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IMMEDIATE

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Northern Ireland

My telegram Britinform 113 of 2 September dealt with a purported letter from the British Ambassador in Washington, produced by Miss Devlin in the course of a television debate with Mr. Stratton Mills, M.P., and I understand that the Embassy will be telegraphing further about this affair. In the meantime you may wish to have at once the enclosed transcript of the debate. The reference to the letter from the British Ambassador in Washington occurs at the bottom of page 6 of the transcript and, as you will see, the wording is not quite as reported to us by Mr. Stratton Mills and quoted in my telegram under reference.

2. I am sending a copy of this letter to Anthony Elliott in Washington.

C. Shenton
(Secretary to)
(F. R. Mac Ginnis)

p.p.

Gordon

W. R. Haydon, Esq.,
News Dept.,
Foreign & Commonwealth Office,
London, S.W.1.

IN CONFIDENCE

A COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF
NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION'S

"The Battle of Belfast: A debate between Bernadette Devlin
and Stratton Mills, Members of Parliament"

FROM: National Educational Television, 10 Columbus Circle
New York, N.Y. 10019 Phone (212) 262-5576

NOTE: This transcript is to be used for news and review purposes only.

This is a complete transcript of an unedited videotape
recording of a debate between Miss Barnadette Devlin, M.P., and
Mr. Stratton Mills, M.P., over the present political crisis in
Northern Ireland. Program moderator is Dick McCutcheon.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BROADCAST TIME: Nationally, Wednesday, September 3 10:00 PM EDT

In New York City, WNDT/Channel 13 Wednesday,
September 3 10:30 PM EDT

"Battle of Belfast" is a production of National Educational Television

DICK MC CUTCHEON: Bernadette Devlin, 22, the youngest member of the British Parliament, represents mid-Ulster. As a member of the Independent Unity Party, she demands an end to Protestant control in Northern Ireland and says her fellow Catholics have the right to ask help from anywhere, including the Irish Republic, to gain that end.

W. Stratton Mills, 38, Protestant, also a member of the British Parliament, represents Belfast North for the Ulster Unionist Party. He is in this country, he says, to tell the truth about Ulster, to counter the adverse propaganda of Miss Devlin, whom he describes as a Fidel Castro in a mini-skirt.

This is the flag of the Irish Republic. It is the standard of supporters of Miss Devlin, who demand equal civil, religious and economic rights for the Northern Catholic minority. Most of them also demand union with the Irish Republic.

This is the flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the standard of these other Irish-Americans, who have come to support the position of the Protestant majority for continued union with England. They and you are the audience for this NET special, The Battle of Belfast.

I'm Dick McCutcheon. The Irish Island is divided between the Catholic south, the Irish Republic, and the Protestant north, Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom. The first Englishman to concern himself with this problem was Pope Hadrian IV, who granted Ireland as an inheritance to England's King Henry II in 1155. Even if a later Henry - the VIII - hadn't found it expeditious to break away from Rome and cause the Church of England to be established, there would still have been a problem of Irish

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independence or rebelliousness. It was to counter this that the English planted a Protestant colony in the town of Derry, in the midst of Catholic Ireland.

They put the government in the hands of the Corporation of the City of London. It became known as London Derry, and later Londonderry.

The present troubles began there three weeks ago on August 12th. It was the anniversary of the defense of the city by troops of William of Orange. About to give up, it is said that thirteen apprentice boys barred the gates and shouted, "No surrender." And that the Orangemen, with new found courage, went out to defeat the forces of Catholic King James II. Each year the Protestant Apprentice Boys Clubs march, as one member said, to show the Catholics who's the boss.

This year some of the Catholics weren't having any. It's reported that about a hundred residents of the Bogside slum cast the first stones at the Protestant marchers, and the largely Protestant police.

The police brought up armored cars, and the Bogsideers began throwing petrol bombs, the local version of Molotov cocktails. The Londonderry air was soon filled with smoke and the sounds of riots.

At night the Protestants counterattacked, setting homes and businesses afire in the Bogside. The trouble soon spread to Belfast, where gunfire was introduced for the first time. Three days after the troubles began eight Irishmen had been killed, including an eight year old boy in Belfast, and hundreds

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of millions of dollars worth of damage had been done.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary and their deputies, the totally Protestant B-Specials, had been unable to restore order.

(FILM CLIP)

British troops, for the first time in more than fifty years, were called upon to keep the peace within the borders of the British Isles. The last time had also been in Ireland, in the bloody 1916 rebellion in Dublin, now the capitol of the Irish Republic.

By the terms of the Home Rule Act passed in 1914, but suspended because of World War I, a unified Ireland was to be granted self government. The Protestant Ulstermen rejected this and came close to civil war themselves.

In 1921 twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties became the Irish Free State, later the Irish Republic. And the remaining six became the United Kingdom Enclave, Northern Ireland, or Ulster.

The uneasy peace of the past forty-eight years has been broken often by raids of the outlawed Irish Republican Army, and most recently by friction growing out of the Catholic civil rights movement beginning last October.

Reforms have been promised by the British Government and the local Protestant leadership, which has little hope of support from its followers. And the British troops remain in Londonderry and Belfast.

The continuing battle remains to be resolved in Belfast, the seat of the government representing the one million Protestant

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majority and not, it is charged by the Catholics, representing their five hundred thousand member minority.

Our guests again are Bernadette Devlin, M.P., and W. Stratton Mills, M.P. And if we may, we'd like to begin with each of our speakers taking a minute and a half to state their differing positions.

Miss Devlin, if you will first please.

BERNADETTE DEVLIN: My position is very brief. I would like to correct you first that I represent the Catholics of Northern Ireland. I represent the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, and I am one individual member of Parliament.

I have taken the stand that I have been forced to take because the Unionist government has ruled my country for fifty years. It has ruled it corruptly, it has ruled it unfairly. Therefore as one individual under the control of that government I have a democratic right, in a democratic and supposedly Christian society, to voice my grievance, and to have my grievance heard and acted upon by my government.

Therefore not I, but my government, as represented by Mr. Stratton Mills, is on trial.

MC CUTCHEON: Mr. Mills.

W. STRATTON MILLS: I find myself in the position, I think as do most responsible people in Northern Ireland, of being immensely saddened by very many of the things that have happened in the last month, which frankly I would not have believed possible that this would come about. Terrible things have happened, eight people have lost their lives, Protestants and Catholics both.

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I can speak with experience of the -- being behind the barricades in both areas, the Protestant areas and the Catholic areas. And I'd say this to you, with all the sincerity that I can at my command, that the fear is there on both sides, no side has any monopoly. And probably no side has any monopoly of the rights and wrongs as to what happened in those events of the last month.

A top level inquiry headed by a British high court judge is to go into that, and see what's to be -- what happened during this terrible time.

But I welcome the words of James Callahan, the British Home Secretary, who called on all people to reduce tension and increase confidence, so that life can go on. And he says, of course, and I agree with him, that ninety-five percent of the people of Ulster live together peaceably. Though I think on looking at those pictures this evening, that would not have been the impression you got.

And I have asked Bernadette Devlin to, through her weight in the civil rights movement, in the movement she represents, to get the barriers down in Bogside.

MC CUTCHEON: Your minute and a half is up. Miss Devlin took much less than her allotted time.

Would you like to question Mr. Mills, Miss Devlin?

DEVLIN: Yes, on a number of points. You have in fact stated the fact of the inquiry. You did omit, however, that the inquiry came from the British Government, and not from the Northern Ireland Government. You did in fact give Mr. Callahan's

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statement. You omitted to point out to many Americans that Mr. Callahan is the Home Secretary for the British Parliament, who has, much against the will of the Unionist government, foisted his demands of reform on them.

However, again you have omitted to point out the fact that these are promises, promises which we have been hearing about since the 5th of October. Promises for which no machinery has been put into effect to make really meaningful.

One will admit we do have an ombudsman; we are having one man one vote, following the most sophisticated gerrymander of the western world, to make sure that votes do not count.

And I would like to stress that I am not talking about Catholics and Protestants. I am quite sure that the fear behind the Catholic barricades and the Protestant barricades is equal. My argument with the government is not solely its treatment of Catholics, but its reason for active discrimination for Catholics.

And I will point out at this stage a letter from the British Ambassador in Washington, in answer to a letter from Mr. Michael Stuart, the Foreign Secretary. If I may quote his answer to this, he says, "My main point is that the problem is a great deal more difficult than you give it credit for. But if all you ask is a frank admission that anti-Catholic bias has been present in Northern Ireland, then you may certainly have it."

My argument is not merely that this anti-Catholic bias has come, not from prejudice only of misguided people frightened

of their own position, but has come in the very legislation of the government, and has been used, not simply because they don't like Catholics, but to create a marginally better position for the Protestant working class.

I am sure Mr. Mills will admit that there are no slums worse than the slums of Shanker(?); that in factories where people are paid almost thirty-three percent less than their fellow workers in the rest of the United Kingdom. One doesn't ask, when they're getting their pay packet, are they Catholic or Protestant. What worries me is not that they are either Catholic or Protestant, but that they are grossly underpaid, and that the government of Northern Ireland has deliberately maintained a high unemployment position in order to keep a pool of cheap labor, and in order to secure the support of the Protestant working class, which ordinarily would not support such a government. They have to create a marginally better position for that section of the community, much as in the position of the black and the poor white in this country. The Protestant working class support the government, not for what the government gives them, but for fear that they might lose what little they have to the Catholic working class, because they realize, as all of us realize, that if things are to be shared out equally, the people at the top are going to part with nothing. Therefore the Protestant working class would suffer a lowering in standard to give equality to Catholics.

This is why no one in conscience asks for simply Catholic equality. Because we will not see our fellow Protestant Irishmen suffer either.

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MC CUTCHEON: Mr. Mills, do you have any questions for Miss Devlin? And I'd like to make an observation at this point. Instead of restating positions, if we could probe these varying positions between the two of you, I think it would be much more profitable.

MILLS: I'll just say in passing, I counted something about either fifteen or seventeen inaccuracies in the remarks of Miss Devlin there. But could I go on to put about three questions? Firstly...

DEVLIN: Are you going to let the fifteen or seventeen inaccuracies go by the board?

MILLS: I've been asked by the chairman to ask you a question -- ask you questions. If in fact the chairman allows me to go over these sixteen or seventeen points, then I'll gladly do that. I jotted some of them down here.

MC CUTCHEON: Well let's get to those later. I would prefer if you would ask the three questions.

MILLS: Right, but I think that's on the record. Firstly, why is it that Bernadette Devlin has refused to implement this agreement which was drawn up last week between the British Government, between the Northern Ireland Government, supported by the Roman Catholic cardinal, and which the British Home Secretary said, when he announced it in a joint statement -- Jim Callahan's words were -- he gave a warning that extremists on both sides would try to stop people living in peace, they were acting without any sense of responsibility.

And I condemn equally the activity of the Reverend Ian

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Paisley, who I understand is coming to this country, and does not speak for the bulk of Unionists in Northern Ireland, as I condemn Bernadette Devlin, who has deliberately refused to support this, in getting down tensions.

My second question...

MC CUTCHEON: And your question for Miss Devlin is what?

MILLS: The reason why she's done this. The second question...

MC CUTCHEON: Would you prefer...

DEVLIN: Would you prefer to have the questions answered all at once?

MC CUTCHEON: I think if you would answer them now.

(APPLAUSE)

DEVLIN: My answer to that question is quite simple. The people in the Bogside, which is the area which I was personally concerned with, put up the barricades as a method of defense. They put up the barricades because since the 5th of October they have suffered at the hands of the police. The police have not behaved in a disciplined fashion as the guardians of the peace.

You will remember the Bailey report, which the government has as yet refused to publish, an impartial inquiry into police behavior, carried out by a policeman, on the behavior of policemen who allegedly went down the Leckey Road, a road in the slum area, off Bogside, consisting mainly of young families and old age pensioners, attacked these homes, and verbally abused, intimidated and frightened the people inside. And a further occasion when approximately one thousand policemen entered the

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Bogside and attacked people on the streets.

Now these people are frightened. They have no great political reason for keeping up those barricades, except that they know that to take those barricades down, after fifty years Unionist government -- This is why when the Unionist government promises anybody anything, we like to see it in action first. We've had fifty years of promises, promises unkept.

If you think anybody in the Bogside is going to take the word of the government that there will be no reprisals when those barricades come down, while the Northern Ireland Government still maintains its Special Powers Act, when one individual in Derry, Mr. William O'Donnell, in the space of three hours, from eight o'clock to twelve o'clock in the morning, was arrested, charged, tried, found guilty, sentenced to six months imprisonment. He could produce his employer's evidence that having received an industrial injury he was in hospital. He could produce his doctor's evidence. He was refused by the police in Victoria Station to call on either.

MILLS: This is irrelevant. Now...

DEVLIN: This is not irrelevant. This shows...

MILLS: ...this in fact is going into a detailed case...

DEVLIN: ...this shows that we cannot trust our government.

MILLS: ...this is going into a detailed case, with the greatest respect, Mr. Chairman - going into a detailed case, using it rather in emotional terms, not giving the true facts on it, I imagine, and also...

DEVLIN: This is the true facts.

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MILLS: ...omitting -- omitting to point out that, of course, there is the right of appeal for him.

DEVLIN: There is no right for anyone under the Special Powers Act.

MILLS: Could I just say this, Mr. Chairman...?

DEVLIN: Will you accept that, that there is no right for anything under the Special Powers Act?

MC CUTCHEON: Couldn't we have a definite...

MILLS: I won't accept this at all, I think...

MC CUTCHEON: Could we have a definition of the Special Powers Act for our audience? How would you define the Special Powers Act?

MILLS: Mr. Chairman, I must insist on this. Could we, before we...

DEVLIN: Yes, let us have a definition of the Special Powers Act.

MILLS: ...before we get out --

(APPLAUSE)

What in fact you started off by saying was, first of all, to let Miss Devlin ask some questions to me. Then you suggested I ask some questions to her.

MC CUTCHEON: Yes, one has been asked. We'd like to...

MILLS: She in fact now is going into a long monologue, in highly emotional terms, on the matter which has been put to her.

DEVLIN: This is the answer to my question. You asked me why I will not take down the barricades. I will not ask my

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people to take down the barricades, because to do so would be to ask my people to allow themselves to be walked over by the Unionist government and by the police force. We have had fifty years of broken promises, fifty years of no promises, fifty years of active discrimination. And you think that after fifty years, that because you come in smiling with old Jim Callahan behind you, who for fifty years hadn't the guts to make you behave yourselves, that we're going to say, "Yes, sir."

Not on your life. Take away the Special Powers Act and give us the right to appeal to law courts, if we are brought to court, and we might consider it.

MC CUTCHEON: Mr. Mills, you're next.

(APPLAUSE)

I would ask the audience this. Our time is limited, and we're trying to get as much substance in this program as we can. So if you would please limit your displays.

MILLS: Could I say this, Mr. Chairman...

MC CUTCHEON: Mr. Mills, you're next.

MILLS: ...that it does seem to me that Miss Devlin is getting an undue share of the time, in giving very, very lengthy answers indeed.

(APPLAUSE)

DEVLIN: I will be quiet and you explain the Special Powers Act.

MILLS: She has had her say. Now let me in fact go on with the things I want to put on record here.

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MC CUTCHEON: May I interrupt?

MILLS: Yeah.

MC CUTCHEON: You insisted on asking Miss Devlin another question. Do you want to ask her that question now?

MILLS: Yes, indeed. The question I want to ask - we'll go into a number of the matters, I hope, in discussion later on, of the points that we both have raised on this, and have I think a quick debate on the points backwards and forwards, rather than a long monologue.

But could I say this, that Miss Devlin has come to America, she says, to collect a million dollars. The funds which - I don't know, she I hope is not going to try and use the emotional argument of people in distress, whether they be Protestant or Catholic, that she is not going to use the emotional argument for political purposes. And it seems to me that she has rather dragged in a great deal of other things, playing on human sympathy in this jountry. And she has done this, which I think is really prostituting the whole appeal which she is making here.

Could I go on to put this also on record? It has been said that these funds are to be administered by Miss Devlin. She has given her own...

DEVLIN; this is incorrect.

MILLS: She has given her own personal assurance, though of course...

DEVLIN: But the statement is incorrect.

MILLS: ...she has of course said herself that she has broken the oath of allegiance which she took in the British Parliament, which I saw her taking, to the Queen, so that one just

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doesn't know how much weight to place on that one.

MC CUTCHEON: I think in fairness to Miss Devlin, we should let her respond to this charge...

DEVLIN: Yes.

MC CUTCHEON: ...which she says...

MILLS: I haven't finished with this question of the funds.

MC CUTCHEON: We'll come back to you.

DEVLIN: Do let Mr. Mills finish. He's absolutely...

MILLS: ...on the question of funds. I hope that she won't have this fund administered really out of -- with -- out of her own back pocket, if I could put it this way. One doesn't know -- she says that the money won't be used for arms. I would be much happier if this money was handed over to proper independent people...

DEVLIN: You mean to the government to use for arms.

MILLS: No, to a proper independent body, the one in Belfast set up by the leaders of the three churches, to which I myself have contributed. This I think would have much greater weight, and I think it would create much greater confidence that this wasn't going to be used either for political purposes or military purposes.

DEVLIN: May I now make my position clear? Mr. Mills quite naturally doesn't trust my position. But as I say, I am only one person. And whether he trusts me or not is a matter of individuality. But whether people trust his government or not is a greater question. On it depends the lives of people.

I have come here, and I have quite honestly stated why I

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have come, that I have had two reasons in coming: to explain that the struggle in Ireland is not Catholic versus Protestant. Because the fighting took place between the people of the Catholic sium area and the state. And very few of the ordinary Protestant population became involved in it.

I have stated my own political position. I have stated I have come here to collect funds for relief. That I will give a personal guarantee that none of these funds will be used for violence. And if I were to discover that they were, that I should make a public statement and demand, and in fact do the best...

MILLS: Who is administering them, who are the auditors and who are the trustees?

DEVLIN: I shall come to that. The money is at present, in every city I have visited, frozen in a bank account, to be transferred to a bank account in Ireland. And I will point out that we are wondering whether in fact it's safe to put it in Northern Ireland, such is our trust in our government. And there, while the money is frozen, the Civil Rights Association, which is a perfectly - I do believe even Mr. Callahan, your great friend, called it a responsible body - will set up proper administration to see that this is administered to all those in need, irrespective of their religion.

One thing we do not want to see is the rebuilding of our country on old lines. I am answering the question.

(BACKGROUND COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE)

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MC CUTCHEON: Miss Devlin, Miss Devlin, Miss Devlin - please, please, please. To redress - please - just a moment...

DEVLIN: How would you like the question answered, gentlemen?

MC CUTCHEON: To redress what is now an imbalance of time, I think we must get back to Mr. Mills.

MILLS: Yes, I...

DEVLIN: That's a good idea.

MILLS: ...certainly find that answer very, very unsatisfactory. It raises I think a great doubt for many of the Irish Americans, whose knowledge of Ireland is based on the picture of Ireland over the last century, that they in fact believe that this money is going to be used for political purposes.

DEVLIN: I just have made perfectly clear that it will not. Unlike yourself, my word can be taken at value.

MILLS: Miss Devlin cannot say who are the trustees who are going to administer it. Who are the...

DEVLIN: I can tell you at the moment - Mr. Frank Gogarty, who is chairman of the Civil Rights Association, is the person who will have the right to authorize the banks, when in fact auditors have been set up. After this point the money is - and I can, in fact, if you want me to go through, city by city, tell you where each account is, in which bank it is. And you can find out where it is.

MC CUTCHEON: I'm afraid we don't have time for that, Miss Devlin. Mr. Mills.

MILLS: Can I just say on this: Mr. Gogarty, the chairman of

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the Civil Rights Association, who has come to America, he said two weeks ago in an interview with the Daily Mail, that he was in constant touch with the IRA. And this is the man who is administering the funds.

DEVLIN: No...

MILLS: This is the man who is administering the funds.

DEVLIN: Mr. Gogarty...

MILLS: And I think now we're getting to the truth from Miss Devlin.

DEVLIN: No, Mr. Gogarty may well be in constant touch with the IRA, which is Mr. Gogarty's prerogative. May I point out that Mr. McKeig(?) could say on television in Northern Ireland that the British Army - and it's interesting to note that it is the supporters of the British Union who don't want the British Army, that it is Major Chichester Clarke...

MILLS: That's not true, there are troops as well...

DEVLIN: ...Major Chichester Clarke who wants peace, but who will not accept direct British rule. The Shank Hill (?) Defense Association could say that the British Army could have all of these special guns they want, we've got literally hundreds at home. This man is not in Cromlen(?) Jail for making this statement. But under the Special Powers Act other people are.

MC CUTCHEON: Miss Devlin, can I interrupt? The ground rules of this debate seem to be becoming rapidly non-existent. But there is one ground rule I'd like to stick to. I would like to ask a question. This issue, it seems to me, has been increasingly inflamed by personality, and as you both have indicated,

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emotion. Is there any one major substantive point on which you two are united?

DEVLIN: Yes, the people in Northern Ireland are too poor, and the government is too rich. Would you agree?

MILLS: That's a somewhat superficial comment. What I would say is this, that -- that -- that I think I would hope that I have common ground with Miss Devlin on this, that...

DEVLIN: We are both members of the British Parliament.

MILLS: No, I think -- I hope we have common ground on another matter as well. That -- I hope we have the common ground -- I repeat this -- where what Ireland really needs are responsible politicians and not rabble rousers. And I hope...

DEVLIN: But Ireland hardly needs its James Connally.

MILLS: And I hope that emotional arguments, the building up of hatred, which I condemn by the extreme Protestants as much as I condemn it by Miss Devlin, can be banished from our land. I hope that this is something which...

DEVLIN: Can one ask what active steps you would take to do this?

MC CUTCHEON: I'm afraid -- I'm afraid we have time...

MILLS: Yes, I would gladly answer that, if I can.

DEVLIN: What active steps...

MC CUTCHEON: I'm afraid we have no further time, Miss Devlin, the time has flown. I'll ask you now, each of you, to summarize your position. I know it's increasingly difficult -- to summarize your position in a scant thirty seconds, please.

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Miss Devlin.

DEVLIN: Might one permit Mr. Mills, since I started?

MC CUTCHEON: Mr. Mills.

MILLS: When that's a very courteous invitation. I would say this, that I referred to Miss Devlin as a Fidel Castro in a mini-skirt. The reason I did this, I'm going to expand on in greater detail at a press conference in the New York Press Club on Friday, producing documentary evidence on this.

But I want to refer both to the statement by the Catholic Truth Society in Belfast this morning, saying that Roman Catholics are being exploited by extreme left wing and subversive elements; the resignation of the secretary of the Civil Rights Association because of the extreme Socialist revolutionaries.

And I think that this puts in question the whole credibility of the face Miss Devlin's been putting in this country.

MC CUTCHEON: Mr. Mills, I'm afraid I must exercise a time limitation. Miss Devlin, would you...

DEVLIN: The problem in our country has been for fifty years that we have lived in an unjust society, we have lived in poverty. We have asked our government for economic and social justice; for fifty years it has been refused. There now seems only one peaceful solution, the solution which the Unionist government has refused. That is to abolish Stormont(?), and to institute direct rule from Westminster, until such time as the whole problem of the Irish question can be solved.

The cry of the government has always been Ulster is British.

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And this is a peaceful solution; and yet it is the town cryers of Ulster is British who will not accept direct British rule.

MC CUTCHEON: Thank you.

DEVLIN: In fact, the whole...

MC CUTCHEON: I'm sorry, Miss Devlin.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you very much, Miss Devlin and Mr. Mills. And thank you all for being with us. I'm Dick McCutcheon. Goodnight.

ANNOUNCER: This is NET, the Public Television Network.