

IRELAND

BACKGROUND

to what

is happening

to day



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PART I

1911 - 1923

Events in the North of Ireland at present are very dramatic but we should not think that they are in any way novel or that they are in any way insoluble. Certainly, we would be foolish to accept that these events are beyond an Irish solution as distinct from a British solution.

Nor is this the first time the Irish question has been dragged before the House of Commons at Westminster or held the stage of British public opinion. Far from it.

All through the 1880s, at a time when England ruled the whole of Ireland, Parnell led a strong contingent of Irish Home Rule M.P.s at Westminster. Parnell was the leader of a party which held the balance of power in Westminster and which therefore had the unique opportunity of coercing Liberals and Tories alike into granting the demands of the Land League of the 1880-'90 period and eventually what the Land League agitation escalated into - *the demand of Home Rule for Ireland.*

It is a feature of Irish history that any general agitation involving the mass of the people always escalated into the constitutional issue of the whole relationship of Ireland to England. The Land League was no exception to the rule. From 1879, when it held its first successful meeting in Irishtown, Co. Mayo, the demand for peasant proprietorship became the support base for the Home Rule demand.

In the 1885 election Home Rule swept the country winning 85 out of a total of 102 seats. Ulster returned a majority of one in favour of Home Rule where Antrim became the only county in Ireland not to return a follower of Parnell. Anti-Home Rulers numbered seventeen Ulster Unionists and the two members from Trinity College, Dublin - a result which bears comparison with the 1918 Sinn Fein election result.

So it was that in 1911 John Redmond, the new leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party led a re-grouped Party representing the vast majority of the Irish people. The demand before the House of Commons in Westminster in 1911 was for Home Rule for Ireland, and John Redmond was in the position to coerce both Liberals and Tories to listen to him and to yield to his arguments because he held the balance of power. In 1911 the Tories were out of office and it looked very much as if the Liberal administration was going to concede Home Rule to Ireland at John Redmond's insistence. Powerful forces in the Tory establishment and in the Unionist North stood ranged against them and, as always when their interests are threatened, they were quite prepared to go beyond the Parliamentary process to protect themselves.

Why were the interests of Tory Unionism and Home Rule such opposites? The answer lies in an understanding of the Home Rule demand. It was not a demand

for full independence for Ireland. Home Rule was the demand primarily of the Irish middle-classes, i.e. *the business community who wanted a limited freedom.* That freedom consisted of the right to autonomy in taxation and in the control of imports and exports, a freedom to impose tariffs behind which underdeveloped agricultural Ireland might industrialise itself. But while this was the main impetus in the Home Rule demand it was a demand which enlisted the support of everyone in Ireland from the small businessman, in whose interests it was primarily made, to the ordinary worker and the small farmer, and to the Republicans.

The Republicans wanted full independence but Home Rule represented a step along that road, being the most extreme national demand to attract popular support. Pearse's stricture on Home Rule was that it represented only a small moiety of the full freedom Ireland was entitled to. The Redmond Parliamentary Party commanded this support, which was led by the middle-classes and was Southern-based because the South was largely agricultural and under-developed.

The North-East corner was industrialised, however, and here can be seen the seeds of the crisis that has governed Irish history since those days. The North had shared in the English industrial revolution from 1860 onwards and what the Home Rulers of the South wanted - protectionism - would not suit the industrialised North East corner and the bigger industrialists in that area. They wanted access to the Imperial markets all over the world and any concessions that the Home Rulers would get from Westminster would be used to the detriment of their better interests.

Were a Home Rule Ireland created it could decide what imports would have tariffs on them and then trading partners would retaliate and put tariffs on Irish exports, which meant that the whole position of the Northern industrialists would be threatened. They would suffer from Home Rule in that they already had free access to British markets all over the world (*and Britain was then the strongest Empire in the world*) and they wanted to maintain that position. The Tories also wanted to regain power, and so to embarrass the Liberals and play a trump card (*the imperial card of divide and conquer*) Randolph Churchill's advice was accepted.

In the North-East of Ireland the businessmen whom Carson and Galloper Smith were to lead could not tell the workers there - "*We ourselves want to exploit you - we don't want the middle-classes of the rest of Ireland exploiting you.*" Churchill's classic advice was: "*Play the Orange Card*". This meant they would whip up religious fears and religious hysteria among the Protestant people and under the guise of these religious fears they would effectively mobilise a homogenous people - working class, middle class and upper class - against the demands of the Home Rulers.

Then Carson and Galloper Smith provided the slogan of the day - the popular slogan that still rings in the North today - "*Home Rule is Rome Rule*". There was an element of truth in this because the British Empire had used the Catholic Church in the past: *in 1795 they had bought out the political loyalties of the*

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Catholic Church by granting the right to have a seminary in Ireland for the training of priests - Maynooth College. Therefore the Catholic Church traded the political loyalty of its flock for the right to exist in Ireland and in so doing it effectively (in 1817 in particular and indeed throughout the 19th century) led a pogrom against the Gaelic culture in the South. The Catholic Church was one of the main influences in destroying the Irish language.

Now the Orange Card was played with viciousness, "Home Rule is Rome Rule" was the first slogan and the next very quickly followed: "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right".

The Ulster Volunteer Force was formed, 100,000 men in the North-East, to oppose Home Rule demands for Ireland because of religious fears and sectarianism. There quickly followed the counter-move in the South by the Home Rulers. They established the National Volunteers to make sure that Home Rule would be granted and to defend Home Rule for the whole of the island.

Thus there were two opposing forces now in existence - 100,000 Orangemen in the North and up to 180,000 Nationalists in the South in the uniform of the National Volunteers.

The next act of escalation was the running of guns into Larne near Belfast by the Orangemen, an illegal act, soon to be followed by the running of guns at Howth, near Dublin, by the Nationalists. "The North began" was the attitude of the Nationalists and "if they can do it, we can do it". So it was that at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 there were two forces in Ireland - the Orangemen and the Volunteers.

There was also one other force which, at the time was influencing attitudes very much. This was James Connolly leading the Irish Citizen Army and the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. Connolly represented that vein of thought which wasn't middle-class or upper-class and which said that until the whole people of Ireland control the whole property of Ireland the laws made in Ireland would be anti-working-class laws. He held that if Irish workers wanted to control their own destiny and write their own history they must control the means of production, distribution and exchange. This philosophy animated Connolly's whole career. Nevertheless at the armed level (compared with 100,000 Orangemen and 180,000 Volunteers) he had only a few hundred Citizen Army men.

The Citizen Army had been formed in the heat of the battle between the workers of Dublin and their mainly Catholic middle-class Home Rule employers, the Murphys, Easons, etc., in the General Strike of 1913, a vicious struggle which lasted for six months. In spite of small numbers the Citizen Army was destined to be a force to be reckoned with.

In 1914 British Imperialism wanted conscripts to go to Europe to fight German Imperialism. They decided to deal with the rival factions now in existence in Ireland and they passed a Home Rule Bill for the whole of Ireland. But they privately assured Sir Edward Carson and Galloper Smith (who both, subsequently got positions in the War Cabinet) that what was eventually to become the Six Counties would be excepted, in effect, from the Home Rule Act at the end of the

war. This satisfied John Redmond who urged the National Volunteers to go and fight wherever the firing line extended in order to impress England with their loyalty and the usefulness of giving them Home Rule. And Carson had very little trouble persuading 100,000 Orangemen to rush to the front to protect "little Catholic Belgium" (*the jingo slogan of the day*) on the grounds that they would be effectively opposing the granting of Home Rule in the post-war situation.

A minority of the National Volunteers, however, refused to play along with Britain's plans. This was because the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the remnants of the secret Fenian military organisation of the 19th Century, dedicated to the freedom of Ireland by the use of physical force, had control of a section of the Volunteers and decided at this point to hold as many Volunteers as possible in Ireland against the day when they could rise and strike a blow against British Imperialism for Irish freedom.

A total of 11,000 Volunteers refused to help Britain and formed the Irish Volunteers, while the majority followed Redmond and Britain and paraded off to war in Europe. So England at the first stroke had got roughly 230,000 Irish recruits for its imperialist war with Germany.

Connolly was furious when at the outbreak of war all the socialist parties of Europe threw away their principles, grabbed the imperialist rifle, rushed to the trenches where working-class was now shooting working-class in the front line.

Connolly declared that he would strike a blow in the interests of socialism and against this imperialist war before the war ended. And the I.R.B., preparing to strike its own blow, realised Connolly's intentions from his writings and saw to it that Connolly got together with P.H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, Thomas MacDonagh and other Volunteer leaders who would be sympathetic to Connolly, and they agreed on a common programme. This programme is captured in two documents of the period - Pearse's "The Sovereign People" and the Proclamation of 1916.

The Republican forces marched out on Easter Monday Morning 1916 after a lot of misadventure - *the Rising had miscarried, and it was almost doomed before it started.* But Connolly led his Citizen Army and the Volunteers and took key positions in Dublin. This Rising of 1916 was put down after a week of bloody fighting and sixteen of the leaders were executed. Immediately the Rising was condemned in the jingo press of Britain as an unparalleled act of treachery, a stab in the back at a time when England was fighting for the freedom of small nations, especially Catholic Belgium, against Germany.

One very important result of the Rising was that when Connolly died the whole working class consciousness was eclipsed for many years. Connolly had consciously engaged in what he might describe as a class alliance - *safe enough provided your class is the leading element in it.* But with Connolly's death there died the working class consciousness that he advocated and his own former comrades in the Trade Unions betrayed his political ideals and that betrayal is visible to this day. They also betrayed his whole political position in the

struggle for Irish freedom, so that when a rising tide of support for the Rising swept the country in 1917-'18 the socialist role was put aside.

By 1918 the vast majority of the people of Ireland were united: not now in a demand for Home Rule, but in a more extreme demand, the demand for an Irish Republic, for full independence from Great Britain; and this demand was popularly associated with the Sinn Fein party of Arthur Griffith which was associated with the Rising in the popular imagination.

In 1918 Sinn Fein swept 79% of the votes in the Westminster election and took 73 out of 105 seats. 26 Unionists and 6 Redmondites were elected. Before what became known as the "Sinn Fein election" there were 80 Redmondite Home Rulers! The 1918 Election showed a clear mandate in Ireland for separation from England and this must be remembered now when arguments about minorities and majorities in the North are considered. Because it was after this clearly-stated desire for national independence that the division of Ireland was created in 1920 in order to abort the wishes of the people, and maintain British power.

The next stage of the Anglo-Irish war was the guerilla war of 1919-'21. People who had been fighting for Britain in the World War of 1914-'18 used their experience against Britain. General Tom Barry, the famous guerilla leader of the era, was in Mesopotamia in the uniform of a British army private when the Rising broke out in 1916. In far away India in 1920 the Connaught Rangers mutinied. Generally the military experience that had been learned from the British was used against them in the 1918-'21 struggle.

By 1920 it was clear to the British that they would have to come to some accommodation with the forces then fighting for the freedom of Ireland. First, they enacted the 1920 Government of Ireland Act (totally ignoring the result of the 1918 Election) setting up the Stormont Government and Six-County regime that we now know, and, in effect, partitioning Ireland, for the first time, (this was confirmed in 1925 after the Boundary Commission had sat to review the position).

Then in the South they went to deal with the leaders of the guerilla war, the nationalist rebellion, and they entered into a Treaty with some of the leadership. The ordinary workers in the cities and country who had fought the battle knew instinctively (not very coherently, as Mellows pointed out) that this was an act of betrayal. Any Treaty that would agree to the Partition of Ireland could not but be an act of betrayal - and they had James Connolly's advice from 1914 when the idea of partition was first mooted; any attempt to partition Ireland, he had pointed out, must be fought with the last drop of blood in Ireland, because, he said, if it succeeds "there will be a carnival of reaction North and South" the likes of which was never seen in this country.

Thus came the Civil War of 1922-'23. The anti-Treaty I.R.A. rose up and Britain rushed in arms to prop up the pro-Treaty faction. The Civil War ended in military defeat for the Republicans and in a counter revolution, with the middle-classes proclaiming that they were the masters in this struggle, and

that any settlement reached would be their settlement on their terms. The middle-classes in the South didn't need the working classes of the North for their own protectionist policies, and the conservative Griffith had won much more than he had ever dreamed of when he started out in political life.

By the end of 1923 there was established in the North under British patronage a Unionist Government; and in the South, a middle-class counter-revolutionary Government firmly entrenched; and a defeated Republican faction led by a mixture of working-class and middle-class elements, where the middle-class elements were again going to win out because of the lack of political awareness of the working class people in that republican section. The Republicans were led by Eamonn De Valera, the man who coined the phrase "Labour must wait" during the 1918 Election.

PART 2

1923 - 1968

One can leap virtually 50 years to 1968 by briefly describing what happened in the North and in the South in the intervening period (1923-'68). What happened in both areas is vital to an understanding of the present situation in the North.

In the North there was the system of Unionism with its institutionalised discrimination on religious, cultural and economic grounds. This institutionalised discrimination was an attempt to make permanent the state of "Ulster" or "Northern Ireland" and it involved the total depression of one third of the people - these were the people who were loyal to a united Ireland.

The real power of the Unionists was summed up in the Special Powers Act of 1923. The Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr. Vorster, is on record as stating that he would swap all his special powers for a single clause of the Special Powers Act of Northern Ireland. And if there are any limitations on his power in South Africa he would be quite right to do so, because the Special Powers Act of 1923 gives the Unionists the power to do anything they wish in their relations with the political minority trapped inside the artificial border created by Britain in the Government of Ireland Act, 1920.

The Unionists have made full use of this Act in the 50 years since its enactment. Their main achievement under the Special Powers Act is that they outlawed the Republican philosophy. The man who stands up and says "I am in favour of a United Ireland" is automatically a criminal and a traitor and he can be held indefinitely by internment without charge or trial or appeal to any legal process.

Internment was used in the North in the 1920's, the 1930's, the 1940's, the 1950's and now again in the 1970's. By this Act, the Unionists turned a third of the community into outlaws. Another good expression of this Act is censorship. This is most relevant because it stopped the half million nationalists trapped inside this border from communicating with and forming common ground with the one million loyalists. Republican publications were banned and there was no traffic in the other direction because of the establishment of the 'B' Specials to control the whole of the state. For example, the "United Irishman" was banned virtually from its foundation, and, as example of British double-thinking, anybody holding a copy of it in the North was subject to prosecution and a 2 year prison sentence under the Special Powers Act, while in Britain it was freely available for sale, distribution or holding with no legal disability attaching to it. But in the North, this censorship served the purpose of stopping communication between the two communities.

Finally, there was gerrymandering in the North. Derry was a very good example. This is a city two thirds Nationalist and one third Unionist. Nevertheless it elected a Corporation which was two thirds Unionist. This is only one of many examples.

The I.R.A. embarked on 2 purely physical force campaigns during this period - one from 1939-45 and the other from 1956 to 1962. Both of which ended in defeat and the near destruction of the I.R.A.

Such was the background in the North which led up to the events of 1968.

Meanwhile in the South, in the same period of 1923 to 1968, there was a very important development, one which has been ignored or forgotten or hasn't been very clearly seen.

The small businessmen who had supported, in turn, Home Rule, the Treaty and finally (from 1937 on) Fianna Fail, were growing up and becoming big businessmen. The small businessmen of the 1920's grew up behind the protection barriers, their businesses getting progressively larger, and as this happened their demands for greater markets grew and they got more confidence.

This was the gravitation in Fianna Fail in the 1920's and 1930's - as the business interests of its supporters and followers grew the demand for the ending of economic protection grew and instead of going in the direction of economic independence, Fianna Fail began to tend increasingly in the direction of economic dependence on Britain. Had they wanted to go in the direction of economic independence their only bastion would have been the ordinary worker. The worker would have to be given control and then he would have had something worth fighting for but Fianna Fail itself, faced with the pressures of its business backers and of outside world markets, had to come to terms with these markets. Therefore instead of going in the direction of economic independence (he was sharply repulsed on this issue in the Land Annuities Campaign of the 1930's) De Valera stood still in economic terms until he left office in 1959, and then very quickly under Sean Lemass the tide began to turn and the direction became total economic dependence. Thus Britain saw a politically hostile Republic (26 Counties) becoming more and more amenable as trade dependence on Britain increased.

There was the very significant 1958 Control of Manufacturers Act which abolished the clause whereby foreign nationals could not own more than 49% of an Irish company. The policy of spending state money on state industries like Bord na Mona, the Electricity Supply Board, Coras Iompar Eireann or the Irish Sugar Company was phased out in favour of spending that money on tax and other incentives to foreign industrialists to come to Ireland.

Indeed, an Ireland where the arrival of a foreign industrialist is not a great occasion is now almost unthinkable. But in the 1930s, foreign control of industry was unthinkable; even in the 1940's it was almost unknown but in the 1950's it became the political premium. The political party that could boast of bribing more foreign industrialists into Ireland that the other got the votes at the elections.

The high-tide of this development was, of course, the 1965 Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement. In the first five years of this Agreement (1966-1971), the 26 Counties, from being Britain's ninth best customer in terms of world trade, has become Britain's third best customer, after West Germany and the United States.

So that from being a hostile Republic, from tending in the direction of economic independence or at least having that capacity in theory, Britain discovered that in the South there had developed a classical neo-colonial situation. This altered Britain's attitude towards Belfast because the message from Dublin to London ran: *"We are now obedient again"*. and London said to Belfast: *"Could you please tone down the grosser forms of discrimination and malpractice in Northern Ireland as the people in the South are naturally aware of these and please try to improve relationships as both North and South are now once more dependant, in their different ways."*

Captain O'Neill, then Premier of the North, responded to this demand of British Imperialism because instinctively or otherwise he realised that the Orange Card had been devalued over 50 years and was more of an embarrassment than a help now that the Southern establishment was no longer hostile to Britain. Orangeism was a vital necessity to Britain in the Ireland of 1921 when the whole island was hostile with the exception of this enclave but since the 1960's this was no longer so. The Orange Card had lost its value and could no longer be played with profit. It had served its purpose. The whole island was amenable to British rule again, and partition could be maintained without any difficulty.

Captain Terence O'Neill ~~sped~~ South and clinked tea-cups with Sean Lemass. Captain O'Neill has been described as - and indeed was - the cleverest of the Unionists and would have extended the Unionist regime for many years more with none of the trouble it now has had they been clever enough to follow his advice. Captain O'Neill realised the new situation but his followers did not.

The Unionist following had been taught to treat the people of the Republic as wanting to annihilate them, push them into the sea, abolish their religion and substitute for it a religion from Rome. These people felt very uneasy when they saw Captain O'Neill speeding South because it was going against all

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their conditioning as sectarian Unionists. Hence the growing presence of the Rev. Ian Paisley on the scene. He represents this feeling of betrayal or distrust in the Unionist majority. This marked the first split in the Unionist monolith and who could blame the people of the North? Captain O'Neill was now drinking tea with the Pope's men in Dublin. So they didn't want to know Captain O'Neill anymore and they had in the Rev. Ian Paisley a man who could articulate their feelings. The difference between Captain O'Neill and the Rev. Ian Paisley was very simple: *Captain O'Neill was a dishonest bigot - he didn't believe in it but he practised and used it; and the Rev. Ian Paisley was an honest bigot.* This sums up the basic difference between the two men, and that is the basic difference between Official Unionism and 'Right Wing' Unionism to this day at that level.

The attempt to come to terms with the new neo-colonial structure in the South for Britain's benefit was the first of O'Neill's troubles; the second had already commenced with the Civil Rights Movement.

PART 3

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT 1968

The Civil Rights Movement made moderate demands - so moderate were they that the people of Dublin regarded them as laughable. They were looking for - *one man, one vote; an end to electoral rigging; and a non-discriminatory points system in housing allocation.* Everyone in Dublin had these rights, and such demands would not cut much ice with a Dublin electorate, particularly in a Dublin that had 10,000 people homeless - despite the existence of a points system for housing allocation.

But in the repressive conditions of the North even these mild demands were dynamite. They could be looked upon as reforms, but it would be a mistake to regard them simply as such. The important thing about reform demands is that it all depends on who is making them - *if conscious revolutionary people are making them, then such demands can be a very serious thing indeed.* The demands themselves were innocuous, but they were necessary in the North, and the important thing about them was not the actual demands but the reaction they drew from the Unionists.

That reaction evidenced itself in the first Civil Rights march in August, 1968, in which 3,000 people marched from Coalisland to Dungannon in County Tyrone. The march marked the unheralded start of the Civil Rights campaign for basic democratic rights in the North, and a second march was organised a few weeks later. The second one was held in Derry, and whereas there were 3,000 in Coalisland, there were only 300 in Derry, because even at this early stage the Civil Rights Movement was drifting into that morass of hopelessness and helplessness that had engulfed every other anti-Unionist movement in the previous fifty years.

It might have vanished off the political scene completely had it not been for Captain O'Neill's Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. William Craig.

Where Captain O'Neill was a clever Unionist, Mr. Craig was an instinctive grass-roots Unionist, a Paisleyite who saw Captain O'Neill's visits to the South as treachery, and who regarded his toleration of Civil Rights marches as weakness. So he ordered the R.U.C. riot squad to attack this small and perfectly peaceful march and as a result of the R.U.C. violence that day (October 5th, 1968) the cause of Civil Rights mushroomed on every television screen in the world.

The overall result was that the next Civil Rights march in November (*which was also held in Derry*) had 30,000 people on it, and this was followed by the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and the pushing of the Civil Rights demands.

It was the continual pushing of these basic demands throughout the spring and summer of 1969 that led not only to the downfall of Captain O'Neill as Prime Minister (*he had almost lost his Bannside seat to Paisley in the February Election*), but to the events of the week of August 12th. The "United Irishman" of that month carried the front page headline "The North Began", an echo of the foundation of the National Volunteers in 1913, and in Derry it did indeed begin.

A civilian population armed only with bricks, bottles and petrol bombs (no firearms were used) drove from the Bogside ghetto (*which had been created by Unionism*) a fully equipped full-time police riot squad, the R.U.C. This population also held off for two days the sectarian 'B' Special quasi-police force despite the use of guns and CS gas.

At this stage the British troops were brought into the area and the people of the Bogside cheered and clapped them, gave them tea and asked them into their houses, because the arrival of the troops signalled the end of their traditional persecutors, the R.U.C. and the 'B' Specials.

Events in Derry were seen overshadowed by August 14th-15th in Belfast, where there was an attempted pogrom that night in which at least 8 people were killed. There were also hundreds of homes burned and thousands had to evacuate their homes. The events generated not only a tremendous fear in the North but created political turmoil in the South, and this led to demands from both sides of the border for the 26 County Army to be sent to the North.

The Civil Rights Movement had now opened up the basic constitutional issue, because the issues agitating the North now also agitated the South. Anything that agitated the whole island was observed in London with some alarm because London had always looked on Ireland as a unit and would naturally respond to this.

A very important point must be made here about Ulster's loyalty to Britain. Captain O'Neill's loyalty to Britain was unconditional, he would do anything that the British Government asked of him, and in fact he did too much in the end and went too fast. But the real Orange Ulsterman has his own definition of Loyalty, and an understanding of this definition will clear up many misconceptions

The definition of the Rev. Ian Paisley (*who now represents at least as many people as Brian Faulkner*) should be listened to with respect: the Ulster Loyalist is loyal not to the British Parliament, he is loyal not to the British Cabinet, but he is loyal to the British Throne as long as a Protestant sits on that throne.

In other words the Ulsterman's loyalty to Britain is conditional - not unconditional. His support for the Union Jack is based on the belief that it secures his prosperity. Remove that illusion and he will fire on the Union Jack as fast as anyone else will. Grasping this concept of conditional loyalty is an important step in understanding the Civil Rights demands and the attitude of the Republican Movement towards the North.

The distrust aroused by Captain O'Neill is personified in Mr. Paisley, in Desmond Boal and in their followers. This distrust has been developed by the twin pressures from Dublin and London, the pressure of Dublin's neo-colonial allegiance to London and the pressure of Civil Rights in the North for the ordinary people there. This dual pressure finally split the Unionists. It also consumed two Prime Ministers in as many years, and has finally consumed the third, Mr. Faulkner.

Mr. Faulkner only maintained his position as Prime Minister for only a year by anticipating the insatiable demands of the Unionist Right Wing. These demands were satisfied temporarily by an ever-increasing degree of repression and brute force.

The first, and, as it turned out, final year of Faulkner's reign was marked by a huge build-up of the British Army presence, the expansion of a variety of official para-military security forces, the reactivation of the Special Powers' Act and internment without trial, the acceptance of Unionist vigilante groups who operate freelance and in independence of the law, and the planned murder of thirteen unarmed civilians in a Derry street after a Civil Rights march. This was the price paid by the non-Unionist population in order to keep Mr. Faulkner from being eaten by his cannibal right wing.

This was the crisis in Unionism. The official Unionist leadership could only remain in power by constantly proving that they were more right wing than the right wing in Parliament, and because every right wing demand had been acceded to. This explains what has happened to the British soldier since he was welcomed with the cups of tea in 1969. The British soldier is now shot and hated in the North. The reason very simply is this: *he has become the replacement of the 'B' Specials and the R.U.C.*

The British ask: "*Can we not stop this violence?*" "*Why shoot soldiers?*" and "*Why shoot them in the back?*" and so on; such arguments have a great effect on British public opinion in particular, help bolster up ignorance about Irish events and lead, ultimately, to an endorsement of Tory policy.

It must therefore be answered and the answer is simply this: On August 15th 1969, the Falls had been cleared of R.U.C. and defended by the I.R.A. against pogrom, and from August 1969 to July 1970 the Falls was a "no-go" area,

to use the description of the Loyalist people and of the British Army. It was an area where the people themselves were in absolute control. There was not a shot fired in that period.

The first shots in the area were fired when the British Army, on the insistence of the Unionist Right-Wing, attacked the Lower Falls in July 1970, to remove the barricades and make the Queen's writ run down these narrow ghetto streets. The battle ended after a fierce night's fighting with four people killed, scores injured and the usual scare stories in the English press.

When the fighting had finished Captain Brooke and Captain Long, of the Unionist Government, sitting in the back of an army lorry, paraded in triumph through the Lower Falls, and both went to Parliament the next day to point out to the Right Wing that nothing had changed - *it was Protestants up and Catholics down once more*. In terms of Unionist politics this had to be done. But the British Army was used as an instrument of this repression where previously the 'B'Specials or the R.U.C. would have been used. Therefore the British Army earned the hatred of the ordinary people in that area and gained for the Republican Movement tremendous support at the time as a very necessary defence organisation against coercion.

One can have a certain sympathy for the average British soldier for this reason; *he might, for example, have been one of the first to have been unemployed on the Clyde and in preference to going down to the Labour Bureau every week with his card, he decided to become a professional soldier*. In Scotland the hoardings are plastered with recruiting posters. So he joins up, is taught how to use a weapon, is put in uniform, is taught about strategy and tactics, is taught to respect his officers.

But there's one person he is not taught how to deal with - *this is the person Mr. Faulkner has described as the "ten-year old terrorist"*. He is not taught how to deal with a ten-year old child, standing at the corner of the street, singing: *"If you hate the British Army clap your hands"*. It is important to understand why this happens. This soldier has never been in Belfast before. He's a 'professional' and he might like a bit of action.

In any part of the Lower Falls, for example, any morning, maybe at 4.30am, the people wake up, not because they cannot sleep but because these young professionals of the British Army are kicking in their front doors. Men, women and children are ordered out. At one end of the street there's a Saracen armoured car blocking the entrance, at the other a Whippet armoured car. The mounted machine guns are trained down the street. There are British soldiers behind the tanks, in the street and in the back-gardens watching anybody trying to escape; *the men are taken apart from the women and children*. Then *the Special Branchman (political police) comes along, picks out four or five men almost at random and they are taken away*.

The ten year old child watching this cannot ask his mother what happened to Daddy or his elder brother because mother is in hysterics and his elder sister is crying or wrestling with the soldiers.

Later that day when the soldiers come round on patrol this little child is standing at the corner of the street clapping his hands and singing: "If you hate the British Army, clap your hands" and throwing stones at them. Doors are closed in the soldiers' faces. Old women spit at them. And this young British soldier is at this kind of work for a week, two weeks, three weeks - he has no relief. He cannot go down to the Cafe and he cannot go down to the public house because if he does the door is kicked in and a revolver is emptied into him.

So the soldier lives on his nerves. As he comes along on patrol he might think he hears a shot, aims at the nearest male target and kills a man. In the North it's the American principle as practised in Vietnam. If you shoot the man dead, he must have been a Viet Cong: if you miss and he's alive, then he's a South Vietnamese citizen on his way to vote for President Thieu.

In this way the soldier is as much a victim of the terror machine created by Unionism and supported by the Tories as is the victim he shoots. Repression has followed repression, violence has followed violence. Further escalation has followed the mass-internment of August 9th 1971, and the level of violence on any day since internment was introduced has not fallen below the pre-internment level. Now the official use of brutality and torture of prisoners has been added.

The people must defend themselves against the soldiers who are the instruments of the terror. They are fighting for their lives because they either win liberties or they go down in defeat for yet another twenty or thirty year period.

In this situation the basic British argument is that violence must be ended first. And so it must, but it is their violence and they must be brought to recognise that they are the violent men in Ireland. THEY are the fundamental cause of all this violence and 99% of the violence used against them (*a violence which can be portrayed as senseless but is an understandable violence in defence of the lives and liberties of innocent people*).

PART 4

TOWARDS A SOLUTION

What is needed to break the present spiral of struggle is this: First - the end of internment. The release of political hostages (*internees and all political prisoners*). The release of prisoners, however, will only restore the status quo position prior to August 9th 1971. If one wants to make political progress in the North, minimal demands must be gained and the second main demand is the ending of the Special Powers Act because it is this Act which epitomises all the repressive powers in existence in Northern Ireland.

Abolition of the Special Powers Act is essential to achieve political

normality in the North. If a man cannot stand up and say "I'm a Republican, I don't like the price of butter, it's too dear", then he cannot be expected to work in a political context with Unionists in Ireland. If that right is established and guaranteed then at last the conditions in which violence and sectarianism can be ended are brought about.

The third minimal demand is that the British troops be prevented from attacking nationalist ghetto areas. This is a very simple and understandable demand. The Civil Rights demand is that British troops be withdrawn to barracks from all areas pending their total withdrawal from the North.

Other political developments could then follow. Immediate local elections, for example.

None of the points outlined above have been affected in the least by Britain's abolition of Stormont. Stormont in its original format had to go but Westminster, instead of passing a Bill of Rights to amend its power and take steps to democratise it, abolished it completely. This was done, because from a British point of view, *the Unionists were unable to guarantee stability any longer in the North.* Hence the need for a new establishment and perhaps a completely new settlement of the "Irish Question" i.e. *one involving some new arrangement between Britain and the two parts of the sundered island.*

Of all the options open to it Britain chose Direct Rule. The action of bringing in Direct Rule was preceded by months of ballyhoo about an "Initiative". When it came it was dramatic enough in the Irish context and, while doing nothing to lessen sectarian tensions, did cause a fundamental re-arrangement of political forces and loyalties. One of the main targets of Direct Rule was the Provisional I.R.A. The policy was to separate them from the bulk of the nationalist population. Direct Rule satisfied the Catholic and Nationalist sector of their supporters and from being active supporters many of these became dormant for a while before emerging in a manner hostile towards the Provisionals through the medium of the "Peace Movement" which was largely organised by the Catholic Church. They had had their victory - *a sectarian faction-fight victory over the Unionists* - and they wanted out. Direct Rule, accompanied by the staged release of internees and a falling off in the hostile activities of the British Army made the Provisional Bombing Campaign stand out more and more in the nationalist community like a sore thumb.

Direct Rule conveniently split the Unionists into two camps. One sought the return of Stormont after its year of prorogation while the other sought full integration with Britain as a reassurance that Unionists would never be abandoned by Britain to a 32 County Republic.

The split in Unionism pinpoints one of the salient features of the British decision to discard the Unionists and bring in Direct Rule. Full integration would have had the same effect on the nationalist minority in the sense that it stands for a victory over their traditional enemies but would also have reassured the Unionists.

Britain choose Direct Rule as distinct from full integration because full integration would have been protested by Dublin whereas Direct Rule was

welcomed. Britain, as ever, watched its own interests in the situation and on this particular issue Westminster was determined to please Dublin where its new agent of continued domination of Ireland - the Fianna Fail Party - holds Government. The Orange Card has been discarded in favour of the Green Card.

In place of Stormont Britain appointed Mr. Whitelaw as "supreme" to govern the North by means of Orders in Council. In his hands are concentrated all the repressive powers which made Stormont anathema to the minority.

To the minority, however, the coming of Whitelaw represented a victory over their traditional enemies, the Orangemen. Whitelaw's coming apparently ended fifty years of discrimination and Orange terror. Many of the minority are foolish enough to think that it was their efforts and not British policy which ended Stormont and substituted Direct Rule instead. But the greater problem created by the advent of Whitelaw is the whole question of the democratic future of the North.

Civil Rights had properly argued for the reform of the democratic system in the North realising that some democratic alternative to Stormont had to be found. The Northern Resistance Movement, on the other hand, guided largely by elements of the People's Democracy, led the blind cry for the abolition of Stormont without proposing an alternative. Following the abolition of Stormont the pseudo-radical Northern Resistance Movement became dormant while the Civil Rights Movement was faced with the problem of convincing its traditional supporters that a democratic system inside the existing Six County area was the revolutionary solution to the problems of the North, particularly that of sectarianism and discrimination.

Many of the followers of the Civil Rights Movement would consider democracy within the Six Counties where loyalists held two thirds of the votes in any contest as an impossibility. A pamphlet written by Robert Heatley and issued by the Belfast Regional Council of the Civil Rights Movement shortly after the fall of Stormont argues forcefully and validly that only the sub-consciously sectarian could rule out the possibility of a democratic system in the existing conditions of the Six Counties. Yet this is precisely the point adopted by John Hume of the S.D.L.P. and the probability is, that because of fifty years experience of Orange rule, a majority of the minority would believe John Hume rather than Civil Rights on this issue. So it is that Whitelaw, as an agent of continuing British rule in Ireland, acting exactly like an ancient Pro-Consul, sits so well in the sectarian division that exists in Northern Ireland.

There can be no doubt that the Civil Rights solution is the only way forward from this impasse that can avoid a Civil War on the one hand or a British inspired Federal Deal on the other. But the dynamic that would make this conversion of the minority possible is lacking at the moment while the memory of the bombing campaign will long prevent response from the working class loyalist.

The first task of progressives, therefore, is not to ask the British to grant a sectarian victory to the minority on grounds of religion but to gain a victory for the whole community on grounds of democracy.

The democratic victory is best gained by securing full civil rights for all and by demanding a Bill of Rights which would reverse the fifty years of blind unqualified support for Unionist hegemony and create the conditions of normal democracy. For Republicans the most significant civil rights demand is that which stresses that it should be as legitimate to work for a united and independent Ireland as it is for the connection with Britain.

Those who argue with bomb and bullet for a united Ireland in the present conditions of the North risk a sectarian civil war which will postpone that day indefinitely. They also misunderstand completely the political position of the ruling Fianna Fail party in the South. Fianna Fail have become the local managers of British imperialism in the 26 Counties and their political prosperity depends as much on the link with Britain as does that of the Unionist party.

To open the road to a tri- or quadri-partite conference for Fianna Fail is to take a side-step back into the British Commonwealth for the whole partitioned island. Fianna Fail's main problem is that its pre-Imperialist leadership has a largely republican following. To date, however, it has been able to disguise that fact very effectively and its enemies and rivals in the Republican Movement have failed to create the mass political consciousness of their position.

While this consciousness is being fostered in the 26 Counties the most realistic and revolutionary role for Republicans is to gain conditions of democracy in the North which will help eradicate the greatest enemy there - not the British Army, but sectarianism and the division of the working-class.

BOUNDARY

B-SPEC

BROOKER

CHURCH
RANDOLPH

CARSON

CONNOR

CURRIE

FALLS

FIANNA

GOVERNMENT
ACT 19

GRIFFIN

HOME

HUME,
IRISH

I.T.G.

I.R.B.

INDEX

- BOUNDARY COMMISSION: Set up in 1925 in accordance with Article 12 of the 1921 Treaty to redraw the Border between the Six County and Twenty Six County States. The intention in 1921 had been that large areas amounting to half the Six Counties would be ceded to the 26 Counties. In the event, the time-lag of four years made it possible to make no change.
- B-SPECIALS: A sectarian part-time para-military force which terrorised the Six County minority for fifty years; abolished in 1970 it was replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment.
- BROOKE, CAPTAIN Prominent sectarian; member of Six County Government since 1971, son of Sir Basil Brooke (Lord Brookeborough), former Prime Minister.
- CHURCHILL, Lord RANDOLPH Crusader against Home Rule in 1886; father of Sir Winston Churchill.
- CARSON, SIR EDWARD Leader of the Ulster Unionists from 1912 onwards.
- CONNOLLY, JAMES Famous Irish socialist writer and activist; executed after Easter Rising 1916.
- CURRIE, AUSTIN Currently member of Parliament (Six Counties) for S.D.L.P.
- FALLS Large Republican ghetto area of Belfast City.
- FIANNA FAIL Government Party in Dublin continuously since 1932 (with 2 three-year breaks); led in turn by De Valera, Lemass and Lynch; from a Republican origin it has become very conservative and right-wing; committed to a policy of subservience to Britain at any cost, and repression of radical forces.
- GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND: ACT 1920 Established Partition and the Stormont (Six County) State.
- GRIFFITH, ARTHUR Principal supporter and signatory on the Irish side for the 1921 Treaty with Britain, largely because he believed British promises about the Boundary Commission. Died 1922.
- HOME RULE The main Parliamentary demand and movement in Ireland from 1870 - 1918, led by Parnell, later by Redmond.
- HUME, JOHN Leading member of S.D.L.P. in Six Counties.
- IRISH CITIZEN ARMY Founded from the Trade Union Movement after the Great Strike of 1913, fought beside the Volunteers in 1916, under Connolly.
- I.T.G.W.U. The largest Irish Trade Union - The Irish Transport and General Workers Union.
- I.R.B. Irish Republican Brotherhood; a secret society which was a continuation of the Fenian Movement of the third quarter of the 19th century; it was largely responsible for the 1916 Rising, since its members controlled the Irish Volunteers.

- LAND LEAGUE Tenant movement led by Parnell and Davitt in the 1880's against the feudal Landlord system in Ireland.
- LAND ANNUITIES CAMPAIGN A struggle (in the early 1930's) between Britain and Ireland on a minor issue of major symbolic importance; it marked the beginning of the end of the republican idea in Fianna Fail.
- LONG, CAPTAIN Minister in successive Unionist Governments in Belfast during the 1960s and 1970s.
- MELLOWES, LIAM Republican Socialist in the Connolly tradition; executed as a reprisal by the Irish Free State Government (pro-Treaty) in 1922.
- MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS. in charge of all aspects of security in the Six Counties.
- NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS: Founded 1913 in Dublin; split in 1914 on the issue of supporting Britain in the Great War; Redmond led the majority to war; the minority, re-named Irish Volunteers, revolted against Britain at Easter 1916.
- N.I.C.R.A. Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association; popularly known as the Civil Rights Association or the C.R.Movement, a peaceful non-sectarian, non-party movement acting mainly through marches, and (since internment, August 1971) through a Rent and Rates Strike. The leading anti-Unionist force in the North.
- ORANGE ORDER The militantly sectarian Protestant body which controls the Unionist Party.
- U.V.F. The Ulster Volunteer Force, an army established by Sir Edward Carson and others in 1912 to guarantee a Protestant Ascendancy in the North-East of Ireland.
- UNIONIST PARTY The Government Party in Stormont (Belfast) without a break from the establishment of the Six County State in 1920 to the imposition of Direct Rule in 1972.
- "UNITED IRISHMAN" The official monthly newspaper of the Republican Movement.

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