The Irish Crisis

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Preface to Second Edition

The fundamental argument of this book may be summarized as follows: There is a clash of interest between English monopoly capitalism on the one hand and the Irish people on the other. This expresses itself in economic, political, constitutional, legal and cultural conflict. The present superior strength of imperialism is expressed in the determining fact of enforced partition. Economically, partition imposes severe disabilities on each part of Ireland, but especially on the part denied political sovereignty, comprising six counties. These disabilities are made to press one-sidedly on the Catholic and Nationalist minority in the north, who are denied civil rights so as to render them politically powerless and encourage them to emigrate. Just as partition in its application to Ireland as a whole prevents the unity of the national forces against imperialist exploitation, so discrimination and the denial of civil rights in the six counties enfeebles both Protestant and Catholic opposition to the political power of Unionism, until there can be found a means of uniting. The result is that partition influences every aspect of the class struggle within Ireland, so that all other issues must be related to it and cannot be understood otherwise.

In virtue of these circumstances English imperialism is *responsible* for the resultant evils, and the British people are of necessity involved. The intervention of the British people against imperialism, on the side of the Irish struggle for national freedom, can destroy the position of imperialist superiority and reverse the balance of forces. This intervention, which must not be understood as an intervention in Irish internal affairs, but as an intervention

against imperialist involvement in Irish internal affairs, must be applied progressively in accordance with the needs of the struggle in Ireland, but can ultimately help to remove the obstacles that have been placed in the way of Irish development. While the course adopted by an independent Ireland is not the direct concern of the British people, historical necessity, and the needs of the situation, must ultimately lead to the establishment of a socialist Ireland. In helping to free the Irish people to solve the problems of their country in their own way, the British people simultaneously change the balance of forces in their own favour in their own country.

The watchword of the Irish people should therefore be *unity*. That of the British people should be *solidarity*– as regards the twenty-six counties directed against intervention, as regards the six for the time being against the *character and content* of the intervention, until the united forces are strong enough to bring it to an end altogether.

The desired position of Irish unity backed by British solidarity from which a successful assault on imperialism can alone be launched remains to be achieved. But it would be mistaken to imagine it an idealist's pipe dream. It seemed quite possible in 1965. The struggle for civil rights was under the leadership of the organized working class, which though not divided on sectarian lines was predominantly Protestant. What imperialism had to fear from it must have been very apparent to the ruling class at the time. Success, even substantial progress, along these lines would not only have menaced the existence of Unionism by destroying its mass base; it would have thrown into disarray the traditional Irish policy of imperialist England. Indeed even her European policy would have been threatened. There are influential forces on both sides of the border bitterly opposed to the attachment of either part of Ireland to the E.E.C., which is being enforced in the one case by political decision, in the other by economic control. Had the movement initiated in 1965

succeeded there would have emerged the important possibility of a joint struggle against inclusion in the E.E.C., and inevitably this struggle would have led to unity on other issues. It was a prospect highly unacceptable to the rulers of England and the leaders of Unionism. It never seriously threatened them. The opportunist bi-partisan policy of the English Labour leaders, the pusillanimity of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and the consequent rise of Paisleyism ensured that.

As a consequence the Catholic community, wearied of endless unfulfilled promises, grew impatient, threw over its moderate leaders and took up a position akin to moral insurrection. The aim of a working class united alike on economic and political issues was not attained. But a battle was lost, not a war. If for the moment the forces against Unionism have fallen into disunity, there still remains the duty of solidarity. This can best be expressed if the British working-class movement, and the Irish community in Britain which is increasingly becoming a part of it, direct their offensive against the main enemy, the enemy which is before them, the reactionary Conservative Government of Edward Heath. They should demand the abandonment of the absurd notion that a problem as complex and deep-rooted as that confronting them in Ireland can be solved without recognizing its fount and origin.

The working-class movement should proclaim a policy in line with its socialist objectives, a policy of withdrawing English interference in Ireland, consulting at every point with the Irish to ensure the minimum disruption. It is of no consequence that such a policy would be attended by difficulties. These would affect its form, not its substance. The effort to enforce elements of that policy upon the Tory Government can form an important ingredient in the struggle to replace a bad government with a better one.

The present position is disastrously expensive. The destruction of property in the six counties runs into mil-

lions of pounds. The tourist industry is in ruins. The tally of death and injury mounts every day. Crumlin Road jail is crammed with prisoners awarded six months' sentences for mere trivialities. A concentration camp is full of untried men. A number of young people are serving severe sentences in English prisons for the offence of being goaded into action by the Government's criminal policy. Is it not time to say halt and reverse? Surely this is not the way the British people wish to go.

The same fundamental argument was stated in a long pamphlet, *The Irish Question and the British People,* which I wrote in 1963 and was published by the Connolly Association in London. To my mind, everything that has happened since then reinforces this argument. This book is based on the earlier pamphlet, and certain parts of it have been repeated virtually unchanged. Yet so much new material has been added, that it has become an entirely new book. In particular, it is brought up to date by the addition of an outline political history of the struggle for civil rights.

I would like to thank those, too numerous to mention individually, who have helped by providing information, and to accept sole responsibility for the opinions expressed. On what may be be termed the strategic question of England's relationship with Ireland, many years' experience has convinced me that there is only one answer. On the tactical questions before the democratic movement, it is not intended to be dogmatic. It is better to attempt tentative conclusions and see how they stand up to experience and controversy than to stand indecisive before the complexity of the world. But it must be clearly stated that no finality is intended. History is scurrying and what seems true one day may seem incorrect or irrelevant the next.

C.D.G.

Liverpool, 30 November 1973

ONE

Partition

On 5 October 1968, the British public saw television shots of fierce encounters in Derry City. A peaceful demonstration was broken up by officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary who used clubs and water-cannon, sparing neither age nor sex. Among those set upon were Members of the Northern Ireland Parliament. The Secretary of the Belfast Trades Council who had addressed the gathering narrowly escaped. Three English Members of Parliament witnessed the attack, which took place in "an integral part of the United Kingdom".

People who thus heard of the struggle for democracy in Northern Ireland could be excused for thinking they saw something new. But they did not. The realities of Northern Ireland had been skilfully hidden from them over half a century. Those who had been following things all the time were not surprised. As certainly as there will be earthquakes and volcanoes where the ground is under stress, so political eruptions recur at lines of social discontinuity. And as for British politics, what was this but old Vesuvius come to life again? The Irish question was active once more.

The Irish question, not the Northern Ireland question. The problem of Northern Ireland was created by British policy towards Ireland as a whole. If the expression "Northern Ireland question" has any meaning at all, it is only in denoting a phase or form of the Irish question. There may of course be the necessity in some future free Irish Republic to consider what special policies are required in different parts of the country. But that will be an internal Irish affair. At present the question of

Northern Ireland and the partition that gave rise to it cannot be an internal Irish question, for Northern Ireland forms part of the United Kingdom. The Irish question is an international question.

What is it then? It is the question of whether the sovereignty of Ireland is of right vested in the people of Ireland or in the English Crown. There are two antagonists, Irish democracy and English autocracy in the various historical forms in which it has evolved, landed, mercantile, industrial and imperialist. These have been at odds these eight hundred years. But England is not its ruling class. What of the English people? At each point in history they have to choose. Will they support those who claim that the English Crown has some right of overlordship in Ireland? Or will they support the Irish people in asserting their independence? That choice has to be made today. And supporting the Irish people does not mean making romantic excursions to Ireland when things look exciting. It means consistently opposing root and branch the imperialist policy of their ruling class, in the place where that policy is determined, and not for the sake of the blueness of Irish eyes, but in their own interests as sensible English people who want their own country freed from expensive, discreditable and unnecessary entanglements.

This choice is of deep significance in English politics. At every stage in the historical struggle, the most advanced representatives of English democracy, from its first emergence in the seventeenth century, have supported Irish freedom. It is only necessary to mention Walwyn, Wilkes, Shelley, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, as examples to which many could be added. The radicals, Chartists, Social Democrats and Communists have in their generation taken the one side. Marx and Engels indeed developed their theory of the national and colonial question principally in relation to the Irish question. And with them and others it demanded an opposition to the whole policy of emerging imperialism.

Within the Labour movement the issue has repeatedly distinguished right from left. "The Labour movement will not tolerate an Irish Republic," boomed the notorious J. H. Thomas. At the conference at Scarborough where he spoke those words, Ernest Cant of the British Socialist Party succeeded in persuading the platform to accept a resolution which virtually recognized that Republic. It was on the Irish question that this great breakthrough of the left was achieved. In 1949, in the debates on the ill-starred Ireland Bill, Herbert Morrison was ranged on the one side, William Gallacher with a handful of left Labour men on the other. These understood that freedom for Ireland is essential for the struggle for socialism in England. Unfortunately the issue is not presented to the English Labour movement in an easily recognizable form. It is curious, and this was noted in the case of Rosa Luxemburg, what little attention the average socialist pays to *state boundaries*. Yet these are just as much the subject of class struggle as state constitutions.

A socialist approach to the national and colonial question must be based on the principle of internationalism which subsumes that of the equality and self-determination of nations. It is hoped that the evidence and argument presented below will suffice for the conclusion that the grievances against which the Civil Rights movement made historic protest arise necessarily from the policies of imperialist capitalism in what has been called "Britain's first colony". They are not merely the product of exceptionally stupid or reactionary local tyrants. The principal means by which the equality and self-determination of the Irish nation is denied is partition. Partition is therefore the central point from which to undertake any study of the Irish question today. Without an understanding of the origin, purpose and consequences of partition, all is confusion. With that understanding all fits logically into place.

Partition was imposed by an Act of the English Parlia-

ment in virtue of the claim of the English Crown to be sovereign in Ireland. Its title, "The Government of Ireland Act, 1920", made clear Parliament's intention to "govern" Ireland. It received the Royal Assent on 23 December. It provided for the establishment of two parallel legislatures in Ireland. One was to make laws for twenty-six counties, the other for six. Their powers were strictly limited, and a number of important matters were expressly excluded from their authority.

Why should the English ruling class wish to continue "governing" Ireland when a majority of its people had expressed their opposition to it? The imperialists had powerful rivals. It would not do if any of these were to gain a lodgement in Ireland, either by treaty or occupation. During one of the Lords' debates on Ireland in the light of the first British application to join E.E.C. the doctrine of the "unity of the British Isles" was mentioned.[1] The strategic argument was probably the most powerful.

But there were strong economic arguments too. Ireland was a vast market for British goods. There was foreign exchange available from the sale of linen and whiskey. There was a cheap and safe source of food supplies, and a seemingly inexhaustible reserve of manpower for industry and the army. There were also aristocratic and feudal elements in the population whose influence was considered advantageous when brought to bear in Britain.

[1] See "Political and Strategic Interests of the United Kingdom" (Royal Institute of International Affairs) pp. 6–8. This doctrine means of course the hegemony of England. Historically the "Pretanic" Islands of Greek geographers included both Britain and Ireland because both were reputedly inhabited by *Picts (Cruithni)*. The word *Britannia* seems to have entered Latin from Gaulish, and is believed to be cognate with *Pretanic*. But the principal inhabitants of the two main islands have not been of one stock in 2,000 years and there is no evidence that the Picts were ever in sole occupation. Contrary to what every English schoolboy believes, the term "British Isles" confers no historical right of hegemony on England.

So much for general considerations. But there was a special one which conditioned the particular decision at the particular time. Partition was aimed at stifling a revolution that was in progress in Ireland and raising an insurmountable barrier in the path of another. It was of a piece with the almost contemporaneous settlements of Versailles and Washington.[2] It was of a piece with the whole course of foreign policy pursued by English imperialism to the present day, the counter-revolutionary consolidation of the "west" against the Soviets and the world national liberation front. And the Irish sector was doubly important from its proximity. If the Irish revolution had triggered off another in Britain, the game was up.

The Government of Ireland Act was taken through its stages during a reign of unexampled terror in Ireland. The purpose of the terror was to compel the Irish people to give up their allegiance to the revolutionary Government, *Dáil Eireann*, which they had established in January 1919. The Act came into force on an "appointed day", namely 3 May 1921. Two separate General Elections, one in twenty-six counties, the other in six, were immediately announced. The six county election took place. That in the twenty-six was so thoroughly boycotted that it was recognized that the Government of Ireland Act could not be made to work in the greater part of Ireland. The English Government then entered into separate discussions with the leaders of the Irish people, forced a section of them to accept a compromise under threat of a resumption of hostilities, and insisted on its performance even though it led to a disastrous civil war.

There were now two Governments in Ireland, but they were no longer parallel. Some have held that their differences were unimportant since both were creations of Lloyd George. Others have taken the opposite view,

[2] It is a matter of interest that the Boundary Clause in the Anglo-Irish "Treaty" of 1921 was drafted on Article 110 of the Treaty of Versailles.

namely that the twenty-six counties now had complete national independence. But in fact both were the result of a struggle, and in the actual position reached imperialism had yielded substantially more to the twenty-six than to the six counties. A comparison of constitutions illustrates this. The twenty-six county state, *Sáorstat Eireann*[3] as it was called until 1937, enjoyed the status of a Dominion of the English Crown. It suffered limitations of sovereignty, but these were removed subsequently by unilateral action. Its freedom was more strongly limited by economic circumstances. By contrast the six counties of "Northern Ireland" were completely subordinate to London, and not one line in the instrument defining their relation with England was ever revised except by the Westminster Parliament. This matter will be discussed later.

For the moment let us concentrate on the immediate effect of the partition of Ireland. The total population of Ireland according to the 1911 census was 4,390,219. This figure probably corresponds more closely to that of 1920 than does that of the census taken in 1926. Of this total of nearly four and a half million, only 1,250,531 lived in the six counties. The population of the twenty-six was 3,139,688, more than twice the number. But by ukase of the English Government the majority of the Irish nation retained its rights as a majority only in part of the country. In the remainder they were handed over to a minority.

To put the matter another way, there were political differences among Irish people consequent on the whole trend of English policy in the past. Some were prepared to accept incorporation in the United Kingdom, while others regarded it as an extreme evil. England could not rely on the support of a majority if the country formed one political unit. The opponents of English overlordship must therefore be excluded from part of the country, so that in this part the minority might function as a majority. The two states thus created were of grossly unequal size, but

[3] In English "Irish Free State".

they were then treated as possessing equal weight. That is to say the minority was given a power of veto on the unity of Ireland.

What is this but the principle of the gerrymander, later so effectively used in Derry and elsewhere? For whenever the Irish people insisted that they, and not the English Government, were entitled to draw any lines within Ireland that needed to be drawn, they were presented with the factitious statelet, totally subordinate in reality, but seemingly independent of the hidden ventriloquist that spoke for it in the words, "Ulster must not be coerced." There is coercion and coercion, of course. For when did any English Premier renounce the right to coerce minorities? Why is what is right for England, or indeed for the majority within the six counties, wrong and vicious for the Irish nation as a whole? Such an opinion can only rest on the claim of the English Crown to sovereignty in Ireland. We are back where we started.

There is a further matter. Of the population included in the six counties, one third would have preferred to be incorporated with the majority. They were members of the majority who by virtue of the geographical location chosen for the frontier by the English Parliament found themselves cut off and subjected to the minority. They inhabited the two counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone, where, as in Derry City, they constituted the majority, as well as southwest Derry, south Down, south Armagh, about a quarter of Belfast and the northeast corner of Antrim. Members of their community were sprinkled and dispersed throughout the remaining territory. For historical reasons they were for the most part, though by no means exclusively, adherents of the Catholic faith, which like the Star of David in Nazi Germany became the mark of the inferior citizen. Their situation can be no better described than in the words of the author of partition, Mr. David Lloyd George:[4]

[4] *Hansard*, 14 December 1921.

"The majority of the people of two counties prefer being with their southern neighbours to being in the northern Parliament... if Ulster is to remain a separate community only by means of coercion can you keep them there."

He deplored such coercion, though he was not prepared to coerce its perpetrators, to take away from the wolf the lamb he had thrown to it.

This situation is the basis of politics in the six counties. Reasons will shortly be given for believing that partition has had adverse economic effects. The magnitude of the disruption it occasions is too great for compensation. For the moment let it be noted that any attempt to raise the question of civil liberties in the six counties in the way usual in England comes up at once against the denial to the minority not merely of their right to belong with the majority, but of their rights as part of the majority of the nation as a whole.

This section within the six counties, mainly Catholic, may be called the Nationalist minority, those who would prefer to be part of an independent Ireland, those who do not recognize the English right of overlordship. Where are they to look for succour? Hardly to their own strength alone. As a part of the majority of the Irish nation they fit naturally into comprehensible communities. Placed in an artificial minority the basis of their coherence is destroyed. What is there in common between a Belfast docker and a Co. Tyrone hill farmer? Yet the first has his counterpart in the Dublin docker—whether he believes in a United Ireland or not he will belong to the same trade union as many in his own trade in Dublin. And the second could move over the border to Co. Donegal or Co. Monaghan and find substantially the same way of life.

Their lack of homogeneity, except for the accident of religion accounts for the bewildering complexity of the political organization of the Nationalists, the constant

appearance of fresh organizations, the repeated reversals of policy. In this group of communities the main element of stability has in general been the bourgeoisie which does not enjoy great wealth and is therefore not distant from the people. There are signs that recent events may be transferring this responsibility to the working class. Even so the development of strong political antagonisms based on class is discouraged by the common position of subjection in which all Nationalists find themselves.

To the problem of leadership corresponds the problem of allies. The bourgeoisie traditionally looked to parliamentary action at Belfast and London, resting its hopes mainly on liberal elements. To some measure it hoped for diplomatic intervention by Dublin. It has usually been prepared to offer imperialism a modest *quid pro quo*. By contrast the workers have sometimes, especially in Belfast, effected a junction with sections of the Protestant working class; this has seldom passed beyond economic and industrial issues, but Protestant workers have voted for Catholic candidates on class grounds. The various intermediate strata have produced many plans, but by far the strongest petit-bourgeois influence has been that of republicanism which has at times favoured military intervention across the border, at other times forms of civil disobedience in its broadest sense, and at times mass agitation in alliance with other sections.

Such then are the immediate social and political problems posed by partition. They arise from two facts. First the majority of the Irish people has been deprived of its rights as a majority. The ending of the border is thus a *democratic* question. Second the placing of a part of the majority under the rule of the minority has created a special problem. Here there is a twofold necessity, first the establishment of a position of equality within the partitioned area, and second the restoration of majority rights.

These questions will be examined in greater detail

below. But the conclusion emerges at once. The situation was created by the ruling class of England. Those who must unmake it are the working class of England. They have the power, if they use it. And when they do so they will free forces in Ireland that will bring powerful support to their own cause.

TWO

What Is the Law?

Every citizen is presumed to know the law. But what is the law? It is congealed politics, and where there is irreconcilable political conflict it reveals antinomy. This is illustrated in the opposition of the laws of Ireland and England.

Article II of the Constitution of the Irish Republic[1] states that

> "The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and territorial seas."

But Article III recognizes a *de facto* limitation in that the Dublin Government does not govern six counties in the northeast.

> "Pending the reintegration of the National territory, and without prejudice to the right of the Parliament and Government established by this constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of that territory, the laws enacted by that Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of *Sáorstat Eireann* and the like extra-territorial effect."

Thus we have *de jure* all Ireland owing allegiance to the Parliament in Dublin, as the only constituted expression of the will of the Irish people, and *de facto* the inoperability of this principle in an excluded area.

The constitution was adopted by referendum in twenty-six counties in the year 1937. What right had the people of one state in Ireland to adopt a constitution for those

[1] *Bunreacht na hEireann*, p. 4.

in the jurisdiction of another, even though they were kind enough to refrain from attempting to implement it? Surely, the plain man will think, this was a propaganda exercise, an ingenious subtlety from the fertile brain of Mr. De Valera.

Subtle or not subtle, however, Mr. De Valera had excellent precedents. For under the terms of the Free State Agreement Act, the Provisional Government had been authorized in 1922 to draft a constitution for the Irish Free State, which was established on December 7 of that year. Those who drafted this constitution never exercised jurisdiction in the six northeastern counties, not for a single day. Yet it was provided by Westminster that if before the expiry of a month from that date an address was presented to the King of England by both houses of the Parliament of Northern Ireland, the powers of the Parliament and Government of the Irish Free State would *no longer* extend to Northern Ireland.[2] Thus when the law is unfrozen we see politics.

It might be argued that the powers exercised in Northern Ireland by the Government of the Irish Free State were a legal fiction designed to secure acquiescence in the partition of the country, and in any case derived along with the Provisional Government from the English Crown. That might be, but in that case they were extinguished in 1922.[3] Clearly Mr. De Valera was reviving the claim of the revolutionary *Dáil Eireann*, something quite independent of English law. So we are led further back–to the actual conflict of 1919–21, to the bones of the Irish question.

The Republic is thus forced to define the area of its actual jurisdiction in terms of the British Government of Ireland Act, and the partition of the country enforced by that Act. This arises not from will, but from the necessity

[2] See Kohn, *Constitution of the Irish Free State*, p. 415.

[3] Subject to a Boundary Commission, the subject of a separate agreement in 1925.

of external compulsion. Nevertheless attempts have been made to place the responsibility for partition on Irish shoulders, and even to pretend that such responsibility is admitted.

Mr. F. H. Newark[4] refers to the delegation sent by *Dáil Eireann* to negotiate with the British Government in 1921. The delegates signed articles of agreement which they knew might have the effect of restricting the jurisdiction of the projected *Sáorstat Eireann* to the territory of "Southern Ireland" as defined in the 1920 Act. But no impartial judge could possibly regard this agreement as voluntary.

First it took place six months *after* Northern Ireland had begun to function as a separate jurisdiction. Partition cannot therefore have been initiated by the articles of agreement. At most the Irish delegation can have accepted a *fait accompli.* Second, the delegation was widely held in Ireland to have exceeded its powers. Third, it was not unanimous. Fourth, those of its members who signed despite their dissent did so on the explicit threat of Mr. Lloyd George of what he called "immediate and terrible war". And finally, they were assured that partition would be of only temporary duration.

There is therefore no escape. The origin of partition and the phase of Anglo-Irish relations that opened with it, is the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. The British Government abandoned the attempt to operate this Act in the territory defined in it as "Southern Ireland" (afterwards the *Sáorstat* and *de facto* territory of the Republic) but was successful in operating it in six northeastern counties. Successive governments of the Republic have refused to accept this arrangement, and in particular have avoided all international commitments liable to involve diplomatic recognition of the six county Government. Hence the policy of more or less strict non-alignment and

[4] *Ulster under Home Rule*, Oxford 1955, p. 28.

refusal of participation in N.A.T.O. Hence also some of the difficulties hedging round the question of the entry of the Republic into E.E.C.

Rejecting the Dublin claim to the six counties, British law on the other hand holds that the status of Northern Ireland under the Government of Ireland Act was not affected by changes taking place in the area defined as Southern Ireland. In other words, what Dublin accepted *de facto* was the *de jure* position. This view was of course shared by the Government in Northern Ireland, though it found it convenient for its own purposes to surround the subject with a certain fog.

All therefore meet at one point. Whether by law or merely in fact, according to one's viewpoint, the constitution of Northern Ireland is the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, subject to later amendments.[5] An examination of the contents of the Act disposes at once of any illusions about autonomy, such as are sometimes loosely claimed by those anxious to invest partition with a popular sanction.

The head of state is the Queen of England, represented by a Governor, who has the power to withhold assent from legislation, which then becomes void. The bicameral legislature at Stormont, Belfast, has strictly limited powers which confer nothing resembling sovereignty. It is debarred from legislating on the following "excepted matters", namely, the Crown, peace and war, the armed forces, treaties with foreign states, treason, naturalization, trade with any place outside Northern Ireland, radio, air-navigation, lighthouses, coinage, weights and measures, copyright and patents. It is also forbidden to legislate upon certain "reserved matters" which might under the Government of Ireland Act as originally envisaged, at some future date have been transferred to a united Ireland. Whether this was ever seriously contemplated is a matter for historians to debate.

[5] The Northern Ireland Constitution Act, 1973 amends but does not repeal the 1920 Act.

It did not happen.[6] Consequently Northern Ireland has lacked control of the Post Office, savings banks, and about 90 per cent of its own taxation.

Lest there be any lingering doubts as to how matters stand, Article 75 of the Government of Ireland Act reads:

> "Notwithstanding the establishment of the Parliament of Northern Ireland, or anything contained in this Act, the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things in Northern Ireland and every part thereof."

In the face of such a provision in the constituent Act it would seem difficult to claim that Northern Ireland possessed anything resembling autonomy. Many would say that here is the definition of a puppet state if ever there was one, especially when it is noted that while the six county Government was excluded from raising an army, English troops continued to garrison the towns that they had occupied for centuries. Yet intellects are found daring enough for the most challenging feats, and during the past few years there have been periodical threats of a "unilateral declaration of independence".

Under the Act the Northern Ireland Government exercised certain transferred powers which include such matters as justice (including the police), agriculture, land purchase, housing, etc. which bore very directly on the daily lives of the citizens and consequently distracted attention from the imperial framework without which they could not operate.

They derive solely from the constituent Act and could be withdrawn at any time, while Sections 6 and 75 reserve the right to override them if necessary.

It may therefore well be asked what was the reason

[6] In May 1916 Lloyd George wrote to Edward Carson, "We must make it clear that Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge with the rest of Ireland."

for the reluctance of the Westminster Parliament to legislate for the relief of the immediate grievances of the Nationalist population. It is difficult to see any motive other than an unwillingness to begin a process which might end in the complete revision of the 1920–22 settlement, that is to say the reunification of Ireland.

This reluctance was embodied in curious institutional forms. It was a "convention" of the Westminster Parliament that its twelve members for Northern Ireland constituencies were precluded from asking questions upon matters affecting their own constituents, if these matters fell within the competence of the subordinate Government. This Convention had some ludicrous consequences, including debates where more time was spent deciding what could be debated than in debating it.

This principle encouraged loose-thinking theorists and Unionist publicists within the six counties to invoke a supposititious "federal" constitution for the United Kingdom, or even to assert an "effective autonomy". Thus the Unionists traditionally made great play of the position of Northern Ireland as an "integral part of the United Kingdom". Their problem was to retain the advantages of this and avoid the disadvantages, which were spirited away by invoking a "federal" constitution in the United Kingdom as a whole. To foster a belief in its federal status would no doubt assist in investing the Northern Ireland Constitution with something of the sacredness of "states' rights" in the U.S.A.

But the United Kingdom was never a federation. Northern Ireland sends twelve members to the Westminster Parliament who vote as freely as any Londoner or Liverpudlian on purely English matters which the Westminster M.P.s have found great difficulty in even discussing when they related to Northern Ireland because they were "transferred". This is a kind of "one-way federation" in which Tory votes count in London but Labour votes do not affect Northern Ireland.

Generations of Unionist apologists have laboured hard to create a public impression that the "transferred powers" confer autonomy on the six counties. If so, then they are magical powers. In hope of sustaining this argument it was suggested that Section 75 is a dead letter, because it had never been invoked. Some wide-ranging legal minds have sought its fellow in the "British North America Act" which is still on the Statute Book but cannot be enforced.

To compare a historically defunct Act with one emergency clause in an Act of which most of the remainder is in daily operation is of course ludicrous. In fact Section 75 is as alive as it ever was. But its virtue is in protecting the operation of the remainder, that is to say in strengthening the hands of the Unionists, not restraining them. Mr. Newark has no illusions on this subject. "This saving of supreme authority is an 'iron ration' of legislative power which remains on the Statute Book to be used in an emergency." Some of the Unionist apologists who believed that forty years' disuse would rust a provision out of a British Statute, while the power to operate it remained, have reason to hope that they do not suffer the surprise poor Casement got when he was hanged on the Treason Act of 1351.

Not surprisingly, little has been heard of this doctrine since the events of 1969. But there may yet be attempts to revive it. Deader dogs have been resurrected.

The view was sometimes expressed that the Ireland Act of 1949 negates the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 by conferring some kind of extra autonomy on Northern Ireland. Nothing could be further from the truth. The 1949 Act confirmed and strengthened the 1920 Act by providing that without the consent of the Northern Ireland Parliament the six counties "shall not cease to form part of His Majesty's Dominions". But it conferred no right of secession whatsoever. If a Parliament of Northern Ireland had been returned with a Nationalist majority and thereupon prepared for withdrawal from Her

Majesty's Dominions, either by setting up as a Republic or by joining an existing one, such legislation would be *ultra vires* and of no effect. Then we would see what Section 75 meant in practice, as indeed we saw in 1972.

It should also be noted that if the twenty-six counties had rejoined the Commonwealth and thereby become once more a part of Her Majesty's Dominions, the Ireland Act, 1949, would virtually disappear. The Unionist might note therefore that imperialism's cupboard love for its Ulster concubine only appeared when its Leinster wife left it. A restoration of marital relations could put things back where they were and Parliament could vote Northern Ireland into a 32-county republic without by-your-leave.

It is difficult however to regard the Ireland Act, 1949, as more than a declaration of policy, perhaps a product of Mr. Herbert Morrison's bad temper. For no Parliament can bind a successor, not even under the Treaty of Rome, in connection with which another "convention" seems to be in the making, and while the Westminster Parliament controls "every person, matter and thing" it is in a position to undertake whatever legislation it thinks it can enforce, including if necessary a Bill to restore the unity of Ireland by handing over the six counties to the Republic, as Newfoundland was handed to Canada or Heligoland to Germany. The Parliament of the Republic would however stand in a different position altogether. It would have the right to decide whether to accept the six counties and to bargain over the conditions of transfer.

For many years the British public was allowed to believe that Northern Ireland was attached to England by nothing more durable than the free consent of a majority of its inhabitants. But let us suppose that some Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, whether Nationalist or ultra-Unionist, decided on a unilateral declaration of independence. This would have to be embodied in a secession Bill at Stormont. Since such legislation would be *ultra vires* it would be the duty of the Speaker not to

permit its discussion. But if he did and it was accepted, then the Governor General must "reserve" it, and it must remain in suspense pending a decision at Westminster. The Westminster Parliament could of course pass an Act enabling the Northern Ireland Government to secede. But if an attempt were made to operate a secession Act without the Royal Assent, those making it would have to take note that the armed forces were entirely under Westminster control, and that control of these, plus those of air-navigation, radio, relations with foreign states, most of the taxation and the Post Office confers no mean power.

Only once did the Governor refuse assent to a Bill of the Northern Ireland Parliament. This was the Local Government Bill of 1922. His decision, taken on instructions from Whitehall, drew a storm of protest, "We must be masters in our own house," declared the Unionists. But this was no declaration of independence. The first section of the Act abolished proportional representation, which had been retained in the Government of Ireland Act as a protection for the Nationalist minority. The second section gave the Minister power to alter the boundaries and numbers of local electoral divisions. Gerrymandering was born.

These changes had some bearing on the question of religious discrimination since the boundaries were redrawn with direct reference to the religion of the electors. Such legislation was prohibited under the Constituent Act. The British Government had every sympathy with the Ulster Unionists, but had to decide whether to go back on solemn assurances at a time when this might easily influence to its detriment events shaping in the *Sáorstat* south of the border. The balance taken, conscience was muffled. But instead of a brave defiance of the mighty British Empire by brave little Ulster what took place was a shabby arrangement among Conservatives to eliminate their political opponents from local government.

The reason why the saving powers of the British Government were not used is therefore that Northern Ireland (under Unionist government since 1920) never showed the slightest disposition to challenge Unionism at Westminster.

The Stormont Government was *subordinate* not federal in status, and differed from the Yorkshire County Council only in the multiplicity of its trappings and having a smaller population to pay for them. This reality is impressively revealed by the financial relations which subsisted and still subsist between Northern Ireland and Westminster.

The powers of taxation enjoyed by Stormont were very limited and effected the raising of only 10 per cent of the Northern Ireland revenue. On this subject the Isles and Cuthbert[7] Report remarks that these powers were too small to make much difference to the range or scale of industrial development, partly because the main revenue-raising taxes are reserved to Westminster, and also because of restrictions imposed on the character of transferred taxation by the Government of Ireland Act.

The reserved taxes, collected by Westminster, include income tax, customs and excise, and the various profits taxes. The level of such taxation is decided at Westminster and the Northern Ireland Government has no power to vary its incidence. Among the considerations a British Chancellor of the Exchequer would no doubt have in mind when framing his Budget would be the economic problems of his Tory friends in Belfast.

But they would scarcely be foremost. Thus one "credit squeeze" after another selected Northern Ireland for its direst effects, without convincing Westminster of the need for making exceptions, still less stinging Stormont to defy Westminster and dare them on Section 75.

Revenue from transferred taxation is applied directly to

[7] *An economic survey of Northern Ireland*, H.M.S.O., 1957.

transferred services. That is to say the money does not leave Northern Ireland. But it is clear that there must also be some return of the reserved taxation taken to Britain. This was effected by means of the Joint Exchequer Board, through which Westminster can exercise minute control and supervision over Northern Ireland policy. It is known for example that the Treasury was the obstacle to Northern Ireland's going into the beet sugar business in the period before the Cuban crisis because under existing international agreements the United Kingdom as a whole was permitted no further expansion.

When the Joint Exchequer Board concluded its deliberations, the whole of the reserved taxation was returned to Northern Ireland in instalments, less a provisionally agreed sum, known as the Imperial Contribution. This is nominally Northern Ireland's share of such imperial expenditure as the Crown, defence, foreign embassies, etc. The Imperial Contribution never leaves Westminster. Those who sometimes pronounced airily that Stormont should "withhold" it, in the event of some dispute with the British Government, failed to appreciate the mechanism by which it is taken. It cannot be "withheld" because it is never held. The Northern Ireland Budget was presented in May in order that the effect of the British Budget can be estimated first.

At this stage we need not concern ourselves with the amounts of the various items determined by the Joint Exchequer Board. What is important is the principle that Treasury control was exercised over practically the whole public finances of the six counties, and thereby indirectly over the entire economic life of the area. Control continued through the medium of joint consultations at about fortnightly intervals throughout the fiscal year.

In sum, the Westminster Parliament established Northern Ireland by coercion of the majority of the Irish people, decided and fixed the powers of its Parliament and Government, while reserving its own ultimate

supremacy, and insisted on checking and supervising practically all its business activities. It can therefore in no way escape responsibility for what happens in the part of Ireland under its control. The key to understanding the Irish question is to be found in London.

THREE

The Shape of Neo-Colonialism

Everybody who has ever spoken on a public platform in the interest of a united Ireland is familiar with the questioner who asks why the six counties should amalgamate with the twenty-six when these are patently so badly off.

The question is based on fallacies of both fact and principle. The twenty-six counties are conducted according to the capitalist system. The disadvantages of this system are well known and are reproduced with additions to be considered later. As capitalist societies go, however, the twenty-six county Republic is by no means the worst. It enjoys a stability which is obviously not one of the features of the six county area.

But the fallacy of principle takes us much further than that of fact. The questioner who points his finger at the south is making an unconscious assumption. That assumption is that the conflict of English and Irish sovereignties expresses itself directly in an English state and an Irish state. But as we have seen it does not. The presence of the two states arises from English dictation. The twenty-six counties are as much subject to coercion as the six as far as boundaries are concerned, and it is impossible to approach the economic life of the Republic without reference to partition. The two contending principles are thus not the two states, but the principle of English overlordship which gave *partition*, and that of Irish Independence which gave the *existence* of an independent Irish State. The contradiction is unresolved and the struggle goes on.

The justice of this argument is evidenced by the history

of partition. Even after the Union of 1801, Ireland could not be joined to the Crown of England in the same way as Scotland and Wales. These two countries had been attached to England by the consent of ruling classes which, if not popular, were acceptable to the people. The subsequent stirrings of national revolt may be broadly assimilated to what is often termed the "national question".

By contrast Ireland was sold to England in 1800 by a class of landlords alien in culture, language and religion, who possessed not a vestige of moral authority among the mass of the people. The result was a colony–not of the classical English form, but rather after the style of Algeria, nominally part of a United Kingdom, but in practice governed on distinct principles.

There were of course a number of strong reasons why Ireland proved impossible to assimilate. A separate large island naturally developed an indigenous economy with sharp market boundaries. The invaders had been distinct in language and, during the decisive times, in religion also. Not only did they come as robbers, they implanted a system of land ownership which was totally abhorrent in a country where pre-feudal society attained exceptional economic and cultural development, and where principles derived from primitive communism were incorporated in well remembered laws and customs.

It was in the early eighties that Gladstone realized that the legislative Union was doomed. Ireland could not be governed in this way. A sustained agrarian agitation was compelling the Government to sacrifice its economic garrison class, the landlords. It was necessary to create a bourgeois garrison. This was the purpose of the three Home Rule Bills of 1886, 1893 and 1912.

The issue of partition arose practically only in relation to the third of these. But it had been proposed earlier. It is said that Labouchère acted as an intermediary between Joseph Chamberlain and Parnell, taking to the Irish

leader proposals for "annexing the area around Belfast to England". Possibly from the Tory friends with whom he flirted when opposing the Liberals, H. M. Hyndman took up the slogan "Home Rule within Home Rule" in an issue of *Justice*. But first let it be remembered that no such demands were voiced in Belfast. And even in England, partition was not proposed on its merits but as a means of wrecking Home Rule and preserving the Union unchanged. It was felt that the Irish people would probably prefer not to have Home Rule at all to having it with partition. As late as 1916 the Irish T.U.C. declared that they would be prepared to wait fifty years for Home Rule rather than lose six counties.

Later, partition became accepted as imperialism's next line of defence against advancing Irish nationalism, and a serious objective of English policy even if nobody in Ireland desired it.

It was at this point that the myth of the "two Irish nations" was invented. W. F. Moneypenny, *Times* correspondent in Ireland, and biographer of Disraeli, developed this theory in a book of the title in 1912. "The Home Rule struggle is a struggle between two nations, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic, or, as, to avoid even the semblance of ministering to religious bigotry, they had better perhaps be called, the Unionist and the Nationalist."[1] But it would seem they were nations in a somewhat Pickwickian[2] sense. "Both nations," he warned,[3] "are essentially Irish . . . there is at bottom a common ground of sympathy and intelligence . . . in the very depths of their antagonism there is something essentially Irish." He concluded that one "sorrowful" cause of division had been the revival of Home Rule agitation since 1909. In other words, if the Irish remained within the United Kingdom they were one nation, if they tried to get out of it they were two.

[1] W. F. Moneypenny, *The Two Irish Nations*, p. 17.
[2] Or Disraelian.
[3] ibid., p. 15.

Of the third Home Rule Bill, the partition bill, it was said that it had not a friend in Ireland. The bluster and the rodomontade of the Carsonites was not aimed at separating a part of Ireland from the remainder, but at retaining the whole within the United Kingdom. It was in England that the desirability of partition was increasingly argued, as a means of maintaining control of Ireland when something far more formidable than a land agitation threatened the Union. One would have thought, if there was any section in Ireland desirous of partition, that Lord Carson would have pronounced himself satisfied. Let him speak for himself:

> "What a fool I was! I was only a puppet, and so was Ulster, and so was Ireland, in the political game that was to get the Conservative party into power."[4]

What Carson had glimpsed and expressed in limited Parliamentary terms, in the bitterness of his disillusionment, was that imperialism had no loyalty to any class or section in Ireland, and the English Government had acted solely in accordance with what it conceived to be imperialist interests. It was axiomatic that Ireland must be ruled by England. It could not be done with the aid of the landlords. The bourgeoisie were divided, so it could not be done through them. So one part of Ireland got Home Rule which it did not want; the other was denied the Republic it had fought for. Irish interests did not come into the matter.

What came into existence by the settlements of 1920–22 was a new system of controlling Irish destinies, a partition system. The situation in the twenty-six counties is just as much a part of that system as that in the six. But that does not mean that the governments have equal status. In the case of the six counties the chickens were in the battery. In the case of the twenty-six they must still flock round

[4] Montgomery Hyde, *Carson*, p. 465.

when the farmer's wife waved her apron. There are more ways than one of domesticating an animal; there is holding the animal, and holding its means of life.

The working of the partition system in the six counties will be dealt with in detail in later chapters. This is the part of Ireland for which the English Government is legally responsible. But it is necessary to show evidence of the effect of partition in the Republic, in order to show the irrelevancy of the present economic and political situation in the twenty-six counties as an argument for partition. It is not merely a matter of putting two acreages of land together, but of making possible a social transformation impossible in a divided country.

If the state of the six counties remains fundamentally colonial that of the twenty-six is classically "neo-colonial". That is to say that while the old colonial Government has been replaced by a Government based on native interests, those upholding these interests are content to work the old colonial system subject to certain reforms necessary for its preservation. And the class struggle proceeds between those anxious to reform and replace the system and those willing or anxious to preserve it, different classes not necessarily preserving their accustomed roles throughout.

The settlement of 1921, incorporated in the Free State Agreement Act and the Free State Constitution Act, gave the twenty-six counties a degree of independence nominally based on dominion status. Certain derogations from complete national sovereignty were set out. There was an oath of allegiance to the English King obligatory on members of the legislature. This was held to signify common citizenship with the inhabitants of England. Two naval bases were granted. Under the financial settlement "land annuities" (state mortgage payments incurred as a result of land purchase) were payable to the English exchequer. There was appeal to the Privy Council, and nominally the Governor General could reserve legislation.

So much was explicit. But much more was implicit. The

principle of common citizenship was effective in ensuring the free movement of capital and labour between the two countries. This was a matter of enormous importance, for there was no partition for the banks which continued to operate on an all-Ireland scale.

More still, there was the programme of the revolutionary *Dáil Eireann*, which it must be admitted had been postponed, but now must be abandoned. Instead of the clean break with English law which was the intention of Republicans, the whole preceding body of English law was taken over, together with civil service and judicature. The starting point was not a clean sweep, but the institutions and interests existing in 1922, some of which to be sure had been affected by the struggles of the revolutionary years, but only to a limited extent.

The founders of the Irish Free State were men of petit-bourgeois origin, who out of fear of its ultimate logic allowed themselves to become the agency of halting a popular revolution, thus handing power to the bourgeoisie. It is possible to sympathize with them even in this inglorious role. Imperialism blocked the only path to national freedom that they could understand and accept. They must fight a civil war to impose the compromise they had made. They were therefore friends of nobody. They must build a viable economy after losing 29 per cent of the population and 40 per cent of the taxable capacity of the country, as well as the main industrial area and the largest city, Belfast, a port through which passed 33·3 per cent of the national trade. And they were inhibited from taking vigorous measures. The teeth of the bourgeoisie were still chattering. This class had more national independence than it felt brave enough to use. Apart from the beginnings of an infrastructure, the famous Shannon electrification scheme, and attempts to broaden the interpretation of "dominion status", they were able to achieve little. The Government at Westminster, busy consolidating its position elsewhere, neither encouraged nor discouraged,

helped nor hindered, possibly hoping that time would teach the futility of exercises in self-government, and the rebels would come back to beg re-admission into the fold.

It would be unfair to brand the first post-Treaty Government as totally reactionary, as it attempted these timid reforms. At the same time it is quite clear that only limited progress could be made without re-awakening some of the spirit of the revolution. To achieve this even to a limited degree it was necessary for the defeated party in the civil war to reconcile itself to bourgeois rule, and thus harness the energies of the masses to winning such concessions as were possible within its limitations. Thus arose the paradox that Arthur Griffith's Ireland could only be built by his radical opponent De Valera.

During the thirties the infrastructure was greatly expanded. State enterprises produced turf, electricity and beet sugar; there were established state shipping and insurance services and a Central Bank. Simultaneously a number of consumption goods industries were built up behind protective tariffs. Rural housing was provided on an unprecedented scale; farm electrification was pushed rapidly ahead. The weakness remained however that without an adequate industrial base (and this had been lost thanks to partition) further industrialization could not proceed rapidly enough to absorb those disemployed by farm mechanization.

When in order to help find capital for industrialization the De Valera Government ceased to pay the land annuities, the chilly neutrality of English imperialism was converted into open opposition. The trade war was undertaken in order to weaken Irish efforts at achieving self-sufficiency or if this was not attainable a viable trade position. The policy of *penalizing* the twenty-six counties for wishing to remain independent has survived up to the present day. It was seen in the refusal to supply electrical equipment and ships after the war, and in the terms of a series of trade agreements in which England has invariably

used her economic strength to drive the hardest possible bargain.

The imposition of tariffs on English imports was obviously vital to the establishment of new industry in the twenty-six counties. But doing this inevitably meant imposing tariffs on six county products. Thus to protect the twenty-six counties it became necessary to disrupt still further the all-Ireland economy.

The loss of the industrial area round Belfast was a matter of great seriousness. Metal goods must be imported from England. It was not possible to influence six county industry in the direction needed for the prosperity of the country as a whole. The imports had to be paid for in goods England would accept. These were above all cattle. In the fifties the twenty-six counties carried the highest number of cattle in their history and had the lowest population. The dependence on cattle meant the preservation of the ranches and the cattle trade, together with the backward social ideas natural to an industry whose origins lie in the days of feudalism.

The export of agricultural in return for industrial products gave full application to the disparity in prices between these two types of goods. The sum lost to Ireland is not easy to estimate. The magnitude of the agricultural subsidy, designed to reduce this disparity to a point where capital will remain in agriculture, was such that about £40 million was paid to six county farmers annually during the sixties. The loss to the twenty-six counties on that computation might be of the order of £80 million.

A drain of this size obviously affects the process of capital formation. It strengthens the power of mercantile as opposed to industrial interests. It encourages such capital as is formed to migrate, and it is not to be doubted that the foreign investments of the substantial rentier class within the twenty-six counties have constantly increased. Most of these have been within the English economic world system, and thus the more backward tendencies in

Irish political life have been strengthened. This was indeed one of the developments which partition was calculated to encourage.

The balance of payments of the twenty-six counties shows the effect of partition with extreme clarity. There is a large adverse balance of trade. This is due to the failure of the cattle trade to earn enough to pay for engineering imports. The deficiency is made up partly through tourism, typical resource of an under-capitalized economy, immigrants' remittances from workers whom Ireland could not employ for lack of capital, and interest on investments of the rentier class insofar as they exceed payments due to foreign investors. Seldom indeed do these items create a balance. The deficit is made up on capital account by vast and constant influxes of foreign capital, buying up the country from end to end. As Mr. Brian O'Neill put it forty years ago when the process was just beginning, "Landlordism has been replaced by Bondlordism."[5]

But within this framework created by imperialism through the act of partition there has been a constant struggle both against the framework and against its consequences. This struggle has been conducted by workers, small farmers, the urban and rural petit-bourgeoisie, and at times even by more substantial farmers and industrialists. The history of the twenty-six counties shows none of the stagnation so characteristic of the six counties. There is a lively class struggle in which the partition system as it was first conceived has been materially bent if not broken. The junction of these very substantial forces of progress within the twenty-six counties with similar forces in the six counties is all that is necessary to begin once more the march that was halted in 1921. This is the significance of the struggle to end partition. Its purpose is to transform all Ireland, to create a position where what

[5] B. O'Neill, *War for the Land in Ireland*, pp. 86–116.

changes are necessary can be carried out by the Irish people themselves. The alternative to the partition system is not the twenty-six counties as it at present is, but what an all-Ireland Republic could become.

It is not a question of incorporating the colonial north into a neo-colonial thirty-two county Ireland. It is a question of freeing the initiative of the Irish people for a general onslaught on the whole imperialist system.

FOUR

England's Last Colony?

It is said that the six counties have spent fifty years living on a British subsidy. The Unionists dispute this. "Ulster more than pays its way," declared Lord Brookeborough in April 1948, after a run of good years. This reply then gave rise to allegations of exploitation. While it is of great importance to come at the truth, the antithetical approach, either subsidization or exploitation, misses the fullness of the matter. Those who imposed the partition settlement had a policy towards Ireland as a whole. This being so, the question was how to carry it out, at worst with minimum expense, and at best with maximum profit. The scheme stands or falls as a whole and, as has been indicated, the Irish policy of English imperialism is intimately bound up with that affecting Europe and the Atlantic.

The financial conclusion follows from this.

If the Northern taxation can feed the Exchequer, all well and good. If not, perhaps there is a net gain from the economic exploitation of the south. Failing both, the deficit must be set against the disadvantages of some alternative policy, including that of abandoning Ireland altogether. It is important to grasp this principle because once Ireland was partitioned, Britain's classical policy did a kind of vanishing trick and cannot be pinned down in relation to only one or other of the two areas.

The fact that Northern Ireland was "an integral part of the United Kingdom" did not confer upon it some special immunity from the effects of British economic imperialism. The loss of its *hinterland* across the border has been brushed aside as of negligible importance. "The economies of the two parts of Ireland were never complementary," it

is declared. Or again it is urged that the *Sáorstat* was to blame for introducing tariffs which the six counties never desired–never desired along with other forms of protection against imperialism. The fact is that the six counties were set on a course of development which ignored the inland areas and drained everything towards Belfast, the one great port and industrial district. Trade with the interior was never taken seriously. The dereliction of Newry, Enniskillen, Strabane and Derry City was matched in Clones, Ballyshannon, and Lifford across the border but no alternative centres could be developed comparable with Dundalk, Ballybay, Sligo and Letterkenny.

The loss of the *hinterland* did not only mean the depression of the border areas, it meant the abandonment of all prospects bound up with a balanced distribution of industry. It is admitted in the Hall Report[1] that "there is a tendency for industry to require a location within the industrial belt referred to above," that is to say Belfast, Lough and the Lagan valley.

At the same time it should be noted that partition dealt the industries of the Belfast area a deadly blow. In 1911 Belfast was the most populous city in Ireland with a population of 386,947 against Dublin's 383,076. In 1951 the population of Dublin had risen to 522,183 while that of Belfast was only 443,671. This interval has been chosen so as to minimize the effects of boundary changes and re-housing. Since then the figures have drawn further apart but are less strictly comparable. Again in the years immediately before the First World War, the Belfast area was a region of relatively high employment and attracted many workers from Scotland. During the early twenties its unemployment rate soared and has remained exceptionally high ever since. And the reason is not far to seek.

Northern Ireland was born with a home market too small to support a diversified industry. Her industrial

[1] Joint working party on the Economy of Northern Ireland, Cmd. 1835, October 1962, p. 85.

imbalance was of a peculiarly intractable kind. She had only two major industries, linen and shipbuilding, which at the end of the fifties provided about 40 per cent of the total employment in manufacturing industry. These, while vital to the prosperity of the six counties, have powerful competitors in Great Britain, and produce almost entirely for export. Flax cultivation was virtually abandoned in the nineteen-thirties and both industries became dependent on imported raw materials. The same applied to the important aircraft industry established just before the Second World War. Yet the Government of Northern Ireland had no control over trade with any place outside the six counties.

Generally speaking fuel and raw materials are brought from Britain. Here Northern Ireland industry encounters not only monopoly prices but high transport costs. It is alleged that the shipping lines use their strong position to extract unduly high freight rates. Even the National Coal Board came under accusations of driving too hard a bargain, and in this instance, the enemy being a nationalized industry, the Stormont Government did not think it beneath its dignity to enter into public controversy.

Distance from markets imposes a further disability. These facts are signalized in a succession of Government reports on Northern Ireland's economic problems. A part of the United Kingdom, indeed, she is as remote from its heartbeat as the Scottish Highlands. Such are the difficulties imposed by the present Anglo-centric system. The result is as if Northern Ireland's industries paid a special tax. Full employment is only practicable when general demand pushes up prices high enough to provide this tax. Naturally therefore industrial growth has failed to absorb those displaced by the mechanization of agriculture, though thanks to the fact that only 14.5 per cent of the employed workers are engaged in agriculture (as against 40 per cent in the Republic), unemployment derived from this source has been less serious in the six than in the

twenty-six counties. Emigration, though running at the high figure of 9,000 per annum, has failed to remove the total natural increase of population except in the small farm county of Fermanagh.

The operation of the imperialist financial system is not so easily uncovered as in the twenty-six counties. This is because the Northern Ireland balance of payments is wrapped in mystery thanks to its integration with that of Great Britain. Considerable sums may pass from one country to the other without published record. The striking of a balance of payments is never required for the practical purposes of a non-sovereign administration, and public accounts are not presented in such a way as to facilitate it. It is however extremely important to try to get a general picture, even though any estimates so far attempted vary widely. The most that can be done here is to construct a rough model of the *type* of balance of payments that is involved. But quite important conclusions can be drawn from this.

It will be found convenient to utilize the immensely detailed researches published in the Isles and Cuthbert Report, and the later Hall Report. The year chosen for investigation will therefore be 1960–1. But the forecasts that arise from that investigation will be checked against the known outcome.

It is not in dispute that the adverse balance of trade in both 1960 and 1961 was about £36 million. Unlike the Republic the six counties enjoy a favourable balance on manufactures, and the deficit arises from imports of fuel, raw materials and foodstuffs, including animal feed. For the year 1960–1, before paying back to Northern Ireland the residuary share of reserved taxation, the Imperial Exchequer levied an Imperial Contribution of £6 million. Northern Ireland has thus to find a figure of £42 million on invisible import account.

According to the Hall Report (page 75), the English Government provided the sum of £28 million in the form

of agricultural subsidies. This figure may be on the low side though it tallies well with that given for the following year by Mr. R. J. Lawrence,[2] since in a reply to a question (29 January 1963) on the subject of the 1961–2 subsidies Mr. Cahir Healy, M.P., was given the much larger figure of £37 million for the later year. Taking the Hall Report as correct, however, the biggest item countering the adverse balance of trade consists of agricultural subsidies amounting in the year in question to 31 per cent of the value of output. The deficit is now down to £14 million.

The Government figure for the proceeds of tourism is £11 million, against which would possibly have to be set a counter-figure of, say, £3 million spent by six county residents visiting Britain and the twenty-six counties. The deficit is thus reduced to £6 million, and it may be guessed that the payment of pensions not otherwise included in the social service accounts, and emigrants' remittances, by providing another £2 million might bring it down to £4 million. There are then certain non-agricultural subsidies which amount to £6 million. There is thus finally a discrepancy of £2 million which (bearing in mind that the trade figures are between £300 and £400 million) is within the bounds of error a level balance.

The impression at first glance is thus that Northern Ireland cannot pay its way unless the English Government meets its total trade deficit by means of a subsidy, and the question then arises of why the English Government is so kind.

Unfortunately there is more to it than this. There are two other accounts which have not been mentioned and whose figures cannot be estimated except in the most roundabout way. These refer to the income from British and other investments in Northern Ireland, consisting of dividends etc. that are taken out, and conversely dividends from Northern Ireland investments abroad, and secondly

[2] *Government of Northern Ireland*, p. 87.

to capital movements inwards and outwards. From what we have seen above, though these should roughly balance, taking the two accounts together, we should be biased, if at all, in the direction of expecting more to come out than goes in.

According to the Hall Report (page 10):

> "There is lack of information on this subject. Isles and Cuthbert have estimated (though as they admit, on slight evidence) that in 1950 the amount of Northern Ireland capital held outside Northern Ireland exceeded the amount of external capital held in Northern Ireland."[3]

It is characteristic of the uncertainties of this subject that the authors of the Hall Report should think it quite possible that Isles and Cuthbert could be a cool £300 million out in their estimates! For this is the figure that would have to disappear if in 1950 the amount of external investment exactly equalled that of outsiders in the six counties. This would seem unlikely. But possibly the methods used by Isles and Cuthbert (unquestioned experts who took immense pains over a number of years) overestimated one side of the balance and underestimated the other.[4]

The external investments of residents of the six counties were estimated by sampling death duty accounts and multiplying by an arbitrary factor. Those of the banks had to be disentangled and deduced from all-Ireland

[3] Isles and Cuthbert, Appendix B., p. 476.

[4] The complexities of this question can be illustrated by a single example. Messrs. Gallahers Ltd., who had a capital of £30 million of which 50 per cent was held by the Imperial Tobacco Company, in December 1962 announced the purchase from the American Tobacco Company in return for a 13 per cent stake in Gallahers, of its subsidiary in Britain, Messrs. J. Wix & Sons Ltd., makers of Kensitas. Here a Northern Ireland investment in Britain and a U.S. investment in Northern Ireland were created simultaneously by the stroke of a pen. The reality is of course the expansion and centralization of monopoly capital.

accounts.[5] The reverse side, investments of outsiders in the six counties, was obtained by examination of companies operating in the six counties, and some intelligent guesswork about branches of imperial concerns. Granted the above reservations regarding the Isles and Cuthbert figures, let us see what they would mean in practice. There was said to be £200 million invested in the imperial system through the agencies of banks and institutions, and another £200 million held by private investors. The first sum represents the savings of working-class and middle-class people, yielding a low rate of interest and a loss of control by Irish people over their own capital. The second sum will represent the more profitable investments of the remaining landowners, rentiers and the reserves of medium business people.

That was in 1950. From published figures it seems likely that if all the component factors of these sums rose in the same proportion, the 1960 figure would be something like £520 million, corresponding to a drain of capital at the rate of about £10 million a year. It would appear that Northern Ireland may have to increase the financial resources of British imperialism by some £100 million in order to add a measly £5 million a year to its invisible earnings. On this basis, then, we will enter a figure for capital exports of £10 million per annum and assume that receipts from external investments had risen to £25 million by 1960.

In 1950 Isles and Cuthbert could trace only £83 million of imperial and foreign investment in the six counties to offset Northern Ireland savings channelled abroad. This consisted of about £38 million invested in local companies, £12 million in private building, an estimated £11 million in branches and subsidiaries of British concerns, and a miscellaneous £22 million mainly consisting of investment in public institutions.

[5] See *The Banker*, July 1948, for an account of the intertwining of six and twenty-six county finances.

At least half of the capital could be expected to return a distinctly higher rate of interest than that obtainable by Northern Ireland investors abroad. It would be monopoly capital already,[6] whereas that exported would only become monopolized in the process of export. As in the case of the twenty-six counties, the movement of imperialist finance is measured by adding the two figures which are subtracted in the balance of payments.

But here critics of the Isles Report have suggested that the figures are too low. They do not take account of ground rents collected by landlords resident in Britain nor of the operations of British chain stores, hire-purchase agencies etc. These might account for some millions of pounds, possibly £10 million or more.

Working from the estimates given by Isles and Cuthbert, it might be expected that their figure of £80 million for external investment in Northern Ireland might have risen to £100 million by 1961, through the further operation of the causes which originally brought it about.

In order to estimate the complete position, however, we must take note of the special measures taken by the Northern Ireland Government to stimulate foreign, and mainly British investment, since 1954. The Hall Report (page 10) comments that even if Isles and Cuthbert were correct in asserting a net outward flow of capital, in the year 1950, this must, however, "have been reduced in the past decade by the inward movement of capital invested in new industries".

The question which now arises is to estimate this fresh influx. On the basis of the number of fresh jobs created the capital investment (less Government aid) could be of the order of £80 million. It would seem reasonable to expect a high proportion of this investment to have come from Britain. There must also be a high figure for "take-

[6] On the composition of British capital investments in Northern Ireland, see R. H. W. Johnston, *Irish Democrat*, December 1959, January 1960.

over" investment, but since presumably the bulk of the sums received by Northern Ireland residents is invested outside Ireland in a sense it could be deducted from outward investment rather than entered here. It seems desirable however to try to estimate its order.

In 1938, according to Isles and Cuthbert, an analysis of the places of residence of shareholders in companies comprising 80 per cent of the total investment in public companies in Northern Ireland showed that 72 per cent of their capital was held outside the area. By 1948 the figure had risen to 75 per cent. If the trend continued, and nobody has suggested that it has not, then by 1960 the figure must surely have reached 80 per cent. The market value of 4 per cent of the total investment in public companies can be estimated as about £8 million, so that if the rate of take-over kept steady, something less than £1 million a year changed hands in this category. But it is common knowledge that take-overs have sharply stepped up.

Hence it is not unreasonable to allocate to the year we are considering (1960–1) an investment from outside of say £1 million on this account, and £8 million for the decade 1950–60. All in all therefore the investment by British (and other outside) investors in the six counties in 1960–1 probably stood near to £200 million, and further investment may have been taking place at the rate of as much as £18 million a year.

The interest payments Northern Ireland indebtedness gives rise to would then approximate to something like £20 million, since the type of investment made by outsiders within Northern Ireland almost certainly earns a higher rate of interest than that of Northern Ireland investors abroad.

It is now possible to construct a hypothetical table showing the type of balance of payment problem which exists in the six counties.

APPROXIMATION
TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Category	*Receipts*	*Payments*	*Net receipts*
Trade	334	370	–36
Imperial Contribution	–	6	–6
Agricultural Subsidies	28	–	28
Non-agricultural Subsidies	6	–	6
Tourism	11	3	8
Pensions	1	–	1
Emigrants' Remittances	1	–	1
Dividends and Profits	25	20	5
Capital Movements	18	10	8
Total	424	409	15

A glance at the table suffices to show that the total of the first column is £15 million too high, that of the second £15 million too low, or there must be some mutual adjustment to bring them into line. In other words some of the figures must be inaccurate, and the question is which. The position is, sums appear to be entering the six counties without their equivalent leaving it. This arises from the fact that the subsidies, investments and dividends coming in appear to wipe out the adverse balance of trade and leave £15 million to spare. What is the most likely, that we have exaggerated income, or that there is some unrecorded process of outgoing?[7]

No doubt the fact that there is this type of discrepancy led the writers of the Hall Report to look doubtfully at the Isles and Cuthbert figures for six county capital invested abroad. One should be very reluctant to reject such highly professional and painstaking work. But let us suppose for the sake of argument that they pitched their figures for external assets one-quarter too high–then the figure for income from dividends and profits might be

[7] A part of the discrepancy was removed by revision of accounts in later years, but the principle is not affected.

reduced to £20 million. Let us say likewise that we have exaggerated inward capital movements (and outward interest payments by a smaller figure), and in place of £18 million let us write £15 million. Is the £7 million discrepancy that remains small enough to be dismissed in a balance as rough as this? Does anything need to be sought to put in the other column? And if so, what is it likely to be?

As has been indicated above, there have been suggestions that items of outgoing rent, interest and profit escaped the Isles and Cuthbert net, despite their careful probing, and that the figures for sums withdrawn by branches of British concerns, owners of ground rents etc., if fully estimated, could raise the figure in the second column by £10 million. Great care should be exercised over this. Certainly there is no claim that the balance of payments of Northern Ireland has now been demonstrated –this is not possible. It is not even possible to take the trade balance for granted within a certain margin. Who knows, for example, what goes through the parcel post, or people take backwards and forwards with them on the boats? What has been shown, however, is that there is nothing unreasonable in suggesting that the balance of payments may be more closely represented by the revised table below.

REVISED APPROXIMATION
TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

Category	*Receipts*	*Payments*	*Net receipts*
Trade	334	370	–36
Imperial Contribution	–	6	–6
Subsidies	34	–	34
Tourism, etc.	11	3	8
Dividends and Profits	20	25	–5
Capital Movements	15	10	5
Total	414	414	

The meaning of such a balance of payments is that the subsidies and inward dividends and capital movements do not result in the stimulation of industry and employment with a consequent favourable balance of trade, but instead merely facilitate the establishment of industries considered useful to imperialism, taking over the resources of local capitalists, and meanwhile guaranteeing the annual outflow of a substantial sum in interest and profit, plus the savings of the ordinary people.

Reference has already been made to the fact that by 1948 mainly British interests has secured at least 60 per cent of the total investment in public companies. Even in the case of 55 private companies,[8] of whose capital 11·8 per cent was held abroad in 1946, only two years later this proportion had risen to 16·1. If the process had continued throughout the following decade at the same rate about a third of these companies' capital would be held outside Northern Ireland by 1960. The commanding heights of the Northern Ireland economy have long been conquered by British imperialism; what are going on now are profitable mopping-up operations.

No wonder therefore that the take-over is the typical feature of Belfast. The *Belfast News-Letter* 1961 annual review described in glowing terms the changes in the face of the city:

> "In High Street for example, the site has been cleared for Woolworths stores . . . and for the erection of a new building on the other side of Crown entry . . . a newly constructed building erected for Great Universal Stores who also owned the adjoining Whitehall buildings taken over by Littlewoods . . . a six-storey structure will have bank premises on the ground floor, an insurance company is to occupy 17,000 square feet . . . closing of the Empire theatre to give way to a further development of Littlewoods' premises . . . the conver-

[8] Isles Report, p. 472.

sion of the Gaumont cinema to a multiple store . . . a tall building on the site formerly occupied by Finlay's soap-works to house Imperial and Northern Ireland civil servants . . . the Prudential Assurance Company will have a new five-storey corner block . . . a building which is nearing completion is that of the Norwich Union Insurance Company . . . others to be erected are for the Royal Globe Insurance Company and for the Commercial Union Insurance Company . . ." and so *ad infinitum.*

The clearest comment on such a situation was given by a County Longford man two centuries ago.

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

For wealth undoubtedly accumulates in Northern Ireland, and the fact is well known to the pale-complexioned men in faded denim who claim their allowance of bread without circuses each week at the "burroo". In 1939 the total paid up capital of companies registered in the six counties was £16 million. In 1960 it was £117 million and in 1969 £174 million.[9] Over the thirty years the number of private companies registered increased from 1,687 to 5,857–an illustration of the fact that monopolization is never complete, and that big fleas have little fleas as Dean Swift divined. The total of rent, dividends and interest entering the pockets of those privileged to enjoy such things was (irrespective of origin) £23 million in 1951–2, £40 million in 1960–1 and £80 million in 1968–9.

Needless to say income tax and sur-tax have risen steadily, and there have been important capital gains. An increasing proportion of the wealth of the six counties is owned by non-residents. But while the sale continues, the take-overs proceed, and the interest and savings go out, the Unionist Party congratulates itself on the regular ar-

[9] *Digest of Statistics* (N.I.), No. 34, September 1970, p. 106.

rival of the subsidies, which make the whole profitable process possible without provoking revolution.

In the absence of another study as detailed as that of Isles and Cuthbert it is impossible to do more than attempt intelligent guesswork with regard to the present position. The trade figures are of course known with reasonable certainty. In 1968 exports (£596 million) paid for 90 per cent of the import bill (£659 million). The proportion is exactly that of 1960–1. In the meantime prices had risen by approximately one-third. Adjusted to 1960 prices the £597 million thus becomes £437 million, giving 33·3 per cent growth over eight years, or a geometrical average of 3·7 per cent per annum. By way of comparison it may be noted that on the same basis U.K. exports between 1964 and 1969 increased at a rate of 5·4 per cent per annum.

The rate of growth of exports from Northern Ireland was thus less than two-thirds of that of the United Kingdom as a whole. It was matched by a rate of growth of imports which completely neutralized its advantages and left the position proportionately similar but absolutely £30 million worse. It is interesting to note that the gross domestic product of the six counties measured at constant prices rose by 22 per cent from 1963 to 1968, that is to say at an annual geometrical average of 4·1 per cent, a higher rate than that of the growth of exports. Within this average the growth of the output of productive industry was substantially higher than that of "service" industry, a fact that indicates the relative success of the Government's policy of inducements to industrial investment. Notwithstanding this relative success the balance of payments problem seems to have remained the same. Northern Ireland has been running hard to remain in the same place.

The visible trade deficit had by 1968 risen to £63 million. The Imperial Contribution had shrunk to £2 million and was thus purely nominal. Against these deficits we

have to set the net gain from tourism, whose receipts were recorded at £28 million but whose outgoings are unknown. Perhaps in view of the 31 per cent rise in real income over eight years, a figure of £14 million would not be excessive. According to R. J. Lawrence[10] the total financial assistance afforded Northern Ireland by the United Kingdom Government in 1963 was about £47 million, and seemingly rising at the rate of about £2 million a year. One can therefore reasonably insert the figure of £60 million for 1968–and reach the same conclusion as was reached in respect of 1960, namely that the subsidies meet the entire cost of the adverse balance of trade. The balance on current account is favourable to the extent of £11 million. This is of course only according to the roughest approximation, and leaves out income from investments.

Turning now to the question of the effect of capital movements, it is perhaps useful to estimate what would have been the position in 1968 if the trends assumed for 1960 were extrapolated. An important conclusion is that by 1968 the favourable balance on income from investments would have been eliminated and replaced by a deficit of £11 million. Capital movements if assumed to have undergone no increase would still yield a favourable balance of £10 million. If on the other hand capital investment each way had increased by 17 per cent per annum, the unfavourable balance of £21 million on what may be termed investment income account, would be balanced by a surplus of £30 million on capital account.

What are the conclusions from these extremely approximate calculations? They are that the balance of trade for 1968 as shown in the published figures demands that we assume a steadily rising subsidy from London, or a rising rate of foreign investment, or a combination of these factors. The dependence of the six counties has increased. And one is entitled to ask what would happen if these

[10] loc. cit.

artificial forms of support were withdrawn, for example in a world trade recession?

Support for these general conclusions is available in published statistics. Thus it can be shown[11] that the total personal income of residents of the six counties rose by 76 per cent between 1960 and 1968. The total income from rent interest and dividends rose by about the same figure, namely 75 per cent. But whereas income from national insurance benefits, family allowances, assistance grants and pensions rose by 140 per cent, income from self-employment rose by only 31 per cent, a lower percentage than that due to the increase of retail prices. These figures accord with the balance of payments position suggested above. They also surely offer some explanation of a political ferment affecting primarily the unemployed and the petit bourgeoisie. The great reality in the six counties is the constant penetration of monopoly capital, which it is the purpose of Westminster policy to facilitate.

Summarizing and simplifying it may be stated that in effect its incorporation in the United Kingdom imposes on Northern Ireland a disability which compels it to suffer a dual process. The disability is an artificially imposed adverse balance of trade arising from the interplay of factors already mentioned, chief among which is the fact of partition. The dual processes consist of the denudation of local savings which are channelled to Britain, and the injection of increasing amounts of foreign capital. The final comment is that this process is *not* self-correcting. On the contrary it is a progressive disease. Each year the situation becomes more desperate, another batch of emigrants gets on the boat, and the owning class is compelled to sell up another instalment of the national heritage. This means a still worse position, and a further repetition of the cycle.

The powers of the Northern Ireland Government were

[11] See *Abstract of Statistics*, No. 34, September 1970, p. 77.

totally inadequate to modifying this process. It would be quite mistaken to imagine that the gentlemen who compose it are either unaware of or incapable of using adequately the powers they possess, though possibly the fortnightly consultations with the Treasury contribute to the chilling of the spirit of enterprise. But to have any decisive effect, their powers would have to be of a different order of magnitude, of the order of magnitude of those possessed by sovereign states. For the powers of sovereign states include the fiscal and treaty-making capacities without which a country is a plaything of world economic (and in this case imperial economic) forces.

It is agreed by experts that the rate of profit, Government assistance excluded, tends to fall below the United Kingdom average in a Northern Ireland which is an integral part of the United Kingdom. Isles and Cuthbert argue, and Hall agrees, that failing the acceptance by its workers of a lower standard of living (actually earnings of employed workers are only about 80 per cent of those in Britain) then capital will be exported until its scarcity, and the corresponding surplus of labour power, so adjust prices that the average profit is earned again. This process is limited by the unwillingness of the working class to be its unprotesting tools. The end point can never be reached partly because of mobility of labour, and also for political reasons. Whether this theory is sound or not, and its mechanism is not yet fully explained, the condition of its operation is agreed on all sides. It is the fact that Northern Ireland *is an integral part of the United Kingdom.*

To the all-important working of private finance and investment, a public finance so hedged with restrictions, plays second fiddle. Economic crisis developed in the twenties. The British Government took the only action available to it under the Government of Ireland Act. It so scaled down the Imperial Contribution that Northern Ireland was no longer paying its due proportion towards

the purposes for which it was levied. In a nutshell she got free defence and national debt, whereas the Republic had to pay for hers. This was equivalent to reducing the incidence of taxation in the area. During the war period when the special disadvantages of Northern Ireland were at a minimum (though unemployment was never eliminated) a substantial Imperial Contribution was retained.

But after 1947 the net Imperial Contribution was not sufficient to meet the cost of food and producers' subsidies, training and rehabilitation schemes, the so-called agency services. In recent years the food subsidies have been abolished, but one particular agency service has acquired enormous importance. The agricultural subsidies at present paid to Northern Ireland from the Imperial Exchequer amount to at least £28 million.

It should also be noted that while, of course, the agricultural subsidies may in fact represent the very wisest way of expending a gift of £28 million, the Government of Northern Ireland has no choice in the matter. Its opinion is not asked. Financial policy encourages what Britain wants encouraged, restricts likewise always in the primary interests of imperialism.

It has been stated by Mr. H. B. Newe, however, that despite everything, agricultural prices in Northern Ireland constantly fall below those in Britain. It is not by any means certain that the subsidies fully compensate the Northern Ireland farmers for their unfavourable position on the periphery of the United Kingdom. Whatever the truth here, and it is likely to be complicated, the effect of the subsidies is to facilitate exploitation, as indeed the effect of the whole system of public finance in Northern Ireland is to facilitate the movement of imperial finance.

It is now possible to make a brief comparison between the two areas of partitioned Ireland. The similarities will have been noticed: the unfavourable balance of trade, the constant penetration of foreign monopoly capital and the dependence on England in the economic sphere. On the

other hand, whereas the six counties receive a subsidy which looms large in the figures, the twenty-six have received no assistance whatsoever. It should of course be noted that the agricultural subsidy is really no subsidy at all as it merely compensates for the robbery inherent in the price structure. But however it is regarded the comparison is the same.

Unfortunately six county statistics are much inferior to those of the twenty-six counties, and it is difficult to be confident that figures are strictly comparable. There is however one simple parameter available for comparison, that of gross domestic product. From 1963 to 1967 that of the six counties grew by 32·5 per cent, that of the twenty-six by 37 per cent. Another available measure is total exports (i.e. including re-exports) which over the same period increased by 26 per cent in the six counties, but by 45 per cent in the twenty-six. The figures show incidentally one quite startling thing. Total exports from the six counties amounted in 1963 to 93 per cent of the gross domestic product, and in 1967 to 88 per cent–i.e. the six counties are wrenched out of their proper context in Ireland and made artificially into part of the British economy, and (presumably) their essentially Irish context is shown by the transport of twenty-six county products through Belfast.

The ratio of total exports to gross domestic product in the twenty-six counties rose from 23·4 per cent in 1963 to 24·8 per cent in 1967. This change illustrates one of the most significant differences between the two areas. Whereas in 1965 the twenty-six counties were faced with an adverse trade balance of £150 million, this was cut to £105 million in 1967. There was a spectacular growth in exports, and for the first time for many years a net capital outflow. How is this to be explained? It is to be explained by the existence in the twenty-six counties of an independent government able to take measures to deal with economic problems as they arise. It may be too much to

expect prosperity under the partition system. But the existence of an Irish State gives the maximum flexibility within it.

By contrast the six counties are imprisoned and powerless. Their independent industrial base is being gobbled up. The Unionist politicians are not now even junior partners of English imperialism. As Mr. R. J. Lawrence concluded after examining London-Belfast financial arrangements, "regional Government also has in some measure become a fiction."[12]

It follows therefore that Unionism could never hope to solve the problems of the six counties. But before considering a solution we must see what it has made of them.

[12] op. cit., p. 88.

FIVE

Shifting the Burden

To those who regard livelihood and liberty as privileges, the six counties must appear as an "under-privileged" area. But it is better described as a retarded area, retarded as a consequence of being ripped from the economy where it belongs and attached to an economy to which it is an irrelevance. The consequent burdens are borne by the common people, but not equally.

Social services have been nominally based on the principle of "parity" with those of Britain. While this is true enough of the unemployment and medical services, the principle does not apply universally. Indeed it is not what it seems.[1] In the tug-o'-war behind the closed doors of the Treasury the Joint Exchequer Board decided what sum should be allotted from reserved taxation for transferred services.

As Mr. Thomas Wilson explained,[2] "parity does not mean uniformity" and "the consequences of lower taxation or higher expenditure cannot be evaded by claiming more assistance from Whitehall."

Isles and Cuthbert[3] expressed the view that consequently "the standard of services is not in all respects as high as in Great Britain." In any case the Northern Ireland Government had to finance its own schemes for aid to

[1] The principle of parity has received curious interpretations. One of them would restrict the use of powers vested in the six county Government by the Government of Ireland Act to measures comparable to those adopted in England, whether the uniformity is beneficial or not.

[2] *Ulster Under Home Rule*, p. 121.

[3] op. cit., pp. 163–164.

industry and agriculture from the sum allocated by Westminster. It was not at liberty to levy special taxation for this purpose. Mr. R. J. Lawrence[4] has pointed out that though Stormont occasionally deviated from the principle that the "total amount of money raised per head from the taxpayer of the country [*sic*] should correspond to the total amount raised per head from the taxpayer on the other side," and the exact form which that took could be varied within the discretion of the Parliament, the scope for divergence was "very narrow". We added that "Northern Ireland is subject to Treasury control" which is "subtle and varied". He mentions as one of the factors tending to conformity the objections likely to be raised by businessmen in Britain if Northern Ireland measures favoured their competitors. The six counties are in a Common Market with Britain, and the only advantage left them is that Westminster helps to mitigate the disastrous consequences. For this their inhabitants are expected to express gratitude by voting for the Tories.

To a certain extent the provision of social services conflicts with the provision of employment. Both require vast sums. But what is available is externally decided. It tends to be minimal, as capital expenditure must be watched carefully. The *Digest of Statistics* already quoted estimates an expenditure during 1969–70 of £34,300,000 in capital grants to private industry. This compares with £36,200,000 expenditure on fixed assets under the rubric "Housing and environmental services". Yet 200,000 new houses are needed, and 40,000 new jobs. State expenditure on housing is essential since *per capita* income is only 75 per cent of that in Great Britain.

Within the United Kingdom the existing system discriminates against Northern Ireland. This, moreover, was both foreseen and intended by the architects of partition. During the "Treaty" negotiations of 1921, Lloyd George

[4] op. cit., p. 89.

refused to "coerce Ulster" but permitted it to be thought that the smallness of the area allotted to Northern Ireland would render it economically non-viable as a state, with the result that it would seek voluntary Union with the Irish Free State. During the "Treaty" debates in Dublin, it was even suggested that the experience of a brief spell of partition would be a salutary lesson for Northern merchants and manufacturers dependent on the southern market.

While such an effect was conceivable, in practice the financial provisions of the Government of Ireland Act were revised in favour of the six counties. Indeed in 1925 Mr. Phillip Snowden, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the preceding Labour Government, was provoked to remark:

> "From the time of the passing of the Act of Parliament which conferred self-Government upon Northern Ireland, the British Treasury has been subjected to constant demands from the Government of Ulster for illegal financial assistance from the British Exchequer."

This illegal financial assistance Mr. Winston Churchill was proposing to provide. It arose from the enormous cost of repressing the enemies of partition. But notwithstanding such assistance and the greater sums that have been poured in latterly, the six county state has remained in a demonstrable state of economic retardation. How then did the Unionist Party manage to retain the reins of power throughout fifty years without a break? It did so by lightening the burden on those prepared to tolerate partition by shifting it on to the backs of those opposed to it. These being in a minority, the Government remained secure.

From this follows a consequence. It is that given equal rights for all, the hold of Unionism on its supporters will vanish, and the dominance of the Unionist Party be placed in question. This is the answer to those who

imagine the struggle for equal rights will detract from the struggle for independence, or, as others believe, will make no contribution towards solving economic problems.

Such then is the significance of religious and political discrimination. Employment and housing are social benefits which it is the responsibility of the six county Government to provide. Thanks to the retarded economy they are in short supply. How are they distributed? Not according to need, but as a political weapon to divide the people and bind the more favoured section to the support of the Government. The circumstance that Catholics were traditionally Nationalists was of great assistance.

How came it that the Unionists found so useful a weapon to their hands? Religious sectarianism originated not in Ireland but in Britain, whose revolution was fought under the slogans of the reformation. The final expropriation of the Irish tribal lands proceeded under the only excuse which would justify naked robbery to the British people. This was protection against the papacy, for their practical purposes enshrined not in the spiritual power of Rome, but in the military designs of Spain and France. Inevitably any movement for democracy in Ireland from then on must centre on Catholic emancipation and the land to the people.

It was his realization of this fact which made the greatness of Wolfe Tone. Ireland from 1782 to 1800 had legislative independence. But only Protestants could vote or sit in Parliament, which thus became the central executive committee of the landlord class. His proposal was to enfranchise the Catholics when inevitably landlordism would be swept away, Ireland undergoing a revolution similar to that of France. Rather than face such a prospect the landlords fell in with the British oligarchy in submerging the Irish representation in Westminster through the Act of Union.

It is of interest that the Orange Order made its first appearance in connection with these events, and that its

militant Protestantism had no political[5] importance again (save for a brief period when Dublin Castle armed selected Orange lodges against the revolutionaries of 1848) until the eighteen-eighties, when the Act of Union itself became due for repeal.

The slogan "Home Rule would be Rome Rule" does not mean the same thing to everybody. Many progressive English people, their thoughts coloured by their own history, think it means that Ireland would be subjected to the control of the Catholic Church in its practical affairs. Its meaning is that universal suffrage in Ireland must mean a predominantly Catholic electorate, which can thus determine the complexion of the Government unless the Irish representation is merged in that of Westminster. But of whom would this electorate consist? Of the small men, the majority of them workers, farmers, shopkeepers and small professional people, as opposed to the landlords, financiers and top merchant and professional people. "Rome rule", in other words, was the rule of the masses, the great unwashed, the *vulgus mobile.*

In the eighteenth century the Orange Order played on the guilty consciences of planters and settlers who knew they had what Prendergast called "defective title deeds" to their estates. Orangeism *redivivus*, a century later, had no such simple basis. Its achievement was to manufacture a hysteria comparable to anti-Semitism and to divert a section of the working class from its own interests to those of its enemies.

It is important to recognize that religious sectarianism in Ireland does not consist of some inborn antagonism between Protestant and Catholic which reaction merely "makes use of". It is a one-way gun, built and loaded by the Tories, and directed against the Catholics. Before

[5] It had of course considerable industrial importance, as a means of dividing the working class and frustrating the purposes of trade unionism. See Andrew Boyd, *Holy War in Belfast*, for an account of Orange-inspired disturbances from 1835 onwards.

partition it was openly anti-democratic. Now it is directed against a section placed in an artificial minority by a British Act of Parliament and can put on a show of democracy.

That the aggression comes from the Protestant side is illustrated by the content of Orange songs and slogans, which play such an important part in the political life of the six counties. One of the songs promises to "kick the Pope over Dolly's Brae", another to "scatter the Papishes every one", adding by way of encouragement that "if that doesn't do, we'll cut 'em in two, and give 'em a dose of the Orange and Blue". A typical Carsonite street chant reveals its intrinsically anti-popular character. It runs:

> "My Da's a volunteer.
> He wears a bandolier.
> He marches up and down the town
> Knocking all the people down.
> My Da's a volunteer."

Lest this be thought merely a child's jingle, another Orange favourite has a refrain glorifying the counter-revolutionary terror of 1798:

> "Oh, the South Down militia is the terror of the land."

What must be realized is that when, at election time, the bands parade playing these airs, every Protestant man, woman and child who has been in contact with the Orange Order, automatically hears the sectarian words, and is given "a dose of the orange and blue".

The function of diverting the working class from their own interests is well known to the Unionists. During a rents campaign, Unionist speakers were hard pressed by their normally loyal constituents. One of them is known to have extricated himself with the words, "Ach, to hell with the rents–give us the Sash"–one of the less offensive Orange songs.

Extracts from these and other ditties will be found

scrawled on public buildings though until recently they seemed to be retreating to less edifying places.

Against them there are no comparable Catholic slogans. While Protestant organizations exist with the avowed aim of opposing Catholicism, for example, Mr. Ian Paisley's fortunately small "Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster", there are no comparable Catholic bodies devoted to the extinction of Protestantism.

The counter-slogans of the Catholics are political, such as "Remember 1916", and "Up the I.R.A.". The very conception of Catholics priding themselves on being "the terror of the land" is ludicrous.

Anti-Catholicism does not necessarily take a personal form. "Some of my best friends are Catholics," would not come inappropriately from the lips of Lord Brookeborough himself. Indeed, during the time when he was Premier, his political opponents conceded that he was the perfect gentleman in his personal dealings, courteous and considerate in every way. Yet he boasted, "I have not one of them about my place." Even the incarnation of Protestant extremism, Mr. Ian Paisley, is said to have invited Miss Bernadette Devlin to tea, and shown open and genuine hospitality.

The position resembles that of Nazi Germany where it was rare to find *personal* anti-Semitism. The object of anti-Catholic propaganda is to justify *social* discrimination. It is a political not a religious phenomenon. The average Protestant has no wish to discriminate against his Catholic fellow countryman, but he tolerates it on the part of those with the power to carry it out. The tendency, as in the Germany of the concentration camps, is for decent people to close their minds. I remember some years ago visiting a housing estate on the outskirts of Enniskillen where I ascertained that there was not one Catholic family. I found a recent immigrant from London naïve enough to answer a stranger's questions. Was the absence of Catholics evidence of discrimination? "I don't think there is *much*

discrimination," she replied. If there was not "much" it could be ignored.

Lord Brookeborough justified his own discrimination by saying that Catholics were disloyal, in other words that discrimination was not religious but political. This is logically on a par with Hitler's assertion that the Jews were Marxists. And why, one might ask, is it true that nearly all Catholics are Nationalists? The answer of course disposes of Lord Brookeborough's argument. They are Nationalists because they have suffered discrimination throughout the centuries, and continue to suffer it today. There is nothing in the Catholic faith which makes its members more responsive to democratic or national ideas than people of other beliefs. But there is something in the actual situation of Catholics in Northern Ireland today which compels them to play the part of rebels. That something is discrimination. The Protestant community, on the other hand, though largely Unionist in tendency, produces opponents of partition, people uninterested in politics, and occasionally that curious political deformity, the "socialist" uninterested in his own nation. Protestants do not suffer religious discrimination and thus politically have one more degree of freedom. To Catholics the attainment of equality of rights and opportunities is the *sine qua non* of all further development.

It is of course quite obvious that religious antagonism can have no effect where there is no power to discriminate. The Government of Ireland Act, seeking to allay fears that Home Rule might be the signal for a religious war, forbade either government in Ireland to pass legislation which directly or indirectly promoted religious discrimination. But it is doubtful whether, for example, the Pakistani community in Bradford would regard themselves as adequately protected by a Government pledge to refrain from legislation against them. Discrimination takes place within a social environment. Its framework the Unionists found available to them when they were given power.

Despite Catholic emancipation which had opened high office to those in a position to secure it, the economic results of the penal system lived on, as the economic status of ex-slaves remained that of a depressed class in the southern states of America. It was in order *inter alia* to sweep away the remnants of the landlord ascendancy that Connolly and his associates took part in the Irish revolution of 1912–22. And it is noteworthy that when the revolutionary *Dáil*, under the leadership of the conservative Griffith, decided to accept "the law" (i.e. English law) as the basis of the jurisprudence of the Republic, a solitary reservation was made, in respect of "such portion thereof as was clearly motivated by religious or political animosity".

The first and most obvious form of discrimination is geographical. Roughly half the area of the six counties bears a population whose majority is Catholic. This area includes the two counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone, southwest Co. Derry, South Armagh, South Down and the Glens of Antrim.[6]

In 1969 the Northern Ireland Economic Council published its proposals for "area development" up to the year 1981. The six counties were divided into two regions, the "Belfast region" and the area "outside the Belfast region". The "area outside the Belfast region" is substantially that described above. The plan was as follows:

In the so-called key towns of the Belfast region (Belfast and its suburbs excluded) the population was to rise from 146,800 to 296,000, that is to say there was to be an increase of 103 per cent. That some of this increase would represent over-spill from Belfast is not to the point. It was to move into the Belfast region, not to the peripheral area. The population of the key towns outside the Belfast region was to rise from 138,300 to 194,000, an increase

[6] See Kevin O'Shiel *Handbook of the Ulster Question* (Dublin 1923) for magnificent detailed maps prepared for the Boundary Commission.

of only 41 per cent. Thus growth in the Belfast region was to be two and a half times that in the outer region. But the result is really worse. Of the increase of 56,000, no less than 26,000 was allocated to the area of Coleraine, which is being developed as a rival to Derry in the one substantially Protestant area outside the Belfast region. The corrected figures are thus, for Unionist areas 176,500 (121 per cent) and for Nationalist areas 29,500 (21·4 per cent). The ratio is six to one. What method is to achieve the distinction? The allocation of public funds and the various means of controlling the location of industry.

That this plan apportions resources in inverse ratio to need is shown by a comparison of the two counties Antrim, almost exclusively in the Belfast area, and Tyrone, a county of similar size but with a Catholic and Nationalist majority. The comparison is set out in the table on page 75. The figures are derived from the 1966 census, and show the result of half a century of geographical discrimination. Thus Co. Tyrone is three times as dependent on agriculture as Co. Antrim, and has over twice the level of unemployment. Yet it is interesting to note that if engineering and electrical industries were expanded in Co. Tyrone to the level achieved in Co. Antrim, the unemployment rate of 13·45 per cent would be reduced to near zero. There would automatically result an increase in the proportions of workers engaged in electricity, transport, distributive trades, construction and miscellaneous services, at the expense of agriculture. Yet the Government proposal is to develop Antrim while leaving Tyrone to stagnate still further.

Why give to those who have? If there must be a burden why not distribute it equally? In Co. Tyrone, Catholics form about 55 per cent of the population. If numbers of them are compelled to emigrate to the east, they will cease to form a majority in the west, but they will still be outnumbered in their new abode. On the other hand if their home districts were developed their high birthrate would

come into play, increasing their majority. Protestants might not wish to move westwards, and labour might have to be brought across the border. There are thus strictly political reasons for the policy the Government has chosen. It is decreed that in order to preserve the existing order the burden of partition must rest on those who do not want it.

Parameter	*Co. Antrim*	*Co. Tyrone*
AREA (square miles)	1098	1218
Population	313,991	138,040
Av. No. persons per dwelling	3·74	4·15
Total occupied population	129,155	50,465
Net immigration 1965–6	+5·1 %	—2·1 %
Percentage unemployment	5·9	13·45
Percentages engaged in:		
Agriculture, forestry etc.	8·23	23·85
Mining and quarrying	0·48	0·46
Food, drink, tobacco	5·11	3·28
Engineering & electrical	6·0	0·26
Shipbuilding	1·04	Nil*
Vehicle manufacture	2·0	Nil*
Miscellaneous metal products	0·66	0·25
Textiles	9·57	6·67
Clothing and footwear	2·74	3·42
Bricks, pottery, glass	0·78	1·59
Timber, furniture etc.	0·87	0·18
Paper, printing, publishing	0·90	Nil*
Rubber, plastics etc.	0·12	Nil*
Construction	9·35	8·7
Gas, electricity, water	1·26	0·72
Transport	4·3	2·2
Distributive trades	13·0	10·83
Banking and insurance	1·67	0·79
Professional occupations	10·0	8·95
Public administration	5·8	4·2
Miscellaneous services	8·3	7·27

* Ratios under 0·1 % are treated as zero.

It is of course no accident that in what may be described as the deprived areas, where capital is lacking and opportunities for employment are restricted, discrimination against the Catholic majority is regarded as a condition of survival for the Unionists. It is from these areas that many of the "die-hard" Unionists draw their support. And what they have to defend may be illustrated by an examination of the local government appointments in two districts, one the most rural, the other the most urban of them. The figures relate to the year 1961, and such changes as have taken place since will be noted later.

In Co. Fermanagh, where there was a small Nationalist majority of 700 electors, the County secretary, accountant, and assistant accountant were all Protestants, as were also the solicitor and all her clerks and the County Surveyor and all his staff. All clerks in the County Council office were Protestant with one exception appointed prior to the Local Government Act of 1922. In the Health and Welfare Committee's offices, the secretary was a Protestant, as were his office staff, with one exception who was a telephonist. The chief medical officer, his two assistants, the chief dental officer, the welfare officer and his assistants, the public analyst, the chief taxation officer, the chief education officer and all his assistants, the architect and his assistant were all Protestants. Only one assistant dental officer and one assistant architect were Catholics, and these were the sole applicants for the posts in question. All the drivers of the school vans save two part-time workers were Protestants, and of the twelve rate collectors one only was a Catholic. Of 17 members of the County Welfare Committee only 5 were Catholics, of 21 members of the County Health Committee only 6, and of 27 members of the Education Committee likewise only six. Yet the number of children in Catholic primary schools exceeded that of all others combined.

An analysis of local government appointments in Derry City was made by Councillor Friel, who showed that only

in one category, that of labourer, was there parity of employment, the numbers of Protestants and Catholics being respectively 86 and 85, though on the local government voters' rolls (which exclude non-householders) there were 13,185 Catholics and 9,117 Protestants. Among 113 tradesmen in Derry City there were 75 Protestants and 28 Catholics, among lorry drivers 21 Protestants and 4 Catholics, among 91 clerical employees 20 Catholics, while of the 69 officials in administrative grades 61 were Protestants and only 8 Catholics. In the offices of the town clerk, city accountant, rate collector, city solicitor, Welfare Department and Electricity Department there was not one Catholic higher official. When a delegation of enquiry from British Labour organizations visited Derry to confirm these facts in 1962, the Mayor declined to meet them. He had no answer.

How this situation was possible in administrative areas the majority of whose inhabitants were Catholic will be revealed in the next chapter. There was however one notable area, namely the town of Newry, where over 80 per cent of the population was Catholic. It is of course natural that the overwhelming proportion of persons employed in the public service should be Catholics. In a letter to *Tribune* dated 18 May 1962, Mr. T. Markey, a leader of the majority Irish Labour Party in control of the council, stated that of 600 applicants for employment on the books of the council not one was a Protestant. Of 4,000 unemployed 98 per cent were Catholic. For clerical posts there was an examination system with papers set alternately by Protestant and Catholic colleges. When attempts were made to asperse Newry's reputation for fairness, the Urban District Council passed a *unanimous* vote of protest on 10 April 1961.

The political motive behind discrimination, which is rampant wherever the Catholics are not in an overwhelming majority, is revealed in the tests which were imposed upon applicants not only for civil service appointments,

but for employment in the humblest capacity by a local authority. It is as if, in their anxiety to avoid falling foul of Section 5 of the Government of Ireland Act that forbids discriminatory legislation, the Unionists had been compelled to blurt out their real purpose.

It was a condition of employment by the civil service and local authorities that workers must sign a declaration of allegiance not only to the Queen of England, but to the constitution of Northern Ireland and its Government. The constitution of Northern Ireland was a Westminster statute, which is subject to amendment or repeal at any time. Its Government existed solely in virtue of that statute. A test binds the opposition to support the very thing to which it is in opposition. Yet it is estimated that 34,000 persons must conform to it.

Apart from public discrimination there is also private. As the United Nations Memorandum on the subject explains, this is not always easy to prove. But occasionally it is gloried in. In the Belfast City Council elections of May 1961 three unofficial Unionist candidates justified their breakaway by alleging of the official party an undue tolerance of Catholics, and distributed handbills boasting that they had never employed one of them in their lives. They challenged the official candidates to say the same. There has never come from the Catholic side any comparable demand for the non-employment of Protestants. Unionist spokesmen have on the other hand frequently argued that only Protestants should be employed.

The former Prime Minister, Lord Brookeborough, when as Sir Basil Brooke he was Minister of Agriculture, said:

> "I would appeal to loyalists, therefore, wherever possible to employ good Protestant lads and lassies."

When challenged he explained that

> "the vast majority of Roman Catholics in Ireland are disloyal."

Disloyal to what? His rhetoric had unwittingly carried him across the border into a different jurisdiction and incidentally admitted the unity of the country. His motive became clearer when he told his supporters:

> "Unless you act properly, before we know where we are, we shall find ourselves in the minority instead of in the majority."

This was an implied reference to the higher Catholic birthrate, and it is interesting to note that Messrs. Barritt and Carter, after studying discrimination with no hypercritical eye, remark that

> "emigration is just about sufficient to drain off the excess births in the Catholic community and keep the proportions of Protestants and Catholics almost alike."[7]

In 1949, Mr. Geoffrey Bing, K.C., M.P., reproduced a Ministry of Labour "green card" on which the "reason for non-employment" was recorded with unusual frankness. It was "Religion". But such blatancy is unnecessary. It is not even necessary to ask an applicant his religion. Segregation in education, reluctantly agreed to by the Catholics in the days of intense Protestant proselytizing, results in all sects being tagged for life. Segregation of residence operates in the same sense.

The picture of discrimination as a built-in mechanism operating for the defence of social stability has its attractions for some authors. Thus despite the clear evidence both of motive and action that the Unionists actively promote religious discrimination for political reasons, Messrs. Barritt and Carter in common with other writers represent the position as showing an unfortunate phenomenon of nature for which nobody is responsible. Ignoring official incitement and the public discrimination of government and local authorities they say:

[7] *The Northern Ireland Problem*, p. 108. They conclude, "Thus the difference in economic opportunity is a regulator maintaining the *status quo*."

"Protestant dominance in the business, executive and professional life of the province goes much beyond what would be indicated by the proportion of the population belonging to that community; so if Protestant and Catholic employers on average discriminate to the same extent, the job opportunities for Catholics will be below average and those for Protestants above average."

This is really an attempt to assert the tautology that Protestant dominance is Protestant dominance. How did it arise? By discrimination. How is it maintained? By discrimination. The Catholics once defeated were deprived of the power to retaliate. But for all the gobbledegook in which it is couched, this statement drops an accusation in the right place. It places the guilt of operating Government policy on the class responsible, the class of landlords and capitalists. That class is indeed the remnant of the old ascendancy, mindful that while the head of the Catholic Church may be the Pope of Rome, that of the Anglican is (or was until disestablishment) the King of England.

To suggest that Catholics try as hard as the Protestants to discriminate, but lack the means from their class position, is merely to parallel the famous "refutation" of socialism which runs, "If you were a capitalist you'd be an exploiter yourself." The trouble is that the refuter does not tell him how to become one.

Discrimination in housing followed a similar pattern which need not be traced so fully. The main offenders were the Unionist councils. The Irish Labour Party Council at Newry allocated strictly according to need in open council. In this connection it should be noted that since the Catholics are admittedly most numerous among the poorer people, Catholic need is invariably greater than Protestant need.

There are whole areas whose population has been restricted to Catholics as a part of electoral manipulation,

where families have been living in condemned houses for decades. In Enniskillen there are families living in single-room tenements with gaping holes in their roofs, sharing one or two communal privies inconveniently placed.

That local councils failed in their duties is generally acknowledged. For example, from 1920 to 1940 the rural district councils of Enniskillen, Lisnaskea and Irvinestown built no houses at all. An unnamed "prominent Unionist" told Messrs. Barritt and Carter that Catholic housing needs are great because "the Catholic Church encourages people to have families larger than they can rear."

Here evidently is a case where God proposes and man disposes. On 24 March 1937, Mr. Cahir Healy, M.P., read in Stormont a resolution which had come into his possession. It was passed by the West Tyrone Unionist Association, and contained the sentence:

> "We would like to point out that a great number of applicants for cottages in Co. Tyrone are either Free State Roman Catholic labourers, or the families of such labourers, and are definitely hostile to the Unionist Party and to the Northern Government."

It suggested that the regulations should be altered so that these applications need not be entertained. The Unionists were ready for their duty. If they could not stop the births they would make the rearing as difficult as possible.

Here, in another sphere, is the familiar justification of religious discrimination on political grounds, without even a thought of winning Catholic support by catering for their social needs. The reluctance of local authorities to build houses at all, and especially to let them to Catholics, became a public scandal and compelled the Government to establish the Housing Trust which has pursued a liberal policy without doing more than scratch the surface of the housing problem.

Housing policy, like employment policy, must have played a part in the efflux of Catholics from Northern Ireland.

There are other forms of discrimination which are less widespread, for example restrictions on the right to rent commercial property. A Nationalist councillor in Enniskillen was the only applicant for shop premises identical in most respects with those he held already. The owner was the Town Council. The man was turned down. Some months later the premises were let to a Protestant at a third of the rent the councillor was prepared to pay.

Then there was the absurd practice of locking the swings in working-class children's playgrounds to discourage ungodly sports on the sabbath. The Catholic religion enjoins attendance at Mass on a Sunday, but apart from that leaves the day at the disposal of the faithful. The fundamentalist tendencies of some of the City Councillors in Belfast were outraged at such permissiveness and they resolved to save the Catholics from themselves. What if the poor things broke their necks?

There was also discrimination against the Catholic Mater hospital, which was given a status inferior to that awarded comparable institutions in Britain. Then there are actions which border on the childish, such as the refusal of Lisnaskea Council to erect a street lamp outside the Catholic church although there was one provided for the main Protestant church.

It is therefore impossible to escape the conclusion that religious discrimination runs through the social life of Northern Ireland, and that what is wanted is not a study of "group relations" but a change of Government policy. The Government is evading the express provisions of the Government of Ireland Act with the connivance of the Tories at Westminster. The conflict is not between two sets of discriminators, but between those who want to divide the people and those who want to unite them.

On the one hand we have Lord Craigavon's statement

as Prime Minister, "This is a Protestant Parliament and I am an Orangeman."

On the other we have that of the late Mr. Cahir Healy, M.P., "The Nationalist position is that we want no discrimination in making clerical or other appointments. There ought to be a fair field and no privilege or preference for all the children of the province, not to mention the nation."

The philosophies which prompt the respective positions are equally clear.

On the one hand we have, "The South Down militia are the terror of the land."

On the other we have "Remember 1916" when Pearse and Connolly published their proclamation and undertook to establish "equal rights and equal opportunities" and to "cherish all the children of the nation equally".

Can any democrat doubt which is the side of progress?

As a result of their policy of discrimination, the Unionists were enabled to make an economy of capital investment in building and the provision of employment. Discrimination against Catholics has a depressing effect on Protestant standards, and so those of all are brought down. Politically the result is to divide the common people and to divert them from the path of struggle against their real enemy, British imperialism. The Unionists pose as the champions of the Protestants, protecting them from the scarlet woman of Rome, when in reality they merely fix them to the treadmill of cross-channel capitalism.

A word should be said on the result of discrimination on the "privileged" Protestant community. Its workers earn less than corresponding grades in Britain. Their "privilege" is nothing positive. It consists of freedom from special disabilities imposed on the others. But this brings with it a less obvious tyranny from within. A rich Protestant can, of course, please himself and can follow his class interests. But the small man with a family must take care.

Lack of enthusiasm for the sectarian cause has cost many a Protestant his employment in hard times. It is best to keep in with the side if "wee Willie" is to get a start in his profession.

The mechanism of keeping Catholics out becomes a means of compelling obedience in Protestants. In the 1962 election when Labour increased its vote among the Protestants of Belfast, many of the electors were chary of driving to the poll in Labour cars, even though the Northern Ireland Labour Party had fallen over backwards in its recoil from the dread imputation of nationalism. The reason is that sectarian prejudice is backed by sanctions which depend on the existence of discrimination, and only the end of discrimination against Catholics can free the Protestants to act according to their consciences.

Sometimes Unionist apologists trade on the ignorance of the British public by attempting to justify religious discrimination in the six counties by alleging it in the twenty-six. Whereas one answer would be that two wrongs do not make a right, there is a stronger one. The allegation is simply untrue.

Acts of discrimination against Protestants in the twenty-six counties make more than news. They make history. There have been but two consequential cases in the past half century. In the thirties the Mayo County Council passed over a Protestant librarian in favour of a Catholic who was promoted. The Dublin Government intervened, and the Protestant was appointed. After a dispute over a will a party who considered himself aggrieved tried to organize a boycott of Protestant shops in Fethard in Co. Wexford. Mr. De Valera, who was then *Taoiseach*, condemned the proceeding with all the authority at his command. Those who desire a United Ireland could never support religious discrimination for it would defeat their main purpose.

The first President of Ireland was a Protestant, Dr. Hyde. Mr. Erskine Childers, a member of every *Fianna*

Fáil Government for years, and another Protestant, is now President. Although non-Catholics form only 6 per cent of the population of the Republic, and are therefore not in a majority in a single constituency, they provide 10 per cent of the membership of the Senate (which includes representatives nominated by the Government), 4·5 per cent of the membership of the last Corporation of Dublin, and 3·5 per cent of the membership of the *Dáil*. These Protestants must be returned by Catholic voters. Is there a single constituency, or a single local Government area in the six counties where a Protestant majority returns a Catholic?

In the twenty-six counties there is not even any great rancour against Orangeism between the times when pogroms are in progress in Belfast. Thus Orange walks were traditional in Co. Donegal, and lodges were to be found in Monaghan and even Cavan. I recall nearly a quarter of a century ago chancing to be in the Co. Leitrim on the twelfth of July. While the march of hate was proceeding in Belfast, a farmer's wife took new potatoes to a Protestant family who had come from one of the six counties and settled near Dromahaire. The reason? They had arrived too late to plant an early crop and this was a special occasion to them.

It would be hard to take tolerance further, though it is to be doubted whether the Leitrim woman appreciated fully what the twelfth of July stood for, or the fact that it was quite possible that these Protestants did not view it with favour. Her instinct was good-neighbourliness and she followed it. That instinct exists among the Protestants too, but requires just laws and a sound constitution to give it free play.

SIX

One Vote Equals Two

Gerrymandering is a system of manipulating electoral boundaries so that the result depends not on the number of the votes but upon how they are arranged.

The Government of Ireland Act performed the master gerrymander from which all others are derived. It is ironical that in the last years of the Union, Ireland received its most democratic electoral system under British rule. Realizing that its supporters were now in a minority, the British authorities introduced a system where every vote would count, namely the form of proportional representation marked by the single transferable vote. The system had been proposed for local government in the whole United Kingdom, but was only operated in Ireland, the first occasion being that of the municipal and urban elections of January 1920. The object was to give the best possible opportunity to the Unionist minority.

There were 206 such local government areas in Ireland, and *Sinn Fein* gained control of 172 of them, including the County Councils of Fermanagh and Tyrone, and the City Council of Derry. But the Irish people were never permitted to hold a General Election by proportional representation. For in 1921, though the system was extended to them, there were two elections instead of one. It was clear that 80 per cent of the people still insisted on an independent Republic, and on the basis of democracy this should have been sufficient. But the Government of Ireland Act had come into force, and Ireland was divided into two polling areas. This was the beginning of the system known as "gerrymandering" from

the name of Governor Gerry who instituted it in the state of Massachusetts. Partition never possessed any higher status than that of an act of electoral legerdemain.

In the larger of these areas, comprising twenty-six counties, there was no contest. The Republicans held all seats unopposed with the exception of the four of Trinity College. In the smaller the Unionists won 40 out of 52 seats. Thus the result on an all-Ireland basis was the return of 140 Nationalists and 44 Unionists. The Nationalist majority was 96, and the opposition formed 23·9 per cent of the candidates returned.

But the election was held in two parts, each part on a separate day. That in the six counties was held under conditions of terror, accompanied by intimidation and pogroms. In this area, despite all, the Nationalists won 23·2 per cent of the seats. But by removing the 100 per cent Nationalist twenty-six county area into a separate voting region, the Unionist vote had been kept intact for service in six counties selected to form Northern Ireland. It represented only 20 per cent of the electorate of Ireland, but it was adequate to submerge a Nationalist vote representing about 10 per cent of them.

There was now no prospect of establishing an Irish Republic by popular vote. It was not sufficient to hold the 70 per cent incorporated in the twenty-six counties. It was necessary to win more than half the remaining 30 per cent as well, and the process might for that matter be repeated, for if a majority of these should become converted to Republicanism, the demand could go up for a further partition in which a majority must be won in the remaining 15 per cent. An ancient Pictish Kingdom of Dalriada might then be resuscitated and the world be told that Dalriada must not be coerced by the majority of "Ulster". The principle of partition means in effect that it does not suffice a nation to demand independence by a majority; unanimity is needed.

The position would thus be difficult enough in a clear

field. But the Nationalists were not left a clear field. First came pogroms organized for the purpose of driving as many of them as possible across the border. The disturbances of 1920 are described in the annual report of the Irish Trades Union Congress.

> "At a meeting of the men of Workman and Clark's shipyard on 23 July last, to which were imported people from Bangor and other places, an appeal was made to the basest passions to stir up religious bigotry and to drive Sinn Feiners out of Ulster and not to allow 'rotten Prods' in loyal Ulster. A 'rotten Prod' is a man with the same amount of toleration as ourselves–to give the right to all workers to think and act on civil and religious affairs as one may see fit.... In 1849 seven thousand Roman Catholic families were cleared out of Armagh to make room for Protestants. That policy is still being pursued today.... On 21 July, men armed with sledge-hammers and other weapons swooped down on the Catholic workers in the shipyards, and did not even give them a chance for their lives. There was no aggression towards them, no provacation, no 'rebel cries'. The gates were smashed open with sledges, and vests and shirts of those at work were torn open to see were the men wearing any Catholic emblems, and then woe betide the man who was. One man was set upon, thrown into the dock, had to swim the Musgrave channel, and having been pelted with rivets had to swim two or three miles, to emerge in streams of blood and rush to the police office in a nude state."

Belfast delegates explained that "*Sinn Fein*, the Republican element, is breaking the old political prejudices and barriers; the Labour movement equally is broadening the Orangeman's mind so quickly that it would only be a matter of time when the Boyne would be bridged and then that ascendancy gang would lose its power."

A "rotten Prod" (and proud of it), Mr. Hanna told the Congress that he "had to put three thousand miles between Belfast and himself to open up his small mind and rid himself of ideas imbued into him."

What clearly emerges from the T.U.C. report is that the pogroms were organized from without the shipyard, and that the number of workers who resisted the forcible breaking up of the unity of their class was sufficiently great to necessitate a campaign against the "rotten Prods" –of which 400 in all were expelled from the yard. These expelled Protestants were, indeed, the cream of the Belfast working class, the shop representatives and leaders of the unions in every economic struggle.

But victory went to reaction. The pogroms were an essential part of the preparation for establishing Northern Ireland. Similar pogroms occurred in 1921 and 1922. Between 21 June 1920 and 18 June 1922, there were 428 Catholics killed and 1,766 wounded, 8,750 driven from their work, and 23,000 driven or as it was usually put "burnt out" from their homes. A thousand refugees fled to Glasgow where they added to an already difficult unemployment problem.

In its blood days, the Unionist Party scarcely troubled to separate its electoral activity from the violence and intimidation it had made general. Polling stations were sited either in Unionist areas, or in such a position that Nationalist voters must run the gantelope of their political opponents, frequently armed and as often ready to fire.

The siting of polling stations in inconvenient if not now dangerous positions is a recognized method of discouraging the opposition in rural areas even today. In the Westminster House of Commons in March 1948, Members gave examples of Nationalist voters living west of Omagh, who must walk through the town and three miles east before they reached the station where it had been decided that they could cast their votes. Those living southwest must go five miles southeast beyond the town. In Co.

Down there was an instance of electors having to cross a mountain and go five miles further on to cast their votes.

Another feature of Northern Ireland elections is the prevalence of impersonation. While of course this is a game that two can play at, that it is tolerated suggests that on the balance it assists the party in power, which has the best organization available. Every candidate is entitled to have an impersonation agent at each polling station in order to challenge the identity of voters suspected of casting votes not belonging to them.

After the Co. Down by-election, which for good or ill first brought Mr. Desmond Donnelly into public notice, he complained that in one locality his Unionist opponent had been provided with a tent by his enthusiastic supporters. Here impersonators selected disguises from a substantial range of mackintoshes and overcoats. And indeed, one might ask, why should those to whom the year 1690 is part of contemporary history boggle at the intervention of electors not more than a couple of years dead?

In the 1959 imperial election, the Republicans complained of interference with their impersonation agents, one of whom was actually arrested shortly before the election. In the debate on the Electoral Law Bill at Stormont early in 1962, Nationalists complained that the Government was taking such malpractices too lightly, as being on the whole advantageous to themselves.

Such irritants indicate the course of policy without shaping its result.

The first unmistakable indication that the Northern Ireland Government was unwilling to maintain normal electoral standards came some five weeks before the local Government Act of 1922 was passed by Stormont. On 16 September that year, two orders were issued, the first demanding a £25 deposit from each local government candidate, the second requiring from him an oath of al-

legiance to the King of England and his heirs and successors for ever plus allegiance to the Constitution of Northern Ireland, an Act of the British Parliament.

The introduction of an obligatory oath can only be regarded as an act of irresponsible provocation, calculated to alienate totally those Nationalists who might have contemplated giving the new régime a trial if only for the sake of peace. The civil war was raging in the south. It was being fought on the express issue of allegiance to the Crown of England, which was the basis of partition. Then there was the fiction that Northern Ireland would form a part of the Irish Free State which was to be established on 6 December. It was at least imaginable that the next local elections might be held as was provided in the *Saorstat* constitution. Things were being taken for granted, the English Government cannot have been unaware that they were being taken for granted, and had the Provisional Government not had other things to think of, relations between London and Dublin might have been visibly soured. But Stormont was desperately anxious to consolidate, and pressed ahead with the local Government Act.

The Local Authorities Electors and Constituencies Bill passed Stormont on 19 October 1922, while the Provisional Parliament in Dublin was taking the report stage of the Free State Constitution Bill.

The first section abolished proportional representation; in addition the local elections were postponed until May 1924. During the winter that followed a Mr. Leech, appointed with the powers of a judge, visited areas in which proposals and objections relative to the numbers and boundaries of electoral districts might be expected. Electors were given about fourteen days' notice to forward representations, together with relevant maps and statistics. It usually turned out that the local Unionists had their plans cut and dried. The Nationalists were however taken by surprise. It was beyond their resources to provide

documented objections at such short notice and in practically every instance the scheme proposed by the Tories went through.

Special attention had been given to the areas where the Nationalists were in a majority. According to Mr. Cahir Healy,

> "The late Mr. W. T. Miller, M.P. for Tyrone and agent for the Duke of Abercorn, at a demonstration in Fintona boasted that he had rendered more vital service to the Unionist Party than any other man in the northwest. His claim was in effect that he had spent two years, night and day, arranging and rearranging the rural areas and townlands in Co. Tyrone in order to convert a strong Nationalist county into a Unionist one at the council boards. He seemed to think he had not got recognition for the laborious gerrymandering of local government constituencies."

From the Unionist point of view it was important to secure Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry City in order to forestall a very damaging argument. These areas with their Nationalist majorities are contiguous with Ulster Counties included in the twenty-six county area. Fermanagh borders Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal as well as Leitrim in Connaught. Tyrone lies between Monaghan and Donegal, and Derry City is geographically speaking in Donegal since it occupies a four-mile bridgehead on the west side of the river Foyle.

Why should these areas come under Belfast? If the dissident opinions of a local majority in six counties necessitated separating them from the other twenty-six in order to attach them to Britain, why did the dissident opinions of a local majority in two not necessitate their detachment from the other four when they could be joined immediately to contiguous areas where electors belonged to the same majority? The Unionists have never been able to answer this question. They went a stage

further than the chess player who upsets the board when he sees his opponent's queen hovering for checkmate; they invented their own rules. These rules enabled them to convert a majority of electors into a minority of representation.

The classic case was the City of Derry. First it is necessary to distinguish three electoral registers, demanding different qualifications. The Imperial register over which the Northern Ireland Government has no control is used exclusively for Westminster elections. It provides for adult universal suffrage without property qualification for all British subjects and citizens of the Republic. It is not the subject of widespread complaint though it should be noted that Northern Ireland is seriously under-represented at Westminster, the average electorate per member being 73,000 as against 56,000 in Great Britain.

The Stormont register differed from the Imperial in excluding natives of the twenty-six counties who lack seven years' residence in Northern Ireland. The Safeguarding of Employment Act reduced the number of such persons to a minimum, but they were fairly numerous in certain border areas, particularly in centres of communications like Derry, Strabane, Enniskillen and Newry.

Until recently this register recorded a business vote for occupiers of premises of a minimum valuation of £10 per annum, and their spouses, without residence qualification.

A Derry businessman might thus help to decide the complexion of the six county Government though himself resident in the Co. Donegal. Every night he might drive his car over the border to a sea girt villa where he could live like a gentleman. Every polling day he could drive his wife the other way to cast her vote with him. A person born in Co. Donegal on the other hand could live and labour in Derry City for seven years without the opportunity to challenge at the polls what the businessman was doing for him. According to Mr. Bing there were in 1947, before the business vote was abolished in British

elections, 1,072 Stormont business votes, and only 35 valid for Westminster. In other words Stormont allowed thirty times as many business votes as Westminster. The result of substituting the Stormont for the Westminster register is to increase the number of votes in favour of Unionism, and decrease that of its opponents.

The local government register, previous to the reorganization of 1972, took the process of disfranchisement a stage further. It provided for a business vote, this time without spouse, but sometimes with partner, under the title of "general occupier's qualification". Limited Companies were entitled to appoint one nominee for every £10 of the valuation of their premises up to a maximum of six. All other voters must possess a "resident occupier's qualification" which required that a person must on the qualifying date occupy a dwelling either as owner or tenant. A lodger did not qualify. It is estimated that under this provision something like a third of the adult citizens were disfranchised. It is obvious too that the result must be a strong inducement to Unionist local authorities to adopt parsimonious and discriminatory housing policies. Those who fail to get houses through local government laxity cannot express their discontent at the polls. In the west the arrangement penalized Nationalists, in the east Labour; everywhere the owners of property, the stake-in-the-country people, were favoured at the expense of the young. It is as yet too early to say how far this situation has improved.

The situation in Derry City before the corporation was dissolved was as follows. The Imperial register carried the names of 18,818 Nationalists and 10,260 Unionists. On the local government register there were 5,633 fewer Nationalists and only 1,143 fewer Unionists. That is to say that about one Nationalist in three and one Unionist in ten was disfranchised through lack of ownership or tenancy. The Nationalist poll then stood at 13,185, the Unionist at 9,117. The gap was thus substantially nar-

rowed. But the Nationalists still had a majority of 4,000. How then did Derry get a Tory Council?

The city was divided into three wards of grossly unequal size. The boundaries of the south ward were so drawn as to enclose no less than 9,340 out of the 13,185 Nationalist voters. And since this ward absorbed only 1,409 Unionist votes, the remainder, 8,708 votes, were more than enough to provide Unionist majorities in North and Waterside for which there were only 3,895 Nationalist votes left. Thus with north and south wards returning eight councillors each, and Waterside four, the Unionists had a majority of four on the Council and were then in a position to make all the public appointments.

Apart from depriving the majority of its right to rule, the drawing of electoral boundaries in such a way as to make the result inevitable resulted in the stultification of political life. There has been no electoral contest in Derry from 1947 to 1973. There was no point in putting up opposition candidates. Hence candidates need offer no programmes. Derry was never called on to think or choose. Political stimulus was non-existent. The position which gave rise to sectarianism was perpetuated by the sectarianism it gave rise to. An important municipal training ground for young politicians was deprived of vitality and the paralysis then spread throughout the land. The hidebound, the unadventurous, the parochial was everywhere at a premium. Toryism bred Toryism and the constitution was preserved.

While Derry City is the classical example, it was of course by no means the only gerrymandered area. Gerrymanders have been operated in every area with a small or moderate Nationalist majority including Armagh City, Enniskillen Town, and Omagh. Only in Newry is the Nationalist majority so overwhelming that the Unionists must accept defeat.

Each gerrymander is adapted to local circumstances. In some cases the object seemed to be to eliminate all op-

position. Portadown with a Unionist majority had only one ward. The Unionists can therefore gain 100 per cent representation if they offer enough candidates. At present they tolerate a Labour opposition of two. In Omagh as a consequence of gerrymandering there was no contest from 1922 up to 1959 when an Irish Labour candidate forced a contest. Some of the people had to be taught how to vote. There was moreover some ill-feeling directed against the disturbers of the *status quo*.

Each side felt they were splitting the vote. In Omagh there was a tacit bargain between the parties which the Nationalists confess "humiliating but unavoidable". The Unionists refused to permit re-housing to alter the electoral framework. Catholics were housed in the Nationalist wards, Protestants in the Unionist. As a crowning act of grace, the Unionists permitted the Nationalist councillors to allocate "Catholic houses" among their community. Thus discrimination breeds the possibility of nepotism and ensnares even the bitterest opponents of the régime into the distribution of its perquisites.

The result of gerrymandering was to create Unionist councils throughout the predominantly Nationalist belt west of the Bann and south of a line drawn from its source to Dundrum Bay. Even the City of Belfast did not escape. Before partition it returned 37 Tories, 10 Nationalists, 12 Labour and one Independent. In 1946 it returned 51 Tories, one Nationalist, 8 Labour and no Independent. Naturally it is in Belfast that the number of voteless lodgers and of "company votes" would be greatest. It is probable that many of the younger Protestants who would hesitate to vote Labour at Imperial or Stormont elections would do so at municipal elections if it were only in the hope of securing a house. The abolition of the property qualification plus the restoration of proportional representation would therefore have the effect of putting the Unionists in a minority in the city.

British democrats who appreciate the enormous progressive significance of such an event should note that the disfranchisement of the lodgers in the six counties was the result of a decision of the British Parliament. The Representation of the People Act of 1945 established universal adult suffrage in municipal elections in the United Kingdom. But it contained a section excluding the local electors of Northern Ireland from its benefits. It was only because the Westminster Parliament explicitly withheld universal suffrage from the six counties, that the Unionists were enabled to continue their old undemocratic system. The Westminster Parliament which decreed that the Nationalists of the six counties should be citizens of the United Kingdom, similarly decreed that they should be denied the rights customary among such citizens. The failure of successive Governments, including Labour Governments, to do their duty is the main cause of the recurring disturbances in the six counties.

While gerrymandering inflicts a grievous wrong, it is the weapon which the Unionists might be most willing to put aside, or use with more discretion. Thus several years ago academics were advising the abolition of gerrymandering in local government elections by abolishing local government itself. The Unionists would then rely on the ultimate gerrymander, partition, which is guaranteed by the English Government. What they are above all anxious to avoid is a series of municipalities round the periphery of the state, all governed by parties whose programme is transference to Dublin. Now that local government has been re-shaped, even if imperfectly, it will be possible to watch for the emergence of this principle.

SEVEN

Government Without Consent

The unfairness and illogicality of the line of the border has already been referred to. During the negotiations of the autumn of 1921 the English representatives persuaded the Irish to accept it on the promise of a Boundary Commission which would remove anomalies by transferring districts from one side to the other. It was presumed that if the six county Government refused to merge with the twenty-six, they would in all probability lose Fermanagh, Tyrone, South Down, South Armagh and Derry City. It was argued that a jurisdiction so truncated would be incapable of economic survival and would be compelled to join the "Free State". This, apparently, would not be "coercion". The Irish delegates accepted the "Treaty" on this understanding.

They were kept in ignorance of two secret pledges, which make nonsense of the oft-repeated assertion that the English Government did not desire partition. The six county leaders were naturally averse to an arrangement which would expose them to the hostility of the great majority of the Irish people, unless they had assurances that these would never be in a position to exact retribution.

Thus if there was to be partition it must be permanent, and the frontier must not be liable to revision. The name "perfidious Albion" was not given for nothing and they wanted the assurances in writing. They received them on the presumable condition that they were kept secret until the quarry was in the bag.

The six county Government declined to appoint a member to the Boundary Commission. But their torpedo

missed its target. The English Government introduced a Bill empowering Westminster to appoint a representative on their behalf. This was done on 6 August 1924. There was considerable alarm in high Tory circles. It was time to make use of the secret pledges.

Early in September Lord Balfour fired the first shot. He published a letter he had received from Lord Birkenhead just before the Cabinet crisis in which Lloyd George offered his resignation. It was dated 3 March 1922 and in it he assured Lord Balfour that Article Twelve of the "Treaty" contemplated the maintenance of Northern Ireland as an entity already existing, notwithstanding the fact that the Irish delegates had only been induced to sign on the understanding that the Boundary Commission was intended to revise the boundary.

On 10 September 1924 Lord Birkenhead played the ball back. He confirmed the intention behind his letter. Winston Churchill then sought to play statesman by talking of "minor adjustments to the boundary". But on 24 September the Earl of Selborne handed to the press a memorandum by Lord Long, who had been Cabinet adviser on Irish affairs during the discussion of the Government of Ireland Bill. It was made clear that the Unionists had declined to take office and work the Act unless the English Government guaranteed them complete protection. They demanded solemn assurances that once constituted the boundaries of the six counties would remain inviolable. This the Cabinet agreed to and the pledge was given in November 1920, about a year before Griffith and Collins were coaxed to their ruin by an offer to break it.

To show the members of the Boundary Commission the line they were expected to follow, on 29 September Lord Carson stated in the *Morning Post* that in 1916 Lloyd George had given him a pledge of permanent partition. In a fine display of righteous indignation Lloyd George denied ever having done any such thing, whereupon Car-

son published the letter of 29 May 1916, in which a novel approach to the "coercion of Ulster" was given.

> "We must make it clear that at the end of the provisional period, Ulster does not, whether she wills it or not, merge with the rest of Ireland."

Such then were the pledges. How were they to be made good? Northern Ireland contained at least 300,000 people who saw their deliverance in terms of a re-drawing of the border. As Lloyd George had said, they could only be kept in the six counties by means of coercion. Who was going to do the coercing and how?

The Government of Ireland Act forbade the six county Government to raise or maintain an army. In 1922 the area was swarming with English troops withdrawn from the south. But the General Staff had repeatedly warned the Government that their insatiable thirst for intervention all over the globe was stretching their military capacity. Suppose some way could be found to permit Northern Ireland to undertake its own defence, not in the international field, but against the Free State, whose reaction when the boundary fraud was exposed might conceivably be vigorous?

Under Section 23 of the Government of Ireland Act, Northern Ireland was obliged to remit to Westminster an annual contribution which included the six county share of the cost of imperial defence. Under the Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act this was fixed at a sum of £7,920,000. How was the new State to undertake defence and security commitments without encroaching on this liability? The answer was to weave a tissue of illegalities.

It has been mentioned that the Ulster Volunteers constituted themselves as an extra-legal armed force, and defied the Asquith Government from 1912 onwards. Among the pleasantries devised by their spokesmen were promises to "hang Cabinet Ministers from lampposts", and

Sir Edward Carson, speaking of the projected refusal to recognize the authority of a constitutionally established Irish Parliament, declared, "I do not care twopence whether it is treason or not."

The origin of the Ulster Volunteers in the armed blacklegs of the 1907 transport strike, when sections of the police supported the workers, is noted in *The Times History of the First World War,* Volume 8, page 399. There it is stated that "manufacturers and merchants in Belfast, finding it impossible in the absence of police protection to get their goods conveyed to and from the docks, armed themselves and their servants . . . and saw their goods safe on board. This was the beginning of the arming of Ulster."

In 1920, as part of the preparation for partition, this force was recognized, reorganized and re-equipped. Its service rifles and revolvers were delivered in Belfast before the British public was allowed to know of the Cabinet decision. In November 1920 former members of the Ulster Volunteers were called to meetings where they were offered enrolment as Special Constables, the status simultaneously enjoyed by the Black-and-Tans. Two classes were established, a small full-time class "A", based on barracks and a large part-time class "B", based on their own homes, but armed with rifle, bayonet and side arms and possessing all the rights of servants of the Crown. They were described by the *Manchester Guardian* as "the instruments of a religious tyranny" beating down the opposition to the Government of Ireland Act.

A year later, when the Act was in force, the police authorities by secret circular called for the establishment of a third force, class "C", of which it was said, "The force is intended as a military one only," and must be "constituted from a reliable section of the population."

The establishment of this force was explicitly (as that of the others was implicitly) *ultra vires.* But far from raising objections the British Government footed the bill.

According to Captain Harrison[1] the legal and financial implications of maintaining the border were the subject of secret correspondence between Sir James Craig and the Tory Colonial Secretary on 6 November 1922.

By December 1925, when Mr. Winston Churchill announced the impending disbandment of the Special Constabulary, no less than £6,759,000 out of the total cost of £7,426,000 had been met from the Imperial Exchequer, a figure which amounted to half the Imperial Contribution for the years 1922–5. The number then under arms was about 40,000.

The six counties were thus converted into an armed camp while the Boundary Commission was making its enquiries. It was clear that the six county Government would decline to accept its findings if they proved unpalatable.

The two imperial representatives rejected all existing units as areas for determining the wishes of inhabitants. Under county option Northern Ireland would lose Fermanagh and Tyrone. Poor law union option would transfer parts of Down, Armagh and Derry, including Derry City. Did option by parishes suit? Under this arrangement Belfast would be divided into zones like Berlin. Apparently the same delicacy of touch was not called for on the far side of the border. Grabs were made for parts of Donegal and Monaghan. The Free State representative resigned, and behold "Ulster" preserved from doom.

And behind the arguments for leaving the frontier where it was stood the Special Constabulary, 40,000 strong, and paid for by England, which was not prepared to employ imperial troops for fear of bringing back the Irish question into British politics. Immediately the boundary was safe the Westminster Government felt relieved of financial obligations. Mr. Churchill said:

[1] *Ireland and the British Empire*, p. 229; *The Neutrality of Ireland*, p. 120.

"While the boundary question was in suspense, Sir James Craig and his Government felt it necessary to maintain between 30,000 and 40,000 special constables. Every year to every government they were bound to make their request for financial assistance. . . . So soon as this settlement was reached Sir James Craig informed me that he would be able to proceed immediately with the winding up of the Special Constabulary, and in consequence we were able to agree upon a final and terminating payment of no more than £1,200,000."

What did this extraordinary statement mean? It meant that the English Parliament had footed the Bill for maintaining a counter-revolutionary armed force whose avowed purpose was the frustrating of the intentions of the Free State Agreement Act, which had not been repealed. In 1914 the same people had been encouraged by the Tories to defy the Liberal Government. Now the Tories were in office and the stormtroopers had official status, but at one remove. The enormous value of the six county administration to British Toryism is apparent.

Next day, 9 December 1924, Sir James Craig announced the disbandment of the "A"-Specials but the retention of the "B"-men. Now he had to pay for them out of six county funds. What did he need them for? For the coercive functions already indicated by Lloyd George who, when asked in Parliament to explain the Specials, had done so in a comparison with Mussolini's *fascisti.* They remained in existence until 1969, when they were superseded by the Ulster Defence Regiment.

Throughout the whole period of their existence their legality was doubtful. They were armed with rifles and machine guns and were clearly a military force. They were moreover a sectarian force. No Catholic could become a "B"-Special. In country districts it is common for the Protestants to occupy large farms in the valleys,

while Catholics eke out a living in the barren hills. The sons of the large farmers were usually "B"-men. It is also to be noticed that, except in the counties of Antrim and Down, the urban districts contain a higher percentage of Catholics than the countryside. Thus as well as the arming of the landlords and capitalists against the tenants and workers, we see the familiar continental device of playing off the town against the country.

The excesses of this sectarian force were notorious. Their task was not merely to police, but to intimidate. Gratuitous searches of premises, unnecessary challenges in the highway, arrests on suspicion, invasion of social functions and invigilation of political activities were commonplace. These men were the Orange stormtroops, the paramilitary élite, backed by a government that asked no questions.

In March 1955, Arthur Leonard, a nineteen-year-old boy whose family had no political affiliations, was driving across the border to his home in Co. Monaghan when "B"-Specials showed red lanterns and ordered him to stop. Mistaking the signals for traffic warnings, he drove on, his main attention centred on the two girls he was bringing home from the dance. The "B"-Specials then fired and shot him dead. At the inquest Mr. Curran, solicitor representing the relatives, demanded a verdict of murder. The coroner declined to return it, saying, "The law which Mr. Curran quoted applies only to England. The law in Northern Ireland is in a peculiar state. . . ." Such incidents are inseparable from the attempt to hold an area in defiance of the wishes of its inhabitants.

The adoption of the former Ulster Volunteers as part of the new machinery of state had decisive political results. The gerrymandering from 1922 onwards had served notice that constitutional action would be made as difficult as possible. The discrimination now in full swing showed the Catholics that their daily lives were to be made as uncomfortable as possible. The establishment of the Carsonites

as "B"-men was a declaration that the principle of government by consent had been rejected.

It is therefore somewhat ironical to find those who once preached the armed defiance of Parliament, and turned their rebel army into an official police force, expressing shocked surprise when sections of the Nationalist youth, goaded beyond endurance, seek to give the six county Tories a hair of the dog that bit them. If, as its actions indicated, the Government proposed to found its rule on blatant coercion, then it was inviting the conclusion that coercion was a possible recourse against it.

Ireland is not the only country where this consequence was thought out. Here was Irish soil, held by unashamed dictatorship, against the wishes of people persecuted and denied political expression. To expect there would not be young men prepared to meet force with force would be to expect a miracle. More mature political minds might hesitate and caution, but at every setback in the constitutional field, the seemingly speedier alternative would come to the fore again. It is likely to go on doing so until there is a convincing constitutional policy with strong prospects of early success.

That after fifty years there should still be an organized movement of men prepared to take the risks entailed in disposing of the Government by revolutionary means, is itself an indictment of the partition settlement.

Another grievance originating in the early days of partition is the repressive legislation which has been used against its opponents for a half century. On 15 March 1922 Dawson Bates introduced in the Stormont Parliament the Civil Authorities of Northern Ireland (Special Powers) Bill. He announced that £2,500,000 had been allocated to the maintenance of "order" since the six county régime was "at war with the I.R.A." and that Sir Henry Wilson, retired Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had been appointed to organize the defence of "Ulster". It is clear that financial assurances must have been received from London.

The Special Powers Act, as it is usually called, has also been held to be strictly speaking illegal. Under its provisions the Home Secretary (defined as the Civil Authority) was given power to "take all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order", in accordance with the further provisions of the Act. But for this purpose he was empowered to delegate "either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as he thinks fit, all or any of his powers to the Parliamentary Secretary of the Minister of Home Affairs, or to any officer of the Royal Ulster Constabulary."

There are two grounds on which it has been argued that this provision was unconstitutional. First, the Government of Ireland Act made the Parliament of Northern Ireland responsible for the peace, order and good government of the six counties. This responsibility it received by delegation. Implicit in this arrangement was the principle that its responsibility should not be delegated a second time, to a civil authority or a policeman, but should be exercised by those to whom it was given.

The second may be illustrated by an example. A man's house was searched by members of the R.U.C. In a drawer was found a copy of Dorothy Macardle's classic work *The Irish Republic*. A police officer testified that in his opinion the book was an objectionable publication "calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of peace or the maintenance of order". The man was awarded a year's imprisonment, with hard labour. Innocence in action, combined with innocence in intention, availed him nothing. It is reasoned that it is impermissible that the common law rights of a citizen, protected by a jury's view of conduct and motive, should be abrogated by delegated legislation.

How frequently such cases can arise is seen at once from the list of powers delegated to the Civil Authority and the police. They were empowered to:

1. Arrest without warrant;

2. Imprison without charge or trial and deny recourse to Habeas Corpus or a court of law;
3. Enter and search homes without warrant, and with force, at any hour of day or night;
4. Declare a curfew and prohibit meetings, assemblies (including fairs and markets) and processions;
5. Permit punishment by flogging;
6. Deny claim to a trial by jury;
7. Arrest persons it is desired to examine as witnesses, forcibly detain them and compel them to answer questions, under penalties, even if answers may incriminate them. Such a person is guilty of an offence if he refuses to be sworn or answer a question; this applies even where no offence is known, provided a police officer has reason to believe that one is "about to be committed".
8. Do any act involving interference with the rights of private property;
9. Prevent access of relatives or legal advisers to a person imprisoned without trial;
10. Prohibit the holding of an inquest after a prisoner's death;
11. Arrest a person "who by word of mouth" spreads false reports or makes false statements;
12. Prohibit the circulation of any newspaper;
13. Prohibit the possession of any film or gramophone record;
14. Forbid the erection of any monument or other memorial;
15. Enter the premises of any bank, examine accounts and order the transfer of money, property, vouchers or documents to the Civil Authority. If the bank fails to comply an offence is committed;
16. Arrest a person who does anything "calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of peace or maintenance of order in Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations."

The Special Powers Act moreover included a list of unlawful organizations. These were organizations believed to be associated with the Republican movement whose aim is the unity and independence of Ireland. They were added to from time to time. Thus when the Republican Clubs were established to propagate Republican ideas within the law, they were speedily entered on the list, and it has been held that even if a Republican Club devoted itself exclusively to bingo, it would still be unlawful.

It is clear that under the shadow of such powers normal political life is impossible. That for nearly half a century they had been administered by a sectarian police force sent their effect like a poison through the whole social structure. The effect was felt on Protestants as well as Catholics, for these, like the Germans when they heard of concentration camps and massacres, must learn to dehumanize themselves, to make one part of their minds wooden and unresponsive. To do otherwise is to risk the extension of the system to themselves.

Between 1957 and 1961 there were up to 170 men (and one woman) interned without charge or trial in Belfast prison. On St. Patrick's Day, 1958, many of them said they were savagely beaten up by commandos of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to make a "Belfast holiday". They had been caught trying to dig an escape tunnel. No evidence had been offered of any overt action by any of them, indeed not even of dangerous thoughts.

They were held until the volume of protest (including that of many British Members of Parliament and trade unions) could no longer be ignored. In the meantime, if they tried to dig themselves out they were hardly to be blamed. Such enterprises are warmly applauded when they take place in certain more distant places.

Following demands that the authorities either try these men or let them go, it was announced that a Special Tribunal had been set up to which they could appeal. The public was curious to know its composition, but this was

strenuously withheld. Some who appealed to it were released. Others were released only after considerable delay and much questioning.

One man, arrested while sheltering from a shower in a shop doorway and unbeknownst sharing his refuge with a man in possession of an illegal newspaper, is said to have been released only after signing a renunciation of the I.R.A. and all its works and pomps, though he had never been a member.

The majority of the internees declined to appear before the tribunal, holding rightly or wrongly, that the release of a man of known Republican views would be given only on condition that he was prepared to turn informer. In view of the Government's refusal to publish the composition of the tribunal, this suspicion was understandable.

Under the Special Powers Act the circulation of the *United Irishman* was prohibited in Northern Ireland, and the *Irish Democrat* was similarly banned for several years. Visitors arriving from Dublin were watched and on occasion detained and even searched. In April 1960 the sum of £150 was taken from Mrs. McGlade, member of a Republican family, as she stepped off the Dublin train and, despite protests and threats of legal action (which could have been taken under Section 6 of the Government of Ireland Act), it was never returned. It is of interest that the Northern Ireland Bill of 1962 tried to plug up this loophole for democracy by drastically restricting the right of appeal to the House of Lords.

An enactment which reveals the illiterate asininity of Unionist ideology was the Flags and Emblems (Display) Act of 1954. This provided that any person who prevents or threatens to interfere by force with the display of the Union flag is liable to a fine of £50 and up to six months' imprisonment. On the other hand where any police officer considered the display of an emblem (an emblem is said to be among other things any flag that is not the Union flag) likely to cause a breach of the peace, he might insist

upon its removal, and failing this might enter any premises to remove it, and be indemnified for any damage he caused provided he acted in "good faith". Failure to remove a flag so objected to may involve a £50 fine and six months of imprisonment.

The Union flag is the flag created in 1801 when the red saltire was added to the Anglo-Scottish flag. The occasion was the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. The Union of Great Britain and Ireland as a whole was dissolved in 1922. It might be thought that this tenderness for the Union flag was sheer nostalgia. Every English schoolboy knows the red saltire as the cross of St. Patrick. But St. Patrick had no cross. So far as is known he died in his bed. The saltire is the emblem of the Fitzgerald family. It was adopted by the "Loyal Knights of St. Patrick" in the seventeen-eighties, that is to say by an aristocratic predecessor of the Orange Order. Perhaps for that reason the Ulster office in London is occasionally bedecked with it.

It was of course not against the flag of Greece or Liberia that the prohibition was directed. It was against the tricolour of the Irish Republic, the flag that proclaims the unity of Orange and Green through the democratic principle of Republicanism. It is taken by the Unionists as an affront and a reproach to them. When cyclists from the Republic have competed in an international race round Ireland, the authorities have objected to the display of the tricolour on their handlebars though there has been no objection to other "emblems". Yet in the mythology of Unionism the Republic is a foreign country with which the Queen of England is at peace.

The Special Powers Act was not applied with equal severity under all circumstances. Nor was it employed exclusively against Republicans. On a number of occasions trade unions have suffered from it, and during the war two prominent leaders of the Belfast Trades Council were imprisoned for three months without charge or trial. Both

of them were indisputable Protestants, though hardly of the political complexion that would commend itself to the Unionists.

The attitude of the administration to trade unionism has evolved in the course of the class and national struggle. Thus in 1927 the British Trade Disputes Act was adopted with alacrity. It was not repealed in 1945. The administration refused to recognize the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Trades Union Congress because the latter body's headquarters was in Dublin–though strangely enough the same circumstance did not disqualify the Freemasons or the Methodist Church. In the O'Neill era, the main features of which will be discussed later, there were notable concessions to trade union power. The Trade Disputes Act was repealed except for the provision substituting "contracting in" for the more usual "contracting out" in the payment of political levy to the Labour Party. The Northern Committee was recognized, and in 1970 proposals were made for financing some of the work of the trade union movement which was considered to be of value to industry. Its acceptance of government assistance has been criticized though there are similar arrangements in the twenty-six counties. In general the Irish trade union movement has avoided political issues because of their intensely divisive potentialities. While this is understandable it has meant that the voice of the organization of the mass of the workers has not been adequately heard on the most burning issue. Trade unionists have agreed to differ on partition, but the Northern Committee has declared for the democratization of the state structure of Northern Ireland.

EIGHT

Ireland and British Foreign Policy

After 1922, the Irish question ceased to dominate British politics. In Ireland, by contrast, the issue of national independence retained its old supremacy, in economic and political affairs alike. The exclusion from British politics was of course only apparent. The most strenuous efforts were made to insulate the English people from the slightest interest in or understanding of the Irish viewpoint. The myth was invented that the Irish question was now answered. There was nothing more to be said. And so the popular press presented it. But behind the scenes the rulers of Britain paid it close and constant attention. Every shift in international relations had its consequence in relation to Ireland. The old struggle of sovereignties continued in new forms, and influenced the course of events in the two countries and the world at large.

During the first phase the Dublin Government strove to use its representation in the counsels of the Commonwealth much as the Parliamentarians had used their position at Westminster. The "Treaty" which Lloyd George imposed on the representatives of the Republic defined the status of the "Irish Free State" by reference to that of the Dominion of Canada. Kevin O'Higgins, who had been foiled in his chosen policy of "getting the king crowned in Dublin" in return for the unity of the country, turned his attention to the enlargement of the freedom of action of Dominions. He canvassed this notion during the imperial conference of 1926. At the 1930 conference his successors pursued the matter further. The Irish representatives have been credited with inspiring some of the provisions of the Statute of Westminster.

This Statute came into force on 11 December 1931, shortly before the return to power of Mr. De Valera. It laid down that "the Parliament of a Dominion shall have power to repeal or amend any existing or future Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom, insofar as the same is part of the law of the Dominion." This was of course the recognition of the right of secession,[1] a right which was not however exercised until 1948. It may with advantage be commented here that the foreign policy of the Dublin Government has oscillated, sometimes rapidly, between two perspectives. First there has been a tendency to offer concessions of national freedom of action, even of national sovereignty, to England in hopes of receiving in return elements of progress towards national reunification. Second there has been that of reacting against English obstinacy on this subject by breaking the links with which the "Treaty" bound the twenty-six counties. A third possible course of action, an alliance between Irish and British democracies, has not been open to any Government so far elected under the partition system. Nor has a fourth, a quasi-guerrilla war of attrition in the six counties, with the object of a political settlement, though this has been toyed with on at least three occasions, and there are elements of it in the situation today.

The "Irish Free State" joined the League of Nations in 1923. In 1926 it was decided to offer a candidate for the Council. Austin Chamberlain failed to dissuade the Irish delegation, whereupon he contrived a deal with the French in favour of Czechoslovakia. As De Vere White put it:[2] "The British representatives at international conferences were, as a rule, obsessed with the idea of maintaining the predominance of Great Britain in the Commonwealth. In this they were rarely opposed by Australia and never by New Zealand. Canada and South Africa how-

[1] For a description of the circumstances of the time see T. P. Coogan, *Ireland Since the Rising*, pp. 66–7.

[2] T. De Vere White, *Kevin O'Higgins*, Ch. 12.

ever tended to join forces with the Free State, in conclave, if not always in public, as advocates of a more egalitarian association." In 1930 the Free State candidate was elected, and in 1932 Mr. De Valera became President of the Council.

The thirties saw the birth in England of the policy of "appeasement". Its inner reality is not widely known to the present generation. Fascist dictatorships were established in Italy, Germany and Japan, and now embarked on a policy of foreign aggression. "Appeasement" meant encouraging this aggression provided it did not threaten vital imperial interests but led in the direction of war with the Soviet Union. Between Germany and the Soviet Union had been created the "*cordon sanitaire*" the purpose of which was to prevent the spread of socialism westward into Germany. To France this *cordon* was also a safeguard against an over-powerful Germany. After the establishment of Nazism in Germany it was seen in the reverse sense, as a barrier to the extension of fascism eastwards. Under English pressure France was compelled to acquiesce in the liquidation of her eastern alliances. It was to destroy the strongest of these states, Czechoslovakia, that Neville Chamberlain, Douglas-Home at his side, made the ill-fated journey to Munich, thus making war certain–but not the war he hoped for, where England's enemies would tear each other apart and leave England the unscathed arbiter.

The genesis of the Second World War, for which English Toryism was historically as blameworthy as German militarism, since the one built up the other, must be borne in mind in considering Irish neutrality. When in 1932 the De Valera Government made use of the provisions of the Statute of Westminster to abolish the Governor-Generalship and the oath of allegiance to the English Crown, and to withhold the payment of land annuities, the English Government replied with economic sanctions–something it was unwilling to impose on Italy

for her predatory attack on Abyssinia. Agreement was ultimately reached in 1938 when Neville Chamberlain handed back to Ireland the "Treaty" ports of Berehaven and Lough Swilly. It may be asked why Mr. Chamberlain was prepared to take action which obviously improved the possibility of the twenty-six counties' remaining neutral in a war in which Great Britain was involved. Two reasons suggest themselves. First, Mr. Chamberlain was hoping to be neutral himself. Second, the development of air power necessitated the availability of territory adjacent to ports from which to provide protection; the military occupation of Irish soil would not be politically possible or tactically wise.

It was when, after the total collapse of English foreign policy, hostilities against Germany were commenced, that the Irish question resumed its urgency. Some English people thought in all innocence that once England declared war the Irish should follow suit. But why should they risk the security of their truncated territory because the English ruling class had, after six years of playing with fire, managed to set its own house ablaze? The English Government declared war not because Hitler invaded Poland, but because before doing so he had, by signing the non-aggression treaty with the U.S.S.R., undertaken to go no further; that is to say, if he struck again it was likely to be towards the west.

There is perhaps a temptation to regard a war, even one on a world scale, as a simple contest between two "sides". But far from representing a suspension of politics, war is the expression of politics in their most active form. The laws of politics remain supreme. For the conscript perhaps life is simpler if less comfortable. He must do as he is told and if necessary fight for his life. For the decision-makers on the other hand it is quite otherwise. All contradictions are sharpened. The faintest suddenly become tangible. It is not thus a matter of a military struggle to be followed by a return to normality after

somebody has "won". It is an epoch of history, a succession of climaxes, each creating a new political as well as a new military situation, a period of class conflict on an international scale, in which as in all class conflicts, totally contrary tendencies co-exist at every point and evolve in kaleidoscopic variety.

Thus the "phoney war" was stigmatized as imperialist on both sides. Such indeed was the total effect. Hitler was for crushing the European nationalities, putting the English and French colonies under new management, and destroying the labour movement. On the other hand he refrained from his attack on the Soviet Union which it was the dearest wish of the rulers of Britain to bring about. In this general balance of villainy, the Greeks and Poles fought a popular struggle against fascism. The I.R.A. expressed the Irish resistance to English imperialism, and so in another way did De Valera's neutrality. Even so, the two imperialisms were not exact counterparts. With the fall of France, when England had to forego the luxury of anti-Soviet adventurism, already the balance was beginning to tip. In June 1941 when fascist Germany resumed its position as the spearhead against world socialism it was decisively upset. The war rapidly assumed the character of a general offensive of world democracy against German, Italian and Japanese fascism. But even at this stage, England and the U.S.A. remained imperialist, and the fear of colonial revolts, or socialist uprisings on the Continent influenced their strategic thinking, and may well have considerably prolonged the war.

It is necessary to stress the extreme complexity of the world situation. During the "phoney war" fought, if one may use that word, to induce Hitler to resume his *Drang nach Osten*, the Irish question lacked special urgency. The fall of France changed matters. Winston Churchill was anxious for Irish ports and airfields, and there was loose talk of taking them. On the other hand England was dependent on American aid and the Irish-American lobby

was still strong. In the first days of the war there were great demonstrations for neutrality in Ireland. It was believed that the *Taoiseach*[3] was contemplating belligerency on the side of England. Despite all that has been written to the contrary, such was his *political* position, since Ireland remained tied to the British imperial system through the special relationship with London. To have entered the war however would have destroyed that position. While partition remained it would inevitably have thrown the greater part of the population against any government that proposed it, thus creating for England not a secure back garden, but the possibility of a second front. It is interesting, as illustrating little more than the depth of anti-Irish prejudice, that some writers persistently asserted the actual existence of this second front without producing a scintilla of evidence.

The six counties were of course involved in the war without consultation, since under the Government of Ireland Act war is an excepted matter. When attempts were made to impose conscription these were abandoned as a result of mass demonstrations in the Nationalist areas. Until the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union the Communist Party of Ireland, active in both states, maintained an attitude of opposition to the war. When as a result of the new balance of world forces, the Irish Communists moved for offering support against fascism, a difficulty arose. The six counties were belligerent. The twenty-six were neutral. The serious obstacles in the way of abandoning neutrality have already been noted. The tactical difficulty was solved by establishing separate regional headquarters, to work independently though in liaison, so as to take account of the different conditions in the two states. In each state the Communists took up a position of opposition to fascism. Those in the six counties followed the example of the Indians and others who lived in belligerent states. Those in the twenty-six continued to make clear their

[3] Premier.

long-standing opposition to fascism, but did not call for the abandonment of neutrality in view of the situation arising from England's imperialist relationship with Ireland. It must not be imagined that they were the less anti-fascist for this. Accepting a state of belligerency is one thing; demanding it is another.

It was not until the United States had entered the war that Churchill was emboldened to demand the Irish ports. At one time he is said to have talked of revising the partition settlement if the twenty-six county state was prepared to enter the war on England's side. But whereas Irish neutrality was to end at once, partition was to go only "after the war", when British forces would presumably be in occupation of all Ireland. Suspicions were deepened further when it was insisted that "Ulster" must not be "coerced" and that the consent of Stormont must be obtained. Under such conditions public consent could never have been won. Not De Valera but Churchill was responsible for splitting the anti-fascist front. For it was he who insisted on imperialist conditions. It was at this time that De Valera defined Ireland's relationship with the allies as "friendly neutrality".

The great Labour victory of 1945 aroused optimism in Ireland, which was not damped when the unspeakable crime of Hiroshima announced the impending counter-revolution. People hoped that the Irish question might now be settled as a result of a democratic peace, which might even involve the dismantlement of fascism in Spain. Unfortunately Mr. Attlee gave heed to Winston Churchill, whose stupidity lost for England all that his doggedness had gained. With his notorious speech at Fulton he opened the "cold war". The democratic road being closed, the Irish bourgeoisie examined other possibilities. There was talk of ending political neutrality in return for the six counties, for example by the transference of the excepted powers (contemporary literature confuses these with the *reserved* powers) to Dublin.

General MacEoin, with more than a touch of bucolic optimism, declared that the next war would be a "Holy War". He assumed that any young Irishman would be prepared to fight in it if Ireland was reunited in return. Such pronouncements did not endear the twenty-six counties to those on the "left", and the Soviet Union vetoed the Irish application for membership of U.N.O. for a number of years. Although in the package deal which ultimately brought the Republic into U.N.O. in 1956 Ireland counted as a western state, the policy of Mr. De Valera's government contained a sizable element of non-alignment.

So matters stood until the Tories, which Labour's quasi-Tory policies had re-legitimized and restored to office, decided to apply for membership of the European Economic Community. The door was then seemingly thrown open for a return to Kevin O'Higgins's original tactic. But barring the way was the issue that had wrecked collaboration in the past. If the Republic joined N.A.T.O. or entered an E.E.C. that had accepted the United Kingdom, then partition was recognized, and Irish public opinion would be hard to persuade that at a later date it would disappear.

As has been suggested, every change in England's international position requires a re-assessment of policy towards Ireland, on grounds of proximity and political and strategic importance. The Act of Union was a reaction to the fear that French Jacobinism would become established in Ireland. The Government of Ireland Act which ended the legislative Union was a response to the Russian Revolution.

Suez revealed that Britain was no longer a world power. But she had world imperial interests and wished to hold them. The move towards Europe was aimed at using the consortium of weakened imperialisms on the Continent for mutual aid purposes. Its keynote was neo-imperialism, the conception of a brick wall of industrial

powers without a chink in it, facing the underdeveloped agrarian world with take it or leave it terms. It is a conspiracy against the democratic rights and national sovereignty of all peoples within its boundaries, a holy alliance for the international guarantee of monopoly capitalism, a recipe for economic crisis on the scale of the thirties, and a powerful catalyst of all the rivalries that threaten a third world war. It is indeed the Federal Union advocated by the English fascists, the new order of Hitler developed under modern conditions. And it is of great interest to note that the English fascists as early as 1948 used to talk of "Ireland's right to unity on entering European Union"– that is to say on abandoning everything that would make unity worth having.

The establishment of the Lemass Government was the signal for a spate of newspaper articles in Britain. Since the only important governmental change was the retirement of Mr. De Valera, it would seem that the writers were improving the shining moment. At the same time there were rumours of a struggle over the succession in which the old guard Nationalists Messrs. Aiken and Traynor were worsted. Mr. Lemass's Government was described in London as affording for the first time in forty years people Britain could do business with. But it may have been the first time in forty years that Britain was looking for business.

In the clouds of speculation which filled the political sky, certain outlines were visible. Simultaneously with the softening of British attitudes "integrationist" propaganda poured forth in the press. Lord Longford (then Lord Pakenham), Chairman of the National Bank, wrote an article in a Sunday newspaper suggesting that now was the time for the Republic to rejoin the Commonwealth and ease away from her policy of neutrality. But what about partition? Lord Pakenham considered that a kiss and a promise would be enough. His kite-flying evoked little enthusiasm in Ireland but there was little indignation.

The argument was presented as a kind of fatality, that Ireland was too small to stand alone and must "integrate" in order to survive. The argument was of course a consequence of the financial integration that had already taken place and was taking the chain stores, mobile shops and hire-purchase companies to every corner of the Republic.

In August 1961 Britain applied to join the Common Market. The surrounding circumstances were illustrated in a debate in the House of Lords when Lord Windlesham, an Irish peer, told what might possibly be for sale:

> "One has only to look at the map," he said, "to see that the situation of Ireland, to the extreme west of the whole organization, gives it a special position. Cobh has probably the finest inland anchorage in the world . . . had it been available for the use of our destroyers in the last war, the sinkings in the Atlantic convoy routes would have been incomparably less than they were . . . the old naval base at Haulbowline in Cobh harbour still exists and is in excellent order. At the moment it is the property of an oil company, but there would be no difficulty in putting it back into its previous condition.
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> "Then there is the great airfield at Shannon, the furthest west of any airfield or airport in Europe. Its potentiality for expansion is enormous, unlimited, and incomparably greater than anything which exists in Northern Ireland. The little civilian airport at Nutt's Corner is small and not good, and Aldegrove is little better. But Shannon is capable of indefinite expansion. Moreover, it is a very long way from any agglomeration of population, whereas the others are very near to Belfast. Then there is the projected Shannon deep-sea port, which if developed will take tankers of 100,000 tons and more into the Shannon, which in times of war might be of enormous importance and value, and again would

be situated to the extreme west of the whole N.A.T.O. setup."

Were their lordships smacking their lips over the prospective military pickings? Or was there a note of concern lest Ireland's integration should not take full account of Britain's interests? Mr. Lemass's enthusiasm for entering E.E.C. was well known. His application preceded Britain's by one day. If things moved to their logical conclusion, Ireland's bases might become available to N.A.T.O.

But what then of Britain's special position? Would a commanding economic position be sufficient to maintain it if one of the European partners felt a foothold in Ireland would be a convenient means of squeezing their dear friends the British?

That such fears were understandable is illustrated by the fact that in December 1962 it was officially denied in Dublin that the Shannon deep-sea port was to be developed by the Americans for military purposes. Here was the type of situation which called for royal visits to Ireland. Kites were flown in that part of the sky too. There might be on the cards the integration of Britain and Ireland in Europe. But that did not mean an end to all gradations of consanguinity. There was a need for a smaller integration first. Britain would prefer to take into Europe a United British Isles, rather than an Ireland which still bitterly cherished the grievances of 1920, and was now in a position to offer to N.A.T.O. bases better than those available to Britain.

In other words the entry of Ireland into Europe could strengthen or weaken Britain's position depending on how it was done. The chickens were indeed coming home to roost. One noble lord deplored the folly of 1920 which had broken up the unity of the British Isles. For in the way of integrating Ireland with Britain before entering Europe, stood the obstacle of partition.

Was it possible to secure a reunification of Ireland which would still leave Britain the arbiter of its destinies? Would it be possible to lead this unity into Europe and thus leave no open flank? Could this be done without a clash with the die-hards of Northern Ireland? Dare Britain regard the six county administration as expendable and disregard the protests of its dismissed Gauleiters? These thoughts were diplomatically sorted over in newspaper articles.

Mr. Lemass's decision to apply for membership was taken for reasons completely different from those which prompted Mr. Macmillan. Macmillan's were political. Lemass's were economic, though two political reasons are urged alternatively according to time and place. They were first that it was necessary to take part in the fight against Communism, and second that the result of the integration of all Europe would be the disappearance of the border. But the determining economic reason was given by Professor Joseph Johnston with brutal frankness in his book, *Why Ireland Needs the Common Market.*

His case was that agricultural production in the Republic was underprivileged in comparison with that in Britain and the six counties, and operated at a relatively low cost. The disparity arose from the policy of agricultural price supports maintained in Britain over the past decade (and by other methods in other advanced countries). The result, he said, had been to increase British agricultural production to 70 per cent above its pre-war level, and depress prices for outside suppliers. The prospect of the dismantling of this edifice was all-compelling.

> "The real need in the forthcoming negotiations is to scale down British agriculture to its appropriate economic size . . . if that were done now low-cost producers would get the chance they have long awaited to produce for an expanding export market."

The alternative he feared was the prospect of a 15 per

cent tariff being clapped on Irish agricultural exports to Britain, which would mean the loss of the market altogether and not merely unfavourable terms. Consequently, while admitting that "some of the arguments for joining the Common Market are reminiscent of the more respectable considerations presumably urged in 1800 in favour of joining the Common Market of the Union," he thought the Republic had in effect no choice. "What will she do if she doesn't?" he asked, and concluded that "provided only Britain can secure admission, we have much to gain and little to lose by following her."[4]

This sense of absolute dependence on the British market for agricultural products shows how much still remains of the 19th-century relation between the two countries. To safeguard that market the Government of the Republic was prepared to risk the extinction of every native industry set up these forty years.

General Costello, of the Irish Sugar Company, told a meeting of *Tuairim* in London that provided Irish farmers had the British market secure, under the new conditions accumulation of capital in their hands would speedily overflow into the industrial market and that new industries would arise, on a sounder basis, to replace those lost. A questioner put his finger on the weak spot.

How, he asked, can we be sure that the capital accumulated by farmers in the future will not be invested as in the past, via the banks in the British (or E.E.C.) Empire?

[4] Professor Johnston's book was published in 1962. Seven years later he had become one of the most outspoken opponents of Irish entry into E.E.C. and had been joined by the country's leading agricultural expert Dr. Crotty. They had been convinced as a result of studying the agricultural history of E.E.C. and Dr. Mansholt's irresponsible proposals for the elimination of small farmers. In the meantime Mr. Lemass had signed trade agreements with England which promised to give Irish industry an astringent foretaste of E.E.C. conditions. Mr. Lemass was replaced by Mr. Lynch, who imbibed no more spunk from the civil servants than Mr. Lemass had from the businessmen.

Here he touched on a weakness which might vitiate all the optimistic forecasts of the experts. The Republic does not possess complete economic independence; entering E.E.C. she must progressively scale down her political independence; the same forces which "scale down British agriculture to size" and fill the Irish farmers' pockets, are geared to the extraction of capital for neo-imperialist purposes. Without national independence economic policy is impossible.

It was at this point that the political arguments were introduced. Inordinate concern for the welfare of big farmers is a consequence of the partition settlement. It was their exports that paid for the imports of metal products which made industrialization possible. Thousands of Ireland's best acres were thereby kept down to grass, and the big farmers' lobby came down every time in favour of the last links with England. The workers are familiar with the Government's tenderness to the ranchers and wonder whether their employment is to be sacrificed to their interests. The small business people watch the shops closing down as it is, and wonder about the foreign chain stores. Then comes the reply: "But Communism would take all your property away," and into the bargain "the border will be eliminated".[5]

The question then arises, will the Republic abandon her neutrality? The glittering prize across the channel dazzled the politicians; sometimes she would, sometimes she would not. Just as Britain refused to "come clean" on

[5] Mr. Douglas Jay, M.P., speaking in Newry in March 1963, declared that if the Republic joined E.F.T.A. the "economic unity of Ireland" would be achieved. Unfortunately the economic unity without the political unity merely means a free run for foreign finance capital to exploit the country by neo-colonial techniques. What the plain man is interested in, and rightly interested in, is not shadowy issues like the "economic border" and "economic unity", but the actually existing frontier and the unity of the Irish people in one state, so that they can use their united powers to determine their own future.

partition, so the Republic would not commit herself on neutrality. Big meetings in favour of non-commitment took place in various parts of the Republic, press controversy raged uninterruptedly, and Dublin streets, anticipating the result, were whitewashed with "Lemass sells out."

The prospect of ending partition through joining the Common Market had of course something of the character of a pronouncement that we are all equal in death. If there were no boundaries and all Europe were "one big country," then of course there would be no partition of Ireland. But would there be an Ireland to partition? Serious discussion did not go so far as this. The argument was that dismantling the British agricultural price supports would remove a reason why the six county farmer should prefer the British to the Dublin connection. Second, the removal of tariffs (perhaps naturally enough E.E.C. supporters in the Republic expected a few exceptions in favour of themselves) would end the economic division of the country and make the political frontier "seem ridiculous."

On that argument, of course, the division between Ireland and Britain would also look ridiculous. There would only remain, according to Mr. Lemass, the "spiritual cleavage" in the Irish people, which would fall away in time, possibly by the operation of the laws of population. Hence E.E.C. became at once the gateway to a united Ireland, an excuse for doing nothing about the border, and a means of putting pressure on London.

Speculation was set afoot in the summer of 1962 when Sir George Clarke, chief of the Orange Order, consented to meet Senator Lennon of the Ancient Order of Hibernians to discuss sectarianism in the six counties. During the discussions, full details of which have not been published, the press had a field day.

One suggestion was that in return for lightening the disabilities imposed on Catholics, Mr. Lemass should recognize the Northern Ireland Government, that is to

say forego his claim to the six counties, and then after the re-entry of the Republic into the Commonwealth, Britain would agree to a progressive development of all-Ireland functions. In December 1962 it was announced that further discussions would be held and Sir George Clarke suggested as the first item on the agenda the "recognition" of the six county Government by Northern Ireland Nationalists.

Within Northern Ireland there was a strong current of opposition to Britain's joining E.E.C. Northern Ireland would of course join automatically with Britain. The result would be the extinction of agricultural subsidies stated by Mr. H. B. Newe to amount in 1960–1 to 31 per cent of output, while those in Britain amounted to only 17 per cent of output. Only 4 per cent of the British labour force was engaged in agriculture. The proportion in Northern Ireland was 14 per cent. There is a big difference between 17 per cent of 4 per cent (less than a hundredth part) and 31 per cent of 14 per cent (about 5 per cent). And apart from the loss of price supports, the effects of remoteness from markets would inevitably be accentuated.

When in January 1963 General De Gaulle applied his veto to the English application there was widespread relief in both parts of Ireland. The expected accommodation between the Republic and English imperialism was postponed for the moment. There was a half-hearted half-turn back towards the politics of non-alignment. Mr. Lemass called upon Sir Alec Douglas-Home to give an undertaking that England would not obstruct a settlement of the partition question if Irishmen could come to an agreement. Such an undertaking would have eased the path to discussions with the six counties. The English Premier delivered no answer. It was concluded that England was only prepared to tolerate Irish unity provided the country was bound hand and foot.

In the north the Nationalist opposition, somewhat muted since the "Orange and Green talks", became

temporarily more strident. Mr. Healy denounced the "crazy financial structure" imposed by the English connection. But no warning was taken. It was therefore assumed that the forces urging England to membership of E.E.C. were not spent but biding their time. The new Municheers, impelled by the constant prodding of the great financial and industrial interests, were as determined as ever. There was a strong possibility that the Tories would modify England's taxation and agricultural policies in anticipation of joining E.E.C., thus committing their successors. What consequence would follow for Ireland? Regarding the north, the Hall Report admitted grave dangers but trusted that their result would prove "marginal". It was trusted that the Brussels bureaucrats would relax their rules to avoid hardship to an area many of them had probably never heard of.

The makers of English policy, blind to any suggestions of independent initiative, sat down to await the defeat or demise of De Gaulle. Meanwhile the aim of assimilating Ireland economically was pursued diligently. Every scrap of English influence was exerted to drive against the intellectual foundations of separatism. It was sheer accident that the sixties provided four important commemorations, which made it possible to counter the propaganda of "anti-national brain-washing". These were the bicentenary of the birth of Wolfe Tone in 1963, the jubilee of the Easter Rising in 1966, the centenary of the Fenian Rising in 1967 and the centenary of the birth of James Connolly in 1968.

As the sixties wore on, Dubliners complained that they could hardly recognize their city for hideous new office blocks erected with cross-channel finance. In these the servants of the economic invaders recorded the progress of the robbery. The assault on the Gaelic language was intensified in the name of progress. English newspapers lectured Irish schoolmasters on the Nationalist slant of the history they taught and suggested that textbooks

should be re-written in conformity with what they were pleased to call modern internationalism. On 14 January 1965 Mr. Lemass made the journey to Canossa. It is said at Mr. Harold Wilson's suggestion he visited Belfast, where Captain O'Neill was ready to discuss forms of economic cooperation that did not disturb the constitutional position. Public opinion prevented his formally "recognizing" the six county régime. To this extent imperial policy failed.

On 9 February Captain O'Neill visited Dublin. Early in March the remains of Roger Casement were unearthed from the Pentonville quicklime, taken to Dublin for a state funeral, and bolted down under three inch steel plates lest some enterprising Republican whisk them away to Murlough in Co. Antrim, thus rocking the cosmopolitan boat. On 20 July Mr. Lemass visited London, and shortly afterwards signed away the right of the twenty-six counties to protect its own industries. The conversion of *Fianna Fáil* to the old O'Higgins policy was a measure of the subordination of the Irish bourgeoisie to English monopoly capital. It was agreed that over a ten year period the twenty-six counties would dismantle all tariff barriers against English imports. In other words the "economic border" which protected the Republic was to go, while the political one which protected Unionism was to remain.

It was interesting, none the less, that at this point there came the first demand for a change in constitutional relations between England and Ireland. The Bow group of Conservatives, possibly fearful lest Labour's policy should inadvertently lead in the direction of a united Ireland, proposed that the Stormont Parliament should be disestablished and the six counties should be ruled directly from Westminster as if it was a part of England. So much for the convention of non-interference.

English economic policy demanded a closer association with the twenty-six counties. The economic life of all Ire-

land was being progressively subjected to the interest of monopolies whose inclination was to work the whole country as a single unit. There was thus an imperialist argument against retaining the border. But to hand over the six counties to Dublin would be to destroy the imperialist hold on the Unionist workers of the north. Where would they turn? They might turn to Communism. The capitalists of the six counties moreover might be transformed from England's humble petitioners to her sturdy opponents making common cause with those of the south not only against the workers but against imperialism. It was clear that the maintenance of the border was necessary for political reasons, despite the general stultification it imposed on economic activity.

There were many solutions canvassed for this conundrum. There was talk of a tripartite federation in which the overall control of England would reconcile the Northerners to local subordination to Dublin, a return to the Government of Ireland Act as first passed. It was felt that *Fianna Fáil* dare not jettison the fruits of the revolution totally without handing over the leadership of the people to the Republicans. A more cautious speculation was that if Captain O'Neill would move in the direction of giving the Catholics of the six counties a "squarer deal", Mr. Lemass could move the twenty-six counties into closer coordination with England. He might even give the Stormont Government the "recognition" it still hankered after. This was the old *Cumann na nGaedheal* policy of the twenties revived–though the lesson of the twenties was that the six county authorities could never keep any engagement they entered into.

As late as October 1968, when the battle was raging, and the Unionist Government shaken to the core, Mr. Edward McAteer, who more than any other Nationalist leader reflected the pressure of Dublin "statesmanship", suggested that if discrimination against Catholics were abolished it might be possible to move towards a "two-

piece Ireland . . . fitted into a sort of little United Nations type grouping of these islands". The vagueness of the proposal did not disguise its content. Mr. McAteer was defeated at the next election.

But the sheer backwardness of the six counties contributed to the intractability of the problem. Forty thousand new jobs were required. This would cost about £120 million. Two hundred thousand new houses were required. This would cost about £800 million. Allow £400 million for the expanded infrastructure and the price of Ireland's soul comes out at about £1,320 million.

Could the twenty-six counties afford to accept the lady in marriage without this dowry? If it was spent immediately on social reconstruction the reasons which kept the Irish people apart would disappear. The ingrates might use their strength and unity to win a final and permanent independence. No wonder the Bow group thought the old-fashioned jackboot was cheapest and most effective. For English policy was up a gum tree stuck.

NINE

Ireland and the Labour Movement

Since at least 1848 the English ruling class has been obsessed with the fear of social revolution. Despite its seeming solidity Lloyd George was right in describing England as "the most unstable country in the world". Its class structure is simplest. Its working class forms the overwhelming majority of the population. There is no peasantry, and the two national minorities attached to its State are reinforcements not to property but to progress. Faced with this situation within Great Britain, difficult enough without complications, the nightmare of capitalist politicians has been the junction of British socialism with Irish republicanism, for the two forces acting together could overturn imperialism and institute an age of peace and cooperation in these islands.

That this principle has been appreciated only by the most advanced members of the Labour movement, and especially in Wales and Scotland, is a consequence of the imperialist environment in which that movement developed. It is also due to the great pains expended by the ruling class in efforts to separate the Irish from the attention and the sympathy of the British people.

A special feature of the situation is the presence for close on two centuries of a large Irish immigrant population concentrated in the industrial cities which at the present time numbers about one million. The point should be made that even if Britain contained not one single Irishman, the aim of establishing the above mentioned alliance would still be sound.

Their presence is potentially, though by no means automatically, a favourable influence in this direction. Their

communities are subject to the effects of the class struggle in Britain and develop accordingly. In the nineteenth century the ruling class encouraged, or at best failed to discourage, anti-Irish pogroms, which drove a wedge between the peoples and associated the workers with the depredations of their rulers in Ireland. On the other hand the immigrants from Ireland played an enormous part in the establishment of trade unionism and the various political parties of Labour. It was they who traditionally made it their business to raise the Irish question in working-class organizations. Here too was a danger. The policy of the British Labour movement towards Ireland cannot be left to the Irish. It is a matter for the entire working class resident in Great Britain. It is as necessary to resist the tendency of the British workers to "leave it to the Irish" as it is to resist that of the Irish in Britain to hug it to themselves. The enemy is too strong to be defeated by an attack on a restricted front.

But to act effectively in their own interests the British working class must not merely sympathize with the Irish. It is necessary to understand the Irish question, which though a simple matter in essence has because of its great antiquity produced an efflorescence of complex forms. There is a class struggle in Ireland too, and it is necessary to recognize what is progressive and what is reactionary in that country. The guiding principle is that whatever tends to weaken imperialism is progressive, whatever tends to strengthen it is reactionary.

Only on rare occasions has this understanding informed the big battalions of British Labour. One such occasion was the Scarborough conference of 1920 which has already been referred to. In James Connolly's day there was a tendency for British Labour to heed the Redmondites on the grounds that they were elected to Parliament whereas the Socialists and Republicans were not. At other times the attitude has been completely mechanical, while concealing an unconscious chauvinism. At the 1908 conference

of the Independent Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald explained that "for our own organizing purposes, Devon and Cornwall are added to Wales and Ireland as part of Lancashire."

Such an attitude owed something to craft unionism and the prevalence of migratory craftsmen. These inclined to belong to British trade unions, and when Irish sections were formed, for example by the amalgamation of local Irish unions, it was the practice to attach them to Lancashire, the county where the travelling journeymen landed. When in 1909 Larkin separated the Irish dockers from Sexton's union with its Liverpool headquarters, there is no doubt that many English trade unionists believed he was leading a "nationalist break-away". Yet the union he thereby founded has been for many years now the greatest in Ireland, and has played an enormous part in the struggles of the revolutionary period.

The Westminster debate on the "Treaty" was marked by little comprehension on the part of Labour members. At Scarborough the principle of self-determination had been proclaimed. But the Labour members did not enquire whether there had been coercion on the part of the Government. The Parliament which endorsed the "Treaty" was the product of the 1918 "khaki election". It was full of famous names and thick heads. The Labour men seemed to find their surroundings awesome, and *Hansard* rubbed in their inferior status by noting it when they wore "morning dress". The speeches of such as J. R. Clynes were full of admiration for Lloyd George's magnanimity in consenting to negotiate at all with the Irish. Even the *enfant terrible* J. J. Jones did no more than gallantly defend Collins and Griffith from the name of "gunmen"; the imperialist nature of the settlement totally escaped him.

Nor did they challenge Winston Churchill when on 20 February 1922 he initiated the "convention" that Westminster cannot discuss matters transferred to the six county

administration. And they might have done, for Devlin had asked about the fate of the workers expelled from the Belfast shipyard during the pogroms. Before the Free State Constitution Act came in for discussion there had been a General Election. Shapurji Saklatvala, one of the great orators of this century, denounced it as derived from a bargain struck at the point of a bayonet.

One of the difficulties due to partition was that British Labour was seldom brought into contact with Irish Labour as a whole. Even in the six counties there was a tendency for nationally minded workers to prefer membership of unions with headquarters in Ireland, and especially the I.T.G.W.U. Where Unionist workers formed a substantial group in a British-based trade union, they tended to act as spokesmen for partition. The historically determined anti-Catholic bias of many British workers readily disposed them to suspect that "Home Rule" was indeed "Rome rule". Anti-Catholicism might be mistaken for militant socialism, the more so since the six county Protestants were as fine trade union fighters as a man could wish to meet. The tendency developed of leaving Irish questions to the Irish branches, which frequently meant six county branches. Thus there developed in the trade union movement a convention of non-intervention parallel to that existing in Parliament. Britain was held responsible, but the British workers were not permitted to discuss the subject of partition. Since the Irish trade union movement preserved its united organization largely by "agreeing to differ" on the partition issue, it was seldom that Irish branches raised Irish questions. Yet it is to be doubted if anything has contributed more to the desperate ventures that have from time to time been embarked upon in Ireland than the feeling that there was nothing to be hoped for from the British working class.

For the greater part of the twenties it seemed as if the Irish question had been successfully banished from British

politics. The disputes with De Valera, the trade war and the "bombings" brought their spate of anti-Irish misrepresentation, and a series of replies from the "left". Elinor Burns published her *British Imperialism in Ireland* and described with a wealth of statistics the process of robbery now called "neo-colonialism". Shortly after his return to Ireland Brian O'Neill developed a similar thesis in his *War for the Land in Ireland.* Following the great unemployed struggles of 1932, in which old Tom Mann was deported and the Special Powers Act lavishly employed, the National Council for Civil Liberties sent a team of investigators who heard evidence in Belfast and published a celebrated report in 1936. The I.R.A. campaign of 1939–40 also called for an explanation. This was furnished by Desmond Ryan in his pamphlet *Ireland, whose Ireland?*, its title a succinct summary of the Irish question.

The British Labour movement understandably took little interest in the Irish question during the war, though there was plenty of discussion of Irish neutrality. The background of this was explained by Captain Henry Harrison in a useful volume. Apart from Irish organizations in Britain the main defender of Ireland was the Marxist historian T. A. Jackson, who explained the trauma of partition and its effect on Irish political life.

There was some "labour imperialism" when the unavailability of Irish ports was believed to be resulting in the loss of food ships. There was also genuine bewilderment by honest left-wingers astonished that the Irish could not "see" that this was a war against fascism in which their interests were with the democracies. Jackson had the gift of entering the Irish national mind. He never lectured the Irish on this subject. He knew that ever lurking was the suspicion that the English were thinking up new and more sophisticated arguments for re-asserting some undefined subordination of Irish interests to English. Why did they not use these arguments on the Swiss and

the Swedes? Because they had never ruled them and were accustomed to their going their own way. The defeat of fascism was undoubtedly in the interests of the Irish people. But the English were not the best qualified to tell them so, and the telling might prove counter-productive. After all, they countered, neither the Russians nor the Americans had fought until they were attacked.

There was little anti-Irish feeling in spite of differences of opinion. Trade unions busily recruited the construction workers who chequered East Anglia with airfields. At the same time criticism of Stormont was suspended, and that régime acquired a temporary lease of respectability.

The 1945 Parliament contained the most substantial "left" wing yet returned, as was natural after so many unexpected Labour victories. A number of these, at the initiative of Mr. Delargy, then the member for the traditionally Irish constituency of Miles Platting, Manchester, banded together in the "Friends of Ireland" group, and pressed for a settlement of the Irish question on the basis of an agreement to end partition. The Anti-partition League was established and won many thousands of members. Mr. Geoffrey Bing's pamphlet on the six county scene, *John Bull's other Ireland*, was published by *Tribune* and became a best seller which was reprinted several times. Perhaps reacting against the failure of the Labour Government to respond, as well as for internal reasons, the Costello-MacBride coalition in Dublin decided to secede from the Commonwealth. This step was carried out on 24 April 1949. The Labour Government, it is said at Herbert Morrison's instance, replied with the incredibly foolish Ireland Act which poisoned relations over many years.

This ludicrous statute was not important for what it contained but for the attitude it revealed. The calculations behind it were plain enough. As Chuter Ede remarked, apostrophizing the Irish, "We ourselves do not

believe that you are more completely a nation today than you were before 18 April." And he should know. Ireland remained partitioned. Thanks to that she remained economically bound to England which held six counties and had found them adequate for strategic purposes in the recent war. The English imperialists could afford to accept the new position philosophically.

The Ireland Act accepted the secession, provided that for all essential purposes the Republic was not a foreign country and its citizens were not aliens. Such was sensible enough. But there was added that the six counties would not cease to be part of His Majesty's Dominions without the consent of the Stormont Government.

Regarding the secession, since it did not affect the free movement of capital and labour why baulk at trifles? Why stem the tide of useful immigrants by making aliens of them? The two provisions which were hailed as deeds of boundless and unprecedented liberality, though they were largely reciprocated in Dublin, were aimed merely at preserving the profitable *status quo*. Out of concern to preserve English influence in Ireland, the liaison between the two civil services was not cut. It used to be noticed during the war that the twenty-six county Government issued almost to the day emergency regulations word for word identical with those published in England. Would this have taken place if the minutes had not each morning plopped comfortingly on the non-belligerent mat? Why disturb this excellent and inexpensive arrangement for encouraging an eastward orientation?

But the Government had to face criticism on the other issue. It was interpreted as an attempt to make partition permanent. It may well have been, but in fact it changed the situation not one iota. A member complained that the Bill opened with the words "be it enacted", and then followed not an enactment but an affirmation. Not since the fifteenth century had a statute been used as a means of affirming policy.

A leading part in the opposition to the affirmatory part of the Bill was played by Mr. William Gallacher. With the assistance of a small group of the "Friends of Ireland" he strove against the combined front benches and a majority of both parties. He expressed the opinion privately that the Government did not know what it was doing. No future Parliament need pay the slightest attention to the affirmation. It could proceed to legislate as it pleased. If there was any method in the madness, apart from letting off imperial steam, it might have been in giving a half-promise to "moderate opinion" in the Republic that if it cared to follow its revolutionary predecessor in disestablishing itself, here was a ruling instantly invalidated by a return to the fold. Alternatively there may have been a desire to put something into the balance against the twenty-six county claim to *de jure* sovereignty in the North. Had they the length of vision for such calculations? It is to be doubted. Gallacher was probably right.

The Act when passed affirmed a policy, and as a policy it took effect. The six county authorities were strengthened in their intransigent attitude towards reform. There was an immediate revulsion against Labour among the Irish in Britain, some of whose organizations offered candidates at by-elections. The "Friends of Ireland" broke up in disarray. The Anti-partition League suffered a swift decline. The ultra-left as always unconsciously justifying the actual policy of the right by means of seemingly "revolutionary" slogans, proclaimed the supersession of the independence struggle by "internationalism". Some even found the effrontery to advise British trade unionists against accepting Catholic Irishmen into their ranks before these had been certified good socialists. While mercifully these absurdities had little effect, the Ireland Act affected most deleteriously Labour's election showing. One million voters are not to be sneezed at.

It is against the background of disillusionment with the British Labour movement, and the failure of twenty-six

county diplomacy, that one must see the decision of the I.R.A. to undertake guerrilla activities across the border. This began in December 1956 when the Tories were back in office. Their policy was to avoid the commitment of British troops, and to leave the defence of the six counties to the R.U.C. and armed Special Constabulary. At the same time Fleet Street, either voluntarily, in view of the fact that editors and senior civil servants have been to school together, or at Government instigation, clamped down what approached to an "iron curtain" on news of Ireland. All efforts to secure public ventilation of the issues involved were rendered futile.

This was shown most startlingly in August 1958. Two young men, Mallon and Talbot, were arrested, allegedly tortured and charged with responsibility for an explosion as a result of which an R.U.C. sergeant named Ovens lost his life near Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. The alleged offence was committed in 1957. The Connolly Association, an organization of Irish immigrants and their friends in Britain, founded in 1939 with the object, *inter alia* of winning British Labour to the national cause, arranged that legal observers should attend what proved to be three separate trials. The decisive trial took place at the height of the silly season when grown-up journalists are reduced to reporting apparitions, poltergeists, sex-changes and unidentified flying objects. The Sunday newspapers printed not one word about the trial, though it proved dramatic in the extreme.

Attempts were made to have some of the questions raised by the trial made the subject of questions in Parliament. The reply given was that the Home Secretary had no power to intervene in matters transferred to the six county Parliament. Thus began an effort extended over many years in which one organization after another joined to bring to the British public the facts that were being suppressed, and to win back for Parliament the rights of which Churchill had cheated it in 1922. Counsel's

opinion[1] was that, since Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act reserved ultimate power in the six counties to the Westminster Parliament, Parliament was entitled to use its power at its discretion. It was thought however that for the meantime the best course would be to press for a Commission of Enquiry into the working of the 1920 Act in order to see what changes were required. This demand was taken up by the National Council for Civil Liberties and the Movement for Colonial Freedom.

During the guerrilla actions on the border, under provisions of the Special Powers Act, the Stormont Government had imprisoned 174 men without charge or trial. A campaign for their release was begun in 1959 and linked with the demand for an enquiry into the working of the Constituent Act. The trade unions to which they belonged were ascertained and informed. The newly established Belfast Council for Civil Liberties cooperated. In due time eighty-one Labour M.P.s were persuaded to take up the case of the internments and on one occasion the entire trade union group of Labour M.P.s wired Stormont on behalf of the prisoners. This campaign achieved the greatest involvement of Labour Parliamentarians in the Irish question within living memory. It was completely successful. Among other things it gave the democratic movement in Belfast the confidence to raise its own demands. And in April 1961 the last internees were released, *before* the border campaign was called off, and with no noticeable effect on it. Simultaneously the Government was pressed to ascertain the facts which lay behind the internments, but declined.

The demand for a Commission of Enquiry was now linked with a call for the repeal of the Special Powers Act, which made the internments possible. The Connolly Association organized three marches across England, one from London to Birmingham, another from Liverpool to Nottingham, and a third from Liverpool to London by

[1] Counsel was the late celebrated Mr. D. N. Pritt.

a two hundred and fifty mile route. Meetings were held in the cities visited and prominent local figures informed of the facts. That opinion was beginning to awaken was shown in August 1961 when the *New Statesman* editorially criticized the proposal to send the Queen of England on a visit to Belfast. It argued that she would be "shoring up a régime which mocks every democratic pretension that she makes".

The need for intervention from Westminster to restore democracy in the six counties was emphasized in the Connolly Association pamphlet *Our Plan to End Partition*, published in June 1962, shortly after the cessation of hostilities on the border. In this pamphlet the connection between the struggle for democratic rights and that for national independence was stressed:

> "It must be obvious that the greatest obstacle to turning out the Brookeborough Government is the way it has barricaded itself at Stormont behind a mountain of anti-democratic legislation.
>
> "Consider the gerrymandering, the restriction of the franchise, the religious and political discrimination, the control of education even of nationalist children, and the alleged interference with the freedom of radio broadcasting. Then there is the refusal to recognize the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish T.U.C. These restrictions of freedom must be swept away. If they were swept away the confidence engendered among the nationally minded population would become boundless, and the efforts to attain unity would be enormously strengthened.
>
> "The Westminster Parliament has the power to compel Lord Brookeborough to restore democracy. So let us demand that it does so."

This demand was reiterated at public meetings and in trade union and other organizations, wherever the Irish question came up for discussion. The Labour-minded sec-

tion of the Irish immigrants was acting as a channel through which the realities of the Irish question could reach the British working class.

When in September 1962 the Brookeborough Government, for reasons which will be dealt with later, decided to commemorate the signing of the "Ulster Covenant" on its fiftieth anniversary, the Connolly Association and M.C.F. arranged for a party of observers to cross to Belfast. They included Mr. Marcus Lipton M.P., Miss Betty Harrison of the Tobacco Workers' Union and the General Secretary of the M.C.F. They visited Derry, Enniskillen, Dungannon and other centres and thanks to the good offices of the Belfast Council for Civil Liberties were enabled to meet leading Nationalists, Republicans, trade unionists and others. As a result Mr. Lipton was able to ask questions in the Commons. Mr. Eber and Miss Harrison drew up reports which aroused considerable interest in their own organizations, but the press refused the slightest publicity. "The Unionists have some good friends in Fleet Street," Mr. Lipton observed.

The amnesty campaign for prisoners sentenced in connection with the guerrilla activities continued throughout 1963. On one occasion six general secretaries of British trade unions and twenty-five leading citizens from all walks of life telegraphed Lord Brookeborough. The six county Premier dismissed them as "oddities". But shortly afterwards he agreed to do as they suggested, at the same time announcing his resignation. He was replaced by Captain O'Neill, a man able to wear the cloak of liberalism in accordance with England's new European policy. On 16 December 1963 the last prisoners were released.

Encouraged by the interest that was being shown, and perhaps in hope of regaining the initiative after the fiasco of the E.E.C. talks, the entire Parliamentary Nationalist Party from both houses, formed a deputation which visited Westminster on 30 January 1964. They were received by a

mere handful of Labour Members, and it became clear that British Labour was prepared to act against specific abuses, but not against the partition system as a whole. It was noticeable that despite the efforts of Mr. Fenner Brockway to persuade him to do so, Mr. Harold Wilson declined to meet the deputation, although Mr. Jo. Grimond did so. It is unusual for one Parliamentarian to refuse to meet another. The subordinate position of the six county Parliament, and their own colonial status was impressed upon the Nationalists in a most humiliating manner.

During the 1964 election campaign, members of the Connolly Association toured England seeking election pledges from candidates for a programme of democratic reforms. Many of those who gave them were returned. On 13 March 1965 the National Council for Civil Liberties invited representatives of all parties in the six counties to a conference in London. There were representatives of the Unionist Party, *Sinn Fein*, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, the Belfast Trades Council, and the Campaign for Social Justice, a group of professional people based on Dungannon which had been established the preceding year. The Unionists failed to satisfy the gathering that there was no case to answer and the National Council for Civil Liberties increased its pressure for an official enquiry.

It was held that the time was ripe for reconstituting the "Friends of Ireland". Following a meeting called by the Norwood Labour Party and addressed by Mr. Sean Redmond, Mr. Fenner Brockway and Mr. Paul Rose took the initiative. On 2 June 1965 the "Campaign for Democracy in Ulster" was launched, with sixty-four supporters in Parliament.

The C.D.U. differed from the "Friends of Ireland" in its more restricted programme. There was little understanding of the Irish question as a whole. Thus the Trade Pact with the Republic was at this time under discussion. Labour M.P.s were genuinely surprised to learn that the Irish

Labour Party was not whole-heartedly in support of it. Their thinking was liberal but it had not yet transcended the imperial framework except perhaps in a handful of individual cases.

In February 1966 a motion was put down calling for an enquiry into the working of the Government of Ireland Act. It was signed by fifty-four M.P.s including two members of the Labour Party executive. A month later there was a powerful accession to the C.D.U. ranks by the arrival of Mr. Gerard Fitt who had been returned for West Belfast in the election which gave Mr. Wilson a safe majority.

Mr. Wilson no longer had the excuse of a tenuous majority. While he had given no definite pledges in his election campaign he had indicated a willingness to consider remedies. Only the Communist Party and *Plaid Cymru* had pledged their candidates to stand for reform in the six counties. But Mr. Wilson was under heavy pressure from his back benchers. He undertook to urge reforms on Captain O'Neill. If the six county Government introduced reforms the constitutional conventions would not be endangered. In delegating to Captain O'Neill the task of liquidating at least in part the system that he depended on, Mr. Wilson was giving effect to a pledge he had given to Mr. Heath, that the relations between England and the six counties would not be disturbed. But he cannot have reflected upon whether Captain O'Neill was strong enough to perform a duty which rightly devolved upon the English Government.

Presumably Captain O'Neill requested renewed pledges on partition. He received them on 14 November 1966 when, in reply to a question by Mr. Arnold Shaw, the Prime Minister declined to take steps towards the reunification of Ireland. To a similar query from Mr. Sean Dunne at the Council of Europe on 23 January 1967, Mr. Wilson replied tetchily, "If the North and South of Ireland could make up their differences they would have

my blessing and spare me the trouble of answering future questions on this score." He thus completely suppressed the English element in the attitude of the six county Government. It was on 3 October 1967 that Mr. Heath, presumably afraid that Mr. Wilson might succumb under pressure, revealed the pledge he had exacted in an interview. But meanwhile in December 1966 Captain O'Neill, under pressure at home and at Westminster, introduced the first reforms in the history of the State. The breach had been made.

It can be reasonably speculated that Mr. Wilson was told by his advisers that it would be possible to edge Stormont along the path of reform quickly enough to attract the twenty-six counties into the English fold. He pronounced himself mightily pleased with his Irish policy to some of those in his confidence. But unfortunately after the small adjustments at the end of 1966 nothing more was forthcoming. Indeed it was clear that a section of the Unionist Party would never forgive O'Neill for opening the front. What was wanted was action by a Government strong enough to see it through. By giving advance assurances that the preservation of the constitutional conventions took precedence of the necessity for reform, Mr. Wilson encouraged unconstitutional activities by Unionist extremists, and threw himself open to their blackmail. And he placed Captain O'Neill ultimately in an impossible position.

The activities of Orange extremists were not only stepped up in the six counties, they spread to Britain. In October 1967, when it was proposed to erect a memorial to the Manchester Martyrs on the site of Salford Jail, where they had been hanged a hundred years previously, the secretary of the committee that sponsored the project received a letter signed in the name of Spence promising to use gelignite on the memorial if it should be erected. The following year a few days after the Edinburgh Trades Council had affixed a commemorative plaque on a bridge

close to James Connolly's birthplace, it was torn down and the culprits were assumed to be militant Protestants who may have been alerted to the situation by the presence of Mr. Fitt at the ceremony. Later there were anti-ecumenical demonstrations at St. Paul's and Canterbury Cathedrals. Special efforts were made to spread sectarianism further in its old cradle of the west of Scotland.

It gradually became clear that the rules of the game as they had been decided by England in the Government of Ireland Act, were weighted overwhelmingly against the democratic forces. It was not possible to persuade the Unionists to play to lose. The rules of the game must be changed. Gradually over the preceding years the issues had become clarified. What was now required was no longer a public enquiry but comprehensive legislation at Westminster to right the wrongs of the aggrieved parties and to enforce the remedy. Accordingly on 25 July 1968 the Connolly Association addressed to Mr. Wilson a letter, which was subsequently published, calling upon him to introduce as quickly as possible a "Bill of Rights" which would amend the Government of Ireland Act by providing guarantees of a level of democratic rights for everybody in the six counties not inferior to those enjoyed in Britain.

The aim was to assure to the minority freedom of speech, organization and political action, the abolition of religious discrimination, a drastic curtailment of the powers of the police and the end of repressive legislation. But there was no reply. The English Government was determined to preserve the principle of non-intervention. Yet already acts of "civil disobedience" were taking place. The minority had been told they were entitled to reform, but they were not getting it. The September issue of the *Irish Democrat* led with the words, "Unless something is done soon to end the injustices which exist in British occupied Ireland there is going to be an explosion there."

Nothing was done. And the explosion came within a month.

Opposition to Westminster intervention to introduce democratic practices in the six counties has sometimes taken what may be called a pseudo-national form. Thus when Mr. Martin Ennals of the N.C.C.L. visited Belfast in 1962, and the authorities feared another investigation, the Unionist newspapers told him his duty in large headlines and editorials. Their advice was "Keep out!" The Northern Ireland people were mature enough to conduct their own affairs without the assistance of the N.C.C.L.

Again, when Mr. Wilson grew more insistent in his demands for reform, and Captain O'Neill looked like weakening, there was much brazen talk of "resistance" and "U.D.I.". Some observers mistakenly saw in the Unionist hubbub something akin to a demand for national independence. It is necessary therefore to be clear about the status of this brand of humbug. Any complaint that solidarity with the Irish Nationalist movement is wrongful "interference" is destroyed by the Unionists' rejection of nationalism. The argument can be expanded.

Can anybody conceive of a democrat in Britain offering the people of Northern Ireland freedom to secede from the United Kingdom but allowing a puppet administration to deny them the civil rights and universal suffrage that would enable them to say they wanted to? If the Unionists claimed the right to establish an independent Republic of their own, parallel with and separate from the existing one, that might be folly indeed, but could quite legitimately form a basis for objecting to Britain legislating for the area.

That is not their claim. They make the opposite claim. They claim the right to frustrate the desires of those who want secession. It is not, on their submission, interference to control 90 per cent of their taxation, but only to demand that there shall be equality of political rights.

They claim the right not only to remain within the United Kingdom, but to bring in with them others handcuffed and bound. They then claim the right to be free from British interference while they maltreat the prisoners they are holding under Britain's writ. Yet these wish to see the end of all British interference.

It is useless for those whose total claim is to be the agents of defying Irish democracy on the plea that they form an integral part of the United Kingdom to express indignation when British democracy heeds the complaints of those who suffer from the integration. They have no right to fly the flag of Britain and refuse to be accountable to the British people.

National rights are rights of separation. There is no such thing as a unilateral right of Union. That requires the consent of at least two, and when Union takes place it does so thanks to the right to be separate. It is therefore quite open to the British people to place conditions on Northern Ireland's inclusion in the United Kingdom. Those who said they did not want South Africa in the Commonwealth can say they do not want Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom at all, but that while they are in it they must conform to the principles of democracy. Only those who say, "Britain get out" have the right to say, "Britain keep out."

Insistence on action at Westminster to satisfy the demands of the National movement in the six counties, political or economic, is the way to call another bluff–the Conservative bluff. As has been explained, Westminster decides policy and divides it into two spheres. One sphere it operates itself at once. That is the sphere of issues important to imperialism. In the other sphere it excludes Northern Ireland from its legislation, but then indicates to the Stormont Government whether it has decided for them what they should do, or is prepared to leave the matter to them.

Within the second sphere Stormont is allowed an

initiative which is not in fact followed without full consultation at every point with Westminster. The cry, "Do not interfere in Northern Ireland," is therefore merely a demand that this convenient little farce should not be disturbed. And it leads to the absurdity of people demanding the right not to be interfered with in not ruling themselves.

The Labour movement should therefore demand that while the six counties are part of the United Kingdom, no local Government set up by the Tories shall have the right to deprive their inhabitants of equal economic, civil and political rights with the people of Britain.

"Non-intervention" is a Conservative policy. In March 1962 the Nationalists handed Mr. R. A. Butler (then on a visit to Northern Ireland) a memorandum setting out the grievances they wanted redressed. Mr. Butler could have acted through Parliament and had them redressed. He could have told the Northern Ireland Government to redress them or else. He could have ordered an enquiry.

Instead he told the Unionist Party leaders, "Your border is our border," and after a little decent delay sent on the Nationalist memorandum to Lord Brookeborough without comment. By this means he stood the real position exactly on its head. It was Mr. Butler's border, not Lord Brookeborough's. But Brookeborough defended it. It was Mr. Butler's coercion. But Mr. Faulkner carried it out. The complaints made to the owner about his manager were sent to the manager for his decision.

Exactly the same thing happened to the memorandum on unemployment sent to the British Government by the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in November 1962. It contained proposals which could have been initiated from Westminster, some indeed which required initiation from Westminster. After a short delay the memorandum was sent on to the Northern Ireland Government. This is the reality of non-intervention, and it is not the policy of democracy but Toryism.

The policy of democracy is solidarity. Toryism has deprived the Nationalists[2] of the six counties of their rights in the Republic. Its six county agents now try to justify depriving them of their rights in the United Kingdom. Pending the restoration of their rights in the Republic, let us make sure they receive the other rights they are entitled to at once.

The result of solidarity action is to bring the realities of the situation before an ever-widening public. It will become ever plainer that the Tory Party can never solve the Irish question. No more can the six county Unionists. Its final solution demands a non-imperialist policy by Britain, and solidarity action represents this as it were in embryo. The fundamental principle is that the British working class and the Irish national movement, in its broadest sense, must move in harmony. Some further suggestions on this subject will be found in the last chapter.

[2] Of course, not only the Nationalists, but the whole population of the six counties have been deprived of these rights. But it is the Nationalists who are most aware of it.

TEN

The Crisis of Unionism

What may be termed the crisis of Unionism revealed itself first in the economic impasse that led to the Isles and Hall Reports. As has been seen they offered no solution. The situation in 1961 was menacing in the extreme. The level of unemployment which had fallen from 36,935 in 1959 to 32,398 in 1960, increased suddenly to 36,143 in 1961 under the influence of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's "credit squeeze", and after a temporary stabilization in 1962, reached the high figure of 39,041 in 1963. These unemployment figures should be read against a background of constant emigration.

An important aspect of the recession of 1961 was its impact on traditional industries. The labour force in the shipyard was being steadily whittled away as a result of progressive rationalization. The aircraft industry was jeopardized by the economic dogmatism of the Tory Government. In January the old-established Forth River Mills in the Falls Road area paid off their entire labour force. York Street Mills followed in April. There were closures of factories in Derry. In September, legal history was made when a court was confronted with 2,000 processes for the recovery of small debts.

The struggle against unemployment was led by the trade union movement, a particular contribution being made by the shop stewards of the aircraft industry on whose initiative a large demonstration was held in Belfast in April 1961. In the autumn of 1960 a Joint Committee on Unemployment had been established, representing the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the District Committees of the two Trade

Union Confederations, and the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Labour Party. The Committee published recommendations which pressed hard against the provisions of the Government of Ireland Act. These included direct discussions with Commonwealth Governments, a six county market-research association, a development corporation for the whole region and a number of important fiscal and economic measures. It was proposed to study the possibility of economic co-operation with the Republic. In the meantime there should be a programme of public works and the payment of rural unemployment relief. The inclusion of the small farmers' demand was highly significant.

There was a feeling abroad, even in what were predominantly Protestant circles, that changes were overdue. Speaking to a conference of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Mr. Harold Binks said: "A call must go out from this conference for political action by trade unions and trade unionists, to organize and take over control at Stormont before it is too late."

When later in the year the Irish Farmers' Union formed a joint committee with the Ulster Farmers' Union, Mr. Binks advocated a joint committee of the six and twenty-six county Governments. It is doubtful whether he was aware of the constitutional implications of his proposal or that it would require legislation at Westminster. For it was in essence a proposal to restore the Council of Ireland.

The Unionist response was characteristic. The common people were uniting on the basis of their class interests. Whatever the economic consequences the maintenance of Unionist Government must take precedence over all else. The only way to divide the workers was through sectarianism. So out with the old slogans. A twenty-two-year-old unemployed man, Daniel Moore of Drumalin, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, at Rathfriland, for the dreadful crime of displaying a tricolour at the

Easter commemoration at Newry. So much for Mr. Binks's cross-border committees!

The good work was taken up by amateurs. An extreme Protestant sect, founded by Mr. Ian Paisley, appeared in the political arena. The official Unionist candidates found themselves opposed by "Protestants" in the municipal elections. They defended themselves in one ward by issuing a leaflet boasting that they had never employed a Catholic in their lives and challenging their opponents to say the same.

The time was now thought ripe for engineering a visit from the Queen of England. There was of course no difficulty about it. Of this visit the London *New Statesman* spoke frankly in a leading article headed, "John Bull's other Portugal" which has already been quoted.

> "Behind the usual pageantry lies a land in which elections are a mockery of freedom, in which reunification is a forbidden subject. . . . Lord Brookeborough has failed even the basic test. He has been unable to provide economic stability at the price of political liberty."

It is an illustration of the dazzling blindness of English Liberal commentators on Irish affairs, that the Fabian journal completely failed to apply this test to the British Government, though this, and not Lord Brookeborough, was responsible for the limitation of political liberty through partition, and the destruction of economic stability. The *New Statesman* argued that the six counties could not possibly survive the Common Market and that there should be a "re-examination of all the circumstances which have been keeping the Irish nation divided". These would of course necessarily include the Government of Ireland Act.

Earlier in the year the distinguished economist Professor Carter of Manchester had delivered his own warning to an audience in Belfast. He cut nearer the bone.

"It is time to face the fact that Northern Ireland's constitution is an economic failure. The Ministries of Commerce and Finance have responsibility without power; the (British) Board of Trade and the Treasury have power without any urgent sense of responsibility. This is the challenge of the 1960s. Either you change the constitutional relationship with Great Britain, so that Northern Ireland can enjoy a greater prosperity, or you wait till the failure of the present relationship is made obvious. Then you have to change it in a hurry, and in conditions which favour bitterness, industrial strife, and even the loss of the Protestant supremacy by a division of the majority into factions."

But displaying a parochialism which would have seemed restricted even in moles or liver-flukes, the Unionists kept their eyes on their own decaying domain. A warning which must now seem almost prophetic was not even dimly comprehended.

Thus what we see, looking back on 1961, is a crisis in which an effete ruling caste is challenged by a popular movement reaching out from its base in trade unionism. It is advised by Liberal onlookers to revise its traditional relationship with imperialism. It prefers to attempt the old tactic of "divide and rule" and thus conjures up a proto-fascist extremism from among the ruined shopkeepers, small farmers and workers fearful of the future.

In 1961 Paisleyism had as yet little following. The traditional Nationalist Party was relatively inactive, under pressure from Dublin to facilitate entry into the Common Market. It was being argued that the success of this project would make the border "an irrelevancy". The Nationalist Party expected to share this irrelevancy and so anticipated it. Republicanism was still disorganized and somewhat discredited following the failure of the border campaign. Groups of young Nationalists, feeling for a way forward, and sensing the crisis without understanding it, were form-

ing ephemeral organizations, as if experimenting with possible lines of policy.

In February 1962 the unemployed organized a march to Stormont. At the General Election held in May of that year the Unionists lost two seats, one to a left-wing Nationalist Mr. Gormley, and the other to Mr. Gerard Fitt, an avowed Nationalist and socialist who had imbibed some of the ideas of James Connolly. The significance of his election is that he must have attracted a substantial Protestant vote. In this election for the first time the Unionists failed to poll a majority in Belfast. Even in July, the month of midsummer madness, they were compelled to temporize. Mr. Binks brought to London an all-party delegation which was received by the Home Secretary, one stipulation being made; he would not receive Mr. William Blease of the Northern Ireland Committee of the I.C.T.U., because the Unionist Government did not recognize that organization. Never was a Unionist Government in such need of a jubilee. It was decided to celebrate the signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912. This took place on 29 September and was a distinct success. Three days later there took place the first sectarian riots since the Second World War.

But next month it was announced that 2,800 workers were to be dismissed from the shipyard. Trades in which unemployment had been unknown for twenty years were suddenly faced with the "burroo". Mr. Andrew Barr declared, "Belfast is being murdered before our eyes." The trade unionists decided to stump the six counties for a policy of increased employment. On 13 October, at the invitation of the Newry Trades Council, several hundred Belfast workers paraded the streets of the border town. They were joined by the Newry unemployed. The speakers at the meeting included Mr. Binks and Mr. Barr. They were joined by Mr. Boyd, leader of the N.I.L.P. and Mr. Connellan, the local Nationalist M.P. at Stormont, who had in his youth been a member of *Na Fianna Eireann.*

The local people attending the meeting must have been predominantly Catholic. But the words Catholic and Protestant were not heard. And the demonstration was the more remarkable for winning support from the farmers. There was no disorder and the Government did not dare to proclaim it.

Once more unity irrespective of religious conviction had been achieved on an economic basis. Could it be extended to democratic questions? That this was only partially possible does not imply that those who attempted it were mistaken. In December Mr. Gerard Fitt proposed in Stormont that in view of the cessation of hostilities the Republican prisoners should be released. The Northern Ireland Labour Party disgraced itself by voting with the Government. On the other hand the trade union movement had no hesitations. On the motion of Mr. W. McCullough the Belfast Trades Council resolved unanimously for an amnesty. This was announced in March 1963, and simultaneously Lord Brookeborough resigned. His place was taken by Captain Terence O'Neill.

The struggle against unemployment continued. On 26 March a delegation eighty strong flew to London, paraded the West End with a band, and lobbied Parliament in the evening. There was a new spirit abroad. When the N.I.L.P. conference met in April important democratic demands were recorded. A resolution was carried calling for the establishment of a tribunal to examine cases of alleged discrimination, the introduction of a points system in the allocation of houses, and the awarding of employment on the basis of merit only. Thus the overwhelmingly Protestant N.I.L.P. as far as its rank and file were concerned, were agreed on the abolition of Catholic grievances.

At the same time there were warnings of efforts to break up the advancing unity. An E.T.U. delegate reported that sectarianism had "raised its ugly head" in his own organization. Nor was ultra-leftism wanting. The repre-

sentative of the Young Socialist Society suggested that "any job which excluded Catholics should be declared black."

Mr. Ian Paisley was making little progress among the working class though constantly probing. He was reduced to a campaign against ecumenism, organizing protest demonstrations when the Union flag was lowered to half mast on the City Hall as a mark of respect to the memory of Pope John. His more ardent followers let off steam by daubing orange paint on the windows of houses inhabited by Catholics.

After unemployment the sharpest discontent was lack of housing. In the summer of 1963 the "Homeless Citizens League" was established at Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, and a demonstration was held on 27 August. The initiative was taken by Dr. and Mrs. McCluskey, who by the spring of 1964 had organized a group of professional people in the three western counties in the "Campaign for Social Justice". From complaining over the unfair allocation of houses they passed over to a general campaign against discrimination. They did not however explicitly oppose the border. There were occasional instances where squatters occupied houses which had been ear-marked for people in palpably less need.

In the country districts where "Social Justice" was active there was no substantial Protestant proletariat to appeal to, and apart from local actions the only available recourse was an appeal to Westminster over the head of Stormont. It was to Mrs. McCluskey that Mr. Wilson gave one of his pledges to do "all in his power", if elected, to relieve the grievances of Catholics in Northern Ireland. The foundation of "Social Justice" showed that the rural petit-bourgeoisie was reacting to the crisis and looking for extra-parliamentary spokesmen.

In February 1964 Mr. E. McAteer introduced a "Diminution of Discord Bill" at Stormont. It provided for the constitution of autonomous State boards to have

charge of the allocation of employment in public service and also of housing. Mr. Boyd of the N.I.L.P. introduced a "Racial Discrimination and Incitement Bill". Needless to say these measures did not get very far. At the same time Unionist policy began to show curious vacillations. Conciliation alternated with intransigence. At Easter 1964 there was no interference with the carrying of a tricolour in the Republican parade in the Falls Road. In July R.U.C. men were told to discontinue the practice of carrying revolvers by day. But when the chief planning officer of the new town of Craigavon resigned in August, he complained that his work had been frustrated by political decisions aimed at sectarian objects. Mr. Sean Caughey was fined £20 in Ballycastle for participating in the singing of the "Soldiers' Song" after a meeting.

In the Westminster elections of 1964 a Republican, Liam MacMillan, contested West Belfast. Perhaps emboldened by their success at Easter, the Republicans displayed a tricolour in the window of their Committee rooms in the exclusively Catholic Divis Street. Under the definition of the Flags and Emblems (Display) Act the Irish flag constituted an "emblem", i.e. it was not the Union Jack. As such it must be removed if in the opinion of any police officer having regard to time, place and circumstances its display might occasion a breach of the peace. The time was election time and the flag declared the candidate's programme–the unification of Orange and Green through Republicanism. The place was the Nationalist Falls Road. But what of the circumstances? These appeared in the form of a mob consisting of supporters of the Unionist candidates, in which Paisleyites were distributed like currants in a bun, and having made the journey specially to see the "provocation" they professed themselves highly provoked.

The result was a series of riots in which members of the public were sprayed by "water-cannon wagons". The Republicans declined to remove the symbol of their pro-

gramme, and the police broke in and destroyed it. The violence of 1964 far exceeded that of 1962. During the election, which the Unionists won by a small majority, there was unfavourable publicity in England. But there seems to have been little attempt to follow up the exposure of Unionist bias.

At the turn of the year the Belfast Trades Council was considering the possibility of calling a conference on the subject of Civil Liberties, the importance of which had been so sharply illustrated in the election. They were encouraged by the success of the London conference of 13 March 1965, and proceeded with their plan as soon as they had heard their delegate's report. The conference was held on 8 May 1965 and was a historic event. About eighty delegates attended, mostly from about fifteen trade unions, some of which were represented by several branches. But there were also Republicans, Communists, members of the N.I.L.P. and the Campaign for Social Justice. For some reason neither the McAteer Nationalists nor Mr. Fitt's party were represented. On the one hand there may have been illusions regarding the O'Neill-Lemass interchanges then proceeding, and on the other some suspicion of the N.I.L.P. The conference met in the lecture room of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union in the centre of the city.

Veterans of the I.T.G.W.U., men who recalled the days of Connolly and Larkin, were present. Several of these explained with deep emotion that this was the first time in their lives that they had been invited to tell their Protestant friends in the trade union movement what it was like to be a Catholic in Belfast.

They were soberly and sympathetically received. Not one word of sectarian antagonism was uttered. For the most part the Protestants present (the overwhelming majority) said little about religious discrimination. It is doubtful if they had yet the political vocabulary for it. But the atheists made up for them. In Belfast atheists are

classified according to the religious community their relations belong to. These men were of course "Protestant atheists", who in ceasing to accept religion had revolted against its misuse as a political weapon. To the delight of the Republicans they denounced discrimination with the enthusiasm of men whose duty is made pleasurable by conviction. A resolution was drawn up. All present were prepared to accept it. At last the unity of the working class, so largely achieved in the field of economic struggles, was seen possible in the realm of politics. From this could be foreseen the fall of Unionism, and indeed it was the only development which could bring about that fall without calling on forces outside the six counties to strike the main blow.

If the Republicans had characteristically shown impatience in the election campaign, equally characteristically the N.I.L.P. now showed hesitation. They explained that they had no mandate to support the resolution, admirable though it was in every respect. They promised to report to their Executive and send their endorsement through the post. It never came. The delay and loss of impetus proved fatal. On the one hand the impatience of Republicans increased. On the other the Paisleyites were given time and encouragement to extend their hold on the backward elements, even to influence members of the trade union movement in trades specially vulnerable to plant closures and rationalization. The work continued. But it is not possible to put a favourable situation into deep freeze. An indirect result of the conference was a well documented statement on Civil Liberties prepared by the Northern Ireland Committee of the I.C.T.U. But by that time the vital thing in politics, the initiative, had been lost. In the next Stormont election its caution availed the N.I.L.P. nothing. It lost two seats. But Mr. Fitt retained his.

Throughout 1966, pressure from Westminster Labour back benchers filtered through the constitutional barrages

constructed by the statesmen. The Belfast Trades Council continued to work for reforms. In February 1966 the issue was taken up by Mrs. Sheelagh Murnaghan, Liberal M.P. for Queens University, who introduced at Stormont a Bill founded on Fenner Brockway's. It aimed at outlawing both racial and religious discrimination. During that month Protestant extremists set fire to a Catholic church and a Catholic school. At Easter the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Rising was celebrated at Casement Park, Belfast.

An incident took place which showed the extreme fragility of the unity which forward-looking citizens were endeavouring to forge. Appreciating her work for civil liberties, the Republicans invited Miss Sinclair, well known as a leading Communist, to address the gathering. But just as the N.I.L.P. had shied away from the resolution to which Republicans were subscribing, so there were members of Nationalist organizations who looked askance at a Communist. There were hints and mutterings and in the interest of unity Miss Sinclair withdrew.

Provocations continued. Unionist extremists tried to blow up the Republican memorial at Milltown cemetery. In June the Home Secretary at Stormont, it is said unbeknownst to the Prime Minister, authorized Mr. Paisley to lead his followers through the densely populated Catholic area of Cromac Square, carrying banners highly insulting to the inhabitants. It was known that an armed force had been established which, whether it was under Mr. Paisley's control or not, was loosely termed "Paisleyite". During June there were two murders of Catholics which were attributed to this organization, and on the 25th of that month there was uncovered a plot to murder the prominent Republican Leo Martin. On 28 June a petrol bomb intended for a Catholic-owned public house struck a seventy-year-old Protestant woman, Mrs. Gould, who was burned to death. That day the Stormont Government declared the "Ulster Volunteer Force" an illegal associa-

tion. But it remained active underground, and no great pains were taken to unearth it. It must be appreciated that it was the U.V.F. that introduced the petrol bomb into six county politics.

Protestant opinion was anti-Paisley at this time. Mr. Paisley had held a demonstration against the Presbyterian assembly which had had the temerity to touch on the subject of ecumenism and deplore discrimination. He was awarded a three months' prison sentence as a result of the disturbance that ensued, in which personages high in public life, and not just poor devils, were caused embarrassment. At this time indeed many well respected Protestants were publicly dissociating themselves from the sectarian Orange Order. The tone at Stormont was one of opposition to the fascist type of violence that was being promoted. Mr. Paisley therefore began a campaign for support within the Orange Order, and soon his gatherings were speckled with sashes.

As has been noted, at the end of 1966 Captain O'Neill announced electoral reforms which included the abolition of the plural vote in Stormont elections. The university seats, no longer safe for Unionism, were replaced by four in the country. There is evidence that some of the Unionists believed that it was in the electoral field that they could with the least danger to themselves tolerate reform. University dons, venturing on the ice with their careers in their hands, tested and pronounced on reaction's next defence line. There was much to be said, was their verdict, for doing away with local government altogether, for who could make accusations of gerrymandering when it was a simple matter of observation that there was no such thing as an election? The one ultimate gerrymander, partition, could then do the work of all others put together. The London *Times* remarked of the reforms that they might "assist the United Kingdom Ministers to keep the provincial affairs of Northern Ireland away from Westminster", that is to say to keep fundamentals where they were. Mr.

Lemass ventured the hope that the Nationalist M.P.s would adopt a more "rational" policy. He was anxious to meet Captain O'Neill again.

The year 1966 was thus of critical importance. A united working-class movement might have opened the trickle of reform until it became a flood. Moreover it was clear that leftist posturings were not necessary. The first chink had been opened by traditional political means.

Towards the end of 1966 however the economic blizzard blew full blast. Unemployment had fallen to 30,915 in the relative prosperity of 1965. It rose above 41,000 in January 1967, and to 42,844 in April. On one day, 20 January, 1,400 workers were dismissed in Belfast, Newry and Derry. Nor was there further intermission. At the end of 1970 unemployment figures were still around the 40,000 mark. There was constant poverty for those without work, and a constant threat of poverty to those whose work was in jeopardy. To overcome the economic crisis required victory over Unionism, as Mr. Binks had pointed out a few years previously. But for this was required in turn the unity of the workers on political as well as economic issues. Failing such unity the danger was that the workers' just resentment against the results of partition and the imperialist policies it safeguarded might be diverted into sectarian struggles which would be self-defeating.

The reforms of 1966 arose from the complex interplay of the factors that have been mentioned. How was the movement to regard them? Some thought as an earnest of Unionist conversion; others as a sign that the cow was coming into milk. The first sought above all not to embarrass the reformers. The Belfast tactics should be those of the N.C.C.L. in London. Others felt the need for a wider and more vigorous organization. This time the initiative came from the Wolfe Tone Society, a loose alliance of Republicans and advanced Nationalists which had arisen thanks to the bi-centenary of 1963.

A conference was called in Belfast for 29 January 1967, and was attended by Mr. Anthony Smythe of the N.C.C.L. Those present included representatives of the Nationalist Party, the National Democrats, the Republican Labour Party of Mr. Fitt, and the Belfast Trades Council. Only three trade unions were represented. They were the National Union of Teachers, the National Union of Seamen and the Draughtsmen's Association.

It was decided to establish the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. The term "civil rights" was preferred to "civil liberties", possibly for the reason that the Negro civil rights movement was attracting great attention in the U.S.A. The Catholics not unnaturally saw themselves as occupying a position comparable to that of the American Negroes. The Republicans for their part did not wish to fight for what they considered their rights under the title of "liberties". Perhaps the term "democratic rights" might have described what they intended best. But there were no precedents before them. The new body signified an ominous circumstance. It did not arise by the extension of working-class unity from the economic to the political sphere. Paisleyism had already begun to undermine that unity. The greatest delicacy and circumspection was required.

On 9 April N.I.C.R.A. adopted its constitution and elected its Executive Council. To a large extent the constitution followed that of the London organization, the N.C.C.L., having both individual and affiliated membership. Whether individual membership was as appropriate to six county conditions as it might be in London will no doubt be considered when historians attempt a judgement. The Executive Committee consisted of Michael Dolly, Noel Harris, Ken Banks, Dr. McCluskey, Fred Heatley, Kevin Agnew, Derek Peters, Elizabeth Sinclair, Joseph Sherry, J. Quinn, Patrick Devlin, Jack Bennett and J. O'Brien.

While it is clear that the Executive thus constituted

contained members who were active in the trade union movement, including a shop steward from the aircraft factory, members of the N.I.L.P., Communist Party, the Wolfe Tone Society and even a moderate Unionist, it could not be said that they represented these movements. They acted as individuals and were not under the necessity of carrying their organizations with them. The problem of finding a programme which would nevertheless succeed in uniting the masses was one of the utmost difficulty, the more so since sections of the Protestant workers, though opposed to Paisleyism, saw it as their immediate interest in the crisis to hold fast to what they had; they had no desire to encourage Catholic competition.

The Unionists struck at the weak spot during the period of gestation of the Civil Rights Association. Perhaps they acted from sheer stupidity, but if so it was allied to a remarkable instinct. In view of the coming centenary of the Fenian Rising the Republican movement had seen the necessity for an open organization. This was established in the form of "Republican Clubs" which would take part in the preparation of a commemoration. Despite all the talk of reforms the Government proscribed these under the Special Powers Act and Republican indignation was intense.

If the Civil Rights Association had already been functioning perhaps the Republicans might have handed over the organization of a campaign to the new society. To do so would nevertheless have been a breach with past tradition. Under that tradition the governmental forms of the British State are generally not recognized even *de facto*. Thus the approach to a proscription differs from that a working-class organization would be likely to take. Every worker is compelled to accept the *de facto* supremacy of his employer, however much he revolts against wage slavery. The contrasting approach of the Republicans is illustrated by their reaction to the ban on their *United*

Irishman. They conducted no campaign to have the ban removed, for that might savour of recognizing the illegal authorities, but confined themselves to defying the ban and selling the paper in spite of it. The ban was ultimately lifted when the Government felt its position safeguarded by the split in the I.R.A.

Since the alternative was not open the Republicans proceeded in the traditional way. They organized a conference of Republican Clubs in hopes of "breaking the ban". They invited distinguished members of the Civil Rights movement to attend. The Government would never dare to arrest these people, they argued. In the event, after much vacillation the Government held its hand and the convention was held. But the ban on the Republican Clubs remained and was enforced in other cases, and what was worse, members of N.I.C.R.A. were drawn on to disputed ground before the organization had established itself. The convention took place on 19 March. A week later the Fenian commemoration procession walked up the Falls Road with the tricolour flying and concluded with the "Soldiers' Song". On the surface it seemed a major victory had been won. But had the Republicans played cards that should have been held? Had they moved reserves into battle for a skirmish that should have been held for strategic purposes?

Since the cessation of hostilities in 1962 the Republican movement had undergone considerable re-orientation without altering its fundamentally petit-bourgeois character. Its old establishment in Ireland, and the economist tendency of the Labour movement, enabled it to attract a substantial working-class membership, as was very natural under the conditions obtaining in partitioned Ireland. It recruited some of the most idealistic and high-principled of the youth, not perhaps deep thinkers, but men whose watchwords were courage and self-sacrifice. Its strong discipline contrasted with the extraordinary indiscipline of most of the other Nationalist groupings,

and, it must be said, of most of the Labour movement apart from the Communists and the trade unions.

The border campaign had revealed the gulf between the guerrillas and the people. These gave their sympathy, but saw no prospect of success. This separation was attributed to the lack of a social policy, and in a search for such the Republicans discovered the grievances of workers, farmers and the petit-bourgeoisie on the economic front. The movement steadily moved towards the left and in 1968 proclaimed itself socialist. Unfortunately however its theoreticians did not understand the old tried principle of socialism that the "emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves". There was a tendency to undertake activities which were properly the responsibility of the workers' own organizations. Republicans found it hard to understand that trade unions, representing not the cream of the working class but the whole of it, sometimes delayed not from opportunism or a sense of weakness but because objective and subjective conditions were not ripe.

In embracing socialism the Republican movement naturally came face to face with Marxism, and its theoreticians were influenced by Marxism. But simultaneously there was much pseudo-Marxism, peddled by small groups who had rummaged well in the petit-bourgeois junk-pile from Proudhon through Bakunin to Trotsky and Fanon. There was to be a socialist Ireland. Which class was to bring it into being? Some seemed to think the petit-bourgeoisie. Others thought the working class but argued that the I.R.A. was itself the party of the working class. One of the features of the "new left" which fitted the Republican outlook at this time was the under-estimation of the importance of trade unionism, which is not understood to move slowly betimes because of its great load, but because the horse is unwilling. The instincts of the Republicans were usually sound, but they were compelled to apply to a sudden and complex crisis social theories which

they had not had time to digest and where necessary disgorge. They paid the penalty for the years without a social policy from 1939 onwards.

In May 1967 Mrs. Paisley was elected to the Belfast City Council. In June a petrol bomb destroyed licensed premises owned by a Catholic. In July, Mrs. Rock, a Protestant resident on the Shankill Road, was molested by Paisleyites who objected that her daughter was courting a Catholic. On 12 July the Unionist M.P. Mr. Forrest was assaulted at Cooagh by Orangemen who accused him of too great toleration towards Captain O'Neill's programme of reforms, even though the reforms themselves were scarcely to be seen. In November the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Craig, proscribed the Queens University Republican Club, a harmless discussion group, and as a result 2,000 students marched in protest.

England's second application to join the Common Market was rejected at the end of 1967. The current of ecumenism slackened. In January a new Education Bill was debated at Stormont and it was alleged to be discriminatory. In mid-March members of the Derry Housing Action Committee, an organization not without Republican and ultra-left influence, commandeered a vacant house and installed a family as squatters. They were taken to court and fined. But no effort was made to remove their grievance. Throughout the spring and summer commemorations of the birth of James Connolly took place, and the result was a radicalizing of the whole Republican movement which was given expression in ways that differed from place to place. In general there was a feeling for "militant action" particularly in the western areas where the demand for a programme of "civil disobedience" was raised.

It is difficult to avoid the impression that the Civil Rights Association had not solved the problem of a viable constitutional policy. For this the blame must be laid squarely on the failure of the Wilson Government to

respond to the repeated requests for intervention that were made to it. Thus there took place a slow but steady drift to "direct action" in places where the housing question was paramount.

Mr. Austin Currie M.P. "occupied" a house in Dungannon which had been allocated to a girl of nineteen whose brother was a policeman, while hundreds of families were living in overcrowded slums. On 3 July 1968 members of the Derry Housing Action Committee staged a "sit down" at the ceremony accompanying the opening of an extension to the bridge across the Foyle. Then on 24 August took place the march from Coalisland to Dungannon which was attended by at least 2,500 people. This was the beginning of mass protest on the streets by the Catholic population and gave rise to political controversy which illustrates the character of the anti-Unionist movement, and the dilemma created for it when the Westminster Parliament declines to provide elementary democratic forms. In all that follows the comment and analysis can, at this degree of closeness to the events described, be no more than tentative and preliminary. But it may assist discussion of the issues involved.

The Cameron Report states that at the suggestion of Dr. McCluskey of the Campaign for Social Justice, the Executive of N.I.C.R.A. met at the house of Mr. Kevin Agnew, a Republican solicitor, at Maghera. There they considered the proposal for a protest march against the housing policy being pursued by the local authority at Dungannon. The Belfast members "had doubts about getting involved in housing agitation and mass processions" but ultimately agreed. They may have felt that they were being invited to abandon the London model of an impartial non-political court of reference, and to undertake work that was properly that of a combination of political parties. On the other hand, what place had the London model in six county conditions?

The police raised no objection. But the Paisleyites

reacted by announcing a counter-demonstration in the Diamond, or Town Square, which they regarded as Protestant territory. As a result of their arrival, armed with cudgels and blackthorns which may be carried quite legally in the six counties, the police decided to deny the Civil Rights March access to the town centre and directed them to Thomas Street. Here was the first example of a confrontation that was to grow familiar, the forces of law and order protecting the Protestant extremists in denying their rights to the Catholics.

A meeting was held and addressed by Miss Sinclair and the two M.P.s, Messrs. Fitt and Currie. Those present had for the most part never previously participated in a protest march. They did not understand the political strategy of those who had called it, and there is no tradition of preliminary discussion of such things, thanks to the fact that the old Nationalist Party had no democratic local organization. Miss Bernadette Devlin M.P. gives an account[1] which includes a description of the mood of the crowd. But she does not make clear the precise sequence of events. She gives a picture of a crowd growing constantly more angry at being stopped by a cordon of police, of incipient scuffles in which people said, "What's the point of saying we'll get civil rights when you let them stop us having *this* civil right?" There was thus no inkling of the fact that struggles may be protracted and involve retreats as well as advances. People wished to break the cordon. This would have led to a fracas with the Paisleyites, but it would not have won the civil right to march into Dungannon. For that the Paisleyites must be curbed. As this was manifestly impossible in the position that confronted them, Miss Sinclair called for the singing of the Civil Rights Song "We shall overcome" and thus brought the meeting to a close. After that, Miss Devlin puts it, the Belfast visitors "scuttled into the lorry" and were driven off. This however, they have denied.

[1] *The Price of My Soul*, p. 91 et seq.

This confrontation illustrates the quandary of any progressive movement in the six counties. It arises from the powers with which Westminster has armed the Unionists, and the permission given them to use them inequitably, so as to tolerate organizations devoted to keeping the minority in subjection. The Catholics were not strong enough to defeat this combination without winning allies. But where were they to find them? Among the Protestant workers of Belfast? These were not yet ready. Across the border? The Government was up to its neck in European integrationism. Among the British workers who might force Westminster to legislate? Here again the movement was not determined enough or convinced of the necessity. The only possible tactic was therefore to conduct all demonstrations and other actions in such a way as to win these allies. Despite Miss Devlin's understandable impatience, this was what Miss Sinclair and her friends wished to do, and there was little else for it at that stage. The criticism that leaders of the Labour movement constantly urged caution recurs in Civil Rights literature. This caution is intimately connected with the aim of winning allies, the vital and indispensable condition necessary for Irish liberation.

Miss Devlin in her book touches on another question. She revolts from what seemed to her the sectarian keynote of the march, the demand for "housing for Catholics, and jobs for Catholics". She suggests that the demand should have been for "more jobs" and "more houses". First let it be remarked that the entire Labour movement had been urging this demand for years. But it was not a "civil rights" demand; it was an economic not a democratic demand. Nobody has suggested that the demonstration proposed the re-distribution of houses already held by Protestants. It was therefore about new houses not old ones. The demand for more houses was thus implicit. But saving a position where enough new houses were available to satisfy every applicant, a situation which quite obviously

could not arise for a number of years, what was to happen to the new ones as they became available? They should be allocated in accordance with need. Since Catholic need was immeasurably greater than Protestant need, though that existed too, it was impossible to avoid the issue of houses for Catholics. By the same token, when Coloured men are kept out of hotels on racial grounds, it is not possible to avoid the issue of access of Coloured men to hotels. You cannot defend the oppressed with general phrases, you must name the wrong you wish rectified. And from the standpoint of the movement, only when houses were distributed according to need would it be possible to get unity of all those suffering from the shortage to campaign for an adequate building programme.

Mr. Fitt returned to London in a white fury at the way the Government and the Paisleyites had combined to outwit him. He knew well the frustration and anger that was being built up. He went to see Mr. Wilson, but that gentleman was too busy "defending democracy" in Czechoslovakia, and had no thought to spare for it in the United Kingdom. Mr. Fitt then fell in with a suggestion from the Movement for Colonial Freedom to hold a protest meeting in Trafalgar Square. The meeting took place on 20 October, by which time more fuel had been added to the fire.

The Derry Housing Committee followed the example of the Dungannon group by inviting the N.I.C.R.A. Executive to discuss a march in Derry. N.I.C.R.A. urged the establishment of a more broadly based local committee. Invitations were despatched, but only the Labour Party Young Socialists, Derry City Republican Club, Derry Labour Party, and the James Connolly Society responded. It was nevertheless decided to establish an *ad hoc* committee. This was to prepare for a demonstration on 5 October.

When the route was announced came the usual Unionist objections. The "Apprentice Boys", an appendage of the

Orange Order, announced a demonstration for the same time and place. On 3 October the Minister banned all meetings on the east side of the Foyle where the Belfast road and the surviving railway line enter the city, as well as within the walls. On 4 October at a meeting in the City Hotel it was decided by a majority to defy the ban. This decision the Cameron Commission attributed to "local militants."

At the British Labour Party Conference Mr. Fitt and Mr. Redmond, convinced that serious violence was possible, secured that a delegation of Members of Parliament should attend as observers. These were Mr. and Mrs. Kerr and Mr. John Ryan. The counter-demonstration was called off and it was then hoped that the day would pass peacefully. There was little bitter sectarian feeling in Derry, where the whole population had objected to Government discrimination against the city as a whole. But the Government seemed determined on a trial of strength. Police were brought in from other areas and concealed at the naval base on the coast. Despite the doubtful legality of this proceeding nobody seems to have challenged it. There were commandos and water-cannon wagons from Belfast. When the procession gathered at the railway station a strong cordon of the R.U.C. sealed it off from the bridge. Early in the proceedings Mr. Fitt was struck on the head by a policeman for daring to approach the cordon to speak with its members.

A chair was obtained and a meeting held. After explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to protest against the unrepresentative and partisan administration of the city, Miss Sinclair once more incurred the ire of the ultra-left by suggesting a peaceful dispersal now the protest was made. The Westminster Members of Parliament were there. To get so far was a success. It seems that the majority of those present were agreeable to this suggestion and that the dispersal was begun. The Cameron Report suggests that instead of accepting Miss Sinclair's advice,

members of the "Young Socialist Alliance" threw their placards and banners at the police.[2] The County Inspector instead of arresting those responsible for the attack ordered a baton charge on the crowd which was already dispersing.

Unfortunately the other end of the street where the meeting was taking place was blocked by another cordon to whose members apparently no orders had been given. The Cameron Report suggests that the police then used their batons indiscriminately, and the District Inspector wielded his blackthorn with needless violence. The water-cannons were brought out. Neither age nor sex was spared. Within the walls of the city, police clubbed men taking their banners home and, for good measure, those who had been nowhere near the demonstration. There were fierce sectarian riots all evening. The Unionists had once more achieved the old position.

Max Hastings discerns a dilemma before the Civil Rights movement in relation to the Derry Protest. "Whatever the C.R.A.'s original intentions, the moment their march was banned as a result of an apparent Protestant conspiracy the whole weight of Ulster Catholic opposition rallied behind it. . . . It was no longer a Civil Rights march, it was militant Catholic Ulster on the move. Only the Executive of the Civil Rights Association, appalled by the confrontation now before them, considered drawing back."

But the Unionists had overplayed their hand. Strong reactionaries can afford to be nincompoops for a time; weak ones require the use of brains. The indefensible brutality of the R.U.C. had been *seen* on the television screens of the world. The Westminster M.P.s were immeasurably strengthened when they made their reports to Mr. Wilson. If the British Prime Minister had announced legislation there and then for the removal of

[2] Max Hastings, *Ulster 1969*, says one banner was thrown.

the grievances of the minority, there was nothing that could have withstood him. But he chose the line of reasoning with Stormont. Meanwhile those in the Labour movement who had heard of Northern Ireland but could not visualize it, found a symbol they could remember. Thus the way was being prepared for the great policy reversal–intervention by the English Government.

ELEVEN

The Cards Go Down

The events of Dungannon and Derry opened a new age of tumult in the crisis of Unionism, and within them it was possible to discern a recurrent pattern in precise conformity with the internal dynamics of the partition system. To discover that mass defiance was possible after nearly a half century sent a thrill of confidence through the Catholic minority. The breaking of the wall of silence and the world-wide exposure of Unionism as a result of demonstrations led some optimistically to assume that all that was now wanted was to organize more demonstrations, more "confrontations", and the Government in London would be compelled to "do something". But there was more in it than that. The cards had indeed been dealt and gathered up, and play was beginning. It was not apparent in the first two tricks that they had been efficiently stacked. Those who suspected this wished to refuse the game. Those who did not asked the reason for the hesitation.

The immediate consequence of the disturbances in Derry was the activation of the students of Queens University, whose term had just opened. The memory of the turmoils at the Sorbonne, which contributed to the toppling of De Gaulle while preserving all that was most reactionary in Gaullism, was still fresh. The English press, whether anxious to divert the "left" from realistic avenues of social change, or so as to blacken the students as an aid to holding down their grants, had proclaimed them the spearhead of revolution. Some of the best of them took this new role seriously. It is not difficult for young people to mistake their overflowing

sense of physical potentiality for an actual ability to change the world on the spot.

Their revulsion from Unionist brutality was generous and immediate. On 6 October they marched to the house of William Craig. The resident bourbon called them "silly bloody fools" and told them to go away. Next day a meeting in the university attracted 700 students. They decided to march to the City Hall on 9 October, and notified the police. The approved tactic was repeated once more. A thousand Paisleyites barred the way. The police halted the students. Minor scuffles took place but there were no serious incidents. That evening it was decided to set up a permanent protest group.

The establishment of a University Civil Rights organization affiliated to N.I.C.R.A. was an obvious advantage, if only because of the large number of students who were Protestant. It could have helped to isolate the Paisleyites by showing that the intelligentsia were firmly opposed to him. And indeed over a period of about a month student protest, mostly marches to the City Hall and Stormont, had that effect. But all was not so simple. The protest group, composed for the most part of people new to political experience, sought advice from a number of people who were not members of the university, and these became its virtual leadership. The danger was thus the creation of a parallel organization to N.I.C.R.A., which might act as a competitive centre at a time when unified leadership and strict discipline were vitally necessary.

The non-alumni moreover included individuals of strong ultra-left tendencies, who did not understand the necessity for such leadership and discipline. They had the age-old weaknesses of their kind, which seem to derive from the notion that it is possible to change the world of reality by means of nostrums from the world of ideas. Hence, programmes which are not the expression of the needs of the masses, but of the consciousness of

the élite; feverish impatience so that the spirit shall confront brute matter with the least possible delay, mere matter having no power of development of its own; arrogance appropriate to the bearers of a principle superior to reality; in a word the outlook of a sect. But since in the event the spirit fails to shatter reality, which has to be dealt with as it comes along, there is gross opportunism in tactical matters, especially in relation to the movement as a whole. These people had been in contact with Marxism, but had never broken with philosophical idealism or grasped the meaning of *materialist* dialectic.

The name given to the new group, which was mostly composed of ordinary students, was "People's Democracy". It is hard to know what the title was intended to convey, except perhaps that the traditional democracy of the Labour movement was not good enough. It had no formal membership, no elected officials, no agreed constitution, standing orders or, so far as can be gathered, minutes. It thus had no continuity of policy, and was dependent for continuity on the "Young Socialist Alliance" whose members were active within it. The danger of this situation became apparent later.

On 15 October the Nationalists withdrew from their position of "official opposition" in Stormont, which they had accepted under persuasion of the Dublin politicians who desired a more "rational" policy, that is to say one which would not hinder their own rapprochement with imperialism. The following day these men had to account for themselves. They had proposed the abolition of proportional representation in the twenty-six counties, and on 16 October held a referendum. The people rejected their proposal, and there need be no doubt that the events in the north influenced them towards retaining such checks as they had on their representatives.

Derry was still seething and, as among the students, people previously quiescent had stirred into political

life. The vital question was that of leadership, which for the moment seemed to be shared among a number of petit-bourgeois groupings, which competed against each other in uneasy alliance. Conditions in Derry were favourable to formation of an alliance which contained substantial bourgeois elements. A meeting of a hundred prominent citizens was called, and the "Derry Citizens' Action Committee" established. Its leaders were John Hume, a former teacher now a successful businessman well known for his work on behalf of both communities, a man of intellect and strong character who knew his own mind and was close to the people, and Ivan Cooper, a Protestant who showed great courage in braving the antagonism of the bigots among his own community. The Committee made contact with N.I.C.R.A. but did not affiliate. Thus a third centre was established.

The Committee organized a "sit down" in the Diamond on 19 October. On 2 November fifteen of its leading members walked in a token "procession" over the route forbidden on 5 October. On the fourth Captain O'Neill, Mr. Craig and Mr. Faulkner answered a summons to appear at Downing Street, and next day the Commons were told that the Prime Minister had requested a full report of the Derry incidents, and had urged Captain O'Neill to reform local government at once. The M.C.F. demonstration on 20 October, and a series of representations by trade unionists and others since then, had convinced Mr. Wilson that Unionist pig-headedness was jeopardizing his policy on several fronts.

But Captain O'Neill faced substantial opposition to his Whitehall policy, and Mr. Paisley knew how to stimulate it. On 9 November he too must invade Derry and parade the disputed ground. Thereupon Mr. Craig forbade all processions but those which were customary within the city walls. But he must have known that the indefatigable marchers of the Orange Order had a precedent for very nearly every day in the calendar.

The suspicion that Mr. Paisley had laughed last made the Derry Catholics feel baffled and angry. But their resentment was not directed against the Protestants, among whom civil rights still attracted dispassionate sympathy throughout the whole of the six counties. Indeed around this time there were held inter-denominational religious services in Derry.

On 16 November the Citizens' Action Committee organized a remarkable demonstration, and if the so-called "mass media" were less concerned with "show business" and more with education, its tremendous significance would have been more widely realized. Fifteen thousand people were assembled outside the walls, and the sequel showed the difference between disciplined mass action and "propaganda by the deed". The population of Derry is about 55,000. It includes about 14,000 males between the ages of 15 and 60. Of these at most 10,000 would be Catholics. Allowing that every single one of these participated, together with a third of their womenfolk, there must still have been over a thousand Protestants.

To resist such a force was utterly beyond the resources of the R.U.C., illegal procession though it was. This was a confrontation of a new order. When the march reached the police cordon negotiations began. The Committee gave the police no excuse upon which the authorities could call for troops. They insisted that a token contingent be allowed through the barrier, while the remainder of the assembly filtered through side streets to the Diamond where a meeting should be held. The authorities agreed. Three days later Captain O'Neill announced his intention of introducing reforms, and a further three days later these were reported in Stormont.

The sheer magnitude of the demonstration had convinced the die-hards that they must give in. The circumstances that made for this success are worth not-

ing. First there were no Paisleyite mobs in the background such as would have been at once available in Belfast. Second, while the Catholics were in a majority there was some sense of fraternity among Derry citizens who had been compelled to fight the central Government's policy of regional discrimination, which had lost them a university, three railway stations and a cross-channel ferry. Third, Mr. Hume had been prominent in the agitation upon these matters. Fourth, the Citizens' Action Committee proceeded by stages, discouraged sporadic or spontaneous actions, and explained their tactics to the people in meetings before making their stand. And finally they recognized that the line of police in front of them was only a detachment of the enemy, and by allowing them a means of escape provided no excuse for the bringing up of fresh forces. The Action Committee was able to show solid gains, and on 9 December decided that marches and protests should be discontinued over the Christmas period.

The reforms showed that Unionism had been compelled to retreat, but they were hedged about with provisions. There was to be a Parliamentary Commissioner to deal with complaints of discrimination. People said he was to have the job of emptying the sea with a spoon. Instead of a democratic voting system for Derry, the Derry Corporation was to be abolished, and the city managed by a Development Commission. Housing was to be allocated on a points system, but this was not to be obligatory on local authorities. The company vote was to go. But the property qualifications in local elections and the Special Powers Act were to remain.

It was of course necessary for all members of the Labour and democratic movements to consider their attitude to these reforms. Some of the most experienced thought that what was now necessary was to unite all sections other than the extreme Unionists in an effort

to secure their speedy implementation and substantial enlargement. Mr. Max Hastings[1] asserts that during the weeks following 5 October Miss Elizabeth Sinclair[2] summarized the situation in the words, "The war is over, and now the discussions are about to begin." Despite its limited character a victory had been won. The task was to consolidate it and so reconstitute the broad alliance of Civil Rights workers and trade unionists. There were reserves in the offing. They must give them time to come up.

Reference has been made to the great variety and lack of coherence among the local communities enclosed by the artificial border. The "People's Democracy", leaving the seclusion of the university cloisters, now proceeded to hurl themselves upon this patchwork, with the presumable purpose of forming a network of organizations throughout the six counties. In this they competed with N.I.C.R.A. and plunged into action just when the essential was the careful consideration of future policy. On 23 November, the day after the reforms were announced, when the vital necessity was that of winning a majority of Protestants to accept the principle of reform, they held a public meeting in Dungannon. Unionist extremists attempted to break it up. The granting of reforms was associated in the minds of fearful Protestants, many of whom might with justice be expected to have guilty consciences, with advancing disorder which would ultimately engulf them.

The absence of strong sectarian tension in Derry had made possible the brilliant and flexible tactics of the Citizens' Action Committee. In Belfast, and elsewhere in the six county area, no comparable situation existed. N.I.C.R.A. found itself committed to actions others had prepared. Thus on 8 November a Civil Rights group

[1] *Ulster 1969*, p. 63.

[2] Miss Sinclair denies the use of these words and states that Mr. Hastings did not consult her while preparing his book.

had been established in Armagh. Its basis was partly Republican, partly Nationalist. Arrangements had already been made for a march on 30 November, which it was decided to proceed with.

The old blackmail was repeated. Paisleyites poured into the city throughout the night, and paraded armed with bludgeons, iron bars and clubs studded with nails which sometimes protruded their sharp ends. About 2,500 Civil Rights marchers assembled. Police barred their way since the ground they were making for was occupied by Paisleyites. After the demonstration, scuffles broke out as Mr. Paisley and Major Bunting were descried making towards some buses. The police then charged the Catholics, and displayed what the Cameron Report gently described as "indiscipline".

An effort was made to establish a local Civil Rights Committee at Dungannon at an indoor meeting. This took place on 4 December and was the first private meeting to suffer molestation. A group of Protestant extremists gathered in the Market Square and though police held them off, there was stone-throwing and shots were fired when the meeting broke up. It was not denied that "B"-Specials were concerned in this incident.

At this point the N.I.C.R.A. leadership seem to have taken stock of the situation. At all times the Paisleyites had contrived to act as a buffer between them and the Unionist administration. Their conclusion was in favour of the course adopted in Derry. It was agreed to hold no more marches or demonstrations until the second week in January.

The "People's Democracy" did not consider themselves bound by this decision. A series of meetings were held at which members of the Young Socialist Alliance urged that there should be organized a four-day march across country to Derry. The first meetings voted against the proposal. But as the students dispersed to their homes, the proportion of leftist militants increased, and

finally when on 20 December the Young Socialist Alliance members announced that if necessary they would march alone, a majority was found. The proposal was to leave Belfast on 1 January and to reach Derry on the 4th.

The N.I.C.R.A. Executive deplored this decision, but under pressure donated £25. The Derry Citizens' Action Committee, faced with the *fait accompli*, agreed with some misgivings to receive the marchers when they arrived. Republicans, Nationalists, Hibernians arranged to feed and accommodate them on their way. In the nature of the case it was to be a progress of Catholic areas. About fifty young people left Belfast and the story has been told by Miss Devlin[3] and Mr. Bowes Egan.[4] The marchers showed courage and perseverance, fortitude and endurance that can only arouse admiration. Their procession was harried, diverted, abused, stoned, and ultimately attacked by Unionist fanatics who lined the roads and fields. At Burntollet Bridge took place the notorious ambush when hundreds of Paisleyite extremists, excited by his Reverence's animadversions at a "religious meeting" the night before, armed with the usual paraphernalia of thuggery, assaulted marchers of both sexes with merciless disregard of the consequences. An attempt was made to repeat the ambush in Derry, and only the coolness of the Citizens' Action Committee members prevented the eruption of sectarian war.

The young people were not armed. Nor were they politically prepared for the outrageous violence meted out to them. There were telegrams sent to Westminster, demands for the intervention of British forces, pleas for the suspension of Stormont, so that the six counties would presumably become a Crown Colony. Notwithstanding the *naïveté* of their ideas, their action once more exposed the wolves of Unionism. There were

[3] *The Price of My Soul*, p. 125 et seq.
[4] *Burntollet*.

twenty-six casualties recorded by the police, but the Cameron Commission held that these figures must have been incomplete.

But was it necessary to get oneself bitten once more in order to prove beyond doubt that the dog was fierce? And was it necessary to upset neighbours who might have no great love for the animal themselves? The Cameron Report concluded, "For moderates this march had a disastrous effect. It polarized the extreme elements in each place it entered." The Commission suggested that its promoters hoped that as a result tension would be increased and a "more radical programme would be realized". The Commission does not suggest what that programme was intended to be.

The "People's Democracy" now had the bit between its teeth, and pushed on oblivious of all such considerations. It had established a committee in Newry in November 1968. In December a decision had been taken to march in that town on 11 January. The political objects of the march included matters extraneous to civil rights *sensu stricto*. They still protested against governmental denial of civil rights, and alleged discrimination in employment by local public bodies. But two other issues were raised, namely the level of unemployment itself, and alleged nepotism by local councillors.

On 30 December the local Committee cancelled the march. But after Burntollet nothing could be stopped. The decision was reversed. The route notified to the police included one of Newry's small Unionist areas, but in a town unusually free from strong animosities the local Unionists signified that they had no objection.

At this point Major Bunting's romantic imagination suggested to him a "trooping of the colour", that is to say a Paisleyite counter-demonstration. Belfast instructed local police headquarters to re-route the march. Major Bunting then decided not to troop the colour after all. He had achieved his object. The trap was

baited. The P.D. march was to be made sectarian whether they wished it or not.

The local P.D. Committee decided upon a token breach of the police barricade the Major had secured against them, after which they would sit down as a protest. The plan was that when in this posture the gathering would be informed of the "occupation" of the office of the No. 2 Rural District Council. Plans for the carrying out of these operations were confided to selected stewards. Those concerned had not the smallest conception of the degree of organization necessary to carry off so complicated a manœuvre. While speeches were being made at the barricade the organizers lost control of the meeting. It was now the turn of "People's Democracy" to wish the war over and the talk beginning. They urged the crowd to disperse in an orderly fashion. Like many who drew the dread pentagram they saw to their dismay that they could not control the devils they had invoked, who swarmed up in ever increasing numbers. There was a riot in which people attacked and burned three police tenders, which seemingly the R.U.C. were at no great pains to defend, possibly because they were felt to be no loss. Some of the rioters took occasion to pay off old scores against members of their own community. Finally the area was cleared by a baton charge. Those who heard the organizers on radio or television will recall their consternation.

If Burntollet was risky, Newry was ruinous. All the latent fears of moderate Protestants were aroused. The Newry disturbance was seen as a gratuitous invasion of peaceful territory. From then on the Civil Rights movement, though it was not to blame for these events, was labelled "Papist" and the prospect of a united working-class struggle for democracy faded steadily. There is little doubt that the most reactionary forces in the Unionist Party were reinforced by these circumstances.

On 9 January, just before the disturbances in Newry, Captain O'Neill was once more called to London. Presumably he was reminded about the enquiry that was expected. He announced it on 15 January. On the 23rd Mr. Brian Faulkner, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, resigned. Two days later Mr. William Morgan, Minister of Health, also resigned. A deep rift in the Unionist Party was revealed, which was not repaired by the introduction on 28 January of a Public Order Act designed to make an offence of the occupation of public buildings or sitting down in the public highway.

The Unionist Party is no monolith. It has been described as an alliance of local businessmen and Anglo-Irish rentiers and landowners. The latter could survive the crisis well enough and adapt themselves to England's European policy. To the others, many of whom owed positions and perquisites to the continuance of discrimination and gerrymandering, the advance of the cross-channel monopolies was a challenge to their local "rights of exploitation" which they should do nothing to facilitate. Thus the Unionist Party was involved in the crisis of Unionism. The essential was to defeat the right wing, but so rapidly had the movement grown that there was no agreement on tactics.

Captain O'Neill announced a General Election on 3 February. It was held on the 24th and was such as the six counties had never witnessed before. Unionists supporting O'Neill were locked in combat with Unionists opposing him. Mr. Paisley himself fought the Prime Minister in Bannside. But in addition "People's Democracy", which must have come into a fortune or received funds from the U.S.A., fought not only such contested seats as Bannside, but seats which from their overwhelmingly Unionist electorate were usually not contested at all. They invaded the traditional territory of the Nationalist Party, on a programme which combined

civil rights with "workers' control". In addition, the Derry Citizens' Action Committee sent up John Hume and Ivan Cooper as independents against the Nationalists.

Their internecine war was indecisive for the Unionists, and it is hard to think that P.D. intervention had much effect. The strengths of the factions roughly corresponded to their representation in the previous Parliament, and more than tactics was at issue. But the character of the opposition was transformed. The old Nationalist Party was wiped out. Young men who had been active in the Civil Rights movement were returned. Mr. Fitt and Mr. Currie held their seats. Mr. Cooper and Mr. Hume defeated the sitting Nationalist candidates, the latter Mr. McAteer, leader of his party, who thus paid the penalty for excessive statesmanship.

It was a legitimate conclusion that the Catholic community was disinclined to continue living in the old way and returned with acclamation those who had shown fight. And it might be thought that it was difficult for the Unionists to continue to rule in the old way. In that case all that was wanted was a clear policy and a disciplined organization.

Unfortunately for this simplified view, if the crisis affected Stormont, it did not yet affect the paramount power. Wilson could still rule in the old way. On 23 March a conference was held in London at which national and local trade unions as well as a number of Irish organizations were represented. It called for the introduction of comprehensive legislation to amend the Government of Ireland Act in all ways necessary to introduce and guarantee the rights that six county democrats were demanding. The Government did not act.

On 17 April Catholics again showed their mood. In the mid-Ulster by-election Miss Bernadette Devlin was returned to Westminster with a majority of 4,000. Over

the weekend of 19 and 20 April there were fresh serious clashes in Derry. A newly established N.I.C.R.A. branch in Co. Derry decided to repeat the Burntollet section of the march that had been ambushed in January. They were looking for some mode of expressing themselves. Influenced by precedent they hit upon this. It was with some difficulty that they were dissuaded.

But in the meantime the Paisleyites had been busy. On the morning of 19 April they were assembling in Derry City, ready to sally forth against the hosts of Belial. Deprived of their day's sport, they slouched round the town, and a minor incident led to scuffles followed by stone throwing. The police, whose presumable duty it was to escort the unwanted visitors out of the town, instead turned on the citizens and drove them into the congested Catholic district of the Bogside. Derry City is built on a hill overlooking the Foyle. The Bogside lies in an extensive hollow beyond the landward slope, and was no doubt at one time a source of fuel and fodder for the city. It consisted until recently of crowded tumble-down small houses, kept decent by the indefatigable labours of the housewives, but now there rise in the midst of much cleared ground a few towers of many-storeyed flats, alongside which older houses survive.

The inhabitants of the Bogside and those forced thither by the police were compelled to take refuge in these flats, as the R.U.C. men surged forward yelling like cannibals. In the path of their sorties barricades were erected. They improved their opportunity by breaking into the small houses, damaging furniture and gratuitously assaulting whole families. One man who was seriously injured and subsequently died was Mr. Devenny. Hatred of the police knew no bounds. Their presence was a provocation and a challenge. On Sunday, 20 April the atmosphere was electric, the more so since news came that water and electricity supply instal-

lations around Belfast had been blown up, and that the journalistic dawn chorus was blaming the I.R.A. The explosions were, of course, later proved to be the work of the illegal U.V.F.

The Derry Citizens' Committee began negotiations with the object of having the police withdrawn from the Bogside area. The authorities demurred. Swift action was required before fighting was resumed. Mr. Hume organized a demonstration which took the people *en masse* to the neighbouring Creggan estate. This was the second action in which numbers rather than violence won the day. A meeting was held at Creggan. In the meantime negotiations were continued, and the police were withdrawn only a short time before the inhabitants were due to return. This was the first occasion when the authorities were compelled to recognize the need for giving up physical control of a Catholic area. That same day it was announced that British troops (already stationed in the six counties) were to be allocated to guard duties on key installations.

The results of the Stormont election, consequent rumours of the Prime Minister's impending resignation, the return of Miss Devlin to Westminster, and the police evacuation of the Bogside threw the members of the small group who provided the leadership of "People's Democracy" into a state of euphoria. Thus they emerged from the Creggan estate meeting to an interview with a representative of the English journal *New Left Review*. It took place on the afternoon of 20 April and in Derry. They were due in Belfast next day for the Annual General Meeting of N.I.C.R.A. at which one would anticipate momentous decisions would have to be made.

That Unionism was plunging into even deeper crisis was apparent. But how was it to be defeated and replaced? Was it still true that the establishment of democracy was the sole way of enabling the people to mitigate

the effects and commence the dismantlement of the partition system? In any case it would seem plain from experience gained that a precondition of progress was the unity of anti-Unionist forces, which would be best expressed in a movement with a common programme and policy if possible led by a centralized directorate. The penalties of its absence show through the whole story of the fight against partition. It was vital that it should be created.

Unfortunately the minds of those present were not working in this direction. Mr. Farrell introduced divisiveness at the start. He explained that "People's Democracy" was not just part of the Civil Rights movement but a "Revolutionary Association". According to Mr. McCann it was separated by "unbridgeable differences" from "so-called moderates" whose policy, Mr. Farrell explained, was to "keep C.R.A. as a broad class-collaborating organization". The term "class collaborating" used completely out of historical and political context presumably meant that N.I.C.R.A. confined itself to democratic demands.

With similar malapropism the interviewer asked whether the central demands of "People's Democracy" ("one man one job-one family one house") were not "*reformist*". They were of course reformatory and the trade union and Labour movement, including some of the maligned moderates, had been pressing them for years. Mr. McCann provided in reply the following:

> "The transformation of Irish society necessary to implement these demands is a revolution. We are definitely in a pre-revolutionary situation in the north. The Unionists must give something to the Pope-heads[3] of Derry to get them off the streets, but if they give

[3] Derogatory Orange sobriquet for Catholics. By employing this expression Mr. McCann displayed his emancipation. But he should not be imitated.

anything the Unionist Party will break up. So by supporting these demands in a militant manner we are striking hard against the ruling party."

Despite the colourful imprecision of the formulations, the implication of the reply is surely clear. Not only was N.I.C.R.A., an organization created for the advancement of democratic demands, to busy itself with economic issues. But economic gains were not to be won by the united efforts of the whole working class and those willing to support it, but by bringing one religious section on to the streets. But the purpose of the exercise was seemingly not to win these demands, for which it must be admitted the means appear ill-adapted, but to bring about a kind of political catastrophe in which the Unionist Party would "break up" and the revolution proceed, presumably with the British army in ringside seats.

If Mr. McCann and his colleagues really believed, after serious consideration, that such a revolutionary denouement was imminent, they were of course quite logical in feeling impatient with the "so-called moderates" who were unable to perceive it. Mr. Farrell appreciated the difficulty presented by the mass support for Unionism among Protestants. He admitted that "we cannot call for all power to the Soviets." This was not, be it noted, because no Soviets existed, but "because our present basis is not the working class as a whole, or the working class and small farmers as a whole, it is only a section of the working class." Even so he was not without hope. One alternative was that of "posing the question of dual power in areas where the Catholic population is concentrated and militant, by getting the local Catholic population to take over and run its own affairs, a sort of Catholic Power." It is worth remarking that in describing such a position he used the American terminology. But in essence what he was suggesting was

Sinn Fein. And where would it lead? To the secession of the peripheral areas and their junction with the Republic. The people would be their own "Boundary Commission".

But this is not what he appeared to envisage. He thought that provided these councils were socialist councils, the Protestants might be impelled to emulate them by establishing parallel Protestant Power, or even merging. One can imagine the surprise of the Unionists at the miraculous loss of all their wealth and influence. What was to effect the thaumaturgy? One can only conclude that it was the all-transforming *idea* of socialism. Thus at another point Mr. Farrell agreed that the border must go "but it must go in the direction of a socialist Republic". Why? Because he wanted it for propaganda among the Protestants of Belfast.

> "The unification of Ireland into a socialist republic is not only necessary for the creation of a viable economy, it must also be an immediate demand, because only the concept of a socialist republic can ever reconcile Protestant workers, who rightly have a very deep-seated fear of a Roman Catholic Republic, to the ending of the border."

What is an immediate demand? A demand for immediate execution, or a demand for immediate presentation? Clearly Mr. Farrell meant the latter. For it was the *concept* not the actuality of socialist republic that was to reconcile the Protestants. It was of course monstrous that young men should be compelled to crack their skulls on conundrums devised so as to present a conflict of unrealities. But to those who approached the matter in Mr. Farrell's way, the insistence on socialist propaganda is understandable. It was to be the magic wand removing all the actually existing obstacles. It was to be the means of escaping from history. "People's Democracy" sallied forth to Belfast determined to

scatter the moderates who were offering not an instant solution in the world of ideas, but a laborious and prolonged effort in the realm of practical affairs.

The Annual General Meeting was stormy and followed by resignations from the Committee. The most serious loss was that of Miss Sinclair, who permitted herself some strictures on the subject of "People's Democracy". "We were delighted," wrote Miss Devlin.[6] "By alienating herself she gave us the opportunity to push the Communists out of the Civil Rights movement."[7] That would presumably vastly accelerate the coming of the socialist revolution.

On 23 April the Unionist Party agreed to the introduction of universal manhood suffrage in local government elections. One suspects this was the price paid for the British troops. But a few days later, on 28 April, Captain O'Neill announced his intention of resigning. His enemies had made their kill. But his soul went marching on. It proved to be identical with the policy of Her Majesty's Government which was able to induce metempsychosis and thus enclose and enforce it in the person of his successor, Major Chichester Clark. Captain O'Neill was toppled. But all the most reactionary features of Unionism had been preserved.

A question often asked in England was why supporters of civil rights in the six counties did not throw all their weight behind O'Neill, and so bring about a position where the most reactionary groupings were dislodged successively, the ultimate result being a democratic régime. Mr. Gerald Reynolds represented this argument most strongly to Mr. Redmond who was one of his constituents. The chief reasons were that O'Neill did not

[6] *The Price of My Soul*, p. 147.

[7] This did not happen. Miss Sinclair's place was taken by Mrs. Edwina Stewart. But what was sacrificed was the direct link with the trade union movement, and some trade unionists experienced a sense of disappointment.

offer reforms substantial enough to overcome the deep hatred of Unionism widespread among the Nationalist population; and that since the Unionist die-hards would certainly take to the gun, it was essential that the initiative should come from England whose orders the Stormont Government would be compelled to obey; the odium of "coercing Ulster" would rest on shoulders broad enough to bear it.

The validity of these arguments, and whether there was some line of action that was not considered, will no doubt receive examination by historians in quieter days. Meanwhile let us note the paradox that as reforms were half-heartedly brought in, the Government at Stormont became more reactionary in its composition.

TWELVE

British Troops and British Policy

When on 21 April 1969, Mr. Callaghan told the House of Commons that British troops were to be deployed in the protection of key installations in the six counties, Mr. Paul Rose demanded and secured a debate. The maintenance of "peace and order" not to mention "good government" in Northern Ireland was a transferred responsibility, in the timeworn phrase "a matter for the Northern Ireland Government". Why did the Stormont leaders not make use of their "B"-Specials? These were supposed to exist for the purpose of saving good Protestant throats from the cutlasses of the I.R.A. Were some of them too busy blowing up transformers with the U.V.F.? Could Mr. Chichester Clark not trust them? Whatever the explanation, it was plain that a completely new policy was peeping up like an imp between the floorboards at Westminster.

The debate took place next day, and Miss Devlin made her maiden speech. It is unfortunate that she was pitchforked into the arena in this way. She spoke with eloquence, sincerity and wit. But she had not had time to adjust herself. Perhaps she had been over advised by her colleagues in "People's Democracy". In the interview already quoted she had repeated what she said at her "victory rally".

> "I said that all I could do was prove, by trying, that nothing could be done in such a Parliament and that in a very short space of time I would be back to call them out of the factories, and if they were not at that stage prepared to come, then they should leave my victory rally and trot off to join all the people who

thought they could do something by parliamentary methods."

It was remarked that her speech contained no suggestions for action, no line of policy to be urged on the Government, and it thus took matters not a step forward.

She was then the darling of press and television. She had the opportunity to rouse the Labour movement at a time when Mr. Fitt's first impact had eased. From a failure to understand the question of English responsibility, she missed this opportunity.

On 23 April, Mr. Frank Aiken, responding to public concern in the twenty-six counties, left for New York to inform the United Nations of the situation in the six. The principle of "Ireland one country" continuously reasserted itself. On 29 April there were brief disturbances in Armagh. A bomb was placed near a Catholic church in Belfast. It was on the 30th that Captain O'Neill, having discussed the matter with his intimates, formally resigned.

His place was taken by his cousin Major Chichester Clark. Thus on the surface the internal balance within the Unionist Party was preserved. It resembled that of nineteenth-century England in which the landowners exercised their traditional genius for telling other people what to do, while enabling their masters the bourgeoisie to concentrate on their businesses, but for one thing; both were totally dependent on England. And this fact, hidden during the days of the velvet glove, was now becoming realized. In crisis the fundamental declares itself.

Inessentials are seen as such. Chichester Clark's administration was exactly so much more directly dependent on English advice as its "transferred powers" had been clipped by the deployment of English troops. Mr. Faulkner openly concurred in the decision to introduce universal manhood suffrage in local government

elections. But it was decided to delay these elections until boundaries had been re-drawn. This was naturally understood to mean "until a new gerrymander can be effected".

Within Britain there had been an increasing awareness that what was wrong with the six counties was the constitutional position, the one thing no government was prepared to question. On 23 March a widely attended conference of organizations of Irish immigrants and the British Labour movement had been convened in London by the *Irish Democrat.* There was a unanimous feeling for comprehensive legislation along the lines of the Bill of Rights suggested the preceding July. On 20 April the annual meeting of the National Council for Civil Liberties called for the amendment of the 1920 Act. Early in May a group of Members of Parliament associated with the Movement for Colonial Freedom accepted the principle of a Bill of Rights and suggestions were made for having one drafted.

On 6 May, Major Chichester Clark announced an amnesty for all who had been charged with offences during the disturbances. While indictments that were not worth the paper they were written on, against Mr. Fitt, Mr. Cooper and Miss Devlin, were thus wiped out, the amnesty meant that the hoodlums of Burntollet went scot-free. Perhaps this was necessary for buying the acquiescence of the die-hard Unionists in an attempt to placate the Catholics with what they had been promised and then to freeze the situation. On 2 July a White Paper on local government was published, and it was promised that new boundaries would be drawn by an impartial commission. Though N.I.C.R.A. arranged marches from time to time, they were usually cancelled if they promised serious clashes with Paisleyite counter-demonstrators. Perhaps the war was now really over and the talking could begin.

Unfortunately it was the wrong time of year. The

twelfth of July was at hand. The traditional Orange walk had been banned from time to time during the nineteenth century, and indeed the Order itself had been dissolved by resolution of Parliament. It would not have been difficult to those with whom 1690 was but yesterday to heed these recent precedents.[1] But with incredible and perverse folly, with which the Westminster Government felt it was "not proper" to interfere, the Chichester Clark administration decided that the annual provocation must proceed, notwithstanding the state of mind of both the provokers and provoked. Inevitably clashes occurred in Derry, Dungiven, Lurgan, and elsewhere. Now for the first time the petrol bomb came truly into its own, and there was some looting. In Derry barricades were erected to protect the Bogside, and so far had relations degenerated that there were instances of unprovoked attacks on Protestants. Like Tone one could anticipate "every atrocity, from the just indignation of the people". And like Tone also, Republicans and Civil Rights leaders did their utmost to discourage violence, keep excesses to a minimum, in a crescendo of turbulence that exceeded anything hitherto known.

Belfast had up to now been spared. But on 2 August there were riots on the Shankill Road, an area populated by the lower paid Protestant workers from the shipyard. These people lived little better than their Catholic counterparts on the Falls Road. They faced the gnawing uncertainty of those who work in a declining industry. They were frightened and frustrated. But the enemy was not identified, nor if it had been identified was it accessible. Their frustration and anger was diverted into sectarian hatred. At the foot of the Shankill Road there had been built a many-storeyed block called "Unity Flats" which was occupied by Catholics. On this day a

[1] And more recent ones. The Orange walks were suspended during the 1939–45 war.

Protestant mob made for the building and endeavoured to gain ingress with the purpose of ejecting the inhabitants. Barricades were erected. Police appeared. They drove off the Catholics who had come to the aid of their co-religionists. They tried to edge off the Protestants. But so great was their hatred and fear of the Catholics that the Protestants refused to disperse and fought the police. Finally driven away, they turned to wrecking and looting shops in their own area. A sinister aspect of the affair was the arrival on the scene of middle-aged men, grey-faced spiritual starvelings who had survived from the thirties, and now taught young people how to arouse and assuage the thirst for blood, lift paving stones, prepare traps and dodge missiles. The petrol bomb did duty once more.

Chichester Clark was summoned to London. There had been troop movements within the six counties. It was widely believed that in the event of more serious disturbances their numbers would prove insufficient. The question asked on all sides was whether the "Apprentice Boys" would be allowed to march through Derry on 12 August. In view of what had happened in Derry less than a year ago it might seem almost inconceivable that any government in its senses should risk a repetition on a giant scale, unless its own policy was provocation so as to excuse the utmost repression. But Major Chichester Clark had been elected on only one vote. The baleful eyes of Mr. Craig and Mr. Paisley watched his every move, and who would say they were not willing to step into his shoes? If they did it would be "croppies lie down".

But what of Westminster? It was the clear duty of the English Government, in view of the crisis in the colony, to take upon itself responsibility for banning the parade. But it was thought "not proper" to intervene. The Westminster politicians worked on the principle that it was up to the Irishmen to work the English

system, and if it blew up in their faces so much the worse for them. Despite mounting protests, and a special visit to London of Dr. Hillery, Minister for External Affairs in Dublin, the march was permitted.

From all over the six counties, from Scotland and beyond, the most fanatical Protestants assembled to strut through a predominantly Catholic city in honour of a Protestant victory three hundred years old. In the six counties public houses are open all day. Marching is thirsty work. So is watching others march. Catholic and Civil Rights leaders had urged their supporters to stay away. But however forcefully this was enjoined on them, would it have been human nature to obey? On the very morning of 12 August members of the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster in London received a letter from Home Secretary Mr. Callaghan reiterating that it would not be "proper" for him to intervene. It is to be regretted that those who lost their lives as a result of this policy were not able to come back from the shades for an explanation.

As the procession passed below the city walls a few stones were thrown at it by some youths. Protestant spectators attacked them. The police then proceeded to force the opponents of the march towards the Bogside, where they joined their co-religionists who had taken more seriously the advice of their religious and political leaders. Police pressure increased. The realization that the Bogside was to be invaded swept through the district. Men and women poured from flats and houses. They erected barricades and swore that their mortal enemies should not pass. Some of them scaled the high flats and poured down missiles on their assailants. A picture in a London evening newspaper showed Miss Devlin, carried away with the excitement, clutching an enormous brickbat which it was clearly beyond her strength to pitch very far. The paper's comment was "shame"–that a Westminster M.P. should so far forget herself! It is

hard to find it more shameful than the policy which provoked it.

The battle of the Bogside lasted three days. The exact sequence of events has not yet been established. The "Apprentice Boys" had applied the match on 12 August, a Tuesday. The attack on the Catholic stronghold began at 5 p.m. At some point police headquarters ordered a withdrawal. This the policemen are said to have disobeyed. They were thus committed to the struggle. On Wednesday they used massive quantities of CS gas, an organo-chlorine compound smelling somewhat like DDT, itself a substance with none too savoury a reputation. It was becoming clear that the police could not win. General Freeland moved three hundred British troops to a naval base within a few miles of Derry. They could not go into action without the consent of the British Government, which hesitated to act even against police mutineers.

Mr. Wilson was in Scilly. Mr. Callaghan flew to meet him. That evening there were demonstrations in Dublin. Opinion in the Republic was shocked as the people watched their television screens. The *Taoiseach*, Jack Lynch, made a dramatic broadcast to the nation, and sent off Dr. Hillery to the United Nations. Presumably in an effort to draw police forces away from Derry, whither they might have been expected to converge, Nationalists attacked police barracks in Armagh, Coalisland, Dungiven, Dungannon and Enniskillen. In some places shots were fired. In Belfast, the main powder keg, tension was mounting hourly.

By Thursday morning army field hospitals were being established on the Republican side of the border, and the first refugees were crossing to safety. The police were still investing the Bogside, unable to take it but unwilling to withdraw. On Thursday afternoon the "B"-Specials were mobilized and trooped out merrily for the kill. It would seem that while they may have

frightened the Catholics, they frightened Major Chichester Clark even more. It is said that he requested that British troops should move into Derry. It has been suggested that Mr. Callaghan opposed the use of British troops when he met Mr. Wilson, but was over-ruled in a radio message which reached him as he flew back from Scilly.[2] The "B"-men were called back in Derry, and the troops from Sea Eagle manned a line outside the Bogside, from which R.U.C. men were withdrawn. The troops made no effort to penetrate the area, which became a kind of self-governing Catholic commune, economically of course still part of Derry City. As the men went to work in the morning, the barricades were moved; when they returned at night they were set back in position. There were guards there constantly. Soldiers spun barbed wire entanglements outside them. There were some who believed that the Irish Socialist Republic was on its way, and alongside the tricolour the blue and white flag of the Irish Labour Party was raised.

It was the mobilizing of the "B"-men that led to the explosion in Belfast. Here again the exact sequence of events has not yet been established. It seems that excited crowds gathered in the Falls Road and attempts were made by police to disperse them. The "B"-men rapidly joined in. Then came the U.V.F. men, extreme Unionist privateers, and ultimately mobs of Protestants. This combination made a concerted attack on the Falls Road. Rows of small houses were burned to the ground with petrol bombs. Their inhabitants retreated deeper into the Falls, or to the Turf Lodge area, where a relief operation was performed which shows the remarkable capacity for communal action and improvization possessed by the Irish people. The roads around this refuge were trenched and all traffic had to give an account of itself.

[2] Mr. Callaghan's story (*A House Divided*, p. 42) suggests that agreement in principle was reached in Scilly.

As the citizens threw up barricades, armoured cars, rifles, machine guns and petrol bombs were brought to bear. To the occasional bullet from the Catholic side, the police replied with indiscriminate machine-gun fire. One burst was directed at the flimsy walls of Divis Street flats, and the head of a nine-year-old boy was shot away. As the attack continued up the length of the Falls Road, along its southern side barricades became loftier and more sophisticated. Trees were felled. Timber, rubble, overturned cars, vans and buses were jumbled on top of each other. Builders' steel scaffolding was set into the brickwork of houses and equipped with doors manned by sentries. It is said that the Unionist pogromists penetrated further into the Falls area than in any previously recorded attack.

It is obvious that a mass attack by police, "B"-men, the illegal U.V.F., on such a scale, and employing such equipment, could only take place after careful preparation for such a contingency. Was there connivance in high places? Were there those who wished to topple Chichester Clark and replace him with some Unionist die-hard before it was too late? Next day the troops were in the Falls too, manning a "peace line". It became necessary to rush reinforcements from England. Soon they were seen everywhere, the most bewildered army that ever went into action.

There was controversy in England over the use of these troops. The ultra-left, mechanist as ever, demanded their immediate withdrawal. This demand was raised by people who had never given a thought to the presence of British troops over the previous forty-eight years. They could not understand the old principle that war is the continuation of politics, and that the content of any warlike action is the content of its political objective, and is as complex as that objective. The troops had never been there for any purpose but to secure the safeguarding of British Government policy. This policy did

not include the wholesale slaughter of Catholics, though it must be admitted that most things short of this had been tolerated.

The British troops were used to protect the Catholics. But they protected them as subjects to be governed, not as citizens to be helped to freedom. The cry for the immediate withdrawal of British troops would only be logical if the power of molestation of Unionism had ceased to exist. While that existed it was a choice between two methods of operating one system of coercion. It was the abolition of the system of coercion, not the right to choose between the evils, that was necessary. The simple fact is that the Catholics were entitled, since the Government had made subjects of them, to protection from pogromists by any forces the Government had at its disposal. There was no occasion for thanks on either side. What was necessary was that Westminster should immediately back up its military action by introducing the Bill of Rights, ensuring the disarming of the Orange extremists, and making clear that it was anxious for a settlement of the partition question in accordance with the wishes of Irish people. Once more it failed in its duty.

Many of the British Labour movement, and indeed in the six counties also, carried away by the protective aspect of the Government's military moves, and failing to see the oppressive aspect which accompanied it, now demanded the application of the same principle in the political field. They called for "direct rule" in the six counties. Stormont should be abolished and the area annexed to England. This was of course the principle of "no man, no vote" pushed to extremes. A section of the Irish people were not only to be separated from the majority and placed in an artificial minority, but they were to be deprived of all prospect of restoring their position, by submergence in the British administration. The proposal would of course have demanded com-

plicated legislation. It could moreover be held to be in breach of agreements with the Republic as the successor of the (truncated) Free State, and without the consent of Dublin would scarcely be workable. Its Conservative advocate was Mr. Enoch Powell.

It is remarkable that rather than attempt the constitutional changes which might lead to a healing of the breach between the two communities in the six counties and move towards a united Ireland, the Wilson Government should attempt a stabilization at yet another level of compromise. The aim was to yield no more than would restore calm and permit of the withdrawal of troops and the reduction of the garrison to normal strength.

On 21 August a further enquiry was set up under the chairmanship of Lord Hunt. It was charged with examining and reporting on the structure of the six county police force. The Scarman Commission was charged with investigating the cause of the disturbances, but its terms of reference did not include an enquiry into the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

The Hunt Report proposed disarming the R.U.C. totally. It recommended also the disbandment of the "B"-Specials and the establishment of a reserve force under the command of the army and thus subject to Westminster. It was odd that in the crisis of the régime established by the Government of Ireland Act it was proposed that for the first time the terms of that Act should be explicitly applied. The Report was published on Friday, 10 October. It was remarked that no more suitable day could have been found if it had been intended to provoke the rioting which followed on the Shankill Road and continued over the weekend. As usual the mob made for Unity Flats. When troops barred their way they fought them with stones, guns and petrol bombs, and received in return canisters of tear gas. Parachute men were then brought in to occupy the area.

Some Republicans thought, somewhat mechanically, that the result would be to alienate the sympathies of the Protestants and encourage them to make common cause with Republicans against the occupation forces. This belief arose from ignoring the political content of the struggle. The Republicans objected to the troops on the principle that they prevented the operation of Irish sovereignty. The Shankill Road Protestants objected to the fact that their undoubted support for English suzerainty stopped short at eliminating the opposition which the Protestants particularly feared.

The Catholics of the Falls Road area were in the meantime living in an independent commune bigger than the whole city of Derry. Not a policeman ventured into its streets. At every corner the tricolour flew, Radio "Free Belfast" broadcast music, news bulletins, and occasional military warnings. The committee that had been set up dealt severely with looters and other delinquents, and means of instant defence were kept constantly ready. Again people wondered if here was a transition to the all-Ireland Republic. This was not the case, for reasons that have been explained, namely that such transition demanded a settlement between the English and the Irish state powers, which could not be partial and localized. The position reached was indeed the apotheosis of polarization within the framework of the six county system. Far from being the most favourable situation, it was in a sense the worst, for the Catholics, despite their magnificent courage and organization, had their backs to the wall. Their victory was that they survived at all.

In October 1969, after the pacification of the Shankill Road, which was carried out according to English imperialism's inimitable manner, negotiations were set on foot for the removal of the barricades and restoration of R.U.C. control in the Falls. This was agreed to, despite the deep misgivings of many of the residents,

who preferred to trust to themselves rather than to outside protectors. Thereafter British army vehicles kept a constant patrol in the maze of streets. There seemed always to be one in sight, and others appearing or disappearing. Of their two functions, protective and governmental, the governmental became the more obvious. They annoyed like flies round one's head on a September day.

In November the Stormont Government introduced further reforms. Its bargaining power had been still further reduced. Among the legislation introduced was the Prevention of Incitement to Hatred Bill, and the Community Relations (Northern Ireland) Bill. At Westminster the Ulster Defence Regiment Act was passed, though in the face of much criticism from those who best understood the needs of Ireland.

On the other hand while the Special Powers Act was not repealed, the new version of the "Public Order Act, 1951" was pressed forward, to provide against some of the new techniques of protest that were being employed, and as a safeguard against Westminster's being compelled to insist on the abandonment of the more notorious legislation. Thus at the end of 1969 while a number of reforms, in relation to electoral law and the examination of grievances had been either effected or promised, the six county Government found itself in possession of stronger powers of repression than at any time since the establishment of its régime in 1921. It lacked however the means of using them, for these had as a result of the crisis partly reverted to Westminster.

The complexity of the class struggle in the six counties was reflected in its consequences beyond the border. Here was an Irish national State. Its fundamental law declared that the six counties were *de jure* part of its territory. The usurping Government and its system of administration were in acute disarray. What was the *Fianna Fáil* Government to do? If it was to continue

its overall strategy what could it do? The fusion of the largest native capital with imperial monopoly capital was far advanced. The English Labour Government was intent on merging both Britain and Ireland in a multinational State under West German leadership which would be adapted to promote the most rapid self-expansion of monopoly capital. In this State, it was fondly imagined, all issues of national independence would magically disappear. The economic interests *Fianna Fáil* now represented found this prospect acceptable. Their civil servants told the ministers what to say before they were groomed for their television appearances. Opponents who could not answer them were carefully selected, and the inevitability of Government policy was thereby visibly demonstrated to all. What indeed could be said or done while this remained the way forward?

At the same time public opinion was roused and demanded action. *Fianna Fáil* might now be controlled by men whose main interest was money. It was not always so. It had its origins in Republicanism, and throughout its ranks, particularly among the older men, were those who remembered the civil war and the shameful pogroms in the north. The aging President De Valera, who with all his faults was rightly seen as the possessor of some integrity, pointed the contrast with the slick opportunists who now made the running. On some of these the influence of events made more impact than on others.

In 1922 the "Treaty" party had conspired with their Republican opponents to send arms and Volunteers across the border, to the support of those who were resisting the six county tyranny. The arrangements had been made by the military men, and Arthur Griffith does not seem to have been informed. Matters were so arranged that the Republicans, if they were caught red-handed, could be repudiated. In the event they were

shamefully betrayed. Some recollection of these manœuvres, designed to weaken the six county administration and possibly induce concessions from England, may have survived the conflagration into which the "Treaty" party tipped their archives when they lost power to De Valera in 1932. In 1970 there was a series of resignations from the *Fianna Fáil* Government, followed by prosecutions of those alleged to be concerned with the movement of arms, and a *Dáil* enquiry which dragged on for months. If any of the accused were guilty in whole or in part of what was alleged of them, it is hard to find their action more reprehensible than the inaction of the Wilson Government, which left the minority in the six counties at constant risk and without hope.

Was there an alternative? To approach the United Nations might make an international stir, but could scarcely overcome the British veto on any decisive action that might be proposed. Invasion? Suppose a surprise move led to the capture of Derry, what would happen to the Catholics of Belfast? And where did such a road lead? To the United Nations? The veto appeared again. Representations to England? These were made and England did not heed them. Clearly, in order to take effective action, the presumptions on which Irish policy in the twenty-six counties were founded must go by the board. The *Fianna Fáil* Government could not accomplish this, because it was contrary to the interests of the *class* it represented.

The dilemma was transferred to the Republican movement. Here integrity was inherent. But it was preserved in rigid forms which many of the members, including the best known leaders, regarded as out of date. Some of these wished to abandon the traditional policy of abstention from Parliament, in order to remove from control of the twenty-six counties the class interests *Fianna Fáil* had come to represent, and thus make possible a new policy of defence of the degree of national

independence already existing, and its extension in whatever directions were possible. They realized that if *Fianna Fáil* should succeed in merging Ireland with England in the Common Market, even those gains made in 1912–22 would have to be fought for again. It is obvious that this line of policy, demanding the replacement of an existing government by a more popular one, necessarily involved setting in motion the masses of the Irish people. It therefore won the approval of many of the most discerning on the "left" within the Labour movement, though the Irish Labour Party remained utterly confused on the question of partition.

A Dublin newspaper reported that while these matters were under discussion, dissident members of the Government party approached the Republicans. Instead of the policy of setting the masses in motion, with the prospect of ending the *Fianna Fáil* domination of Irish politics, it was proposed to plan together the sending of arms northwards to enable the Catholics to defend themselves. Here was repeated the crux of 1919, when *Dáil Eireann* had to decide between a *political* alliance with Labour which would upset class relationships within Ireland, or an intensification of the *physical* aspect of the struggle which might win concessions from England without strengthening the working class. In January 1970, the Republican movement split along these lines.

Like all preceding splits in the Republican movement, this was an illustration of the tension always present within the petit-bourgeoisie, which draws one section towards the capitalists, and another towards the workers. While agreed figures are not available, it would appear that whereas the traditionalists retained much support in rural areas, those who favoured the new departure were strong in Dublin. The split proved disastrous for the Belfast organization, since it made the co-ordination of political work impossible.

In mid-February there were important defections from N.I.C.R.A. "Social Justice", which had relied for the most part on requests to Westminster but had toyed with "People's Democracy", left the conference which was held on 14 and 15 February 1970. The other disaffiliation was that of "People's Democracy". The promise of rapid transformation in a "pre-revolutionary" situation had proved illusory. Instead of criticizing their own previous estimations, and considering whether perhaps after all Miss Sinclair may not have been right in trying to secure the unity of the entire working class, its representatives stalked off to talk militantly in the wilderness. N.I.C.R.A. now contained Republicans, Communists, and a few members of the N.I.L.P. and other Labour groupings. Trade union support was now negligible. In the shipyard there was tacit agreement not to mention civil rights, so deeply had the ruling class been able to divide the two religious communities. Its constant concern was to deepen the rift further. Only one act of faith enlivened the winter of 1970. In an effort to halt the tendency towards fragmentation of the movement, the Communist Party of Northern Ireland and the Irish Workers' Party amalgamated to re-establish one Communist Party of Ireland.

In March 1970 a Co-ordinating Committee of Irish organizations in Britain launched a petition asking the Prime Minister to take the initiative in imposing democracy on the Unionists of the six counties, so as to halt the constantly worsening position, which was due to his failure to deal with those who were obstructing the introduction of full civil rights. But Mr. Wilson would give no pledges even during his election campaign. When Mr. Heath was returned it became clear that the Conservatives regarded the preservation of Unionism as the primary consideration, and there was no longer the slightest pretence of progress towards democracy.

Under these conditions the disarming of actual or

potential Republicans took priority. While 80,000 guns were held perfectly legally on license by Protestants so that about one in six of their male population was armed, searches were carried out in the Catholic areas. The question inevitably arose of protection against the British troops. Slowly the anger of the Nationalist people mounted. But the Unionists thought their methods too moderate.

From the day they were disbanded (their records being in many cases deliberately burned) the die-hards urged the re-establishment of the "B"-Specials, and the introduction of internment without charge or trial of known or suspected Republicans, and finally the establishment (presumably after amending the Government of Ireland Act) of an armed force under the exclusive control of the Stormont Government. In order to manufacture reasons for thus putting the clock back, the U.V.F. was not unwilling to make provocative attacks on troops, which were then, like the 1969 explosions, attributed to the Republicans. Throughout England the lie was reiterated that civil rights had been granted, and that all that remained was to put down the lawlessness of the I.R.A. It seemed to be the intention of the Tory Government to work back, if this was possible, to the situation existing before the advent of the Civil Rights movement.

The arrest of Miss Devlin in June 1970 led to a fresh wave of disturbances. The reaction of the Heath Government was simple. Send more troops. By such means the twelfth of July processions took place "peacefully" behind rows of armed men. This year however that of the "Apprentice Boys", due on 12 August, was banned.

A joint statement issued in Belfast by the Communist Parties of Britain and Ireland pinpointed the change of Government in England.

"It is no accident that such stronger attacks" (undeclared martial law and CS gas attacks) "have

coincided with the return to Westminster of a Tory Government influenced by the strengthened position of Powellism, and an accompanying swing to the right of the Stormont Government, with Paisleyism more and more exerting successful pressure on the Unionist Party."

The main determinant of events was the Government at Westminster. The Tories abandoned all pretence of seeking a political agreement. While they continued to discountenance Orange pogroms, they made no effort to disarm the Orangemen, and it became clear throughout the winter of 1970–1 that they regarded those who wished to give allegiance to a united Ireland as the enemy. These must relinquish all means of self-defence as a precondition of a return to "normality". Was it really surprising that Republicans rejected this condition, when a government they had so little reason to trust was attempting to impose it?

Inevitably those who wished for moderate policies within the Republican camp were driven ever nearer the position of those who advocated "urban guerrilla warfare", the object of which, as a "provisional" *Sinn Fein* spokesman told the London *Times*, was to bring England to the conference table at which it was hoped, one gathers from the context, to negotiate total withdrawal, followed by the possible introduction of approved United Nations troops to man the border between the ghettoes. This was of course a counsel of desperation, and an attempt to get the whole apple at one bite. But who had made the Republicans desperate? The English Government which had refused to entertain the discussion of even the civil rights that would protect them against Unionist discrimination, and whose forces kept the Nationalist population in a state of unending trepidation and alarm.

THIRTEEN

Question Over Stormont

Within days of the election of a Tory Government to Westminster, the attitude of the British armed forces suffered an abrupt change. Perhaps there was a hurried re-briefing in line with what was known of the new ministry. To Mr. Wilson's Government Stormont had been a subordinate administration controlled by political rivals. While he opposed it with the moderation that characterized all his encounters with the forces of capitalism, still it remained something to be eyed cautiously and if necessary restrained. When the Conservatives took office they attempted to revert to the old practice of leaving decisions to their trusted friends in Belfast. But times had changed. Their army was engaged in security operations and they were inextricably involved.

The local administration was determined that the Orange walks should take place, if necessary under military protection. The preliminary marches were already beginning, and the mood of the Catholics was bitter and resentful. On Saturday 27 June there were serious disturbances. An Orange parade was escorted along a route closely bordering Catholic areas. There followed serious gun battles in the Ardoyne and Short Strand, with some loss of life.

To the consternation of the civil servants who had been sent over by Mr. Wilson as watchdogs, Stormont rushed through the Criminal Justice (Temporary Provisions) Act, as if there was a shortage of repressive legislation. Among other things the new Act prescribed a mandatory sentence of six months, which was imposed

for such trifling offences as scrawling "no tea here" on a wall or swearing when being kicked by soldiers. Mr. Maudling visited Belfast on 30 June, and seems to have given the Unionists *carte blanche*, and all the promises of support they required.

The report, following some raids in London, of a small cache of arms in Balkan Street, precipitated a crisis. A large force of soldiers was sent for the search of a small house. Crowds gathered, insults were exchanged and by evening on 3 July, clouds of CS gas were enveloping the streets. The raw troops who had arrived only that morning lost their heads in the confusion and fired canisters at random, often over the house tops. At 10 p.m. General Freeland clamped down a "curfew" on the Falls area. Thirty thousand people were confined to the area in which they lived, an area poorly equipped with shopping facilities. They could not emerge even to make their weekend purchases. Nor were delivery vans allowed in. The "curfew" was of course illegal, but was made the occasion for a house to house search for arms covering the whole district. There were similar searches elsewhere in the six counties.

The troops were not gentle. Perhaps they over-compensated their natural distaste for such work. Floor boards were ripped up and left lying. Fireplaces were torn from walls. The carefully accumulated prized possessions of working-class homes were strewn in confusion amid dust and plaster. There was looting both of houses and shops. Where such indiscipline was detected officers secured the return of property: but substantial sums of money disappeared. As the weekend wore on mothers who could get no milk for their young children grew desperate. Early on Sunday morning, 5 July, some thousand women assembled *en masse* and pushed their way, with perambulators, through the cordon. The troops gave way and shortly afterwards the "curfew" ended. The Unionists were nevertheless

jubilant. They had cut the last bonds of confidence between the Catholics and the British army. Thanks to a massive deployment of armed strength the twelfth of July passed without serious incident, and they set themselves to the task of planning fresh victories confident in the support of the paramount power. On the other side the sense of frustration and foreboding grew deeper. The peace-keepers had revealed themselves as oppressors.

The troops now attracted to themselves the further odium of enforcing the Criminal Justice Act, in the preparation of which the Parliament to which they were responsible had had no part. According to the *Sunday Times*,[1] between 1 July and 17 December 1970, 269 persons were charged with riotous and disorderly behaviour, having been arrested by the army and handed over to the R.U.C. The English soldier of course lacked the sixth sense which enabled a Belfast policeman to distinguish Catholic from Protestant at a glance. If people rioted he was liable to arrest them even if they were Unionists. On this basis it is said that 129 of the charges were withdrawn. Of those pursued every one resulted in a conviction. The troops thus came to be hated as the instruments of sectarian discrimination. Yet there was no move at Westminster to withdraw them from security duties. The heads of the new ministers were stuffed with rosy dreams of the new order in Europe which, as one of their theorists put it, would finally liquidate the legacy of the French Revolution; he was referring to 1789. To men of such vision practicalities were meaningless. The eyes of the fools remained on the ends of the earth.

It was the sharpening resentment against the use of soldiers as political police which led to the Ballymurphy disturbances of 12–16 January 1971. On this vast Catholic housing estate it was estimated that 40 per cent of the

[1] 21 November 1971.

men were without employment. That violence erupted spontaneously from the anger and frustration of the people is shown by the efforts of the "provisional" I.R.A. to keep it to a minimum. For some time past there had been a tacit agreement with the military by which Government face was saved by ostentatious patrols in vehicles during the day, but the army relinquished control to the I.R.A. at dusk. This arrangement was seriously shaken when on the night of the 14th the authorities sent in 700 men to conduct a house to house search. There were 40 petrol bombs thrown in the fighting that ensued.

Rumours of the existence of "no go" areas reached Stormont. Questions were asked. There were demands that the army should re-assert full control and be seen doing it. These were reflected in uneasy denials at Westminster where it was asserted that the army was able to go wherever it wished. On 3 February it was "wished" into the Ardoyne and Clonard districts for the presumable purpose of showing it was a match for the "Provisionals". Blocks of streets were cordoned off and the houses subjected to search. Inevitably there was more fighting. The attempt to humiliate the "Provisionals" led to the shootings of 6 February. In separate incidents an English soldier and two "Provisionals" were killed. The days of reprisal had arrived, and soon the bomb was holding the headlines and confusing the issues.

The Premier, Major Chichester Clark, declared that Northern Ireland was "at war with the I.R.A." His cabinet, meeting on 20 February, demanded every facility calculated to extend and embitter the conflict as quickly as possible: more soldiers, more searches, more "curfews" and the use of the Ulster Defence Regiment. He asked for 3,000 more troops, and when Mr. Maudling furnished only 1,300, he pronounced himself unable to control the right wing of his party and on 19 March resigned from office. His successor, Mr. Brian Faulkner

replaced him on the 23rd. One of his first actions[2] was to order the construction of a concentration camp at a disused R.A.F. site at Long Kesh, Co. Antrim.

In a sense history had repeated itself. The "Provisionals" in pursuing a policy divorced from the struggles of the masses had succeeded in toppling their humiliator, but all that was most reactionary in his policy was preserved, and indeed soon received reinforcement.

In England the illusion still lingered that a man of sufficient political dexterity could square the circle and bring back Northern Ireland to its normal state of abnormality. Perhaps if the aristocrats had failed the hard-headed businessman might succeed. There were new departures it is true, not an amnesty, but the appointment of Mr. Bleakley, a former Labour M.P., as Minister of Community Relations. He was a man who had the gift of saying much while conveying very little, a master of vagueness. There was fine talk of important concessions to come. But the campaign of bombing continued. There were thirty-seven explosions in April, forty-seven in May and fifty in June. Slowly, British public opinion was being forced to the conclusion that radical changes must be made.

But what were these to be? The Campaign for Democracy in Ulster inclined somewhat hazily to the (temporary or permanent) abolition of Stormont. There would then be "direct rule" from Westminster. They thus subscribed to the opinion that "bad government" rather than the partition system was the basis of the ills of "Ulster". Their extra-Parliamentary members had so little confidence in the possibility of taming Stormont that they hesitated to participate in the campaign for a Bill of Rights. Their Parliamentary members on the other hand gave valuable support.

The necessity of showing the Bill of Rights as a concrete alternative to the policy of reforms too little and

[2] So one presumes from *Hansard*, 25 November 1971, col. 1581.

too late, had become clear during the autumn when the Bill was drafted. It was now supported by a petition bearing nearly 100,000 signatures collected for the most part by such Irish organizations as the Connolly Association and branches of "Social Justice". This was presented at Downing Street on 5 May. On the 12th, Mr. Arthur Latham in the Commons and Lord Brockway in the Lords sought leave to introduce it. Mr. Latham's motion was lost. The Government issued a whip. Mr. Latham attracted 135 votes against the Government's 175. But the result was important. A breach had been made in the principle of bi-partisanship. And the 135 Labour supporters included front benchers and the overwhelming majority of the members of the C.D.U.

Those who controlled the "mass media", to whom, as has been remarked, politics are a branch of show business, though they are politically conscious enough to publicize to the full every reform which has an easily recognizable snag in it, showed no enthusiasm for mentioning the Bill of Rights. A synopsis of its contents is therefore given here.

Its stated aim was to "amend the powers of the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland, to make other provisions for equating the civil rights of citizens of Northern Ireland with those of other citizens of the United Kingdom, and to make provisions for proportional representation in parliamentary and local government elections in Northern Ireland." The grievances which it sought to relieve had been particularly complained of by those who spoke for the Civil Rights Association, and the text had been publicly discussed in Belfast at a conference convened by that movement.

The first section sought to extend the Race Relations Act to Northern Ireland where it would include reference to discrimination on grounds of religion. The second section was designed to protect the political

activities of Nationalists and Republicans. The six county Government would lose the power to create political offences in the activities of Nationalist or Republican groups, and it would be illegal to demand or administer any oath or test as a condition of public office, employment or election. The third section was designed to destroy the "Flags and Emblems Act". The fourth section aimed at restoring the form of proportional representation known as the single transferable vote in all elections, local or provincial. It would of course not affect Westminster elections.

The most important section was probably the fifth which was aimed against the Special Powers Act and similar repressive legislation. The powers of the six county Parliament to legislate were so curtailed as to prevent their passing any Act authorizing imprisonment without charge or trial, searches without warrant, the imposition of a curfew, denial of access to legal advisers to persons under arrest, or the arming of any species of Special Constabulary. The Special Powers Act would have disappeared the moment the Bill of Rights became law, and so would the Public Order Act. A final clause sought to encourage the growth of cooperation between the six county administration and the Government of the Republic.

The Bill of Rights would have brought immediate relief to the hard-pressed Nationalists of the six counties in those matters that they themselves said most concerned them.[3] The tactics of the Tories were to prevent its introduction in the Commons, hold debate to a minimum

[3] Sometimes resolutions were passed calling for a Bill of Rights *and* the repeal of the Special Powers Act, Flags and Emblems Act etc. If reference is made to the Bill introduced by Lord Brockway, it is unnecesary to specify these things in addition and thus make demands on two Governments simultaneously, for the Brockway Bill would automatically extinguish the Special Powers Act and all similar enactments.

and discourage publicity. Lord Brockway introduced the Bill in the Lords later in the same month. There was a brief but useful debate, after which the leader of the opposition voted with the Government.

If the Bill of Rights had been passed, the Westminster Parliament which had created and was preserving the six county state would have accepted responsibility for democratizing it. Unfortunately its melancholy satrap was compelled to face the midsummer madness without such restraining influences, and with no resources other than quick wit and opportunism.

The Unionist provocators were growing bolder daily. There was a number of cases of assault on Catholic youths and children who were seized and held by hooligans while the letters U.V.F. were scratched on arms or abdomen with broken glass or razors. These events were seldom reported in the English press, and the people of England are not to be blamed if they thought the I.R.A. the sole fount of violence. Mr. Faulkner made proposals which he thought might appeal to the Catholic middle class, and thus by isolating them, make it easier for him to appease his extremists by a fresh onslaught on the I.R.A. He therefore proposed to create three committees which would be attached to Stormont for the purpose of formulating policy in the fields of social services, industrial development and "the environment". He invited members of the S.D.L.P. to participate, and if the offer had been made at any other time he might have persuaded them.

Unfortunately the army appeared unable to follow the intricate course of Stormont policy, which demanded punitive searches and curfews in February and was dispensing the balm of responsibility in June. Increasingly the soldiers adopted the practice of stopping and searching. Men would be unceremoniously stood against the wall, their arms extended and their feet kicked apart. Mr. Patrick Devlin M.P. was subjected to this

indignity in May, and as the preliminary Orange walks began, feelings grew increasingly bitter in Catholic areas. Disturbances began in the Bogside on 3 July. The army at first fired rubber bullets. Then a man called Seamus Cusack, generally agreed to have little interest in politics, received a rifle shot which killed him. Early next morning a boy of nineteen, Desmond Beattie, suffered similarly. There was no evidence that he had had contact with firearms or explosives. The S.D.L.P. demanded an enquiry. When this was refused, as the main opposition in Stormont, they declined to attend any further meetings of Parliament.

Everybody but Her Majesty's Government was becoming convinced that drastic changes were needed quickly. At the end of July the *Irish Democrat* published a series of proposals which aimed to show that a permanent solution of the Irish question was possible, provided the all-important principle of Irish sovereignty in Ireland was accepted. In sum it was proposed that England should:

1. Renounce in principle the claim to Irish soil.
2. Announce that future policy would be based on the aim of withdrawal from Ireland. This would almost certainly have sufficed to end Republican "violence".
3. Withdraw gun licenses and otherwise disarm the Unionist extremists, thus giving the Catholics security.
4. Ban provocative parades which lead to the perpetuation of hatred.
5. Bring into force the Bill of Rights.
6. Proceed with the withdrawal of British troops.
7. Discuss the measures necessary to achieve a united independent Ireland with the Dublin Government and conclude the required agreements in consultation with representatives of all interested sections of the community in the North.

8. In accordance with these agreements arrange for the withdrawal of all British civil and military administration.

Such a programme might take a few years to complete, and might be open to modification, but it could be begun at once and disposed of the argument that "nothing could be done".

Thanks to massive military protection the Orange parades had passed off as peacefully as could be expected. But it was becoming obvious that it was not practicable to underwrite indefinitely the organized provocation of a third of the population for two whole months out of every year. After the shootings in Derry and the withdrawal of the S.D.L.P. from Stormont, there were grave doubts surrounding the traditional Derry "Apprentice Boys'" walk in August. If the Westminster Government had been prepared to do its duty, the Orangemen would have been told that since the only way they could hold their periodical jamborees was under military protection, they would have to desist until passions had cooled. But instead the decision was placed on Mr. Faulkner's shoulders. Placed as he was under the necessity of carrying his party with him he glanced apprehensively at his extremists and decided that a bone must be thrown to them. He judged they would accept nothing less than internment without charge or trial of those suspected of connections with the I.R.A. This view he canvassed at Westminster during the early days of August. He consulted Mr. Maudling, who in turn consulted Mr. Callaghan who gave him an incautious assurance that the principle of bi-partisanship would not be placed in jeopardy.

The "Apprentice Boys'" parade was called off. But during the night of 9 August, police and soldiers descended without warning on the homes of alleged Republicans. The net was cast wide. Middle-aged men who had been inactive for years were rounded up. There were cases of

mistaken identity. Mr. Faulkner was credited with the belief that the technique of internment and not the contradictions inherent in Narodnik or Blanquist policies, had foiled the Republicans in the fifties. But the technique had undergone development. In the fifties known Republicans were incarcerated as a simple means of keeping them, as was thought, out of mischief. In 1971 the army added a new dimension, the dimension of "interrogation in depth". It is hard to avoid the conclusion that people were rounded up on a speculative basis to see what information could be hammered out of them. The Compton Report gives ample evidence of what it euphemistically describes as "ill-treatment". Men were kept standing against walls, with bags over their heads, supported only by the tips of their fingers, day and night, often without facilities to relieve themselves when they wished, on a starvation diet, and without sleep for days on end. These and other refinements, admittedly intended to induce a "state of disorientation", may well have led them to incriminate themselves and implicate others. But it was argued that there was no brutality because (if the reasoning is understood aright) for one thing it was anticipated that they would recover from their injuries, and for another the soldiers and policemen derived no pleasure from inflicting pain and discomfort; presumably it hurt them more than it hurt their victims.

Why were these men not brought to trial? It was claimed that witnesses would be afraid to give evidence against them. But had the police no evidence of their own? Are we to presume that the R.U.C. and the British army would be afraid to give evidence out of fear of reprisals? If so one wonders what they were doing there. On the other hand if the police had no proper evidence, how did they know that anybody else had? No evidence was offered against the internees. They were not told why they were interned. But the authorities constantly

urged against their release that it would be folly to unleash such desperadoes on the public. They could be guaranteed to destroy within moments the sweetness and harmony which now characterized Belfast.

If ever an exercise confounded its performers it was internment. The "Provisionals" replied to suggestions that their leaders had been captured by an immediate and immense multiplication of their bombing campaign. Their main forces were untouched. They called press conferences in the heart of the city. It was clear also that for every man arrested ten had been recruited. If internment was intended to "stop the gunmen" and not as *quid pro quo* to the "Apprentice Boys", it had proved a total failure.

Mr. Kevin McCorry, organizer of N.I.C.R.A. was arrested in the early days of internment. He at least was treated with such courtesy as the authorities were capable of. The aim may well have been to disorganize the work of N.I.C.R.A. at a crucial time. But it was not disorganized. As has repeatedly happened in Irish history, the women filled the places vacated by the men. As well as Mrs. Edwina Stewart, the Honorary Secretary, Miss Madge Davison, Miss Ann Hope, Mrs. Dorothy Deighan and many others staffed the office frequently from early morning and into the small hours, dealing with a mountain of correspondence and telephoned business.

Internment completed the alienation of the Catholic community. It was stated that one family in a hundred had a member interned. A civil disobedience campaign was launched. Within weeks thirty thousand families declined to pay rent, rates or electricity charges until internment was ended. At the same time Nationalist councillors resigned from local authorities and prepared to attend an "alternative assembly" summoned by the members of the S.D.L.P. The divisions and misunderstandings of the past eighteen months gave way to a

great wave of solidarity. N.I.C.R.A. branches sprang up throughout the six counties. The felon's cap was once more the badge of honour. Women congratulated each other when their sons were "lifted". But the British press said little or nothing of this mighty mass movement, without previous parallel in these Islands. Instead they concentrated their attention on the "gunmen", as if the Unionists were not fighting a whole population.

The introduction of internment could not be without effect in England. There were demands for the recall of Parliament which, possibly in view of their assurances to Mr. Maudling, the leaders of Labour were reluctant to acknowledge. There were great protest demonstrations by Irish organizations and those of the British Labour movement. The mass of the English people felt mounting disgust at the consequences of the Government's Irish policy. There was strong indignation and demonstrations were held in Wales and Scotland also.

The Connolly Association Conference held in Manchester over the first weekend in September called for the immediate ending of internment and the release of the internees. A resolution was carried demanding a new policy derived from the principles of the eight points. The following week the Trades Union Congress meeting in Blackpool voted unanimously for the introduction of the Bill of Rights, and over a hundred delegates signed a telegram demanding the ending of internment, which was despatched to Mr. Faulkner. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Latham, Mr. Stallard and others, Parliament was recalled on 22 September. Ministers had to face criticism in both Houses. In the Lords the leader of the Labour Party publicly confessed his error in voting against the Bill of Rights. It was pointed out that if the Bill had become law the crisis that the members were now facing would never have arisen.

Gradually a consensus of progressive opinion was forming. At their conference during the same month

Plaid Cymru declared their opposition to internment and called for a policy based on the aim of a united independent Ireland. About the same time, within Ireland the Communist Party conference at Belfast reaffirmed the principle of a solution based on the needs and struggles of the mass of the ordinary people, through the "building of a people's alliance" which would "lay the basis first for a united opposition, and later to alternative Governments to the Unionists at Stormont and to *Fianna Fáil* at Leinster House". While there was no question of equating *Fianna Fáil* with Unionism, its failure to fight imperialism and respond to the needs of the times came under censure.

In November the process was carried further when the British Communist Party met in London, and undertook to wage a campaign based on the underlying principles of the eight points. An immediate demand was the withdrawal of British forces from Nationalist areas where their presence had become a provocation. Thus less than three years since the issue had first arisen in Derry the principle that a community should police itself had become accepted. This was to place a question mark over the whole future and character of the six county régime. In December the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions published heads for a settlement which included the ending of internment, the passing of the Bill of Rights, which, following the Blackpool decision Mr. Feather had discussed with them, and an economic aid programme amounting to £1,000,000,000 over ten years.

As in the dark days of 1920–21, there were mediators and intercessors in plenty. Six Tory M.P.s abandoned the purpose of visiting Dublin for talks with the "Provisionals" only after their leader had expressly forbidden it. The *New Statesman* evolved a plan for knocking sense into Irishmen's heads, as its tone of exasperation indicated, by threatening a complete and

punitive withdrawal from Ireland. This was the punishment that the Irish had been seeking for over eight hundred years. But there was an element of blackmail. The Catholics could be faced with the danger of civil war, and might be expected to restrain their demands to avoid it. A Tory parallel to the Labour withdrawal plan proposed making the six counties a sovereign state, entitled to raise and maintain armed forces, and by the same token eligible for international assistance in maintaining its social and territorial integrity. This amounted to "all power to Stormont".

A refinement of the "direct rule" proposal appeared in the *Sunday Times* of 14 November, and there were simultaneous rumours of its discussion and rejection in high places. Fermanagh and Tyrone were to be handed to the Republic. Britain was to abolish Stormont and institute direct rule in four counties. There was to be exchange of population, so as to produce Carson's old dream of "homogeneous Ulster". It is said that when one intermediary spoke to the S.D.L.P. after discussions in Dublin he told them, "Lynch doesn't want you." If that was so the scheme was inoperable. The potato was too hot for anybody's palate.

By mid-November it was clear that, notwithstanding pressures, initiatives and speculations, the situation closely resembled stalemate. The civil disobedience campaign was spreading. Great meetings were being held across the six counties, most of those attending being housewives. And in some cases Unionist tenants were joining the protest. Some felt they were going to find themselves in a united Ireland anyway, and valued their good relations with their Catholic neighbours. Attempts by the six county Government to attach the social security benefits, even the wages, of rent and rates strikers, which had been embodied in special legislation, were being treated with contempt. The burden on civil servants was becoming insupportable.

Every governmental boast that the authorities "had murder by the throat", as in a previous generation Lloyd George had put it, was answered by some new and daring, even if politically unproductive, action by the "Provisionals". While internment lasted it was impossible even to talk about talks with the opposition parties. Every day there was sharper pressure within the Parliamentary Labour Party for an end to bi-partisanship, for Tory policy was demonstrably bankrupt. It was under these conditions that Mr. Wilson, with the Government's blessing and technical assistance, undertook his semi-official visit to Ireland, and evolved the plan which he presented to Parliament in the debate which opened on 25 November. On that day the Parliamentary Labour Party had decided to challenge the Government's Irish policy to a division.

Mr. Wilson opened the debate. He began by thanking the Prime Minister for providing him with special facilities. He praised the "wisdom, grasp and understanding" of the Governor of Northern Ireland. And he listed the many interests he had consulted in thirty-two meetings spread over thirty-six hours, some at meals arranged by the Governor. He explained that he had declined to meet representatives of the I.R.A. He did not explain, though it is true, that he did not meet representatives of N.I.C.R.A. who had sent him extensive memoranda when his impending visit was announced. Nor did he meet representatives of the tens of thousands who were on rent and rates strike. One might derive from these acts of self-denial a rough conception of his political predisposition, confirmed when he declined to urge the release of the internees, while criticizing the methods used in arresting and interning them. After an extensive preamble which stressed the gravity and complexity of the situation, Mr. Wilson enunciated ten "principles" upon which he had founded a set of proposals. Thus "violence" must be rooted out. The

"men of violence" must be either destroyed or forced to retire. British troops must remain as long as necessary to preserve public order. But there must be progress towards a political solution. This solution must rest, in the constitutional field, on the Ireland Act of 1949, that is to say the minority must retain a veto on a united Ireland. Thus as he put it "the border cannot be changed by violence". Then came the seventh principle which was heralded across the world as a magnanimous acceptance of the principle of one Ireland.

The leader of the opposition declared "it is impossible to conceive of an effective long-term solution in which the agenda does not include consideration of, and which is not in some way directed to finding a means of achieving, the aspirations envisaged fifty years ago, of progress towards a united Ireland, in the right conditions and in the right terms, within the parameters of the Attlee declaration."

The "right" terms. Shades of the E.E.C. debate! Years ago I remember a patent agent's explaining the difference between a specification and an advertisement. In a specification one says, "It is known that margarine does not taste like butter, but to my margarine I add 1.235 per cent of oxide of Kidium, and tests on two hundred school children have shown that they find it indistinguishable from butter." But, he explained, an advertiser is best to confine himself to "quality", "goodness" and what is "right".

But let us examine the principle more carefully. The "solution" comprises an *agenda*. It is admittedly not a quick solution. The "agenda" includes *consideration*. Of what? Of *aspirations*. And what is aspired to? *Progress* towards a united Ireland. Will we ever get there? Only "in the right conditions" among which is to be found the stipulation that the Unionists can veto the whole thing! The use of the word *parameter* is curious. Perhaps the leader of the opposition had in mind a *perimeter*.

What stands forth in stark clarity is the contrast between the exact specification of the conditions imposed on Ireland, and the sketchy adumbration of what England is committed to, which is so vague as to defy definition, even with the aid of a parameter. And moreover, as if to warn the Irish not to aspire too hard, Mr. Wilson explained that "a substantial number of years will be required before any concept of unification could become a reality". But, he conceded, "the dream must be there." One would wonder why. What is the function of this dream? Is it a wish-fulfilment to confuse those who might otherwise fight together on immediate issues?

His eighth principle re-asserted the "Human rights provisions of the Downing Street declaration". These had of course been regarded as insufficient by the Civil Rights movement, among other things because the Special Powers Act remained untouched. The ninth principle was that the Nationalists should be encouraged to participate in all levels of government, but only "provided that they undertake loyally to accept the interim system of government of Northern Ireland". In what way did declaring the Stormont system as "interim" change it? It was "interim" in 1920. It was born "interim". And what form must the undertaking of loyalty to the constitution take? When that was demanded in 1922 the result was an oath.

Finally there was an important proposal which worried the Unionists deeply in the debate which followed. The British Government should take over from Stormont "ministerial responsibility for all aspects of security, providing in police matters the maximum local devolution to the Ulster police authority". This would of course demand the amendment of the Government of Ireland Act and might be expected to weaken the apparent stability of the régime. But in sum Mr. Wilson's proposals were that the mad dog should be re-registered as a mentally sick animal.

Mr. Wilson later explained the practical measures which would follow from his ten principles. The first was that "violence must cease". But it was clear that his political initiative was not dependent on this condition. He proposed inter-party talks at Westminster. These would presumably repair the bi-partisanship so recently broken. At a later stage the talks would be extended to include "the principal parties in Northern Ireland". These would presumably include the Nationalists who had declined to see him while internment remained, but not the Republicans whom he had declined to see. Then would follow tri-partite talks between Governments with the aim of establishing a constitutional commission representing the major parties of the three Parliaments. The purpose of the commission would be the "examination of what would be involved in agreeing on the constitution of a united Ireland".

The proposal was thus not that the Irish should be encouraged to meet together to resolve their differences. England was to be present throughout to ensure that the terms were "right". And Mr. Wilson made it clear that what he regarded as essential English interests must be guaranteed before discussions began. Thus the new constitution for all Ireland would have to be ratified by the *three* Parliaments; the two Irish ones would not suffice. There would have to be "enforceable safeguards" for minorities. Who would do the enforcing? One can guess from some later proposals. The constitution would not come into effect until fifteen years after agreement was reached. Since agreement could not be reached without Stormont, the story of the Boundary Commission might well be repeated. Following the ratification by the three Parliaments the agreement would be "enshrined in an international convention entered into by the two sovereign powers, with provisions for binding arbitration by the International Court or other agreed appropriate tribunal". Two sovereign powers, in other

words, were to enter into an international agreement over the constitution of one of them.

If "progress were made" (i.e. before agreement was reached) "the Irish Republic should undertake to seek as a Republic membership of the Commonwealth, recognizing the Queen as the head of the Commonwealth". There followed a vague reference to an oath of allegiance for citizens. But too much need not be made of the "aspirations" expressed under this head. In the debate Mr. Fitt ventured to wonder what form the Commonwealth would take in fifteen years' time.

Granted that Mr. Wilson had achieved the position above described one would have thought that the Republic was now in the bag. But further stipulations followed. "From the moment of agreement" Mr. Wilson proposed (i.e. with fifteen years yet to run) the Republic must undertake *now* to "use all appropriate powers and all the energy, force and means at its command to pursue and extirpate terrorist organizations operating from, located in or supported from Irish soil". What if the consequence should be a second civil war? No matter. The Republic must undertake "jointly with the British armed forces and other security forces to engage in all necessary operations of border patrols and other means of border control to prevent terrorist infiltration to the North." And Mr. Wilson "saw no reason" why British forces should not remain in Ireland for "up to a quarter of a century from the date of agreement". Indeed "to emphasize Britain's determination" there would be established in Ireland a peacetime establishment similar to Aldershot or Catterick, "so as to avoid the drama and sensation of entry of troops for riot or subversive operations". Mr. Wilson obviously had little confidence that the Irish people would be satisfied by the arrangements he was making for them. Or was the base linked with a "European" strategy? Finally Mr. Wilson had ready for the Irish the *harmonization* (blessed gobblede-

gook!) with English practice of social security policy, the law on contraception and abortion, and the system of education.

The word *independence* was not even spoken. What Irishman could be blamed if he turned away in disgust when the dreary sterilities of 1921–22 were resurrected for presentation as the summit of modern thinking? There was some dissatisfaction in the Labour movement that the leader of the opposition should appear to be trotting off to Ireland as Mr. Heath's envoy. He appears to have considered it his duty as a Privy Councillor, and several times he referred to confidential information made available to him in that capacity.

We see here the reality of class collaboration. The leader of a party claiming to be based on working-class interests pursues policies which identify him with the interests of the imperialist ruling class and makes proposals calculated to preserve its position in a country where it has no right. Yet at one time he was just as collaborative in the matters of trade union democracy and the Common Market. The movement educated him, and it can educate him on Ireland too.

We thus return to our starting point, for the essence of Mr. Wilson's approach, and it is to be doubted whether he ever gave serious thought to any other approach, is the English claim to sovereignty in Ireland. It is to this that the British people must give their answer, for it remains one of the shackles that binds them to the will of the "establishment". Against the right-wing acceptance of the fundamental assumption of imperialism, the left must proclaim to the British people that *their* future demands the renunciation of all claims to rule Ireland, and that they must take the initiative in forcing this upon their present masters.

All that need be taken from Mr. Wilson is the recognition that the Irish people want their country re-united, and that the main obstacle is British policy.

FOURTEEN

The End of an Era

When Mr. Lynch visited London on 6 December 1971, Mr. Faulkner declared by way of warning that the border was "absolutely sacrosanct." Even so, his assurance failed to halt the advancing disintegration of the one seemingly monolithic Unionist Party. On the 29th of the same month all thirty members of the Bannside Unionist organization went over to Mr. Paisley. From that time on the stream of defections to the Paisleyite right or the Alliance "moderates" flowed steadily and inexorably, until by the time of the election of the summer of 1973, a new political configuration had established itself. In this London and Dublin remained principals, but all between was a welter of confusion. The situation was not embarrassing to the long-term aims of English imperialism; it provided the maximum flexibility in negotiations aimed at winning more influence in the south. It incidentally revealed the much ignored political truth that there is no such thing as a non-Nationalist opposition to English imperial policy, however much some Unionist extremists would like to think there was.

The turn of the year was a time of rumour. The S.D.L.P. was refusing to attend Stormont or discuss with the Unionists until internment was ended. An uneasy deadlock promised during the vital months in which Mr. Heath must achieve his mandate for joining the E.E.C. and contrive to bring the Republic with him. At the same time he faced the industrial unrest consequent on the orientation of his economic policies towards the E.E.C. If the leaders of Labour could for once have

visualized themselves as the champions of the deprived and oppressed, instead of the sugarers of the pill of oppression, they would have opposed on three fronts and the Tories would have fallen.

The pressure for an independent Irish policy nevertheless built up steadily within the Labour Party. But it was frustrated thanks to a timely diversion. It is customary at such times for those considered close to the seats of policy-making to "leak" elements of official thinking. Their admirers take it uncritically as the "coming thing", and are anxious to appear to have advised it, even brought it about. The diversion was the demand for "direct rule". It was taken up strongly by the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster, whose worthy but gullible members threw themselves energetically behind it. They failed to appreciate that they were not striking a blow for democracy against imperialism, but assisting imperialism in re-organizing its position. They showed incidentally how fallible is a campaign for democracy that takes no account of the ultimate denial of democracy, the partition of Ireland.

Kites were flown in Dublin. On 22 December, Irish newspapers carried reports that the English Government was considering the appointment of a Minister for Northern Ireland, and the transfer of the control of security to London. Westminster would thus gather fresh elements of sovereignty into its own hands. The Irish question is an issue between the English Crown and the Irish people. Therefore the proposition involved a step backward. The essence of the Bill of Rights, as legal opinion advised, only possible because the sovereignty of Stormont was limited by a written constitution, was that the six county régime should retain a capacity for self-development. Powers of progressive growth, of *rapprochement* with Dublin, should be awarded; those of oppression should be denied. Lacking these it would be compelled to conciliate. Instead of a premium on

sectarianism there would be a premium on co-operation. It is true that it would still be possible for Westminster to introduce its own emergency. But the writing of democratic safeguards into the constitution should make possible a *modus vivendi* in which the estranged communities would be encouraged to come together for mutual advantage, and the influence of the Labour movement could be exerted to the maximum. This was a principle of devolution not of concentration. The conception of increasing Westminster control ran totally counter to it.

Nevertheless it swept through the Parliamentary Labour Party like a virus, the more so since the S.D.L.P. making its first serious blunder of the campaign, strongly supported the proposal. The C.D.U. subscribed to the ingenuous theory that once England administered the six counties directly the principles of "British democracy" would prevail. They could not see that a territory carved from the body of a nation, where part of the majority is made into an artificial minority, was not and could not be a democracy except in the most partial meaning of the word. If the border was sacrosanct, then repression was going to be sacrosanct as well, for the minority would not accept it except when they had no choice. The demand that security be transferred to England, rather than that England should give up the claim to Irish territory, implied that the chief promoter of discord was the Unionist Party, not English imperialism.

The error they committed was understandable. Perhaps it arose from an inability to envisage an independent Ireland. It was customary in the Middle Ages, when the king could do no wrong, or at least could not be got rid of, to exonerate his majesty when heads fell and blame his ministers. In the six counties, where religious sectarianism now permeated every aspect of social consciousness, the immediate oppressor was the Unionist Government, weak, hysterical, vindictive and inept. It

was not easy to remember that a victory gained through the agency of the Tories was in danger of resulting in a Tory outcome.

The end of Stormont was hastened by the massacre of Sunday 30 January 1972. The Civil Rights organization had called a demonstration at Derry and had invited Lord Brockway and others to be present as observers. The meeting was preceded by a march which, though technically illegal, was well within the range of activities to which the Government was accustomed to turn a blind eye, provided they were initiated in the right quarter. On this occasion those who watched television saw troops of the parachute regiment charge like a pack of wolves. Volleys of shots were fired, and among the many civilian casualties were thirteen dead. There followed a great revulsion of feeling against Unionism in England, accompanied by a comfortable sense that "it could not happen here". There was an increasing demand that English troops should not be under orders from a Government which had shown itself totally lacking in responsibility.

Yet there was no immediate change of policy. This was shown by an important test case brought to court by Mr. John Hume. He had been arrested by soldiers at the request of the R.U.C. to whom he was handed over. He was convicted of one of the trivialities that suffice to create felons in the six counties. He appealed on the ground that the action of the police in requesting soldiers to arrest him was *ultra vires* and unconstitutional. His plea was upheld. Under Section 4 of the Government of Ireland Act Stormont was allowed no control over the armed forces. The whole administration of the six counties had been based on a monstrous illegality. Clearly the law must be obeyed. Therefore, argued Her Majesty's Government, it must be changed to suit those who were to obey it. A Bill to amend the constitution was introduced on 23 February and passed through all

its stages in seven hours; thenceforth Stormont might give orders to English troops. What is more, the constitutional amendment was made retrospective, so as to legalize the past illegal actions of the army. A handful of Labour dissentients gathered round Mr. A. W. Stallard, but the greater part of the opposition seemed mesmerized with pious awe at the speed with which the majesty of the law can be stood on its head.

There might have been more opposition but for an accidental circumstance. The previous day, presumably as a "reprisal" for the Derry massacre, a car-bomb exploded in Aldershot, killing six people. This ill-advised action provided the Tories with the means of neutralizing the growing feeling of sympathy with the Civil Rights movement. Who would like to have it thrown at him that he jeopardized "security"? The Members of Parliament, like fishermen in a storm, stayed safe in the harbour of bi-partisanship. Nobody was worse than anybody else.

At the same time the Government must have felt uneasy. What were they to underwrite next? Relations with the Republic were being endangered. On 2 February, during demonstrations in Dublin, the British Embassy was burned to the ground. Ireland's strongest trade union, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, had declared against membership of the E.E.C. Before the Government could constitutionally plunge in, a referendum to change the constitution was required. Mr. Hillery ventured the hope that "Europe would make Mr. Heath see reason". Unionist extremists made their own contribution to the triumph of logic. On 4 March, one of their bombs produced dreadful carnage in the Abercorn Restaurant. On the 9th thousands of Unionist workers went on strike at the instance of the "Loyalist Workers' Association". Most of them were members of English trade unions whose head offices looked on uncomprehendingly. The demand was for

more vigorous action against the I.R.A., in particular the invasion of the so-called "no go" areas where there was tacit agreement that the army made only token appearances. The Unionists could be forgiven if they imagined they were pressing an advantage, since at this time Mr. Heath was intoning uplifting speeches against the "men of vahlence", by which he meant the I.R.A. His attitude to other "men of violence" was shown when after the fall of Allende, his Government despatched arms to them, presumably to help them keep the violence up. But could he totally ignore increasing Unionist extremism? Dare he commit even more English forces when some reckless action by the Stormont Government might place them between two fires? These issues were mulled over during March when a temporary paralysis seemed to have befallen English policy.

Towards the end of the month it was decided that those with power must claim and exercise responsibility. Mr. Faulkner was summoned to London and his requests for still more troops were dismissed with the information that the Government of Ireland Act was to be amended. Internal security was to become a reserved matter. Westminster would take all the decisions in future. To accept would have spelled political suicide for Mr. Faulkner. He and his Ministry resigned *en bloc.* As far as is known it did not occur to Mr. Heath that the correct thing was to invite Mr. Fitt to form an administration which would end internment and introduce all other necessary reforms. At the very least, that the intransigence came from the Unionist side would have been exposed. But perhaps their class instincts steered away the Tory Ministry from such disquieting thoughts.

On 30 March, the "Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions) Act" became law. Stormont was suspended for a year. All its powers were transferred intact to an individual: the new Secretary of State for Northern Ire-

land, Mr. William Whitelaw, was to become responsible to the Westminster Parliament. If this change had been accompanied by the immediate enactment of the democratic reforms, envisaged in the Bill of Rights, a reversal of the policy of the sacrosanct border, and the offer of unrestricted discussions with all legitimately interested parties, maybe the Orangemen would have rioted for a day or two, but the basis would have been created for a new order. Almost certainly the I.R.A. would have declared a cease-fire. There would have been no danger of the English army being caught between two hostile forces.

But first, such a change in objectives was not in the nature of the Tory animal. Second, it seems that there was no alternative policy available. The civil servants had not been thinking upon such lines. Mr. Heath was obsessed with "Europe", and it is not to be wondered at that a man to whom his own country had become an irrelevancy, would be mindful of another, which at best he regarded as an appendage. Mr. Whitelaw went to Belfast and was photographed suave and smiling. Perhaps the very absence of policy gave the Tories the advantage. They could play the rôle of honest broker while others fell out. They could appear to be learning the facts for the first time, and while internment remained gain credit for the intention of abolishing it. On the other hand the Nationalist population, delighted at the bitter discomfiture of their sectarian enemies, were tempted to ignore the greater viciousness of their imperial overlords, who now sent their professional Gauleiter.

Some of the Republicans felt inclined to boast that they had brought down Stormont, and to feel that bringing down English imperialism was a task of much the same magnitude. What had happened was that the national movement as a whole, based on the struggle for civil rights, had shown that Stormont could not govern

without them. The imperial principals thereupon removed their agents. They were no longer capable of performing the duties allotted to them. The principals sent in a man from headquarters.

Mr. Whitelaw initiated some minor reforms. A Director of Public Prosecutions was appointed. It was indicated that future elections would be based on the principle of proportional representation. The Unionist extremists tried to deal with him as they had dealt with O'Neill, Chichester Clark and Faulkner. They strove to involve him in clashes with the Nationalists. Once he was at loggerheads with them, they argued, Unionism was safe. They pointed temptingly to the "no go" areas. Instead of invading them he visited them and talked of peace and justice. The honeymoon lasted some months, months in which Protestant riots increased in frequency and seriousness. The Unionist extremists set up "no go" areas in their own districts, and when these were not respected challenged Mr. Whitelaw to flush out the Republican areas.

His forbearance saved Ireland for the E.E.C. If Mr. Roy Jenkins received the Charlemagne prize for "services to Europe", then the Dermot MacMurrough prize should have gone to Mr. Whitelaw. He enabled the Dublin newspapers to say that the English Government was "doing something", without being compelled to explain what it was. Hence Mr. Lynch could pronounce airily at a meeting in the border town of Ballybofey (Co. Donegal) that entry into Europe would mean a speedy end to partition. Economic inducements completed the trick. On 3 May, the Irish Industrial Development Authority promised the creation of 55,000 new jobs as soon as Ireland was in E.E.C. Next day, as an earnest of the new Christian times that had come upon the world, the English Government paid the £14 million debts of the Belfast Shipyard of Messrs. Harland and Wolff. Mr. Enoch Powell helped unintentionally by demanding the

total integration of the six counties in England, and lashing the Heath Government for appeasing Republicanism, in a speech to the Unionists of Newtownards. *Fianna Fáil* took full page advertisements in the national newspapers saying, "If you vote 'yes' (to the E.E.C.), the future is bright with hope and prosperity." Milk distributors left Common Market propaganda with the churns of small farmers. Nothing was omitted to heighten the euphoria. And the people voted "yes" by five to one, the negators being the working class of the larger towns, notably Dublin. The hope is now fading and the prosperity is still in the future.

With a view to bringing about a position where normal political activity could be resumed, on 25 May, N.I.C.R.A. called upon the I.R.A. to cease hostilities. The "officials" responded with a cease-fire on 29 May. Mr. Whitelaw ordered the release of seventy-five internees, presumably as a peace gesture. The first reaction of the "provisionals" was to fight on. But public opinion demanded a peace initiative. On 13 June, Mr. Sean Stephenson, the "provisional" leader, offered to meet Mr. Whitelaw in "free Derry". While there was no immediate response, the result was an invitation to send a delegation to London.

Thus arrived the crucial turning point of this stage of the struggle. Sufficient evidence is not available for a full and precise historical assessment, but some points may be noted. The two aspects of partition have already been referred to. One is the denial to the majority of the Irish people of the rights inherent in a majority position. The other is the double deprivation of that part of the majority held within the six counties. The movement developed from the crisis of the partition system in the six counties. Its basis was therefore the second aspect. The Civil Rights movement accepted the regrettable inevitability of a temporary continuance of English rule, mitigated however by substantial improvements. To go

beyond this at one step required a movement of the breadth of the interests involved. That is to say there must be favourable circumstances and willing allies both in the Republic and in Britain. And indeed every major change of frontiers affecting great powers requires a favourable international situation.

It has been noted that the young people of "People's Democracy" mistakenly strove to import a third issue, Socialism, requiring an even more advanced set of circumstances. It was not so easy, however, to separate the two aspects of partition. If Draconic measures of repression had been introduced to deny civil rights, might not the resistance provoked sweep away partition itself? The "provisional" I.R.A. sought to cut the Gordian knot. Mr. Stephenson, speaking in "Free Derry" promised that another year's fighting would have the English driven into the sea. But the actual balance of forces was not so favourable. Possibly the "provisional" peace initiative betokened a realization of this fact. Certainly it was made clear that their aim was to bring the English to the conference table, and their statements concentrated increasingly on the need for a "declaration of intent" from London that in due time the six counties were to be evacuated. There was here, but for the rivalry between the two wings of the I.R.A., some basis for a reunification of the national forces.

The prospect of discussions in London gave the "provisionals" a status of spokesmen for the Irish people, which the Dublin Government intensely resented. And there were dangers nearer at hand. It is perhaps regrettable that the "provisionals" were unable to associate other Nationalist groupings with their initiative. The difficulty was that if the talks were not immediately successful they might serve as an unfortunate precedent. It had been agreed in the Nationalist camp that there would be no discussions with Mr. Whitelaw before internment was ended. If the "provisionals" talked in

London unconditionally without success, what was now to inhibit others from trying their hand?

It was on 18 June that Messrs. Hume and Devlin conveyed Mr. Whitelaw's invitation. On 26 June, a truce was agreed upon. On 7 July, the "provisional" leaders went to London under safe conduct. The negotiations, if they may be so described, were not successful. The English complained that there was little common ground. But they were not immediately broken off. It was understood that the truce would continue. What caused the sudden breakdown is not clear. But the multiplicity of interests likely to benefit from it is obvious. On the day of the talks two English servicemen were discovered prowling round "Free Derry". The Government disowned them. But it was noticed that next day the army and the U.D.A. were engaged in joint patrols in the Unionist areas. It had been agreed that sixteen evicted Catholic families were to be re-housed on the Lenadoon estate. The U.D.A. objected. The result was an attempt by the "provisionals" to secure them the houses to which they were legally entitled. A confrontation took place in which the army supported the U.D.A. Efforts to secure Mr. Whitelaw's intervention proved unavailing. Clearly some substantial shift of policy had taken place in high places.

The truce was the sole exotic bloom on the barren bush of Mr. Whitelaw's diplomacy. Once it withered his rôle as an honest broker was at an end. It had possibly struck him that it was somewhat inconsistent of him to reiterate demands that Dublin should crack down on the "men of vahlence" when not only was he tolerating their "no go" areas in the six counties, but was permitting them to usurp from the Dublin Government the right they claimed to negotiate on behalf of the Irish nation. The stage was now set for the counter-offensive of reaction. Perhaps London and Dublin understood each other at last.

On 27 July, 4.000 extra troops were despatched to the six counties. Four days later came "operation motormen". The "no go" areas of Belfast and Derry were invaded by soldiers in tanks and armoured cars. Houses were entered and ransacked. There began that regime of harassment, intimidation and victimization which has already guaranteed a new generation of rebels should this one win too little for their pains and sacrifices. On 7 August, it was clear that this immense effort of repression had achieved its first object. Somebody had cracked. The S.D.L.P. agreed to begin discussions with Mr. Whitelaw, not on the basis of the equality of status demanded by the "provisional" I.R.A., but on the basis of Mr. Whitelaw's position as the representative of English sovereignty in the six counties. At the same time there was caution. When the Secretary of State called a conference of all parties in Darlington, Co. Durham, on 25 September, the S.D.L.P. declined to attend but communicated their opinions in writing. It was during these developments that the attack on Republicans in the twenty-six counties began. On 6 October, the Kevin Street offices of the "provisional" *Sinn Fein* were closed down by police acting under the "Offences against the State Act."

Mr. Whitelaw published his "Green Paper" on November first. It contained a somewhat selective summary of the Irish question, together with statements of the positions of the parties he had consulted, and was embellished by the following statement:

> "No United Kingdom Government for many years has had any wish to impede the realization of Irish unity, if it were to come about by genuine and freely given mutual agreement and on conditions acceptable to the distinctive communities."

When Conservative Governments want something, conditions melt away like spring snow. When they do

not want something, the conditions become sacrosanct. Yet even this assurance might not remove the qualms of the Unionists. They might remember the "free and full-hearted" assent the British people gave to entry into the Common Market.

On 23 November, the *Fianna Fáil* Government introduced into the *Dáil* the "Offences against the State (Amendment) Bill." Among other things it provided that in a court of law when there was no direct evidence that a man was a member of the I.R.A., the sworn *opinion* of a policeman should be acceptable as evidence. The Bill aroused opposition from both Labour and *Fine Gael* benches. It was confidently predicted that it would not pass its second reading on December first. During the progress of the debate that evening a car-bomb exploded in a crowded street outside the I.T.G.W.U. headquarters at Liberty Hall. Two people were killed and 127 injured. It was hard to believe the timing was not calculated to influence the debate, as the location was calculated to affect the attitude of Labour. When the news was conveyed to the *Dáil* the *Fine Gael* leader, happy to be back on the side of law and order, announced with great solemnity that his party was withdrawing its opposition. There was great acclaim and, it is said, the bars rang with cries of "up the Republic." It is a characteristic of the bourgeoisie that whenever they put down they cry "up", as they seal every war alliance in the name of world peace. To their credit on this occasion Labour voted against the gag Act and held aloof from the Corybantics.

Who planted the decisive bomb? Even Mr. Lynch who most benefited from it expressed suspicion of English intelligence agencies. It was most unlikely that even the most prejudiced and ruthless of the Irish services would be a party to wanton murder in the streets of Dublin. Support for Mr. Lynch's widely held suspicion came when on 21 December, two men were arrested

and charged under the Official Secrets Act with passing confidential Irish Government documents to English intelligence. Much more emerged during the Littlejohn trial: the two brothers admitted to having infiltrated units of the I.R.A. and to have induced them to undertake activities which they would otherwise not have contemplated, but which would bring them into collision with the twenty-six county authorities. There were also allegations that special services connected with English intelligence had carried out assassinations with a view to provoking friction between the "official" and "provisional" wings of the I.R.A. The two men, who it was admitted had been in touch with English official circles, claimed as a defence of their carrying out the biggest bank raid in Irish history, that their purpose was political. The blame was to have fallen on the I.R.A.

The situation thus arrived at illustrated the skill with which English imperialism can divide its opponents. Dublin had been made a virtual accomplice in the terrorization of the North. Within the six counties the gulf between Unionist and Nationalist was wider than ever. The Unionists were split three ways. The Republicans confronted the S.D.L.P., while themselves divided into "provisionals" and "officials." Not a section but whose effectiveness was restricted by one of these divisions. By the autumn of 1972 the Tories were looking around for moulds of their own into which they could pour the political jelly into which six county affairs had been pounded.

The Green Paper had admitted the existence of an "Irish dimension" as vague as Mr. Wilson's parameter. When politicians talk geometry somebody is going to be cheated. The "Irish dimension" began to take shape with talk of a "Council of Ireland" whose character was kept as speculative as possible. All that was known was that London, Dublin and Belfast would be concerned in it and that it would operate within the "context" of the

E.E.C. Protestant extremists took alarm, and remembering 1912, sharply stepped up their illegal activities. The existence of substantial caches of arms in East Belfast had been long suspected. But up to now the English Government had not conceived much danger from them. But during the first days of February two members of the U.D.A. were arrested and interned. These were the first internments of Protestants, and the Unionists should have learned from them. But the Loyalist Workers' Association called a general strike in protest. This was widely though not universally supported. It was followed by several nights of rioting and destruction in East Belfast. This time the Government was determined to stand no nonsense. A little more pounding of the extremists might aid in the liquefaction of the centre. And to capitulate as had its predecessor of 1912 would have been to prejudice its strategy of integration within integration. This time the East learned something about the English armed forces. February 7 was thus the day the Orange card was played and proved a miserable deuce. If it had wished it, the London Government at this point could have made the "provisionals" the required "declaration of intent" with complete impunity.

But we must not expect gentlemen to declare intentions they do not possess. Indeed, the Tories wished to have the border question cut and dried before anything further was done. An Act was introduced providing for an immediate plebiscite on the issue of the border, and voting proceeded on 8 March 1973. It was provided that no further referendum should take place before 8 March 1983, and it was not obligatory that one should take place on that date. The result was of course precisely what every election had told over fifty years. The people of twenty-six Irish counties were not permitted to express an opinion on the partition of their country. This was left to a minority backed by English imperial power.

But such considerations did not prevent the Government from informing the Nationalists that from now on the border was not an issue. And as for the Unionists, their assent to remaining in the United Kingdom was interpreted as a desire to fall in with the Government's new plans, though these had been scarcely adumbrated. On the day of the poll car-bombs exploded in London causing a number of casualties and a group of young people was arrested at London airport.

Early in February 1973 the Lynch Government had resigned, intending to fight an election on "law and order" and its success in keeping the troubles north of the border. The two main opposition parties, *Fine Gael* and Labour, though poles apart except in desire for office and willingness to bow to the civil servants when they got it, entered into an electoral pact. They fought the election on being as good policemen as *Fianna Fáil*, but having in addition a regard for wages and prices. Labour was committed against the Common Market, but could forget it now that Ireland was a member. And *Fine Gael*, the most fanatically "European" party in Ireland, was happy to share office with the reformed sinners. An election victory for the coalition at the end of February brought into office the most pro-English Government Ireland had known since the twenties.

The situation was thus distinctly favourable to Mr. Whitelaw when the White Paper was finally published on 20 March 1973. The "provisionals" appeared to be contained. The Republic was in the E.E.C. and in effect under *Fine Gael* Government. The bluff of the Unionist extremists had been called. Let them assassinate Republicans if they could get away with it, but not challenge Westminster supremacy. The S.D.L.P. was emerging as the main Nationalist party, opposed to the Republicans who had been unable to repair their divisions. The Labour and trade union movement faced grave difficulties when it was scarcely possible for trade

union branches to meet. The full-time officials struggled heroically with organizational problems. The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Trade Union Congress and the Belfast Trades Council sought constructive policies to urge in every field. No praise is too high for them, or for the officials of N.I.C.R.A. who endeavoured to protect the liberties of the citizen under conditions amounting to military dictatorship and martial law. But the great strength of the Labour movement, its *mass* character, was under existing conditions rendered inoperative on the main issues.

The White Paper proposed the election of a Northern Ireland Assembly by the method of proportional representation. In words at least there were important concessions to Civil Rights terminology. There was to be legislative prohibition of religious discrimination; abolition of oaths and tests as a condition of employment or office; proportional representation; the repeal of the Special Powers Act; and a constitutional conference involving London, Belfast and Dublin. Thus four of the six provisions of the Bill of Rights were explicitly pledged, two others implied. Surely the years of struggle had not after all been in vain. Important concessions had already been won. But the question was making them good. Would they prove substantial in practice?

The legislation drafted on the basis of the White Paper answered this question to the satisfaction of all observers. Two Bills were presented to Parliament, the Northern Ireland Constitution Bill (which was preceded by the short related Assembly Bill) and the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Bill. Only a handful of Labour M.P.s opposed them root and branch and within a short time they were passed into law. Indeed one of the most deplorable features of the whole set of transactions has been the willingness of the Labour front bench to acquiesce while the Tory Party planted an un-

wanted constitution on the body of a neighbouring country under conditions of military terror.

The Constitution Act laid down the framework of the next phase of English rule in the six counties. The Emergency Provisions Act was a Westminster Act conferring on the Executive the substance of Stormont's Special Powers Act. The principle of dictatorship might in some respects become less gratuitously insulting, but it was made considerably more effective.

The new constitution like the old was to be an Act of the Westminster Parliament. The Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland were abolished. They were to be replaced with an Assembly and its Executive. The Assembly was to have powers to pass "measures" which would have the force of Acts. So far only the names were changed. But a new schedule of excepted matters was appended, among them security; but it was provided that the new Assembly might petition for the transfer of excepted powers, and some hints were given that security might well end up on the transfer list. As against this however no *measure* could be even discussed without the permission of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The executive power vested in the Crown would be exercised by the Secretary of State through an appointed Executive. Their legislative powers were not to be devolved upon the Assembly until the Secretary of State was satisfied that an Executive could be formed that was "likely to be widely accepted throughout the community", that is to say that some section representing the Nationalist population was prepared to offer itself bound hand and foot on their behalf. This arrangement was termed "power sharing". A more appropriate term would be equality of impotence.

Relations with the Republic were to be regulated with equally becoming niceness. The Executive's organs might consult with those of the Republic and make

agreements regarding transferred matters. But these agreements would be subject to the control of the Secretary of State because the *exercise* of legislative powers was scheduled as a reserved matter, and the agreements could obviously not go into effect without the exercise of the legislative powers of the Assembly. Obviously the splitting of a hair need not necessarily impair its strength. One asks, would a Government genuinely concerned not to "impede" the realization of Irish unity have taken such elaborate pains to incorporate this obstacle in the new constitution? It was clear that every agreement with the Republic was to be scrutinized with a sharp eye. For what reason? Presumably to see what England could get in return for permitting it to go forward. The aim was to increase English influence in Ireland as a whole. For the rest generous salaries were offered. The silver jingled and the palms started itching. Consciences were examined, heads counted, and those who believed they could survive it began to display their statesmanship. The essence of the new system was that Nationalists were to be admitted to the emoluments of the partition system, but that in compensation the distant control of Westminster was to be replaced by direct detailed supervision in political as well as financial matters.

The Emergency Provisions Act was retrograde in the extreme. It legalized the military dictatorship under which the new constitution was to be imposed. Its contents were subjected to critical examination by the National Council for Civil Liberties in a statement issued on 17 April 1973. Under its first section a number of offences were to be "scheduled" and dealt with in a special way. In case of doubt the decision as to whether an offence was scheduled or not rested with the Secretary of State. For these offences (which were of course political in essence) there was to be no trial by jury. Its second section set out stringent conditions upon which

a judge must be satisfied before granting bail to a person accused of a scheduled offence. The method of a man's trial thus depended on what he was accused of. The fourth section made admissible written statements, which might include hearsay, from persons not present in court. The fifth section placed on the defendant the onus of proving that any confession he might have made was extracted by torture or other improper means. Section nine confirmed the police in their right to enter premises, search and arrest without warrant. All the most essential of the old Special Powers were preserved in subsequent sections, and the first schedule was identical with the Detention of Terrorists (Northern Ireland) Order of 1972. The N.C.C.L. expressed the view that the Bill would "not produce the climate for a lasting peace in Northern Ireland."

At a conference held in Hampstead Town Hall on 28 April under the auspices of nine participating organizations[1] the lawyers and others present expressed serious concern at the way in which civil liberties in Britain were being eroded as a result, or under the influence of, the troubles in the six counties. The process was compared with that which took place in France during the Algerian war. There was evidence of increasing abuse of police powers in political cases. The mass searches and finger-printings of members of the Irish community, and the manner of treating suspects, were in some cases approaching the level of harassment. Parallel ran a general propaganda assault on the principle of trial by jury, and the rights of accused persons, and there were attacks on the right of peaceful picketing in industrial disputes. It was also noted that the

[1] The Connolly Association, National Union of Students, Political Committee of the London Co-operative Society, National Council for Civil Liberties, Haldane Society, Communist Party, Liberation (the M.C.F.), National Assembly of Women, and British Peace Committee.

doctrine of "conspiracy" was being used to magnify minor torts into serious offences. One military gentleman had written a book which discussed the possibility that the entire population of Britain might be governed by the army.

The reaction of the police to the bomb incidents of 8 March aroused serious misgivings. The persons arrested were deprived of their clothing and held incommunicado while their solicitor tried ineffectively to reach them. There was a growing sense in the public statements of the Executive that securing a conviction was more important than ensuring justice.

The local elections in Northern Ireland took place on 31 May. The new balance of forces was now clearly visible. There were twenty-six constituencies. The number of partitionist candidates elected was 413. The number opposed to partition was 102. That those opposed to partition did not poll their full strength may be ascribed to the Republicans' advising their supporters to boycott the poll failing the ending of internment. The S.D.L.P. was confirmed as the successor of the old Nationalist Party with 82 seats, against 7 for the Republican Clubs, 6 for the Unity Party, 4 for the Nationalists and 3 independent Republicans. The official Unionists won 110 seats, the unofficial 100, the extremer groups 81, and the Alliance Party 63. There were about 60 assorted independents on the Unionist side. An important result of this election was that the new councils roughly reflected the opinions of the voters.

The synthetic pocket boroughs were no more.

The Assembly elections of 28 June were a foregone conclusion. Seventy-eight deputies, or assemblymen, were elected. Of these 19 were members of the S.D.L.P. Unionists of various shades won 50 seats, and divided approximately evenly between official and unofficial, pending the results of the inevitable horse-trading. The

Alliance Party won 8 seats and the Northern Ireland Labour Party one.

The Assembly itself met on 31 July in the Central Hall, Belfast. Mr. Whitelaw had installed as chairman the former Clerk to the Stormont Parliament, and supplied every member with a written "directive". The sole business was the election of a Chairman, whose duties were set out in the directive.

The Unionists met under a deep sense of anger and humiliation. They had believed themselves imperialists but now they were being treated as colonials. Mr. Faulkner's "officials" decided that the bread was buttered on the Whitelaw side and were prepared to co-operate. Thus they would retain what powers of patronage could be salvaged. Investors from all over the world had been buying up bombed sites and the power of the local bourgeoisie was smaller than ever. Mr. Paisley complained that "Whitelaw Englishmen" were being given the key executive appointments. Yet how could he logically complain? His own proposal was for the complete merging of the six counties with the three countries of Britain. He resembled those admirers of European Union who exhort miners to sacrifice in the "national interest" which on their own argument ought not to exist.

It took the Assembly four hours to elect Mr. Minford, who then went into seclusion from which he sallied forth in search of collaborators, the execrations of the Paisleyites ringing in his ears. The choice of venue, the unsuitability of the arrangements, poor accoustics and imperfect amplification system, were all bitterly complained of.

It was as if the English Government had decided to place the Irishmen in the best possible conditions for quarrelling among themselves, and committing themselves to existing party boundaries.

Outside the Assembly military dictatorship continued.

A delegation from the N.C.C.L. which visited the six counties on 17 August was highly critical of the part played by the army. It found that "intensive army activity in the minority community appears to have little relationship to Provisional I.R.A. activity and the search for gunmen." There were provocative army activities directed against children. The army failed to respond to peace-keeping initiatives by moderate Catholics. It failed to respond to requests for protection from molestation or intimidation. There had been persistent harassment in both communities of individuals known to be unconnected with any illegal activity. There had been continued brutality in interrogation and arrest processes, and a failure to pursue sectarian assassins.

Yet throughout this period the Government, the opposition front bench, the B.B.C., independent television, and most of the press persisted in describing the troops not just as the finest body of men since the knights of the Round Table, but as shimmering angels whose pearly wings, spread over the population of Belfast, protected them from all harm, or nearly all. It seems as if the army too had its directives. Some day we shall find out what they were. Suffice it to say that both among the Nationalists and among the extremer Unionists a certain sentiment was being encouraged. That sentiment was expressed in the words "I'll thank God when it's all over."

The S.D.L.P., the official Unionists, the Alliance Party, and the N.I.L.P. had indicated that they might be prepared to form a coalition. But each of the major parties had its own stipulations. The S.D.L.P. wanted equal representation (the equivalent of a veto), reform of the R.U.C., the end of internment, and a Council of Ireland set up simultaneously with the Executive. The Unionists wanted a majority (their version of the veto), the retention of the R.U.C. in its present form, and an agreement from the S.D.L.P. that they should denounce

the rent and rates strike they had participated in initiating.

Both sides were in difficulties. The extremer Unionists, too loyal to accept British salaries, barked "traitors!" from the gutter. S.D.L.P. members were uncomfortably reminded of the fate of the Nationalist Party when they saw their constituents attend Civil Rights meetings, and Republican papers distributed in the teeth of the dictatorship. For several months there was manoeuvring and uncertainty, rumour following rumour. Mr. Whitelaw thought all these scruples pernickety, and Mr. Heath uttered and hastily withdrew a threat to merge the six counties with the rest of the United Kingdom.

On 6 November, the *Financial Times* predicted that within six weeks Dublin and London ministers, together with members of political parties in Belfast would meet at a venue in Britain. Agreement was expected upon a "power-sharing" (i.e. powerless) Executive in the six counties, and a Council of Ireland. Irish ministers would offer substantial successions. These would include the establishment of a "common law-enforcement area" first spanning the border, later covering the whole island. Extradition would be facilitated by special courts for certain agreed offences. These courts, whose purpose was to deny human rights, would be appropriately named "human rights courts". The twenty-six county constitution would be amended so as to delete the provision by which Dublin claimed jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland. In return the Unionists would be expected to agree to the Council of Ireland, to which at some undefined date in the future, "ministerial functions" might be delegated. Though it was "in essence bilateral" it was accepted that the English Government would be associated with it in some measure". It later transpired that the contemplated measure was financial influence. England would thus have a say in twenty-six county affairs.

No doubt as in 1921 "finely orchestrated" paeans of gratitude would float to the sun-god under the baton of coryphaeus Heath. The Irish problem would be pronounced solved again for the umpteenth time. And the opposition front bench would live to express pained surprise when everybody did not live happily ever after.

Something of this mood of exhilaration beatified Mr. Whitelaw's return to London on 22 November with the S.D.L.P.'s capitulation in his pocket. The composition of the Executive had been agreed upon; the Unionists were to have a majority. The R.U.C. was to remain as sacrosanct as the border. The Council of Ireland was to be set up, but on the Unionists' terms. It was clear moreover that the demand for the ending of internment had gone by the board. In the debate that followed it was painful to see Mr. Fitt retreat further to the right under the taunts of Mrs. McAliskey (Bernadette Devlin) and Mr. Frank MacManus, taunts which however injudicious some might think them, were far from empty of substance. The speech of Mr. Frank MacManus in particular commended itself as a well reasoned statement of the Nationalist position. "The package," he said "wrapped up in glowing promises might find favour with certain people in the middle-class Catholic community... it must be said that in the proposals there is not even a crumb of comfort for the downtrodden working class. I can speak only for the working class on the minority side, but I think it can also be said that there are not many crumbs for the working class on any side in the North of Ireland."

Denunciation and implied threats came from the "provisionals" in Dublin. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association and the Communist Party of Ireland together with the "official" I.R.A. disassociated themselves from the S.D.L.P. position, particularly deploring the reversal of position on internment and the rent and rates strike. At a conference in Hampstead Town Hall

called by the *Irish Democrat* and attended by ninety-one delegates from trade union and political organizations throughout Britain, the action of the Tories in extracting this capitulation from the S.D.L.P. was condemned by resolution, and the small group of Labour M.P.s who had refused to participate in the jubilation were urged to continue their opposition as legislation to implement the agreement came before Parliament. It was denied that this was a voluntary agreement. It had been wrung from tired men under stress of military intimidation. The British Communist Party which condemned the settlement, already in view, at its Congress on 14 November, found its warnings only too quickly justified.

But Mr. Whitelaw may have won a Pyrrhic victory. His new coalition rests on a knife-edge. How far dare the S.D.L.P. tolerate the persecution of the rent strikers and the perpetuation of internment without throwing the Executive into paralysis by their opposition? Grant that the extremer Unionists' scruples may be expected to dissolve in the radiance of prospective financial benefits, how far dare Mr. Faulkner offer to confer them without damning the new administration as solely Unionist? How long will public opinion tolerate the army? And granted that the economic difficulties of the six counties cannot be lessened while partition remains, unless England is prepared to pour in vast sums of money, how long will such involvement prove acceptable to the British electorate? These uncertainties are compounded by the immense shift in the balance of world power indicated in the Arabs' oil embargo, and the possibility that the most disastrous Government in English history will meet the most disastrous defeat.

The principal weak spot throughout the struggle has been the leadership of the Labour Party. They are too close to the Ministers, and ministerial thinking too easily communicates itself to them. The small group of Labour

M.P.s who have made themselves acquainted with the subject in the field have not succeeded in passing their experience through to the leadership. There has been a tendency to funk the issue at Labour Party and trade union conferences. Yet it is avoided at the peril of those concerned. It is by no means certain that the present settlement, if settlement it can be called, will either prove workable or prevent the continuance of violence. Even if it should succeed temporarily in both, as sure as the underlying causes have not been dealt with, the old volcano will erupt again, to plague this or some later generation of politicians.

FIFTEEN

A Democratic Solution

The events of the past six years must surely convince even the most sceptical that there is something radically wrong in the six counties. It is suggested here that what is wrong is the most fundamental thing of all, English rule, which places them in the wrong jurisdiction, under a class incapable of catering for their needs. But notwithstanding this incapacitating disability, the inhabitants of the six counties might well have been able to work their way back to a position of national unity if they had been given the means, that is to say if one section, the Tory Unionist Party, had not been handed the means of preventing them.

The establishment in Britain of a government prepared to break with the imperialist past would of course mean the main obstacle was surmounted. Such a government could change the situation overnight by a simple declaration that from now on Britain had no interest in asserting her authority in any part of Ireland and was prepared to discuss complete withdrawal.

Such a declaration would indicate a completely new course of policy, in which the objective pursued would be a strong, prosperous, independent, united Ireland, providing for her own defence and entering agreements with Britain on the basis of equal rights and mutual interests. This has always been the only answer to the Irish question.

But more would inevitably follow. In order to stabilize this free and equal co-operation between independent nations, Britain would have to help to its feet the economy her policy has so often struck down.

Loans for development, without political conditions, willingness to accept Irish produce on favourable terms at least for a transitional period, and possibly other forms of aid would be a small price ending the era of hatred between two close neighbours.

For Britain with her great resources it would be a small one, a fraction of what is banged away fruitlessly in a single week. The benefit to future generations of British people would be immeasurable. They would never be in fear of some enemy establishing himself in Ireland for an attack on Britain. There would be an enormous expansion of a market which is already one of Britain's most profitable. These two advantages alone would justify persevering with the difficult task of changing from a course set over centuries, with all the ingrained habit and vested interest that is built up.

Failing a government which will do this of set purpose, the British Labour movement has everything to gain by pressing the existing Government in this direction, especially now that Irish policy is coming up for reconsideration of a less drastic kind.

Much ingenuity has been exercised in seeking legal pathways to a united Ireland. These have always been blocked at one point–the British Government will not budge. It is nevertheless of use to examine them briefly. The Government of Ireland Act itself envisaged the creation of a Council of Ireland on which the reserved (but not the excepted) powers would ultimately devolve. The "Council of Ireland" being spoken of today seems of little value for this purpose, as has been indicated.

Attempts have been made in the twenty-six counties to work out a *modus vivendi* with the Northern Unionists so that a joint Irish front could be presented to Westminster. It is doubtful whether such efforts are founded on realism. On several occasions offers have been made, and presumably still stand, that the six counties would retain the degree of autonomy they now

possess subject only to the cessation of religious discrimination, provided Britain hands over the excepted and reserved powers to Dublin. In view of what that autonomy has been shown to amount to, it is not surprising that Dublin's overtures have been rejected.

In what Mr. McAteer called a "two-piece Ireland" federated with Britain, the crucial question is, of course, what power does England possess within Ireland, for the Federal Government will in effect be English if the first Queen Elizabeth's dictum is correct that the greater will always draw the lesser. Unfortunately however, in all discussion of halfway houses, the significance of having a united Ireland has been missed. It is not only a means of liberating six county Catholics from Unionism, it is a means of liberating also the men of the Shankill Road, and the surest road to socialism, which is what their best representatives desire.

A single Parliament for the 32 counties so that all issues were aired in one place would open up a national field for a united working class. Adding *pro rata* to the existing *Dáil* would raise its membership to about 210. Of the present 144 only 17 can be described as Labour or radical. To these would be added a solid Labour vote from the industrial districts of the North possibly amounting to 35 T.D.s and possibly a further 15 radical Nationalists or Republicans.

The progressive wing of the united Parliament could be expected to number about 70 deputies at the outset, or one-third of the Parliament. Whether the *Fianna Fáil* and *Fine Gael* parties would maintain their separate identity under those conditions, with the possibility of a left-centre coalition, might be doubted. But even if they were to amalgamate there would still remain the possibility of an alternative progressive government of a type that has never existed in Ireland.

Bringing national freedom from the twenty-six counties to the six would be the means of bringing forces of social

freedom from the six to the twenty-six. To delay this possibility, or diminish its effectiveness by preserving the border in a modified form, would only assist the imperial monopolies to maintain their economic hold on the country.

Despite all attempts from Dublin to sugar the pill, the British Government has never even considered handing over the excepted powers to Ireland. Whether if the Republic re-entered the Commonwealth and thus invalidated the Ireland Act of 1949 this might be considered as part of a package deal, is a matter for speculation. There would be much criticism of any government in the Republic which re-entered the Commonwealth and permitted the continuation of partition in any form, and a British government prepared to meet the Republic halfway might well be persuaded to make the whole journey.

In any case it is not the business of democrats to discuss the capitulations a small country might be forced to make in order to secure its territory from a powerful neighbour with a penchant for annexation. And it may be remarked furthermore that if democrats desire a peaceful solution, it is not because the Irish are not entitled to fight for their rights, but because it is monstrous that they should be forced to do so. It seems necessary therefore to work towards a solution in which the withdrawal of British troops and the handing over of sovereignty to the Irish people would be part of a general settlement of outstanding questions. The Irish aspects of such a settlement would have to be decided in Ireland on the basis of national democracy.

One of the most important preliminary tasks therefore becomes that of ensuring that the people of Northern Ireland are possessed of democratic facilities on a par with those in the Republic and in Britain. The growth of the forces of progress in the area which would result from such a development, so anxiously feared by

the Unionists, would be a vital factor in achieving such a settlement.

The fight for democracy in the six counties is going on now. It ebbs and flows according to circumstances. But it can be helped forward at any time. The complaints are there to be heard. Discrimination against Catholics continues, though there had been some mitigation in Derry following the establishment of the Development Commission. The "B"-men have gone, but nobody knows whether they are to be replaced with something equally objectionable, and extremists in the Unionist camp are calling for their return. The presence of the British army, always visible, probing, searching, touring and trooping, is a visible sign that democracy is lacking. Gerrymandering in its crudest form has gone. The Special Powers Act has been repealed but has been replaced by an equally vicious Westminster statute. Republicans are subject to arbitrary harassment.

Changing these things, far from injuring the Protestant community, would free the working class from an incubus which has been debilitating its movement for years.

The main source of Unionist strength is discrimination. People ask why the proud militant Protestant working class which still reproduces the rugged tenacity and fearlessness of Jamie Hope, Henry Joy McCracken and John Mitchel is seemingly so powerless in the face of Unionism that it can return only one member to Stormont.

Civil Rights are not merely Catholic Rights. When the movement began there was a firm intention to fight for the rights of the Protestant people equally with those of the Catholics. For the Protestants also suffer from the undemocratic nature of the Stormont régime. They are constrained to suffer their own disabilities because those of the Catholics are worse. But who is to say that in ten years' time, the shipyard may not be silent, and the inhabitants of the Shankill steal away to Glasgow or the Common Market countries in search of work, their

sole reward for their loyalty the emigrant ship and the bulldozing and "re-development" of their traditional abode? And this or some similar evil they can prevent solely by an alliance with their Catholic fellow workers.

It is impossible for Protestant workers, however they hate and despise the landlord-rentier junta at Stormont, to sweep them aside while they are themselves even in the remotest way its unwitting accomplices in persecuting the Catholics. Permit oppression and you suffer it. That rule has been proved throughout the world.

To replace intolerance of Catholics with intolerance of inequality and discrimination, to inculcate the spirit of fraternity in the ranks of the Protestant workers is the great task of the advanced Labour movement in the six counties. This is part of the process of achieving the object of the greatest of all Irish democrats, the Protestant Theobald Wolfe Tone, who sought the emancipation of the Catholics in order

> "to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of 'Irishman' in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and dissenter."

That ultimately the working class of the six counties will come to such a position need not be doubted. It is the great test of the understanding and political skill of democrats and socialists in Ireland to hasten the day. But how difficult is the task when it proceeds under a constitution which gives the majority Unionist Party almost unlimited facilities for the promotion of discord!

While it would seem likely that a period of democratic concrescence was required for the estranged communities of the six counties, it may be useful to consider some of the advantages which might be gained by amalgamating the six with the twenty-six counties. Economic forecasts are of course of only limited value. It may be that the

future of a united Ireland might lie in the production of highly specialized agricultural and other products of superior quality. In that case the supreme advantage of a single government would lie in the sphere of marketing. A second advantage would lie in the association of natural resources which today form part of different economies.

From the standpoint of a united Ireland the utilization of such home-produced raw materials as turf is obvious. The know-how is there in Dublin. The research station is there in Newbridge. By 1962 a high proportion of electricity production in the Republic was from turf. Why not develop native turf instead of recriminating with the Coal Board? Northern Ireland has large unexploited bogs awaiting development. The six counties can moreover become the turf-machinery manufacturing centre for all Ireland since new types of mechanization may be required for the smaller bogs likely to come into service in the next few years.

British consent was reluctantly given to the experimental sowing of 400 acres of beet. The product was to be processed at Tuam in the Republic. If the cultivation of beet proves the success it should, Northern Ireland adopting an Irish-centred approach could become self-sufficient in sugar production. And meat processing plants could be developed not merely as small concessions to soothe discontent, but as part of an established economic policy.

Probably no industry has suffered more from the British connection than linen. If the six counties, by forming part of the Republic, had had at their disposal the consular services of a State which could not but regard this industry as vital to its development, international agreements could have been made which would have arrested and reversed its decline.

Flax cultivation in the six counties should never have ceased and could be carried on south of the border also.

There could be a well endowed institute for research into all aspects of the flax and linen industries, seeking to reduce production costs by scientific cultivation and processing, and working on by-products, association of flax with other fibres, combination with plastics and other possibilities. Ireland could and should be in the van of world development in this field.

The references made here to possible economic developments are given solely by way of illustration in order to suggest the new possibilities inherent in a united Ireland. But every year brings fresh evidence that Ireland possesses vast mineral wealth, including some of the greatest deposits of metalliferous ore in Europe.[1] It may be asked why these cannot be developed without waiting for the political changes here advocated, and the answer is they can. The international firms are hovering like birds of prey, and several of them have their talons in. But the political changes are the conditions necessary for ensuring that the development of Irish resources benefits the Irish people, rather than cosmopolitan finance. This is an aspect of the problem that faces all the peoples of the non-socialist world.

Probably not until the border is ended will it be possible to solve the problem of agriculture, though a beginning can be made. Irish soil is among the richest in the northern hemisphere and the underlying limestone which feeds it extends to both sides of the border. An investment in agriculture similar to that made in Denmark could multiply production, keep all the young people at home, and staff ancillary industries while increasing the number of people on the land.

Whatever the precise quantity and disposition of such finance, it seems probable that only a united Ireland would feel strong enough to control private investment.

[1] E.g. At Navan are situated the richest deposits of zinc in the world. They are worked by foreign companies who have paid no taxes since 1956.

Northern Ireland agriculture may be said to be "pampered" now, but its security depends on the wind of Westminster policy. Even now that wind seems to be veering a point to the North.

The great advantage of having an industrial centre like Belfast in a country like Ireland is that farm machinery can be made at home. The immense investment in agriculture that is required could thus employ thousands of Belfast workers, especially if the market so created could form the basis for the export of agricultural machinery to underdeveloped countries.

Under such conditions the relations opened up with the non-European world might become so valuable that a 15 per cent tariff imposed by the E.E.C. could be overcome, partly through high efficiency, and partly, if need be, through a subsidy. An Irish-centred policy thus tends to increase Ireland's trade with Britain.

Many commentators, in the past few years, have taken for granted that ship-building must decline, or at least suffer drastic rationalization. What would be the result of an Irish-centred economic policy in this field? That an industrial area so dependent on exports should carry them in native bottoms would be taken for granted in a sovereign state.

A united Ireland would have the strongest incentives to develop its mercantile marine. At present British shipowners complain that for reasons of international policy, their government refrains from giving them encouragements other governments hand out freely. Whether such encouragements are wise or unwise is not the question. They are only available to sovereign states and therefore the six counties cannot even discuss them.

A similar argument applies to aircraft, where the ability of Belfast to supply freighters should fit in with the Dublin policy of developing air export trade by siting factories alongside airfields. In sum, an increase of Irish production is the basis for increasing Irish transport.

This proposition is also true of internal transport. Allow the Nationalist areas to decay and you starve and destroy the railways. The railway system is indeed being dismantled. Could it be if Derry City, Strabane, Enniskillen, Omagh, Dungannon and Newry were thriving industrial towns? Or the barrier erected by the border were done away with as well?

The development of the *hinterland* is a necessity for a thriving internal transport industry. It might be added that the use of the large inland lakes, in conjunction with the development of such Atlantic ports as Ballyshannon, makes possible a system of inland water transport for bulk articles such as exists on the great rivers of the Continent.

There is no greater provider of employment than the satisfaction of the needs of the people. Is there not an absurdity in the existence side by side of chronic unemployment and a chronic shortage of housing? The provision of building materials, whether brick or cement blocks to supply the housing deficiency, could revitalize an industry which has suffered seriously from the restrictive practices of imperial monopoly. Ireland has plenty of clay and gypsum. The shortage of native timber can be overcome over a period by the planned combination of forestry and agriculture and in the short run there is pre-stressed concrete and the possible development of fibre-boards from linen and turf by-products.

In this connection research is of vital importance. Scientists are scarce and a government pursuing an Irish-centred policy would be begging the young graduates, Catholic as well as Protestant, not to go abroad and educating the youth in modern technical schools in every town.

There are many other possibilities which would have to be examined. Each year tons of scrap-iron accumulate in the six counties. Can this not be melted down on the spot? Indeed, why not set up a steel plant at Newry

where it could draw supplies of scrap from the contiguous parts of the twenty-six area, or in Antrim where it might be possible to incorporate native ore phosphatic to use alone?

The establishment of a full-scale oil refinery and an increase of the rubber and plastics industry, the utilization of Northern Ireland bauxite and diatomaceous earth, and the re-opening of the Carrickfergus salt-beds closed a few years ago by a British monopoly, could lay the basis for a chemical industry in which a big part could be played by the fixation of nitrogen for fertilizers.

A field as yet scarcely touched is that of by-products from turf, which include charcoal for the petroleum industry, waxes, oils, and resins, and there are even methods of producing plastics and coarse paper from it. The extension of the limit of territorial waters to fifty miles and the expansion of the fishing, canning and fish-meal industries are other possibilities which would receive attention.

The greatest asset of all, and that which in the last analysis will be decisive for the younger generation, is the enthusiasm that comes from building a new country. Partition and the British policy of dominating Ireland have robbed the Irish youth of that experience. Today it is becoming clearer that there will never be full employment in Belfast except in the work of building a new united Ireland.

In the course of this book an argument has been put which it would be as well to summarize. First it is established that Northern Ireland is ruled in accordance with the British Government of Ireland Act and is under constant supervision. The object of the Act is to maintain Britain's dominating position on both strategic and economic grounds. By means of this Act, British imperialism holds Ireland, but removes the Irish question out of British politics.

The six counties are ruled through the agency of local landowners, businessmen and rentiers, thanks first to a financial subsidy, and second to the splitting of the people by means of sectarianism caused by a policy of discrimination. Economically the result is the decay of local industries, chronic unemployment and emigration. Politically it is the maintenance of a weight of repression and intimidation upon one section which poisons and paralyzes society as a whole.

The British people should in their own interests endeavour to end this situation. To do so it is necessary in the first place to attack the Government of Ireland Act and demand the complete democratization of the six county area. In Northern Ireland the struggle to end discrimination and unite the common people whether Labour or Nationalist in an Irish-centred policy for economic development is making headway and deserves every support.

At present it is apparent that the Tory Party is still concocting schemes for keeping up the domination of Ireland in conjunction with its modified "European" plans. This means that the voice of the British and Irish people must be raised together to demand a democratic solution.

The solution of the Irish question will not only enable the Irish people to realize the dream of centuries, it will be of inestimable value to the British people. It will protect their western flank in days when their world hegemony is no more. It will strike a severe blow at their arch-enemy the Tory Party, and remove a possible cause of disunity among themselves.

It will establish an important market for their industrial exports right on their doorstep. And finally it will replace the coolness and suspicion in the relations between peoples of these Islands with a new cordiality and co-operativeness based on the triumph of democracy.

This is essential reading for all those seeking to understand the underlying causes of the seemingly endless crises afflicting Northern Ireland. The book begins with an examination of the causes and effects of the Partition of Ireland, which was established in 1920 by the Government of Ireland Act. In particular much evidence is assembled on the repercussions this has had on the economies of England and the Six Counties, and an assessment is made of the effect on the total economy of Ireland if the province were instead joined with the Republic.

Then the events are considered which led to the current situation — from the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement, to the present intervention by the British army. The conclusion is reached that the ultimate solution must lie in a United Ireland, and this is just as much in the interest of the mass of the English people as the Irish.

Mr. Greaves is the author of two previous books of especial Irish interest — *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, and *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution.*

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