The interests of the exploiters have changed over the years anyway until now they are anxious for links with the South. The working class are enraged at the sell-out by their rulers who are protecting their profits at the expense of their erstwhile allies. The first reaction of the Orange workers is to fight to protect their privileges. Another section of the old alliance is also disgruntled. Owners of traditional local firms and large local merchants are threatened with extinction by modern methods and take-overs. Together with the redundant local Unionist bosses they may join the angry workers in an attempt to reverse

the tide of history. This is the stuff of which Fascism is made.

The Fascist threat is a real one. The blind bitterness of the betrayed Protestant workers was displayed on August 14th and 15th on the Falls and in Ardoyne and on October 11th on the Shankill. Already they have some arms and training. If they are joined by disbanded B-men with purloined equipment they could mount a serious threat. The British Army cannot be relied upon to deal with them: the Irish Army could not without precipitating a bloody civil war.

There is another way. Pressure must be maintained to make sure the reforms are implemented, but as they are Catholic workers will realise that they are largely hollow and don't solve the problems of unemployment and homeless families. At the same time Protestant workers must have it explained to them that the reason for the shortage is not the Catholics but the economic system. The lesson must be driven home that the leaders who have betrayed them are suffering no economic loss and that they have been cynically exploiting the working class in the same way for the last 50 years. When the economic winds do blow cold the erstwhile fighters for civil rights should try to involve both Protestants and Catholics in fighting redundancies, and demanding higher wages and better homes.

Discontented Protestant workers will not be won by a united Catholic front directed from Dublin and trying to submerge them in another Tory system where the only difference would be that Catholics have the upper hand. They will not be impressed by middle-class liberals appealing for peace and order and telling them from the security of comfortable homes on the Malone Road that the problem of poverty can be dealt with another day. They will not be won either by any spurious "labour" movement which tries to ignore the question of civil rights and campaigns only on trade union issues "within the Constitution".

The support of these men can only be won by an honest movement which makes clear that civil rights are here to stay and tries to explain why they were denied, and then campaigns on economic issues and tries to build a united working-class movement. But the end solution must be clearly seen. Agitation for jobs and houses must reach a limit within the economic system in N. Ireland. A stage will be reached when higher wages and social investment threaten current profit levels and the constant drain of profit to Britain. A choice will have to be made: between capitalism and socialism, between continued exploitation by British imperialism and breaking the British economic stranglehold. That choice could not be made alone because the Six Counties are economically unviable. The struggle for socialism would mean snapping the link with Britain, overthrowing the rotten capitalist system, discarding the Border, and rooting out British and U.S. economic imperialism in both parts of Ireland. It would mean, in fact, the struggle for Connolly's Socialist Republic.

Title: Struggle in the North
Organisation: People's Democracy
Author: Mike Farrell
Date: 1970

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