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THE CLERK TO THE ASSEMBLY
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ROM/578/88/SH

21 June 1989

Dear Olwin

IRA BACKGROUND STUDY

Following correspondence and discussions in November last, I agreed to carry out a pilot study in relation to the following questions which you formulated:

1. What are the main factors which influence people to join the IRA?
2. How effective are Government's policies in minimising these factors?
3. What additional information should be collected and how far can existing information held by Government and the security forces be utilised in any further study?
4. What are the lessons for existing Government policies and what aspects require further examination?

I submit it herewith.

On 18 January 1983, Professor John Whyte, in an inaugural lecture at Queen's University asked the question: "Is Research on the Northern Ireland Problem Worth While?" Having noted the massive volume of such research and offered three reasons for research into the Northern Ireland problem viz, the hope of influencing current policy, the hope of aiding future scholars, the hope of testing general theories, his conclusion was not very optimistic. He reached this verdict: "Between them (ie the three reasons) they offer, I think, sufficient justification for such research. But I am not entirely sure. I am still oppressed by the disproportion between the enormous amount of work produced and the lack of practical difference which it has made".

It will not come as a surprise, therefore, that the tangible results of my study are somewhat meagre.

Communal conflict makes in-depth research dangerous and difficult, yet the subject you raised cannot be avoided.

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I have given a discursive reply to your questions by endeavouring to relate the views and experiences of people who have first hand knowledge of the situation. The fact, of course, is that given the constraints under which government is acting, these people generally accept that there is little flexibility for policy change.

The critical unanswered questions are why some people have "an appetite for blood", the extent to which government strategy has paid dividends in reducing the level of violence and how a climate can be fostered in which it becomes evident to the IRA that their campaign is doomed.

Against all considerations must be set the truth that the one quality that fanatics and terrorists do not know is gratitude.

Apart from a recommendation for a much wider data base to deal with allegations that conditions for nationalists have not improved in 20 years, I have few other practical suggestions.

Any policy considerations I have in mind may be inferred from my report.

I shall be happy to meet you to amplify any points.

Yours sincerely
J A D Kennedy

J A D KENNEDY

cc: Sir Kenneth Bloomfield
(With copy of report)

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An I.R.A. background pilot study relating to the main factors which influence people to join the I.R.A., the effectiveness of Government policies in minimising these factors, information requirements and lessons for existing Government policies and aspects requiring further examination.

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I.R.A. BACKGROUND PILOT STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In 1842, W. M. Thackeray in the final two pages of his Irish Sketch Book remarked upon the difficulties of formulating an opinion about Ireland: one must begin by getting the truth; and where is it to be had in the country? Or rather, there are two truths, the Catholic truth and the Protestant truth. The two parties do not see things with the same eyes belief is made a party business In the midst of all these truths, attested with "I give ye my sacred honour and word", which is the stranger to select? And how are we to trust philosophers who made theories upon such data?

If the country was puzzling to Thackeray in 1842, one wonders what the author would have made of today's Ireland of political violence, because, in the words of one prolific Northern writer "the peculiar ambiguities of Irish nationalist strategy - that strange mixture of violence, friendship and indifference have been almost perfectly designed to strengthen the forces of reaction within the protestant community".

Since you asked me in November last to make a pilot study of certain aspects of government policy, I have talked to dozens of people, read scores of books and skimmed through hundred of articles.

The only official documentation to which I have had access is that in the possession of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Over the past six months I have tried to go to see people rather than make arrangements for them to visit me. In most cases discussions were conducted on a one to one basis. Nobody declined to meet me. Where the opportunity arose I struck up conversations with individuals from whom I thought I might obtain some helpful opinions. Occasionally these chance encounters provided the most illuminating comment. At no time did I see anyone who I understood to belong to a paramilitary organisation. I did, however, speak to people who would meet Sinn Fein members in the course of their work.

I express immense gratitude to everyone for trying to be helpful and for their discretion. In nearly all cases where I saw people by appointment I gave them an inkling of the task in hand.

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In this study the terms Catholic and Protestant or Nationalist and Unionist are used to identify the protagonists because of the frequent correlation between denominational attachment and allegiance and/or attitudes.

I began by trying to determine the reasons for the terrorists support and prepared a paper accordingly. It dealt with the history of the Irish Republican Army comparing it to groups such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Italian Red Brigades and examined I.R.A. propaganda, intimidation and racketeering activities. I came to a point however, where I realised that I was only repeating material which is readily available in many books and articles. I also realised that I could not add anything to that contained in brilliant studies by Adrian Guelke, Tom Wilson and Martha Crenshaw. In my view nothing is likely to better Crenshaw's essay on "The Persistence of the I.R.A. Terrorism" which is included in the book entitled "Terrorism in Ireland" edited by Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day and published in 1984. Also worth reading is the contribution by Arthur Aughey on Political Violence in Northern Ireland published by the U.S. Center for Security Studies in a volume entitled Combating the Terrorists, and just available in this country.

For these reasons, I decided to discard this section of my report, concentrating instead on producing a digest of comments from various people and papers. I draw one or two conclusions accordingly.

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

There is no doubt that the nature of the conflict does place limits on some research - on paramilitaries, the police, and prisons, for example. The most detailed studies of republican paramilitaries, prison life and security forces' undercover work have not been produced by academics but by journalists, participants and others with special access. There are obvious physical and legal dangers, as well as problems of access, with respect to in-depth research into the role of the security forces and paramilitaries. Even so, some social science research has proved possible on these and other contentious topics (eg Nelson, 1984 on loyalist paramilitaries). Furthermore, researchers such as Burton (1978), Wiener (1980) and Jenkins (1983) have studied local communities heavily pervaded by the conflict.- Liam O'Dowd - Northern Ireland Studies in Social and Economic Life 1989.

I was surprised to find that although nationalist groups (as well as others) condemn the Provisional I.R.A. for its savagery in dealing with what is described

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as anti-social elements, the P.I.R.A. form of rough justice is, surprisingly, very popular in the ghetto community and it even receives some acquiescence from the criminals themselves. Knee-capping is certainly universally approved of for cases of rape and drug-dealing.

Members of the P.I.R.A. are frequently recruited via the youth wing Fianna Eireann between the ages of 14 and 17, just as the majority of U.V.F. youths are recruited via their junior section, the Young Citizens Volunteers. Induction into terrorist groups frequently has to do with family loyalties.

In many cases, membership of the P.I.R.A. confers a number of benefits on its members, which would not otherwise be available to them. It provides them with money and security. Once a person has joined the P.I.R.A. he will always be looked after financially as will his family. If a terrorist is captured, the P.I.R.A. support group will arrange legal aid, prison visits for family, and find him a job on his release from prison.

So not only does the terrorist support group provide financial security for its members, but it also offers power and status. It offers power to individuals in the same sense as the Cosa Nostra does in Italy. No one dares make a move against another member of the family of the P.I.R.A. activist because the terrorist organisation will deal out the same sort of retribution as would the Mafia, had an insult been made against a member of one of their families.

Status comes with membership of the dominant group within the republican sub-culture. Young P.I.R.A. activists have access to guns, women, adventure and acquire the respect that comes with being in an organisation that makes them virtually untouchable in the eyes of other members of their community.

When the P.I.R.A. receives periodic encouragement from individual Roman Catholic Clergymen, constitutional politicians, civil liberties organisations and other groups on the mainland or in the United States, this in turn re-enforces its legitimacy in the republican community because it conveys a sign of external approval on the P.I.R.A. propaganda and even helps to mitigate the enormity of some of its more barbaric acts.

GENERAL FINDINGS

The following is a digest of views which I have heard, or extracts from documents, books and newspapers which may serve some purpose.

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THE PROVISIONAL IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

- (i) An examination of files in the D.P.P. elicited the following information as to the reasons individuals (lettered a to w) gave the police for joining the IRA.
- a. I was fighting for the I.R.A. because of the way the 'Prods' treated the people of Derry before 1969 and other stuff like that. But most of all I joined because I was being harassed by the Police and Army. This upset my Ma and this annoyed me.
 - b. I can remember that a couple of hunger strikers were already dead and feelings were running high.
 - c. Someone asked me if I wanted to join - I was approached in a bar.
 - d. I approached someone whom I believed to be a member of the I.R.A. He asked me about my family and who I was related to. I only joined because I felt that I wasn't doing enough for Ireland and at the time I was confused.
 - e. I was just asked if I would do a job.
 - f. I know its stupid now - but the Provos were my mates - I got caught up with them.
 - g. I never really thought of joining the I.R.A. but then I was getting harassed so I joined it. I was really fed up with the Police raiding the house and that.
 - h. I went to republican rallies, I supported the hunger strikers, I was approached and I joined.
 - i. I agree with a United Ireland, but not the way the South is. It's in a shambles. My name was put forward for the I.R.A. I was told not to get involved in anything like fights and that people would be watching me. I was told that it was too late to pull out.
 - j. Deaths of children by plastic bullets.

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- k. I started running round with -, I knew he was mixed up with I.N.L.A. and I suppose I sort of looked up to him with he being involved and that. I agreed to join, indeed I was scared not to.
- l. I was asked to join (in this case the defendant was a female whose 'Ma is a sleeper'). I was taught anti-interrogation methods, Irish history - six lectures, one hour per week.
- m. I was approached and asked to join a unit of the P.I.R.A.
- n. - appointed me in Dundalk to join I.N.L.A. when he was on remand.
- o. I was asked to join I.N.L.A. and I said I would. I took myself to be one.
- p. I was told the I.R.A. was different from the old days since the supergrass trials. There were only 5 in a squad and only 2 of them knew what was going to happen. We would pick up a piece of paper from the Sinn Fein centre on the Falls Road. I was told to avoid my mates and volunteers on the street, they went on about keeping yourself clear of trouble and not to come under any public notice. I was rejected three times because I was too well known. I support the armed struggle, but I didn't want to get involved.
- q. I joined the Irish Defence Forces in June 1980. In January 1981 I went on leave never to return and joined I.N.L.A.
- r. I was with I.N.L.A. and they asked me to give them a hand.
- s. I come from a republican family - that's why I got involved. The main reason I joined was because I was brought up in a republican area and the harassment I was getting from the R.U.C. I asked if I could join the Fianna after the shooting of three boys in a field at Stranocum.
- t. I am a University graduate and my wife's a teacher - I am not always unemployed. I joined the troops out movement.
- u. I was approached to join the P.I.R.A.

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v. It was just the company I ran about with. Nothing ever happened to any members of the family - no run-ins with the Police or Army that gave me a reason for joining the Provos. I was asked to join and was checked out.

w. The Head brother at - was a sympathiser. We got our own unit together.

(ii) Comments made to me by Catholics about the I.R.A.

a. They believe that they are winning. They think that Britain eventually gives in to the Irish.

b. They feel that they cannot stop now having expended so much blood and effort.

c. Casualties to nationalists are part of the price to pay for unity.

d. Sinn Fein is now an institution.

e. They consider that things have been going their way (eg abolition of Stormont, Irish language acceptance and ending of supergrass trials) and are prepared to put up with a long haul and conduct a war of attrition.

f. Due in part to world opinion British security policy remains relatively liberal which allows the terrorists to flourish to some extent.

g. Mistakes or errors of judgment on the part of the security forces can provide useful propaganda for the terrorist whereas the converse is not true.

h. Catholics fear Protestants, hence the tacit support for the I.R.A. Paisley is seen in the same light as Sinn Fein.

PROTESTANTS

Unionists feel that they are witnessing a further phase in the eradication of the historical presence of Protestants in Ireland. They regard the last 20 years as a case of heaping Pelion upon Ossa in as much as they consider that they have become the focus for much adverse criticism and the target for

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Government legislation leading to "the end of the unionist veto" the "collapse of triumphal unionism" and "the unionist ascendancy being put into permanent eclipse". Protestants argue that the policy of the government is designed to divide and demoralize unionism - effectively to break the will of the majority.

Essentially of course, Protestants believe that the root of the conflict lies in the conditional nature of Northern Ireland's membership of the United Kingdom.

Protestants note the remarks made in the Sunday Times on 30 April 1989 by Lord Whitelaw who when asked by Brian Walden as to why his sympathy for the Catholics goes far beyond the casual tolerance most ministers display replied:

"It's my feelings for the underdog. I was sorry for the Catholics in Northern Ireland, because I felt that they were being held down unfairly and I wanted to see them brought up. Because after all, it's their country just as much as it is the Protestants' country. I felt that it was my job to do everything I could to persuade them to get on with each other."

"The tragedy is that the unthinking Unionist is a very decent chap. There are many farmers, many people all over the North, who always vote unionist, but they fear the Pope, they fear the South, and their fears can be stirred up so easily.

The people I'm very bitter against are those who have played on those fears over the years, and Paisley's one of the leaders of it. People like Paisley have made themselves big figures by playing on fears which are, in my judgment, wholly, totally and entirely unjustified."

Protestants contrast this with the remarks of the editor of the Daily Telegraph, Max Hastings, who in the colour magazine for 1 October 1988 states

"I wrote a book, a short account of the events of 1968-1969 which was published early in 1970. It was a piece of instant reporting, reflecting my passionate support for Catholic civil rights in Northern Ireland, and my youthful shock at the manner in which I and my colleagues had seen the government of part of the United Kingdom conducted. I ended it by saying; 'The British, whatever their politicians may say publicly, will shed very few tears indeed when that distant but inevitable day arrives, and Ulster and the Irish Republic are reunited, as logic dictates.'

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Today, I no longer expect or desire to see a united Ireland in my lifetime. Since 1970, too much blood has been shed for an early reconciliation of North and South to seem attainable. The hopes that we cherished in those days, that the economic take-off of southern Ireland would make unification seem acceptable, even desirable, to the Protestant community, have gone unfulfilled and seem likely to remain so.

For all my old sympathy for Ulster's Catholics, I also understand the sensibilities of Ulster's Protestants. They have now suffered too much at the equivocations of the Dublin Government, for any reasonable Englishman to expect them to stomach a united Ireland."

Protestants believe that their presence in Ireland will continue to be resented by the Catholic minority even if every genuine grievance were met. "Militant republicanism is uninterested in political reform in Ulster ..." Arthur Aughey, Political Violence in Northern Ireland, 1988.

Because they see themselves as custodians of law and order, most regard loyalist paramilitary killings of innocent Catholics with utter contempt and are ashamed of the deeds.

Protestants refuse to subscribe to the traditional Irish nationalist dogma that everyone in Ireland belongs to the Irish nation.

Protestants appreciate that the nature of their relationship with the British Government and the Republic of Ireland is the basic reason for their incapacity to articulate their opposition to a united Ireland in a way that is capable of being understood outside the British Isles.

Protestants do not accept official figures for Catholic unemployment because of opportunities for "working the double", available jobs across the border and the scale of benefits paid to large families

ROMAN CATHOLICS

In the Winter 88/89 issue of PACE the Rev Ignatius McQuillan, President of St. Columb's College, Londonderry gives a Catholic view on Northern Ireland which has been commended to Protestants. He writes:

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"In your last issue of PACE, an old friend Norman Gibson asks for open and brutally frank dialogue about the issues which divide us. I would be grateful if you allow me space to comment on his view of Protestant and Catholic perceptions.

I can appreciate and sympathise with what he sees as the deep-seated Protestant "fear of Catholic power and influence" and their "profound distrust of how it would be exercised in a society in which Catholics are in the majority". What amazes me is that he does not recognise a reciprocal fear and distrust of Protestant rule among Catholics. Their past experience of such rule makes it very difficult for them to trust a people who still choose a political leader whose religious bigotry is plain to see even in the European Parliament. Catholics who remember the conduct of Fermanagh or Londonderry councils will not be enthusiastic about any system of devolved government which might increase the power of Belfast, Craigavon or similar councils.

For myself and thousands of other Catholics, the basic issue is not British occupation. The latter is in fact preferable to any solution which risks restoring old-style unionist control, which would prevent my living in peace and harmony with the ordinary Protestant people whom I so much admire."

Almost without exception Catholics expressed the opinion that a great deal of support for the I.R.A. resulted from harassment by the security forces and personal experiences were often cited.

On the subject of wider nationalist attitudes (following the Anglo-Irish Agreement) Lord Prior writing in The Times on 3 December 1988 said:

"Politically there has been no advance. Despite the obviously enhanced position of the nationalist community, it has responded only lukewarmly to political involvement with the unionists. I would have hoped the nationalists could have done more given that even Mr Haughey, the Republic's prime minister, has had to go along with the agreement. After all, they were given a new degree of advantage and credibility which the unionists bitterly resented and were denied themselves.

The unionists could obviate what they consider to be interference by a foreign power in their internal affairs by accepting some form of devolved

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government. No one should doubt that Mrs Thatcher is a convinced unionist but I am certain she would support some devolution and that she hoped this would be part of the outcome of the agreement.

Many unionists, although angry about the way the agreement was engineered, recognize that it will not go away and, that, however provoked and frustrated Mrs Thatcher may be by present events, she will stick by it. For Mr Haughey the agreement has proved too popular to rescind and I doubt if he would want to be seen as the saviour of Mr Ian Paisley's prejudices.

This raises one of the more subtle and complex aspects of the Northern Ireland situation. The fact is that unlike the Blacks in America, few prominent Catholics appear willing to act as role models in support of the status quo. Indeed no Catholic has spoken in public in terms like the late G. B. Newe in 1958 and 1963 and he, fittingly, was honoured with membership of the Northern Ireland Cabinet.

It is a common experience in conversing with many Catholics that they relate to Dublin for politics, education, recreation, culture and so on. The decisions of Mr Austin Currie and Mr John Cushnahan to become involved in politics South of the border illustrate the point.

Such an attitude may explain why Mary Holland in her article in the Irish Times on 31 May 1989 wrote:

"Let the nationalists who look to Dublin anyway, stand for Irish political parties and send their representatives to the Dail while the British parties recruit actively among unionist voters and represent their interests in Westminster."

THE ARMY

The Army felt that it was regrettable that Viscount Colville's Report on the operation of the Emergency Provisions Acts contained material that was quoted in the Republican News to the I.R.A.'s advantage. It should have been excised before publication because it was an unnecessary propaganda gift.

The Army believe that violence and alienation is endemic among some republicans and that no amount of money or changes in security policy will be enough to

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alter that fact. They have spent much time analysing the kind of people who join the I.R.A.

The Army commented that there are times when N.I.O. might have a more swift and clear response to particular events. I think they had in mind the ambush at Drumnakilly in East Tyrone in August 1988.

The Army resent attempts by Maryfield to lay down operational guidance, especially as they are not allowed to communicate directly with the Irish Army.

THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

The Police believe that a great amount of Sinn Fein strength is gained from its organisational ability in dealing with constituency issues. They also admire its ruthlessness.

They believe that the S.D.L.P. does not give the police its full support because that would be tantamount to recognising a state it does not believe in. The police complain that Catholics ask for protection but add that it should not be too obvious that they are doing so. They thought that nationalist politicians were lacking in sympathy for the strain under which some 18 year old policemen work.

The police claimed that Catholics were less prepared to put up with the inconvenience of security checks etc than Protestants.

The police expressed some bitterness over the sliding scale approach to death and commented on the courts adjourning to mark the murder by loyalists of Pat Finucane whose death notices were carried by An Phoblacht.

The police felt they did not get enough credit from nationalists in their pursuit of loyalist paramilitaries who the police totally despise.

The police would welcome more money going to community groups provided that proper control was exercised over funds. They had some ideas on this.

One policeman told me he thought the continuous tirade of criticism directed towards the administration of justice in Northern Ireland had cowed some judges into acquitting criminals when this should not have happened.

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PRISONS

One got the impression of a liberal humane regime operated by dedicated staff. In discussions with prison officers including doctors and psychiatrists, it was obvious that few terrorists ever felt remorse for their foul deeds. To them a neighbourly Protestant ploughman was someone whom they saw wearing a British uniform on occasions and that was enough to justify his murder.

It was I.R.A. strategy that prisoners should not exhibit any sign of weakness, whether of regret or of mental breakdown. Doctors learnt very little about their attitudes when attending them in the course of routine medical treatment.

The prison authorities were impressed with the support services of Sinn Fein and considered that anyone breaking ranks would forfeit a considerable degree of assistance as a result because there was no discernable alternative back-up structure.

ACADEMICS

One academic recalled that in 1970 a deceased Roman Catholic colleague had said that in the future the have-nots would become the haves. He did not fully understand the remark at the time but he has come to appreciate it now. This particular academic is known for his thesis that the land issue has been central to Irish history. He would agree that in terms of Northern Ireland the distribution of jobs is a more up to date yardstick of controversy.

Another academic expressed disapproval of the attempt to increase Irish studies which he described as cultural appeasement. He wondered how Edinburgh Tories would react to being told to take an interest in Highland dancing in order to reduce the menace of Scottish nationalism.

CONCEPT OF LEGITIMATE EXPECTATION

For the past 20 years H.M.G. has been enacting legislation and formulating policies such as the Anglo Irish Agreement to deal with Catholic grievances, and the media has been telling nationalists that they have been victimized.

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Is it surprising, therefore, then that a percentage of people would translate these communications into justifying violence against Protestants and the security forces?

Barbara Amiel writing in the Times on 5 May 89 about New York City violence said "surely the most important cause of crime seems to be the individual's belief that he has a degree of moral justification in acting in the way he does it seems to me that the solution to this sort of violence (a young woman raped and beaten by blacks who in fact were not particularly disadvantaged) has less to do with law enforcement or punishment than it does with social attitudes". She also remarked "Frankly, if one could do a controlled experiment and tell people with blue eyes that they had been the object of discrimination I'm confident there would be an increase in blue-eyed criminals. These things have nothing to do with common factors of race, or eye colour, or whether the message is right or wrong. They are simply concomitants."

One could argue that in order to get changes in society in Northern Ireland it was necessary to deliver certain messages. An architect to the Agreement is quoted as saying "I know its purgatory for them [the unionists] but they have to be put through it". The trouble is that there is a spillover effect with the result that an ambience is permitted to develop that leads people to assume that the only deprived community in the British Isles is the Northern Irish Catholic and that the British and someone like the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Eames, as representing a Protestant viewpoint, are to blame for the situation.

The Irish News of 7 June 1989 illustrated this criticism of H.M.G. and unionists in the following paragraphs which are taken from its leader attacking the bombers of the Castle Court Complex where it states:

Yesterday's bomb at the Castle Court complex in Belfast illustrates the contempt and disregard of present I.R.A. strategy and tactics alike for the values held by the peoples of West Belfast. These values include a belief in the freedom to work and it is this freedom that has been cynically attacked time after time during the last 20 years in Derry, in Newry, in Strabane and most obviously in West Belfast. These areas are at the top of the unemployment league. They had been the target for the completely discredited policies of a bigoted Stormont administration that in its operations was equally oblivious to the modest hopes of the little streets. It has however, been left to the IRA physically to blow into unemployment the hopes of thousands of its fellow countrymen.

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Only in East Belfast do we see the politics of economic sufficiency applied through expediency because of the nightmare apprehension of the results of a measure of unemployment in Ballybeen like that of Ballymurphy. In spite of this obvious necessity for similar policies in West Belfast, the present British Government has consistently refused to draw up and implement an economic master plan for what is, after all, one third of the city. The reluctance to be bold has had disastrous consequences and has left open to the IRA an argument that it has exploited.

The Irish Times leader of 6 June 1989 writes of an interview with Dr Eames (after acknowledging that the Archbishop says some brave and significant things such as reminding the unionist population that it took the much-hated Anglo-Irish Agreement to bring a degree of hope to nationalists in the North).

Archbishop Eames agrees with his interviewer on the urgency of some initiative to rescue his community from the "ultimate betrayal" of being condemned to perpetual non-politics, as Mr Millar expresses it. The ingredients are there, he acknowledges, for serious discussion of an alternative to the Anglo-Irish Agreement of devolved government to offer the people of the North a sense of identify that is now lacking.

What is disappointing about the archbishop's position, however, and that which is profoundly depressing, if his judgement is correct, is his conclusion that the time is not yet ripe for unionists to commence a dialogue with their opposite numbers in the Republic. This is not the time for a major initiative, he says, because there is not sufficient confidence to ensure a reasonable chance of success.

"My mind is simply screaming with the question 'if not now, when?'," says his interviewer. With John Hume on the record, offering to redefine his party's policies and to talk without preconditions; with Mr Haughey offering repeated invitations for talks; with significant stirrings within the ranks of unionism - with so many portents, there can be few observers who will do other than echo the exasperation and passion of Mr Millar's question.

In a letter to The Times on 12 June 1989 Professor Cornelius O'Leary of the Department of Political Science at Queen's University in the course of discussing the Status of Ulster inside the Union includes a paragraph which reads:

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"It is true that some laws in Northern Ireland differed from those in the rest of the United Kingdom. This was because the majority party took advantage of devolution to boost its position by enacting discriminatory legislation, which in turn alienated the minority and paved the way for the 'troubles' which started in 1968."

Another quotation is from Hansard of 31 January 1989 where at column 203 Mr John Hume asks the Secretary of State in connection with the Fair Employment Bill:

"Does he accept that figures produced in the House show that the two constituencies in Great Britain and Northern Ireland with the highest unemployment are my own constituency of Foyle and Belfast, West? Some of us do not think that that is a coincidence and believe that it is the result of action taken by previous Governments of Northern Ireland to starve those areas of investment."

These foregoing illustrations are used to indicate the difficulty H.M.G. has in dealing with the sense of injustice that remains, that seems to bear endless repetition, that infuriates the unionists and permits many Roman Catholics to blame all their ills on the nature of society in Northern Ireland.

BASIC PROBLEMS

Because scarcely a day goes by without this reference to the political and social alienation among Catholics, especially but by no means exclusively in the working-class areas of Belfast and Londonderry, it remains comparatively easy for the I.R.A. to claim to be the voice of an oppressed people. And unfortunately circumstances are such that few Catholics are in commanding positions such as Lord Fitt who attack visceral support for the I.R.A. or Mr Justice Nicholson, who calls for his co-religionists to back the police.

As H.M.G. cannot count on the nationalists or unionists for routine support for its policies, there might at least be greater understanding for its predicament by the Government in the South which, having been accorded a role in the affairs of the North, could help to ease tension by being less carping without necessarily acknowledging that in many respects Catholics are better off in the North than in the South.

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John Galsworthy noted that idealism increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem. If the United States of America or the Republic of Ireland had to fight a campaign of organized terror within their own territories on the scale of that which the I.R.A. has been conducting within and beyond the United Kingdom for 20 years, we can be sure that authorities in both countries would take tough measures as the Libyan bombing raid and the early executions in the south testify.

On the December 1987 issue of the Journal of Strategic Studies which is devoted to a study of terrorism, a paragraph reads:

"An organisation's success or failure is measured in terms of its ability to attain its stated political ends. Few organisations actually attain the long-term ideological objectives they claim to seek, and therefore one must conclude that terrorism is objectively a failure. The reason it continues in the immediate is that extremist organizations frequently achieve their tactical objectives, particularly publicity and recognition."

If one purpose of I.R.A. terrorism is to maintain the possibility of surprise in its innovative attacks, then it has been successful. John Lloyd writing in the Financial Times on 5 October 1988 says "Militant Nationalism is now too cocky to depend on subterfuge. Terror is reaching a higher and more murderous level this year than for a decade".

In the Lords on 13 February 1989 Lord Fitt speaking on the Second Reading of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Bill concluded his remarks with this interesting observation:

"I do not think that anyone here or in Northern Ireland would have any qualification at all about the new powers contained in the Bill, the seizure of funds. The I.R.A., acting as it does in a Mafia-type way, living by fear and intimidation, has accrued to itself all the finesse of Mafia organisations throughout the world. It has used every terrorist tactic in the book to ensure that it will never go short of funds in order to carry on its campaign of terrorism. I have serious doubts - and I voice them as an Irishman - as to whether the majority of people in the I.R.A. are really fighting to drive the British out of Ireland or bring about the unity of Ireland. A new way of life has taken over for them. They are acting as Mafia, as the Mafia has done throughout decades.

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I said last week - and if noble Lords wish, they may check this in the Library - that when the Mafia first began, it began as an organisation which was allegedly fighting to throw off the oppression by Italy of Sicily. Let us see what has developed throughout the years in that organisation. I honestly believe that the vast majority of young people in the I.R.A. do not know what they are fighting for; but the godfathers certainly do. If the legislation can in any way inhibit and punish those godfathers, then it will continue to have my overwhelming support."

Lord Rawlinson in his recently published autobiography also expresses an opinion about the political situation in Northern Ireland derived from his experience as Attorney General.

He writes:

"After my experience in Northern Ireland I find it difficult to believe that the Irish situation is capable of resolution during the lifetime of the present generation. No one who knows anything about it believes that it is. The visiting politicians from overseas, anxious to win support at home, are reported asking why the soldiers do not go home. But where is 'home'? And what would a Dublin government do if the Province were left to the heavily armed gunmen? Were the Republic to become outward masters of the whole island, they would encounter apart from the I.R.A. a hard core of dedicated and energetic people who would resist with great unity and stern purpose. Bar an unthinkable deportation executed with all the ruthlessness which the Marxists employed upon Russian and Chinese peasants, the island and the world must go on living with a land mass of which one smaller part is determined to be excluded from the larger. On other land masses in other parts of the world, when people of different and alien culture inhabit contiguous lands, geographically artificial frontiers exist and are respected. Like it or not, it seems that will have to happen in the island of Ireland for many years to come.

On 28 March 1972 Willie Whitelaw, the first Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, had expressed in Parliament the hope that the Bill which gave to the British Parliament full power over Northern Ireland could provide a fresh start which must be used 'to promote feelings of tolerance, understanding, fairness, and impartiality'. The minority, he declared, must be won away from the gunmen. Greater fairness, and impartiality in social and employment fields have been instituted but the gunmen, still

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sustained by some ignorant Irish-Americans and supplied with weaponry by America's enemy Libya, have not yet been defeated. On my first morning visit to the Law Courts in Belfast, in April 1972, the sounds of several explosions shook the building. The bombings are now fewer in number, but often more severe in extent. The dead of Enniskillen lying among the artificial poppies by the memorial to The Fallen, demonstrated in 1987 the implacable will of the perpetrators.

The struggles in Ireland have coincided also with a time when the authority of the Churches has declined. In the United States, foolish sentimentalists of Irish descent, ignorant of Ireland, pour out dollars while what a sixteenth century Pope, Julius II, called the *gioco del mondo*, the game of the world, continues to be played out to the benefit of the suppliers of arms whose sole interest is in perpetuating strife. The battle will surely go on, for Ireland has its own place in world strategy, lying across the western supply flank of N.A.T.O. It will inevitably remain divided, either as now causing men and material and money to be diverted to contain the threat of Sinn Fein; or, in an Ireland from which the British troops have been withdrawn, leaving in place an alienated minority and an army and an economy wholly incapable of dealing with the I.R.A., who are as much the enemies of the Republic as they are of the United Kingdom. It would then become a cockpit for ever-increasing violence.

Times of hope come and go, but no more than in the Middle East does there exist a ready solution to this intractable tribal and religious conflict. Only patience and time might bring relief. Seven English Secretaries of State and four Attorneys General have sat in Hillsborough and the Royal Courts of Justice, Belfast, since in 1972 Willie Whitelaw in the House of Commons expressed the hope that the initiative of direct rule might win the minority from the gunmen, offer a better chance of dealing with violence, and lead to a settlement of a centuries-old problem. Sixteen years have passed and few of those hopes have been fulfilled. The more blatant discrimination may have been reduced if not eliminated; genuine grievances which existed may have been excised. That the war still goes on demonstrates that it is not social inequality or discrimination that it feeds upon: it feeds upon naked, atavistic, tribal hatreds. Neither modern politician nor soldier, but only cardinals and bishops and priests and reverends and preachers and elders can reach into such bitter hearts. The men of God bear much of the responsibility for the ills and unhappiness of that island. Like the politicians they have been found wanting."

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Nearly 20 years earlier (on 14 August 1971 - 5 days after the introduction of internment) Harold Jackson the Guardian's correspondent in Belfast wrote under the heading "The Ulster Revolution which Mr Lynch forgets" a piece which some say has stood the test of time extremely well. It was regarded as masterly at the time. His final paragraphs were:

"One sometimes gets the impression that the Catholic community expected Utopia yesterday once Westminster had intervened, paying little heed to the evident facts of government in any country. It really just does not happen that way in a complex society: things take time to get moving and deepset attitudes do not change overnight. It would be a lovely world for all of us if our troubles could be put right overnight but no one has yet found a way of achieving that happy state.

So why can the apparent intentions of the unionist administration - leaned on heavily by London to be sure - not be accepted? Partly, of course, the suspicion springs from the backwoods reaction of the Paisleyites and the rednecks within the unionist party. But this should, in the normal way, be offset by the fact that the reform programme is being carried through in spite of them.

No, there is a much deeper reason that just never gets acknowledged by the republicans on either side of the border. It is simply that they are not looking for a settlement no matter what terms they are offered. The Protestants of the North offer a marvellous focus away from the fundamental contradictions of Irish nationalism, which would have to look painfully at itself if that convenient irritant ever went away. It is much easier to keep on screaming about Ulster.

The unwelcome truth to which the Irish block their minds is that there is virtually no point at which nationalist aspirations and economic reality touch. A small, pretty barren offshore island in the far west of the European mainland has two stark political choices - it can be free and poor, or prosperous and dependent. There is little likelihood, as things now stand, of its people somehow managing to be free and rich. It's tough and it's unwelcome, but that's what it's all about."

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CONCLUSION

1. I have quoted copiously in this paper partly because of the difficulties in carrying out first-hand research personally, but also because I believe it is informative to read the views of distinguished individuals who have been involved in the situation over a considerable period as well as to note the influence of opinion makers. It so happens that more has been written about terrorism in Ireland than I had appreciated prior to embarking on this task. The problem is that given two extraordinarily well-entrenched traditions - Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/Nationalist constituting insurmountable obstacles in the path of radical political change - no compiler of this original research has so far suggested a workable solution.
2. It has not been part of my assignment to dwell on the Protestant/Unionist community but undoubtedly the ugly element in its midst is one of the causes for keeping up the animosity between the two sides to the Irish dispute. More could be said about the uncongenial nature of extreme unionism but it would not be relevant to mention it here.
3. There is a strategic dimension to the conflict on which only military experts may make worthwhile comment.
4. There is grudging respect (from those honest enough in both communities to acknowledge it) for the government's efforts to improve the economy and raise the quality of life generally.
5. The public applauds the careful funding of community projects, new job creation schemes and efforts to stamp out racketeering but is concerned about the danger of a cut back on housing leading to over-crowding because this is seen as an interacting factor on terrorist support.
6. Assisting the economy of East Belfast makes it imperative that this is handled in such a way as not to increase bitterness in West Belfast.
7. On the question of wealth creation and increasing prosperity it strikes me that government statistics are deficient in providing convincing evidence that Catholics are ascending the ladder. Yet anyone who has studied the demographic changes in Belfast and Londonderry over the past 20 years is aware of the burgeoning Catholic middle class in the South and North of the City and on the West bank of the River Foyle in Londonderry which

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no longer has an Official or Democratic Unionist representative on the City Council. The prosperity arises in part from the growth in public sector employment, educational opportunities at the University of Ulster and at Queen's University - where for years the majority of Law Students are Catholics - and as a result of the expansion of job opportunities in the wider business sphere, particularly the service industries.

8. Because of the number of Protestants in the security forces with comfortable incomes, the respective middle class ratio between the two communities is inclined to become distorted. Perhaps, also, not enough is done to indicate to the public that the holders of many important posts are Roman Catholic or why in some cases, such as the County Court Bench, many Catholics are reluctant to take judgeships. Newspapers of course have their own codes: recently the Newsletter referred to the Deputy Chairman of the Police Authority as a former law lecturer from West Belfast and the Irish News described the Ombudsman as the former Secretary of Down G.A.A.
9. I make this suggestion for greater data collection in order to have the evidence to refute the claims of the more extreme nationalists that nothing has changed. These are people who submit that the Catholic proportion of the population should be reflected in as many walks of life as possible even to the detriment of the employment opportunities of people from the mainland.
10. The reason for concern is that apart from the need to show this dynamic change - and the new emphasis on monitoring communal representation in the public and private sectors as an important step - it must also be recognized that the effects of policy may diverge from the intentions of the policy framers. What I have in mind are the problems of employment East and West of the Bann when it comes to appraising the success or failure of new Fair Employment legislation. Furthermore, research needs to be continually aware of the way in which the language of social science interacts with everyday language of communal division.
11. In the course of my enquiry, discussion ranged over many subjects including local government (about which strong views were expressed), education, the civil service, the churches, the Macrory gap and the reform of the legislative procedure for Northern Ireland. I obviously refrain from reporting on these matters.

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12. No one I spoke to believed that there is a solution to the mutual animosity of the two communities in Northern Ireland. The nearest thing to a solution most people consider is what is actually there: direct rule from Great Britain.

JAD Kennedy

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22 June 1989

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