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AJM/ /SB

cc PS/Secretary of State (L&B)
PS/Mr Scott (L&B)
PS/Mr Patten (L&B)
PS/PUS (L&B)

1. Mr Bloomfield ✓

Mr Carvill

Mr Brennan

Mr Burns

Mr Buxton

Mr Gilliland

Mr Reeve.

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SPEECH BY BISHOP CAHAL DALY: 24 NOVEMBER 1984

1. I thought you may care to have a copy of Bishop Cahal Daly's London speech. It is clearly one of his carefully prepared set pieces, though it may have been revised post Summit.

2. The various extended passages on alienation suggest that this is attributed to the apparent inability of the democratic political process to produce those political changes which are necessary if nationalists are to be able to identify with the constitution and the institutions of the State in which they live." This arises because Dr Daly believes that nationalism by its very definition has to imply some degree of estrangement from a constitution and institutions which are based exclusively and unequivocally on the principle of the union - and he might have added the construction put thereon by political spokesmen of the Unionist parties. He argues that to be a full and equal citizen of the country is "to be fully committed to its constitution, its political institutions and its national symbols."

3. He quotes the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, Mr Whitelaw's 1972 White Paper, the Forum Report and The Way Forward as indicating a recognition that the minority should have an effective voice and real influence in the institutions of Government, and should have their identity recognised by a more positive Irish element. This seems to be presented in terms of a "constitutional recognition

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and the institutional and symbolic expression of that Irish identity, including the Irish national flag and Anthem and emblems etc which go therewith". The argument proceeds to a point where it is stated that "the fact is that Northern Ireland has never been given constitutional arrangements or political institutions appropriate to the internal composition of its nationally and politically polarised population."

4. This analysis reflects closely the underlying feeling of John Hume and the SDLP. To this extent Mr McCusker was perhaps nearer to the truth than he deserved to be, especially as he can hardly have read the speech by the time he launched his attack on Bishop Daly. The Bishop condemned violence and sectarianism and the tone of his speech seeks to avoid sectarian language. Nevertheless it goes beyond a call for social, economic and political sharing, although on the Bishop's analysis these would have a contribution if they minimised the sectarian nature of the political debate and the "assumed supremacy" of unionism both personally and as a creed, and provided some greater scope for the Irish identity to be recognised as an integral part of the Northern Irish Province.

5. The development of Bishop Daly's remarks shows how difficult it is to expect SDLP to move into a Northern Ireland Assembly unless there is both a stronger Anglo-Irish dimension and an attitude on the Unionist side which suggests they would trust the SDLP with more than an opposition role. Without that, the SDLP would deduce that the Unionists distrust their Irish identity and Irish aspirations.

6. Of themselves the Unionist parties could not move to that extent. In the relatively moderate Way Forward it is stated that the majority will not accept the power-sharing principle because they believe this would be utilised as a platform for unification, and any Northern Ireland majority government would have to have as its main political objective the maintenance of the Union. (One can hear Dr Paisley already arguing that "the yeast of Irishness must not be allowed to corrupt the integrity of the Province".) The Bishop's thesis, which I believe is close to that of the SDLP leadership; places a severe limit on ^{the} progress which the parties themselves can make without government involvement, if only because the Government control much of the Anglo-Irish dimension without which

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the SDLP would hardly find it possible to look at an internal solution (even if this went as far as satisfying the first, practical, element of Bishop Daly's criteria - "an effective voice and real influence in the institutions of Government for the minority"). But an internal solution could hardly satisfy the second criteria which expresses the aspiration of constitutional arrangements which give "institutional and symbolic expression of Irish identity". SDLP leaders tell me that the All Ireland Council represented this element for them at Sunningdale. It remains important, though I suspect the SDLP leadership may be giving it rather more emphasis at present than could be lived with by the rank and file, provided that the rank and file felt they were getting more influence in the running of the Province's affairs, together with some tokens of their Irishness and an Anglo-Irish dimension. However neither the SDLP nor their rank and file can at present see much inclination on the part of the Unionists to give them real influence in the running of affairs in the Province.

7. Addressees may care to comment further on the points above. (I gather the Secretary of State has already seen a copy of Bishop Daly's address).

A J MERIFIELD

3 December 1984

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WITNESSING THE STRUGGLE: STRUGGLING TO WITNESS

Lecture under the auspices of the Irish School of Ecumenics

In Heythrop College, London, Saturday, 24th. November 1984

BY BISHOP CAHAL B. DALY
of Down and Connor

The struggle which we are witnessing in Northern Ireland has dragged on now for more than fifteen years. It has been with us for so long that it rarely arouses public attention any more. Only the more horrific outrages receive substantial coverage in the media. The individual killings which go on virtually every week merit only a paragraph or two in the British news. Even in Ireland, last week's killings are forgotten this week. Yet each murderous bullet carries with it an immense weight of human heartbreak.

During thirteen of those fifteen years, I was Bishop in a different part of Ireland. In the two years since I returned to my native diocese of Down and Connor and to Belfast, where I had spent all of my years as a priest, I have myself prayed by the coffins or officiated at the funeral liturgies of thirteen persons killed by gunshot wounds. Of these, one was a young policeman, shot by the IRA while giving traffic directions to his killers. Another was a young girl, shot by the IRA, just after leaving Mass with her parents. One was a young man killed by the INLA. One was a young man shot by the British Army. Another was a young man hit by a policeman's plastic bullet. Eight were victims of loyalist sectarian killers, two of these within the past fortnight.

In the homes of all these victims of bullets, I found the same grief and shock and bewilderment, the same distressed parents and heartbroken widows and crying, terrified and uncomprehending children. Everywhere, one was hearing the same agonised question: "Why had they to do this to our family? How much longer has this to go on? What is it all for? When will it ever end?".

Behind each unit of the grim statistics of casualties there lies a personal and family tragedy. There is scarcely a family in Northern Ireland which has not been directly or indirectly visited by violence, whether through the death of a relative, the maiming of a loved one, the imprisonment of a parent, a brother or a relative, the bomb destruction of the family business, sectarian intimidation driving them from their home and community. The death toll is now some 2,500

persons. In terms of world catastrophe, this number might seem small. In the small territory of Northern Ireland, the concentration of tragedy has not many parallels. In comparative terms, the number killed has been calculated to be equivalent to the killing by acts of violence of about 84,000 people in Britain. In addition to those killed, there have been more than 24,000 people injured or maimed. Many thousands more are suffering from psychological stress related directly to the civil violence. It is estimated that there have been more than 43,000 recorded separate instances of shooting, bombing or arson.

This litany of tragedies does not include the recurring scenes of street rioting, often involving home-made but still potentially lethal petrol bombs or other maiming missiles. Nor does it include the harassment suffered from the varieties of intimidation, protection money, racketeering, inflicted both on the Catholic community by the IRA and on the Protestant community by the loyalist equivalents of the IRA, such as the UDA, the UVF, the UFF, etc., practices which blur any distinction there might be between politically motivated violence and common crime or mafia-type gang rule. Nor do the statistics include the vexation, the disturbance of daily and nightly life, and sometimes the harassment inflicted on peaceful citizens by intensive security operations.

All this is happening just one hour's flying time away from where we sit. It is happening in what is officially a region of the United Kingdom and is supposed to be a region as British as Yorkshire. It is happening in a territory where the sole governmental and administrative and security authority and responsibility rests with Westminster. I avail of this opportunity given me of speaking in London to ask you never to allow the sheer repetitiousness of acts of violence to lessen your sensitivity to the suffering it causes. I ask you not to let anyone wash his or her hands of the problem by blaming it on some peculiar perversity or irrationality of the Irish; and not to feel morally superior towards the Irish as though our conflict were some sort of sixteenth-century religious war incongruously and atavistically dragged on into the late twentieth century.

I shall be asking you to realise that our problem is a highly complex amalgam of political, constitutional, cultural and historic, as well as religious differences. I shall be attempting to show that it is simply not a problem which we have ourselves created or are ourselves culpably perpetuating. I shall be trying to convince you that it is not a problem which we can ourselves alone resolve, and that it just will not do to say that the Northern Ireland communities should "get together and agree between themselves". I shall be arguing in fact that the constitutional framework and the institutional arrangements into which we are locked are hampering and hindering movement towards a resolution of our conflict.

ALIENATION

Much has been said in recent years about the alienation of the nationalist community. The Report of the New Ireland Forum had this to say:

The alienation of nationalists in Northern Ireland from political and civil institutions, from the security forces and from the manner of application of the law has increased to major proportions.

It has been claimed, even at Prime-Ministerial and Secretary of State level, that the degree of alienation of the nationalist community has been exaggerated, perhaps even that the term itself is inappropriate. Living in day-to-day contact with the situation as I do, I have to assert quite categorically that the alienation in the nationalist community is real, it is profound, it is increasing, it is spreading to more and more sectors of that community. If there are people who are advising the government to the contrary, then they are simply not in touch with the feelings of nationalists, and their advice is misleading and is a dangerously unsound basis for policy making.

Misreading of the situation could be in part due to a particular interpretation of the recent European Parliamentary election results. The vote for Sinn Fein was significantly lower than that for the SDLP, and represented a considerable set-back to the hopes of that party. Since a vote for Sinn Fein is claimed by that organisation to be a vote for IRA violence (which in very many cases it is not), this was a most welcome encouragement to those of us who have been strenuously condemning violence and working ceaselessly for reconciliation and peace.

It must not be thought, however, that only those who vote Sinn Fein are registering alienation, or that the nationalists who resolutely refused to vote Sinn Fein are thereby to be understood as non-alienated, or as registering satisfaction with the constitutional, security and legal and judicial situation in Northern Ireland. This is very far indeed from the case. It is necessary to say quite plainly that alienation, in greater or lesser degree, now pervades all sectors of the nationalist population. What used to characterise particularly the deprived sectors of the nationalist population is now increasingly found among the middle and professional classes as well.

It is fuelled by the apparent inability of the democratic political process to produce those political changes which are necessary if nationalists are to be able to identify with the constitution and the institutions of the state in which they live. What was said and done this week, and above all what was not said and not done this week, have caused a serious deterioration in the situation. Constitutional nationalism has received a humiliating setback. Alienation among nationalists is now shading over into anger and despair.

It will be a great misfortune for relationships between Britain and Ireland, and for relationships between the two communities in Northern Ireland, if the British government refuses to accept the existence of alienation, as this has been emphasised to it by those qualified to know the nationalist community, and does not make the progressive removal of this alienation a priority item in its agenda. Let it be said quite emphatically that it is much more dangerous to do nothing than it is to tackle the problem at its roots. It would be foolish to ignore the fact that the nationalist mood and inter-community relations are deteriorating dangerously, and that the beneficiaries of this deterioration are the Provisional IRA. They and loyalist extremists were united in the chorus of jubilation at the events of this past week.

The alienation of which I speak can be lessened and eventually removed only when the political process is allowed to prove itself capable of bringing about the constitutional and institutional changes which will give effective expression to the nationalist identity and accord to it the constitutional legitimacy which is its right.

SEMANTIC CONFUSIONS

A number of semantic ambiguities and confusions serve to obscure the fact that the present constitutional arrangements of Northern Ireland exclude the nationalist community from full legitimacy. Phrases in common use, such as "the wish of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland", "the consent of the people of Northern Ireland", sound eminently and almost self-evidently fair and reasonable and democratic. But they carry an implication that the population of Northern Ireland is a politically homogeneous one. Indeed they assume that the population of Northern Ireland is a homogeneously unionist one; for commitment to the Union of Northern Ireland with Great Britain in the United Kingdom is the very definition of unionism. "The people of Northern Ireland" is, however, not solely or homogeneously a unionist one. Commitment to the union of Northern Ireland, not with Britain but with the rest of Ireland, is the very definition of nationalism, and to aspire and to work through the political process for that union is the defining characteristic of a nationalist. Nationalism, therefore, by its very definition, has to imply some degree of estrangement from a constitution and institutions which are based exclusively and univocally on the principle of the Union; for such a constitution and such institutions are by definition unionist. Consequently, what looks like a normal and democratic statement about an ordinary electoral majority amounts in effect to the imposition of an univocally unionist constitution on the nationalist community, who comprise more than a third of the total population and not far short of half of the unionist population. To give full and final and unqualified commitment to the Union would be in effect to abandon nationalism and to become a unionist. This is a plain consequence of the meaning and definition of terms.

Historically, the conception of the Northern Ireland state was based on the hypothesis that it would provide some form of power-sharing within the island of Ireland. In effect, the British government of the time opted for a territorial form of power-sharing, with unionists being given control over the North East of the island, where a unionist majority was assured, and the nationalists being given control over the rest of the island, where the nationalist majority was unquestionable. This could fairly be claimed to have been a well-intended compromise. It may have seemed to the British administration at that time to be the best, if not the only possible solution to an intractable problem. It was, in any case, as I shall point out in a moment, not intended to be a permanent, but only a provisional solution. It had, however, quite fundamental flaws which revealed themselves from the very beginning of the history of the State.

The flaws might have been less ruinous if the section of the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, providing for formal joint institutions for the whole island of Ireland had been implemented. The relevant section runs as follows:

Although at the beginning there are to be two Parliaments and two Governments in Ireland, the Act contemplates and affords every facility for union between North and South, and empowers the two Parliaments by mutual agreement and joint action to terminate partition and to set up one Parliament and one Government for the whole of Ireland. With a view to the eventual establishment of a single Parliament, and to bringing about harmonious action between the two Parliaments and Governments, there is created a bond of union in the meantime by means of a Council of Ireland, which is to consist of 20 representatives elected by each Parliament, and a President nominated by the Lord Lieutenant. It will fall to the members of this body to initiate proposals for united action on the part of the two Parliaments and to bring forward these proposals in the respective Parliaments.

The "Irish Dimension", of which there has been so much said by both the British and the Irish governments and by Northern Ireland nationalists since 1972, is, therefore, not a new concept. It was formally recognised and it was intended to be given institutional embodiment in the very Act of the British Parliament from which the Northern Ireland State derived.

In the event, however, Northern Ireland was given a univocally unionist constitution, which made no constitutional concessions whatever to the nationalist community and its Irish identity and its aspiration towards an Irish rather than a British Union. The division into two States was resorted to because the unionist minority in the island as a whole was too large to be peacefully... governed, without its consent, within a united Ireland, conceived as a unitary nationalist state. The blunt practical reality in Northern Ireland has been that the nationalist minority within Northern Ireland was and is too large to be peacefully governed, without its consent, within a Northern Ireland conceived on unitary unionist lines.

Few would now deny the legitimacy, the legality and the rights of nationalists in Northern Ireland. But a Northern Ireland conceived as a unitary unionist state has by definition to put a question mark over the legitimacy, the legality and the rights of its non-unionist people. To be a full and equal citizen of a country is to be fully committed to its constitution, its political institutions, its national symbols. It is a peculiarity of the Northern Ireland constitution, in its present form, that such an unqualified commitment in effect entails being no longer a nationalist but a unionist. To speak of "the Northern Ireland people" or "the Ulster people", when one really means the unionist community; to say, as some spokesmen repeatedly say, such things as that "the Ulster people will never countenance a United Ireland", is equivalently to define the nationalist people as non-citizens, indeed as non-people.

In passing, one might mention here that the notion of repartition has been mooted. This formula would merely make a bad situation worse. Repartition of Northern Ireland, with the effect of creating a smaller territory within which the unionist majority would be overwhelming, would still leave nearly a quarter of a million nationalists within that unionist state, and would leave them more hopelessly condemned than ever to perpetual minority status and therefore to irremediable alienation.

"INTERNAL NORTHERN IRELAND SOLUTION"

The logic of what I have been saying points inescapably to that minimum of constitutional adjustment which will make it possible for nationalists to identify with the constitution and the institutions of Northern Ireland without having to become unionists in order to do so. It implies the giving of full constitutional legitimacy to the nationalist identity. In the words of the Forum Report:

The validity of both the nationalist and unionist identities in Ireland and the democratic rights of every citizen on this island must be accepted; both of these identities must have equally satisfactory, secure and durable, political, administrative and symbolic expression and protection. (op. cit. p.27).

The logic of my remarks might further be held to point to what has been called an "internal Northern Ireland solution", but one which would give recognition and expression to the two political and national identities or traditions in Northern Ireland. I turn now to an examination of the semantics and the logic of the "internal Northern Ireland solution".

It is banal to say that Northern Ireland is composed of two communities, a unionist one and a nationalist one, with two distinct identities and traditions. To be a unionist is to be committed to the British constitution and to British nationality and citizenship, with all the reality and the symbolism of British national flag and anthem and emblems etcetera which go therewith. This is the British dimension. To be a nationalist is to be committed to Irish nationality and citizenship, and to aspire, by a peaceful political process, towards the reunification of Ireland; and to be consequently entitled to the constitutional recognition and the institutional and symbolic expression of that Irish identity, including the Irish national flag and anthem and emblems etcetera which go therewith. This is the Irish dimension.

It is to be understood, however, that neither identity and neither set of symbols can be allowed to be asserted or displayed in ways which are provocative to the other community.

To the typical unionist, the concept of an Irish dimension is regarded as "interference by a foreign power in the internal affairs of the United Kingdom." To the typical nationalist, the concept of a British dimension is regarded as "a foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Ireland." What has to be affirmed unequivocally and with emphasis is that both the Irish and the British dimensions are internal to Northern Ireland. Both the Irish dimension and the British dimension are precisely the basic ingredients of the so-called "internal Northern Ireland solution". The British dimension is not the presence of an alien and foreign British administration and the British Army; it is embodied in the lawful political convictions and the basic political rights of a million citizens of Northern Ireland. But it is equally true that the Irish dimension is not the interference of a foreign and alien State in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. The Irish dimension is embodied in the equally lawful convictions and the equally basic political rights of more than half a million citizens of Northern Ireland.

In this sense, an "internal Northern Ireland solution" has to be also a British/Irish solution. In other words, an "internal solution" has to be concomitantly external to the territory of Northern Ireland, and this in a two-directional sense. The very same principles of political justice which legitimise a British governmental presence in the affairs of Northern Ireland equally legitimise an Irish governmental presence in the affairs of Northern Ireland. This is because the internal political composition of the Northern Ireland population itself points outside Northern Ireland, and points in two different directions: one towards London and the British Parliament and Government, the other towards Dublin and the Irish Parliament and Government. Unless these facts are kept in mind, the concept of "an internal Northern Ireland solution" misrepresents the internal realities of Northern Ireland itself and obscures the real issues.

(next paragraph on page 7a overleaf)

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The fact is that Northern Ireland has never been given constitutional arrangements or political institutions appropriate to the internal composition of its nationally and politically polarised population. This fact must now be squarely faced. It is a matter of urgency to undertake now with courage and determination the process which will at last provide those constitutional arrangements and establish those insitutions.

THE TWO POLITICAL COMMUNITIES

It is all of twelve years since a British Conservative administration published an analysis of the Northern Ireland situation not altogether different from the analysis which I have given above. The discussion paper, or "Green Paper", as it was called, published in October 1972, under the auspices of William Whitelaw, and entitled "The Future of Northern Ireland: a Paper for Discussion", said:

The special feature of the Northern Ireland situation was that the great divide in political life was not between different viewpoints on such matters as the allocation of resources and the determination of priorities, but between two whole communities. The 'floating vote' for which rival parties would normally compete was almost non-existent. Thus the relationship between the parties was not fluctuating and uncertain, but virtually fixed from one Election to another. Such a situation was unlikely to foster either sensitivity on the part of the permanent majority, or a sense of responsibility on the part of the permanent minority.

The same Report went on to discuss claims of discrimination practised against the nationalist community by the unionist majority. It concluded:

What is incontestable is that the continuous and complete control of central government by representatives of the majority alone was virtually bound to give rise to such suspicions. (op. cit. p.5).

In Part IV, "The Way Forward", this Report stated:

- (a) In accordance with the specific pledges given by successive United Kingdom Governments, Northern Ireland must and will remain part of the United Kingdom for as long as that is the wish of the majority of the people; but that status does not preclude the necessary taking into account of what has been described in this Paper as the 'Irish Dimension'.....
- (d) The two primary purposes of any new institutions must be first to seek a much wider consensus than has hitherto existed; and second to be such as will work efficiently and will be capable of providing the concrete results of good government: peace and order, physical development, social and economic progress.....
- (f) A Northern Ireland assembly or authority must be capable of involving all its members constructively in ways which satisfy them and those they represent that the whole community has a part to play in the government of the Province. As a minimum, this would involve assuring minority groups of an effective voice and a real influence; but there are strong arguments that the objective of real participation should be achieved by giving minority interests a share in the exercise of executive power, if this can be achieved by means which are not unduly complex or artificial, and which do not represent an obstacle to effective government.....

(h) It is of great importance that future arrangements for security and public order in Northern Ireland must command public confidence..... If they are to do so they must be seen in practice to be as impartial and effective as possible in restoring and maintaining and public order.

That was written by the Conservative and Unionist administration of 1972. This very week, a new Conservative and Unionist Government presents us with a seriously truncated version of that analysis, with the crucial issue of the Irish Dimension omitted. It presents this truncated analysis as if it were an important new contribution to a solution of our problem, and as if it were a piece of genuine political progress. The present position, in spite of years of Anglo-Irish discussion and of repeated meetings at prime-ministerial level might almost seem to be nothing more than the repetition of selected and slanted parts of a twelve-year old agenda for discussion.

I should almost certainly be accused of exaggeration, if not of nationalist bias, if I were to speak of an abdication of governmental responsibility. These words, however, are precisely those used by the Official Unionist Party in its recent document, "The Way Forward". The unionist criticism is, not unnaturally, based on opposite grounds to that of nationalists. Nevertheless, here is the unionist comment on the present situation in Northern Ireland:

The present scheme for "rolling devolution" under the 1982 Act..... abdicates responsibility for government by stating to the contending communities that such power as there is agreement upon will be devolved, when patently agreement is the one thing that cannot be found.

In the twelve years that have supervened since the analysis made in 1972, more than 2,000 people have died and very many thousands of others have had their limbs and their lives shattered. The IRA have been given twelve years in which to develop training and experience in guerilla conflict and in efficiency of calculated ruthlessness. The political wing of the IRA, Sinn Fein, a party which, in its own words, is "unambiguously committed" to an "armed struggle" which is immoral, has been given the opportunity to establish a political base which was almost non-existent in 1972, but from which it is now going to be extremely difficult to dislodge them. As a churchman, I must and with God's help I shall, in common with all my fellow-bishops and with all my clergy, go on proclaiming Christian moral teaching about murder and violence, and go on unremittingly proclaiming the Christian Gospel of love, forgiveness and peace. I have sadly to say, however, that our task has not been helped by the events of this past week. Indeed, and here I choose my words carefully, our task as peacemakers and ministers of reconciliation has been rendered immeasurably more difficult by those events.

DIRECT RULE

Direct rule of Northern Ireland from Westminster was introduced by the British Government in 1972 purely as an interim measure. Its function was intended to be that of providing a caretaker administration, pending the establishment of permanent and equitable structures of government for Northern Ireland. In the Paper for Discussion on "The Future of Northern Ireland", of 1972, we read the following about the introduction of direct rule:

The period of one year for which, unless extended, the Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions) Act 1972, remains in force, comes to an end on 30 March 1973. While it is possible to extend its application for a further limited period until more permanent arrangements are made, there are strong grounds for keeping such a period to a minimum. The temporary arrangements for the discharge of both law-making and executive responsibilities are not suitable for long-term use. In particular, it would be unsatisfactory to continue indefinitely making important legislative provision for Northern Ireland by way of Orders in Council. Moreover, continuing uncertainty about the future is unsettling to the public service, and can feed the fears and suspicions of a wider public. (op. cit., p.36).

The "temporary arrangements", which were admitted to be unsatisfactory twelve years ago, are still in force, and there is no evidence of any determination by the British Government to bring them to an end; nor indeed is there much evidence of really serious and sustained thinking at top government level about the form which permanent arrangements must take if they are to be satisfactory and acceptable to both the Northern Ireland communities. The stopgap arrangements introduced in 1973 would seem to have become a full stop to serious governmental thinking about the problems of Northern Ireland. It has become quite clear that Northern Ireland is not anywhere remotely near the centre of preoccupations for the Westminster Government. I say with deep seriousness that the situation in Northern Ireland is one of the gravest problems facing the governments of our two islands, and that our best political brains and resources should be devoted to it. Continuing neglect of the Northern Ireland problem will be at the peril of security and even of stability in both our islands. The British and the Irish leader who displays the statemanship, the determination, and the courage to resolve the Northern Ireland problem will truly have earned his or her enduring place in British and in Irish history.

Meanwhile, it would be churlish to deny that direct rule has brought some benefits to Northern Ireland and has remedied some of the unacceptable and discriminatory practices of the former regime. Some of our Secretaries of State - and may I name in particular Viscount Whitelaw and the one I have known personally, Mr. James Prior - worked very hard at reading themselves into the complex political problems of the region and have seriously tried to come to grips with them. Many of the successive Ministers of State have shown real dedication and genuine social concern, handling their respective portfolios with efficiency and impartiality, and trying, in difficult financial circumstances, to pay particular attention to the needs of the most deprived areas.

Nevertheless, the system of direct rule is in itself a radically unsatisfactory system. A mood of complacency has developed in respect of it, and I am convinced that this complacency carries many dangers. Among other things, direct rule has virtually marginalised the political parties, and in particular has left constitutional nationalist parties without any effective political role or meaningful electoral platform, thereby seriously damaging their credibility and indeed the credibility of the whole political process, and at the same time leaving the centre of the stage to subversives. Direct rule has favoured extremist parties on both sides of the community divide. In the document setting out new Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals in March 1973 we find it stated:

Northern Ireland has been the focus of speculation and uncertainty for a prolonged period already, and there can be little doubt that as long as such uncertainty continues to exist, it will be exploited by those who seek to prey upon the fears of the communities.

The truth of that statement has been sadly verified by subsequent events.

UNIONIST ALIENATION

Dissatisfaction with direct rule is by no means confined to the nationalist community. Here is what the Official Unionist Party has to say about it, in the previously quoted document, "The Way Forward":

The present system of direct rule is the subject of justifiable criticism in that it is often inaccessible to local opinion, insensitive to local views, and politically unaccountable to the Northern Ireland electorate. The most basic services such as health, education, housing, and the environment, which matter so much to every citizen, are the subject of no real democratic control. The essential services, as well as others, are administered by the civil servants of the relevant departments of the Northern Ireland Office who are answerable only to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and his team of junior ministers. Delay in decision making and consequent frustration are the inevitable result when bureaucrats are not accountable to any electorate.....

There is, therefore, a form of unionist alienation too. The Forum Report acknowledged it, saying:

There is fear, insecurity, confusion and uncertainty about the future in the unionist section of the community. Northern Ireland today is characterised by the fact that neither section of the community is happy with the status quo or has confidence in or a sense of direction about the future. It is essential that any proposals for political progress should remove nationalist alienation and assure the identity and security of both unionists and nationalists.

The Official Unionist Party document, "The Way Forward", declares:

In only one part of the United Kingdom, namely, Northern Ireland, are major services subject to no real democratic control. In Northern Ireland alone do employees and professional staff who would normally take their instructions directly from elected representatives, take their orders from the civil servants of the Government Departments at Stormont. There are in Northern Ireland, no indigenous representatives who decide and direct policy on major services, and who themselves are answerable to their electorates for their stewardship. The Stormont civil servants are answerable to no-one but the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and his team of ministers, all of whom are on short term commissions.

Furthermore, there is considerable alienation from the security forces in several loyalist areas as well as in nationalist areas. There is a significant measure of loyalist disquiet and protest about aspects of the judicial and penal system. Some loyalist areas share with nationalist areas the deprivation, unemployment and breakdown of law-enforcement which foster alienation and violence. The Constitutional Proposals document of 1973 said:

An inadequate social environment breeds boredom, aimlessness, alienation from society, vandalism and even violence. In Northern Ireland all these evils may be compounded by high unemployment and deep political resentments.

IRA VIOLENCE

Despair of political progress and social reform by way of the democratic political process is one of the most persistent and persuasive arguments used by the IRA in their endeavour to secure political support for what they call "the armed struggle". Apart from its moral evil, the IRA campaign has many other aspects, all of them of disastrous consequence for the very nationalist population in whose name it purports to have been declared and for whose liberation it claims to be waged. The present IRA campaign is sullyng the moral integrity of the nationalist cause. Quite simply, it is letting the British Government off the moral hook and providing it with a plausible moral alibi for refusal of constitutional or political change.

While saying this, I want also to say that words cannot fully express my sense of moral outrage and abhorrence at the most recent IRA atrocity in Britain, namely the Brighton bombing. I thank God that the disaster was not as great as its perpetrators planned; but for those who were murdered I pray for God's peace; for those bereaved I pray for God's comforting; to those who so narrowly escaped I express my thankfulness at their escape. It would be impossible to expect that this abominable deed and the still greater holocaust which was planned would not colour thinking and attitudes about Ireland in Great Britain.

SECTARIAN DIMENSION

One of the many detestable consequences of the IRA campaign is the inevitable perception of it by the unionist community as a sectarian campaign waged against Protestants because of their religion. Over the past 15 years, 131 members of the RUC have been killed, 69 members of the RUC reserve, and 147 members of the UDR. Virtually all of these have been Protestants. Over recent years, nearly all of those killed by the IRA have in fact been Protestants. The IRA claim that these persons are killed because they are members of the security forces and are therefore, in their odious terminology, "legitimate targets". From the unionist point of view, however, all these have been killed or are listed as targets for killing because they are Protestants.

Many of these have been shot when off duty, going quietly about their daily business or around their peaceful farms, or in their own homes, before their horrified wives or terror-stricken children. Many have been killed along Border areas, where Protestants often live in isolated homesteads or communities. Protestants could not but see this murder campaign as a calculated policy to drive the Protestant population from these areas. Protest as they may about their "armed struggle against Crown Forces", the IRA bear the responsibility for this interpretation of their campaign as a nakedly sectarian one. Inevitably, all this heightens the fears, the tensions and the resentments of the Protestant community to danger point. In all this, I have not even spoken about the most infamous deeds of undisguised sectarian killings by the IRA or the INLA, notably the Whitecross and the Darkley massacres.

There has been a horrifying parallel campaign of sectarian killings by loyalists; indeed retaliatory murders of random Catholics in revenge for IRA killing has been part of the loyalist terrorist tradition for many generations. A typical loyalist terrorist reaction to any IRA atrocity is to kill any convenient Catholic; since any Catholic, in their perverted mentality, is a suspect terrorist. None of this, however, provides any excuse for IRA killings.

Sectarian intimidation of Catholics is another unfortunate feature of Northern Ireland conflict for many generations now. One of the events which decisively affected and continues to affect our continuing tragedy was the campaign of sectarian intimidation in the early 1970's, which drove some 10,000 families, or something like 40,000 people from their homes. The great majority of these were Catholics. A significant proportion of the present crowded Catholic population of West Belfast comprises families driven from their homes and streets by loyalist gangs at that period. While I am deeply edified by the remarkable lack of bitterness which I find among the immense majority of these Catholic families and among the Catholic population in general, it would be idle to deny that those experiences of ten years ago continue to be a factor in the alienation of West Belfast.

The statistics of sectarian killings are truly horrifying. In the past 15 years, 403 innocent Catholics have been murdered by loyalist sectarian killers; in other words, murdered for no other reason than that they were Catholics. I remarked earlier that I had officiated at the funerals of eight such victims in my two years as Bishop of Down and Connor. Since I wrote that, I must now revise the figure to nine, the latest murder of a Catholic occurring yesterday morning. I visited the stricken home on my way to the airport. Therefore, one Catholic a week for each of the past three weeks has been murdered simply because he or she was a Catholic.

I have called these loyalist killers, not Protestant killers. If I may be allowed to quote from the homily which I preached at the funeral of one of these most recent victims:

I have too much respect for the Protestant faith and for its believers to speak of "Protestant killers". Killings such as this..... are a denial of all that true Protestant Christianity believes and proclaims.

SIGNS OF HOPE

The picture I have presented might seem to be pessimistic and the situation might be thought well-nigh hopeless. The phrase has often been quoted: "The problem in Northern Ireland is that there is no solution". This I completely reject. There are solutions; but only men and women of faith and hope and love, of persistent patience and stubborn courage, can find and implement them. I am not pessimistic. I believe that the situation in Northern Ireland will become hopeless only when those who are working for peace and reconciliation and justice abandon hope.

There are positive grounds for hope even in this dark hour. Even the misfortunes of this past week can turn out for good in the end, on two conditions: firstly, that the necessary lessons are learned; and secondly, that the deplorable series of contretemps of the week leads to a new determination on both sides and gives new impetus and new seriousness and urgency to the Anglo-Irish dialogue, which is so critically important for the well-being of both our countries and of both communities in Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, let there be no attempt in Ireland to exploit the situation on party political grounds. It is a national problem, not a party political one. There is too much at stake for party or personality recrimination. It is a time for dignified restraint and calm and national unity. If, by tragic misfortune, the Anglo-Irish dialogue were to break down, it must be made clear to the world that the fault does not lie on the Irish side.

THE MODERATE MIDDLE GROUND

There definitely is a substantial middle ground of modern opinion in both Northern Ireland communities. A clear majority of the nationalist community have, in spite of all the pressures calculated to push them towards extremist views, remained firmly committed to the rejection of violence and the pursuit of the peaceful political process. In the unionist community there is gratifying evidence of new thinking. There is a host of interdenominational groups, praying together, discussing together and working together for peace and reconciliation. The list would be too long to enumerate. Let me mention two of the perhaps lesser known groups, namely the "Two Traditions" group and the "Northern Consensus" group, whose respective analyses of the situation are important and constructive and fair-minded contributions towards a new respect and mutual acceptance between the two communities.

There are many people in the industrial, business and professional fields who are very conscious of the disastrous effects of violence and conflict on the Northern Ireland economy, and who clearly see the need for political change if there is to be any hope of economic recovery and of halting the drastic decline in job opportunities. If they can exert pressure on political leaders, a new impetus towards political progress could be created.

Ecumenical contacts between the Churches have never been more frequent or more friendly. Meetings between Church leaders are now regular and recurring entries in Church diaries. Exchanges between Catholic and Protestant churchmen are frank, open and honest, but trusting and charitable. As a Catholic bishop, I wish to pay particular tribute to the courage that has been shown by many Protestant clergy who have had to endure opposition, sometimes odium and calumny from more bigoted elements in order to pursue ecumenical contacts. There have been many courageous appeals from the Churches, both individually and jointly, for reconciliation and mutual acceptance and respect for religious and political differences. I single out one recent example among many of such pronouncements, namely the statement issued last October by the East Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. A resolution passed unanimously by about 70 ministers and elders, representing almost 38,000 Presbyterians, requested

Ministers and kirk sessions to continue to explore ways of showing love to Roman Catholics living within their parish bounds, and of assuring them that we Presbyterians seek peace, social justice and religious liberty for all men.

The Presbytery called for increased contacts between the communities

in order that fears and prejudices may be minimised and understanding and mutual respect encouraged.

It must be recognised that all the Churches are striving, and effectively striving, to exercise a prophetic ministry of reconciliation, in spite of the worst efforts of paramilitary organisations, of political extremists and of those who exploit religious fears and prejudices for political ends.

Even at political level, there are glimmerings of light. In the Official Unionist Party document which I have earlier cited, there are discernible chinks in doors which, in the well-remembered words of the former unionist leader, were "banged, barred and bolted". The document says, for example:

Moreover although resolutely opposed to an "Irish Dimension" in the form of a constitutional institution, unionists would not object to an "Irish Dimension" in the form of state recognition of the legitimacy of the fostering of distinctively Irish cultural activities in Northern Ireland nor to state funding of such activities in proportion to the degree of public participation or interest in them.

This manifestly falls very far short of what nationalists regard as their minimum constitutional and political rights; but nevertheless indicates an openness on the part of unionists to what the document calls "a mutual recognition of each other's hopes and fears". The document also accepts that:

It is the responsibility of the majority to persuade the minority that the Province is also theirs.

One of the great developments in recent times has been the unqualified acceptance by all the Irish constitutional nationalist parties of the legitimacy in Ireland of the British identity and allegiance of the unionist community, and of the civil and religious rights of Protestants. In the Forum Report, these parties state:

No one living in Ireland should feel less at home than another or less protected by law than his or her fellow citizen. This implies in particular, in respect of Northern Protestants, that the civil and religious liberties that they uphold and enjoy will be fully protected and guaranteed and their sense of Britishness accommodated.

The Report goes on:

The solution necessarily requires new structures that will accommodate together two sets of legitimate rights:

- the right of nationalists to effective political, symbolic and administrative expression of their identity; and

- the right of unionists to effective political, symbolic and administrative expression of their identity, their ethos and their way of life.....

Validity of both the nationalist and unionist identities in Ireland and the democratic rights of every citizen on this island must be accepted; both of these identities must have equally satisfactory, secure and durable, political, administrative and symbolic expression and protection.

The significance of these declarations has not yet been properly appreciated either in the unionist community or in Britain. The Forum Report gives a new dimension to declarations of Irish nationalist aspiration and to statements of the nationalist conception of the future for both of Ireland's communities.

The importance of the Catholic Church's declaration to the New Ireland Forum about Protestant rights and freedoms has also failed to secure the attention it merits. As the one chosen by the Irish Bishops to lead their delegation to the New Ireland Forum, on 9th. February 1984, and speaking on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, I said:

The Catholic Church in Ireland totally rejects the concept of a confessional state. We have not sought and we do not seek a Catholic State for a Catholic people. We believe that the alliance of Church and State is harmful for the Church and harmful for the State. We rejoiced when that ambiguous formula regarding the special position of the Catholic Church was struck out of the Constitution by the electorate of the Republic. The Catholic Church in Ireland has no power and seeks no power except the power of the Gospel it preaches and the consciences and the convictions of those who freely accept that teaching.....

We are acutely conscious of the fears of the Northern Ireland Protestant community. We recognise their apprehensions that any political or constitutional or even demographic change in Northern Ireland would imperil their Protestant heritage..... What we do here and now declare, and declare with emphasis, is that we would raise our voices to resist any constitutional proposals which might infringe or might imperil the civil and religious rights and liberties cherished by northern Protestants.

CHRISTIAN HOPE

The surest basis of our hope for the triumph of love and peace, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland is our Christian faith. The Christian is, by necessity of faith, a man or woman of hope. He or she cannot, in final analysis, be a pessimist. Where there is Christ, there is hope.

Emmanuel Mounier said that "the opposite of pessimism is not optimism but hope"; and hope he defined as "an indefinable mingling of simplicity, of pity, of stubbornness and of grace". The search for peace and justice in Northern Ireland requires a faith-filled stubbornness. It does not look for easy or quick results. It calls for the kind of hope of which St. Paul spoke:

All of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free. For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved - our salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were - but, as I say, we must to be saved since we are not saved yet - it is something we must wait for with patience. (Romans 8:23-25).

The patience of which St. Paul speaks is not passivity. It is active, alert and dynamic readiness to "redeem the time" (Ephesians 5:16), to avail of every opportunity, turn every obstacle into new incentive, every setback into new beginning, knowing that "everything is grace". St. Paul says again:

Sufferings bring patience....., and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. (Romans 5:3-5).