



O RTE

**NORTHERN
IRELAND**

**THE HIDDEN
TRUTH**

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WHAT THIS BOOKLET IS FOR

Northern Ireland has been the subject of much comment and discussion; but far too little accurate information has been available about it. Much of the comment has been almost totally unrelated to a background of plain fact.

Apart from a lack of accurate information, the world at large has been treated to a heavily financed propaganda campaign directed against Northern Ireland. This has caused many people to believe things about Northern Ireland which are quite untrue.

It is the purpose of this booklet to record the facts about a number of matters of public concern in Northern Ireland, for the information of people both inside and outside the province.

RELATIONS WITH THE IRISH REPUBLIC

A British Heritage

The major disturbing factor in the life and history of Northern Ireland has always been its relations with its southern neighbour, known at various times as Southern Ireland, the Irish Free State, Eire or the Republic of Ireland.

Northern Ireland itself has been part of the United Kingdom for more than 170 years, and its people have been a distinct community under the Crown for over three-and-a-half centuries.

At no time has Ireland as a whole been really politically united except under British rule. Democratic machinery of government, and all those institutions which are today familiar essentials of a healthy modern political society, came to Ireland as part of the United Kingdom and were not in existence, even in embryo, prior to the whole island coming under British rule.

At no time in history has the island of Ireland been a single, independent, politically united entity.

Southern Ireland's Secession

A partition of Ireland was not the aim of the British government which gave Northern Ireland its constitution in 1920. Two provincial legislatures were to function within a limited range of local matters for the two distinctive communities which existed in Ireland, but these two were to work together within the framework of a common Council of Ireland. A partition occurred only because the political forces of Sinn Fein dominated the south of Ireland by force, procured an electoral triumph in the 1918 general election by methods of violence and intimidation, and rejected any plan of co-operation between north and south.

When Sinn Fein drove southern Ireland to secede altogether from the United Kingdom, the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland desired to remain British and to avoid being dominated by the reactionary social and political forces which held sway in the south. This decision of the majority of people in Northern Ireland to remain British has

been endorsed by an impressive majority of votes at every general election subsequently held there.

Southern Ireland's secession from the United Kingdom was accompanied by a vicious campaign of violence directed against Northern Ireland. The hallmark of southern Irish political ambition came at that time to be bomb outrages, incendiarism, murder and the destruction of public and private property. This confirmed people in Northern Ireland in the view that they had made a right choice in not throwing their lot in with their aggressive and unstable southern neighbors.

In spite of this, the government of Northern Ireland at all times tried to establish an understanding with the southern government and to bring about as much as remained possible of that co-operation which had existed while both communities had been within the United Kingdom and which was to have been extended under the settlement of 1920 which the south had rejected.

Agreement Reached

Finally in 1925 a treaty was signed between north and south. This treaty was freely negotiated and was mainly the result of direct conversations between the prime ministers of Northern Ireland and of the Irish Free State. The United Kingdom government was also a party to this treaty. The agreement provided for recognition of the existing frontier, for future discussions between the two governments and for extending co-operation between north and south. The preamble to the treaty stated that the governments desired to "aid one another in a spirit of neighborly comradeship".

The treaty was not only signed by representatives of the governments but was endorsed by the parliaments of all three participating countries. With pride in their achievements, the governments who signed the agreement caused their treaty to be registered with the League of Nations. The event caused happiness on all sides and a new confidence for the future. It was certainly the kind of agreement that the majority of people in Northern Ireland have always desired.

Agreement Dishonoured

In the south, however, this agreement was presently wrecked. Another Dublin government, under Mr. Eamonn De Valera, repudiated the recognition that had been given to Northern Ireland, claimed complete *de jure* sovereignty over all Northern Ireland, and also made the frontier between north and south into a formidable tariff barrier.

By withdrawing all recognition from Northern Ireland and by writing a claim to the right to possess and govern Northern Ireland into the 1937 constitution of Eire, the Dublin government destroyed good relations not only at that time but for the future; for, with the Dublin government rigidly entrenched behind this claim, free negotiation between the two governments became impossible.

Continued Conciliation Efforts

In spite of this most discouraging situation, the Northern Ireland government persisted in trying to hold a door open for co-operation. Although it could no longer negotiate agreements with a government which did not give

it recognition, it managed to initiate a number of useful agreements or contracts between departments of the two governments. These ensured co-operation in land drainage, sharing of electrical resources, control of railways in the public interest, co-operation in certain police matters, the control of animal diseases and a number of other useful arrangements of mutual advantage.

During half a century, every friendly advance has come from the northern side. Lord Craigavon, the first prime minister of Northern Ireland, met and tried to reach an understanding with Eamonn De Valera, Michael Collins, Kevin O'Higgins, W. T. Cosgrave and other southern leaders. It was his negotiations with Cosgrave and O'Higgins which brought about the treaty of 1925.

In 1965, when Mr. De Valera had retired from party-political life, Captain Terence O'Neill (later Lord O'Neill of the Maine), then prime minister of Northern Ireland, attempted to follow the same policy as Lord Craigavon and initiated personal discussions with Mr. Sean Lemass, prime minister of the Irish Republic, on practical co-operation between north and south. These encouraging efforts were wrecked by Mr. Lemass's successor, Mr. Jack Lynch, who made controversial public references to "the evils of partition" and intervened with comment in various internal matters in Northern Ireland.

AGGRESSION FROM THE SOUTH

Terrorist Campaigns

Where there is a claim to sovereignty there is also an implied claim to a right to impose that sovereignty by force. This claim has often been openly made in the Irish Republic with regard to Northern Ireland. In 1946 Mr. De Valera said that if he had been at the head of a powerful nation he would not have hesitated to use force to incorporate Northern Ireland in the Republic. In 1939 he had already put forward the idea, in a speech to the Dublin senate, that, in order to give reality to his ideal of national uniformity, Ulster Unionists could be deported to Britain.

While the Dublin government did not itself make any open move against Northern Ireland in terms of military force, it created and developed the climate of opinion in which others did. A series of campaigns of violence and outrage was directed against the province by secret terrorist organisations, of which the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) was the most prominent. Such campaigns occurred in the later 1930's and through the period of World War II, again from 1956 to 1962, and again from 1968.

The Dublin government completely dissociated itself from these campaigns and even declared the I.R.A. an illegal organisation. But, with the aid of quite flimsy legal subterfuges, and sometimes quite openly, the I.R.A. has been able to use the territory of the Republic as its base of operations against Northern Ireland, collect funds there, maintain a headquarters, issue public statements, hold press conferences and public meetings and elicit support both from the southern Irish public and in countries with which the Republic has diplomatic relations.

Moreover, while not associating itself with I.R.A. atrocities in Northern Ireland, the Dublin government has always been very willing to represent to the world as discreditable to Northern Ireland any spontaneous public reaction there against these campaigns of violence.

Religion and Politics

In support of I.R.A. terrorism there has been a continuous effort to involve the Northern Ireland Roman Catholic community and to organise it as a "fifth column".

These efforts have been far from uniformly successful. In an opinion survey made in 1968 and used by Professor Richard Rose, only 13 per cent. of the many Roman Catholic respondents to the question agreed with the view "that it would be right to take any measures necessary in order to end Partition and bring Ulster into the Republic".

And in a United Kingdom general election in 1959, when all twelve Northern Ireland Westminster seats were contested by both Unionists and by Sinn Fein, the political wing of the I.R.A., 77.2 per cent. of the total votes cast went to the Unionist candidates and only 11.0 per cent. to Sinn Fein.

Equally the Nationalists have tried to identify religion with politics by creating among Roman Catholics an attitude of aggrieved self-pity and hence of social irresponsibility. Instead of basing their organisation upon constituency associations as do the Unionist Party and the Labour Party, the Nationalist Party had for many years, as its controlling body, an organisation called the Catholic Voters' Registration Committee.

A third of the voters in Northern Ireland are Roman Catholics but at no general election have candidates and parties specifically favouring the incorporation of Northern Ireland in the Republic received more than a quarter of the votes cast in Northern Ireland. This includes the Northern Ireland general election of 1969 and the United Kingdom general election of 1970, when an emphatic polarisation of politics on a sectarian basis was claimed to have taken place.

There has been even less statistical support for the repeated assertion by southern Irish politicians that 40 per cent. of the people of Northern Ireland desire incorporation in the Republic.

Thus, although a small hard core of Republicans, ready to support extreme measures to coerce Northern Ireland into the Republic, has been created within the Roman Catholic portion of the community in Northern Ireland, and this hard core has endeavored, at times with some success, to organise the Roman Catholic floating vote round itself, a complete polarisation of politics on lines of religious division has never been achieved.

Propaganda Abroad

There has also been an unremitting effort to organise, in support of I.R.A. efforts, a body of opinion in many other countries. This is attempted mainly by representing the choice of the majority in Northern Ireland to remain British as being only a contrivance of a brutal British imperialism and not a democratic fact, and by representing the Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland as a deeply persecuted minority.

Much support for Republican activists has come, as a result, regularly from America, where credulous and simple-minded persons have been persuaded to part with their money to finance murder and destruction in Northern Ireland. In 1936, for example, 400 Thomson machine guns were brought from America to forward Republican aims; and this movement of arms and explosives into Northern Ireland has continued to this day as the result of a naive acceptance of Irish Republican propaganda, including that of the Dublin government.

The unremitting zeal of the government of the Republic to intervene in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland by comment or through approaches to the United Kingdom government or through international organisations and foreign governments may also be seen as largely a propaganda exercise.

The government of Northern Ireland has scrupulously refrained at all times from interfering in any way in the internal affairs of the Republic, even when incidents which have arisen connected with the shabby treatment given to the Protestant minority in the Republic have made it difficult and distressing to maintain this restraint.

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NORTHERN IRELAND'S DEFENCE PROBLEMS

Limited Powers

The government of Northern Ireland was constituted solely to deal with the internal affairs of the province. It was not given powers to cope with pressures put upon it from another country, still less with active aggression from beyond its frontiers. It has neither armed forces nor any form of diplomatic service.

For the defence of a frontier of 240 miles and an area of over 5,000 square miles, it had only a full-time professional police force limited by law to 3,000 men and the part-time services of 8,000 to 10,000 men enrolled as special constables. The army was available only in special circumstances and by arrangement with the United Kingdom government.

Northern Ireland, as part of its defence against terrorist infiltration, has also had special legislation, based on earlier British legislation and similar to legislation enacted in the Irish Republic. This gives the Northern Ireland government powers of internment and other drastic action to limit subversive violence. Normally these powers are not used. The Northern Ireland government has never followed the example of two Dublin governments which not only imprisoned their political opponents but executed some of them on a basis which has been characterised as judicial murder.

Defence Against Propaganda

While the Irish Republic has maintained diplomatic representatives and other agencies in most of the major countries abroad, Northern Ireland has not been directly represented anywhere abroad in this way. The diplomatic agencies of the Republic have been used extensively for the issue of propa-

ganda, including, for example, maps of Northern Ireland claiming quite mendaciously to show large areas in which the inhabitants were alleged to desire incorporation in the Republic, spurious statistics with regard to the proportion of the population desiring this incorporation, and allegations about religious discrimination, electoral corruption and other adverse conditions said to prevail in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has had no machinery for replying to this kind of attack. In the absence of reply, many completely untrue accounts of the province's institutions and quality of daily life have passed into worldwide circulation and into general acceptance.



The Abercorn: a Restaurant crowded with shoppers having their afternoon tea, then it was a scene of death and destruction wrecked by another I.R.A. bomb

Britain's Position

The defence and diplomatic representation of Northern Ireland have always been in the care of the United Kingdom government, since Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom government has always, and very properly, tried to keep on friendly terms with the government of the Irish Republic, but there has always been a temptation to achieve this by refraining from raising issues connected with Northern Ireland.

On crucial occasions the United Kingdom government did, in a most clear and correct manner, state that Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and that, as Lord Attlee put it in 1948, "The view of the government of the United Kingdom has always been that no change should be made in the constitution of Northern Ireland without Northern Ireland's free agreement". But in the day-to-day clarification of what is happening in Northern Ireland and in the task of refuting untruths that have been put into circulation about the province the United Kingdom government has been very inactive.

Reasons for this are probably to be found not only in a desire to placate and appease the Irish Republic but in the fact that there has been created in Britain a large Republican vote. Half a century of economic depression and failure under successive Dublin governments has caused over a million people to leave the Republic to seek the employment and prosperity which their own country had denied them. Most of these people have settled in Britain, where they have been freely given the full privileges of United Kingdom citizenship, although their basic loyalty has in most cases remained with the Irish Republic.

There has been built up among these immigrants an Irish political vote which has come to hold the balance in over fifty marginal constituencies in Britain and asserts substantial pressure in many more. This has created at Westminster an Irish Republican "lobby" which exerts an influence at all times hostile to Northern Ireland through members of Parliament anxious to appease the Irish vote in their own constituencies.

Reactions Within Northern Ireland

Where a small country is kept under constant threat to its existence by a larger neighboring country and is the subject, not only of worldwide propaganda attack, but of active terrorist violence, and efforts to organise subversion and disruption are continuously carried on from beyond its frontier, its inhabitants are at all times under a good deal of strain. Things arise within such a country which would never happen if the pressure from outside had not been present.

"Ulster", said Lord Craigavon, the first prime minister of Northern Ireland, "is nobody's Czechoslovakia". The historical analogy that was in his mind was that of Czechoslovakia as it was in the 1930's, when Nazi Germany endeavored to use the small German community within Czechoslovakia for the purpose of breaking up that country, and a weak British government had been putting pressure on the Czechs to concede everything to the Nazis.

In such a situation there is always a possibility of "backlash"; but the general public attitude in Northern Ireland has been remarkably temperate

and stable through many years of provocation. There was a general repugnance towards the notion of reprisal in any form when murders and outrages were committed by Republican terrorists. The standard of freedom of speech and of public comment was also quite remarkable, and there are few countries in the world where the luxury of engaging in treasonable utterances has been so cheaply accessible to anybody.



“Donegall Street — the aftermath of one of the worst I.R.A. atrocities yet”



A dustman is carried away but Sean MacStiofain, L.R.A. Leader, says "we take every effort to avoid civilian casualties"

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RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

The Minority in the Republic

A major purpose behind the granting of a separate parliament to Northern Ireland was the wish to give protection to the Protestant minority in Ireland. That there was need for a safeguard has been shown by the fate of the Protestant community in the area now comprising the Irish Republic. Although the general population level of the Republic has been very stable, the Protestant population there has been squeezed out at a rate of over one per cent. per annum.

In the fifteen years between 1946 and 1961, while the number of Roman Catholics in the Republic fell by 4.0 per cent., the number of Presbyterians fell by 20.6 per cent., Methodists by 20.1 per cent., and members of the Church of Ireland by 16.7 per cent.

Although Protestants who come to terms with the regime are able, within certain professions and income groups, to be successful in the Republic, and a small number of them have entered politics and achieved cabinet rank, and one has held the office of President, yet the less privileged rank and file of Protestants have found themselves up against widespread job discrimination. As the figures already quoted show, the proportion of young Protestants who have been forced to leave the Republic in search of a career has been four or five times greater than the proportion of young Roman Catholics.

In addition there have been some very disturbing court decisions in the Republic in such fields as custody of minors and physical assaults upon Protestants, and there has been such an incident as the Fethard boycott of Protestants. Under a declaredly sectarian constitution, Roman Catholic

doctrine is imposed upon Protestants in such matters as marriage, divorce, contraception and the relations of the sexes generally and in literary and artistic freedom. An atmosphere has been created that is hostile to a wide variety of pursuits and interests which are regarded as normal in non-Roman Catholic countries or, in some cases, anywhere outside the seventeenth century. Protestants also have often little option but to make use of a clerically dominated education system.

It is not surprising that under this intensely sectarian regime the Protestant minority in the Republic has been more than halved since the Irish Free State was founded half a century ago.

The Position in Northern Ireland

Historically Ulster has the most radical and progressive political and social tradition of any region in the British Isles. Protestant Ulster provided the roots of the American revolution, worked for and welcomed the relaxation of penal laws against Roman Catholics in Ireland, refused to participate in those slave-trading enterprises on which Liverpool and Bristol grew fat, and sent a dozen very radical Liberal members to Parliament at Westminster until Gladstone ceased to keep faith with them. Those progressive sympathies have remained as much alive in the twentieth century as in the eighteenth or nineteenth.

In Northern Ireland every religious body is in a minority. The largest of these minorities has been the Roman Catholics who make up just over a third of the population. Other bodies account for the remaining two-thirds, the Presbyterians being the largest of them, followed by the Church of Ireland and the Methodists. With the setting up of the new government of Northern Ireland there arose a variety of matters of debate among these various religious bodies, such as education; but settlements acceptable to most were soon reached. The Roman Catholics alone held themselves apart.

This dissidence of the Roman Catholics seems to have arisen less from strictly religious reasons than from the fact that they had allowed themselves to be made a vehicle for political interests.

In an earlier period there had been a relatively relaxed relationship between Roman Catholics and their Protestant neighbors. There was a time when the local Roman Catholic bishop joined in the traditional celebrations of the relief of the city of Londonderry; and a prominent Roman Catholic found it easy and natural at the beginning of the present century to sit in parliament as a Unionist for a Londonderry constituency. And to this day, outside the emotional intensities created by Irish political nationalism, English Roman Catholic members of Parliament have had close and happy relations with Ulster Unionists. But with the disturbances at the beginning of the 1920's a distinct though incomplete polarisation of religious bodies on political lines seemed to occur so far as Roman Catholics in Ireland, north or south, were concerned.

After the birth of Northern Ireland, Roman Catholics boycotted Parliament, the police force (in which a proportion of places had been specially reserved for them), parts of the education system and other areas of public life in which responsibility is needed. Not only did they tend to be unwilling

to undertake public responsibilities, but some of them openly attached themselves to organisations devoted to the overthrow of the state by more or less violent means.

The leaders of the Church identified themselves with this attitude of dissidence. They insisted upon having a separate education system, ensuring that children in the province grew up in two separate camps. They refrained from those courtesy actions, involving no political commitment, which are normal between the heads of churches and the heads of governments.

Government Policy

In the face of this attitude in one of the province's larger religious minorities, the government was careful to put the administration of Northern Ireland on a strictly impartial and non-sectarian basis. In the departments of justice and education, which were bound to be sensitive areas, they arranged for the appointment of Roman Catholics to be Northern Ireland's first Lord Chief Justice and the first head of the Ministry of Education, and made similar appointments to many other senior posts. Care was taken, where Roman Catholics refused to be represented or to present a case, as on a committee set up to review the education system, to see that their interests did not suffer by default.

Since the Roman Catholic hierarchy insisted rigidly on the maintenance of a separate sectarian education system for their people, parallel with the non-sectarian education system provided by the state, the Northern Ireland government subsidised that system on a most generous scale, so that at present over 95 per cent. of the cost of the separate Roman Catholic education system in Northern Ireland is met by the government, a situation without parallel in any country where the population is denominationally mixed and Roman Catholics are a minority.

There has also been great care taken by every successive government of Northern Ireland to provide for the special needs of the Roman Catholic community. Proportionately to their numbers, more houses have been provided for them at public expense than for any other group in the community, and they have been the recipients of more welfare expenditure.

Results of Government Policy

As a result of this special attention, the whole status of the Roman Catholic community in Northern Ireland has been steadily improved. As the Cameron Commission Report stated, "a much larger Catholic middle class has emerged". Roman Catholics have moved more and more into the professions and into public employment and have been playing an increasingly useful and responsible role in the community.

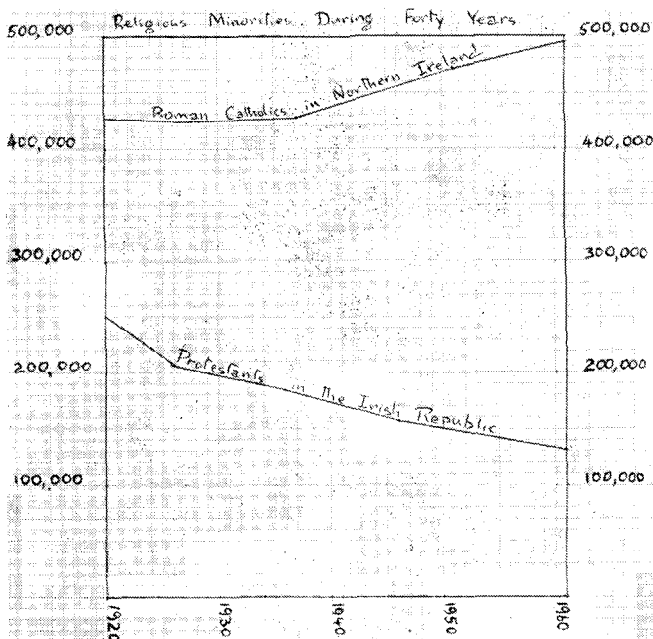
When the Northern Ireland government first took office, Roman Catholics were slightly declining in numbers in the province. Since then, however, they have increased more rapidly in numbers than any other element in the community.

A Comparison

The Protestant minority in the Irish Republic and the Roman Catholic minority in Northern Ireland were originally close enough to one another in size to make it easy to compare their respective growth or decline over a period of years. The following diagram shows how minorities have fared under the two governments, north and south. The figures on which the diagram is based are the following, taken from the census of population in the two countries.

Protestants in the		Roman Catholics in	
Year	Irish Republic	Year	Northern Ireland
1911	313,049	1911	430,161
1926	208,024	1926	420,428
1936	183,461	1937	428,290
1946	157,516	1951	471,466
1961	130,126	1961	497,547

The sharp fall in the number of Protestants in the Republic between 1911 and 1926 may be partly attributed to the withdrawal of the British army and of people in government service. The total population of the Republic has changed very little over the whole period. That of Northern Ireland increased from 1,246,561 in 1926 to 1,425,042 in 1961; but the number of Roman Catholics increased more rapidly than the general population, rising from 33.5 per cent. in 1926 to 34.9 per cent. in 1961. The year 1961 is the last for which figures are available from both countries, but the trends indicated in the diagram are known to have continued.



FIFTY YEARS OF GOVERNMENT ACHIEVEMENT

A Rising Quality of Life

When the government of Northern Ireland was first established, the province was in many respects in a position of serious inferiority to the area now comprising the Republic of Ireland. Farms were smaller, the public health record less satisfactory, education less accessible and less developed in most of its branches. There was also severe unemployment and a grave recession in nearly every main industry.

The government of Northern Ireland, however, was not crippled by the doctrinaire nationalism of its southern neighbors. Through long years of patient effort it has far outstripped the Dublin government in its achievements in nearly every field. Indeed Northern Ireland, from a very poor start, has got well ahead of most countries in the world in many of those aspects of life in which success depends upon government action. It is ahead in its health and welfare services, in its agricultural output, in its elimination of many diseases of both animals and humans, in the elimination of its once high infant and maternal mortality rates, in its schools, universities, training colleges and general education services, in its roads and transport services, its hospitals and its housing and amenities.

The improvement in Northern Ireland's trade and industrial productivity over the years has been revolutionary and it has been due to a very high degree to the government's persistent work in improving standards and attracting new and substantial industries. The province's agricultural productivity is ahead of that in any of the various regions of the British Isles, and its industrial output puts it well ahead of many larger industrial countries. With an annual trade turnover of more than £1,500 million, Northern Ireland is a place of immense economic activity, relatively more intensive activity than is to be found in most parts of Britain, and this is inevitably reflected in a rising standard of living.

Not only has Northern Ireland been able to raise its standard of living all round but it has been able to do this for a population which is one-fifth larger than it was half a century ago, for the province now has one-and-a-half million people, against one-and-a-quarter million in the 1920's.

A Contrast

Against this excellent history of achievement, the Irish Republic has had a sorry tale of lagging behind all western Europe in many aspects of its economic life. It should be remembered that the population of the Republic is almost exactly twice as great as that of Northern Ireland. Yet in some past years its exports have been less than half those of Northern Ireland, and its annual expenditure on education or the annual number of new houses built there have sometimes been lower than those of its small neighbour.

In wage levels, welfare services, social security, care of mothers and children, and all those matters in which a modern government looks after its people, the Irish Republic has lagged very far behind Northern Ireland.

Whatever their theoretical political sentiments, large sections of the population of the Irish Republic have given it a vote of no confidence by

emigrating. From a country with a population of less than three million people, a million have emigrated in the half century, seeking elsewhere the encouragement the opportunity and indeed the food and clothing and shelter, which they had been denied by fifty years of nationalistic and sectarian rule which has often pursued objectives quite irrelevant to the prosperity and happiness of ordinary people.

The story of the Irish Republic is one of continual failure, lack of industrial progress, rural depopulation, low productivity, heavy trading deficits, bad housing, low wages, the absence or inadequacy of many services which are nowadays deemed essential in a progressive modern society. The main industry of the Republic has long continued to be tourism and entertainment. While Northern Ireland was vigorously adapting itself to the demands of a competitive world, the Irish Republic tended to retreat into nationalistic self-contemplation as a quaint but occasionally xenophobia picture-postcard republic.

It is often imagined that the people of Northern Ireland could be bought over to acquiesce in being brought into the Republic by a few changes in the law there, such as higher social benefits or the repeal of legislation against family planning. but northern sympathies have been alienated not just by certain laws and customs incompatible with their way of life. They have been alienated by the whole half century of hopeless muddle and failure that they have seen in the Republic. They know that the quality of life and attitude and background which produced that muddle cannot be suddenly changed and that there can be no miraculous setting of that house in order.

Socially and economically, the Irish Republic has been a sick society, living by philosophies which belong to past centuries and are irrelevant to the modern world. It has been natural enough for successive governments there to try to distract public attention from their tragic condition by carrying on a campaign of hatred and denigration against Northern Ireland. To defend Northern Ireland from the contagion of southern Ireland's sickness has always been a major concern of every Northern Ireland government.

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HOW NORTHERN IRELAND'S ACHIEVEMENTS ARE PAID FOR

Who the British Taxpayer Is

Northern Ireland is taxed at the same level as the rest of the United Kingdom, and this taxation revenue goes into the United Kingdom Exchequer. When one comes upon the expression "the British taxpayer", this means an inhabitant of Northern Ireland just as much as it means somebody living in any part of Britain.

From the taxation revenue collected in Northern Ireland and pooled with other taxation revenue in the United Kingdom Exchequer, a sum of money has annually been paid back to the Northern Ireland government to enable it to maintain the social services and other public services for which it is responsible, at the same level as the corresponding services in Britain.

Similarly every other area of the United Kingdom contributes its taxation revenue to the United Kingdom Exchequer and in turn receives the public expenditure it requires. Most areas of the United Kingdom receive somewhat

more than they pay in, and it is only the great urban areas, such as London and the Midlands, with a very high taxable capacity, which regularly pay in more than they receive.

Northern Ireland has regularly received somewhat more than it pays in, but not to an exceptional extent. In recent years, for example, Scotland was receiving more from the Exchequer in proportion to its population than Northern Ireland was, and the average individual in Scotland cost the Exchequer a little more than did his Northern Ireland opposite number.

Most Money Does Not Come from Governments

Taxation revenue and payments that pass between governments are only a small part of the flow of finance that takes place between Northern Ireland and Britain. There is a big volume of trade which has often been balanced in Britain's favour. But even in years when there has appeared to be a balance in Northern Ireland's favour, this has been unreal, since a large proportion of Northern Ireland's exports to Britain are only goods in transit which will pass on to contribute favorably to Britain's trade balance with the rest of the world.

Northern Ireland is also an area of high investment, and it pays enormous profits to investors who are mainly British.

By its high productivity and intense economic activity, Northern Ireland is a major financial and economic asset to Britain and contributes substantially to the United Kingdom's balance of trade and balance of payments.

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POLITICAL COMPLAINTS

Why People Vote Unionist

Maintaining a high standard of achievement in every field of government activity, and this often in the face of very adverse conditions, the government of Northern Ireland has always enjoyed strong electoral support. In any case, when the Opposition is declaredly out to destroy the state, the electorate understandably refrains from voting it into office.

The result has been that Unionists have formed the government of Northern Ireland for half a century. One thinks of those long years of Labour governments in certain Scandinavian countries or the long predominance of the Congress Party in India. Northern Ireland is by no means a case of "one-party rule" in any sinister sense. The party in office has always had two wings, representing a wide range of attitude on many subjects. In tie 1969 Northern Ireland general election, professing Unionists of different complexions stood against one another in twenty-two constituencies.

Indeed a much wider range of political opinion finds expression through the Unionist party in Northern Ireland than finds expression through the two main parties in the Irish Republic which have alternated in government but are derived from a single historical origin and have usually had almost indistinguishable policies — Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

Electoral Procedures

The fact that Republicans failed to obtain more than a small minority of the votes at successive elections in Northern Ireland caused them to seek



The scene in Customs House Street, Londonderry, after an explosion caused by a 120 lb. bomb that had been placed in a car. Customs House Street has been the scene of many explosions in the past year

a reason for this that would not be unflattering to themselves. Undoubtedly the real reason was that the electorate did not want them or their policy. But Republicans tried to find an explanation more gratifying to themselves by claiming that electoral procedures in the province were corruptly rigged to their disadvantage.

Thus they have claimed that in Northern Ireland there was extensive “gerrymandering” of constituencies and other electoral divisions. They claimed that the boundaries of constituencies were fiddled and adjusted to the advantage of the Unionist Party.

This claim is found to be groundless when the facts are examined. No changes were made in the Northern Ireland parliamentary divisions between 1929 and just before the general election of 1969. This unreadiness of the government to interfere with or update constituency boundaries, far from favouring the Unionist Party, operated to its disadvantage. And the disadvantages increased as population changes occurred. Unionists were left with members sitting for the fourteen largest constituencies, usually with very substantial majorities of what were, from the point of view of the party in the province as a whole, necessarily “wasted” votes. A party or government really bent on astute “gerrymandering” would have produced a very different result.

The democratic character of an electoral system is pretty fairly shown by the extent to which the number of members of a particular party (especially the government party) in the legislature is proportionate to the

number of votes it received. In the Northern Ireland general election of 1965, the last before updating of constituency boundaries began, the Unionist Party (not counting Independents and others who also supported the Union) obtained 58.9 per cent. of the votes cast and secured 69.2 per cent. of the seats in the Northern Ireland House of Commons. Taking the latter figure as a percentage of the former, we find that their representation in Parliament was 19.1 per cent. in excess of their proportion of the votes cast. Then compare this with the United Kingdom general election of 1966. In this the government party—the Labour Party—got 48.1 per cent. of the votes cast and got 57.7 per cent. of the seats. Their proportion of seats was 19.9 per cent. in excess of their proportion of the votes.

This shows that the overall result of a Stormont general election, prior to any reforms or revisions being made, was very close to the British norm and that the Stormont election was even slightly more “democratic” in its result than the Westminster one.

The Franchise

Parliamentary franchise for the Northern Ireland Parliament has kept step by step with the franchise in Britain. Every adult has a vote; and the extension of the franchise to all women and later to voters between 18 and 21 years was provided for in Northern Ireland as in Britain.

Boundaries and franchise arrangements in connection with election of Northern Ireland representatives to Westminster have at all times been under the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom Parliament, and the Northern Ireland government has had no control over them.

Quality of Government

Apart from the mechanics of representative government, the quality of government has always to be considered. Within a parliament so small, the Westminster system of parties alternately holding office has not taken shape, for reasons that have already been noted. The kind of debate which at Westminster usually takes place between parties has often taken place at Stormont largely between wings of what is, at least professedly, one party. Party discipline has been much looser than at Westminster, and Opposition concerns and interests have been taken more into consideration and there has been consultation with the Opposition on a much wider range of issues than is possible at Westminster. Naturally, in so far as the professed aim of a portion of the Opposition has been to destroy the parliament in which it sits, the contribution that such members can make to parliamentary business has self-evident limitations. But there have been many times of relaxation when traditional public postures have been tacitly abandoned to enable business to be done.

Government in Northern Ireland has been far more open and accessible to the public than can be the case at Westminster. This accessibility is a quality which permeates public departments. After a Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration had been appointed and he had had opportunity for learning how public business was conducted in the province, he stated in his second report, “My first years of office in Northern Ireland have not produced a single instance of culpable action in the organs of

central government". And in the same report he also said, "I think it fair to say that the quality of administrative performance in the Northern Ireland ministries compares well with my experience of government departments in the United Kingdom. Indeed the individual citizen frequently gets a better service from a Northern Ireland ministry than he would get from a United Kingdom department in similar circumstances owing to the easier access to central government".

Local Government

Similarly, Republican lack of success in elections at local government level has been attributed by them to the voting system and not to the unpopularity of their own policies.

In local government, the electoral boundaries were established in 1923, under United Kingdom legislation which required rateable valuation to be taken into account as well as population. Here also the boundaries were left unchanged, with various effects in different districts according to population changes. Only five local government boundaries were altered between 1923 and the present reorganisation of local government which has been taking place parallel with a similar reorganisation in Britain.

When the local government franchise in Britain was made the same as the parliamentary franchise, Northern Ireland continued to leave local government voting confined to those who occupied rateable property, and their spouses, as has also been the accepted custom in many other countries. This meant that only about two-thirds of those who had parliamentary votes had local government votes. The effect of this cannot be shown to have been to the disadvantage of any particular political, religious or ethnic group. It is possible that it was marginally advantageous to Roman Catholic voters, since a higher proportion of Roman Catholic young people married early and left the parental home to occupy premises in which they would have qualified for a local government vote.

This was the issue which gave rise to the slogan "One man one vote". The use of the slogan created many completely untrue impressions about the electoral system in Northern Ireland. People in other countries and even locally were led to believe that in some way whole groups or classes of people had no vote at all. In fact, however, there has at all times, throughout the fifty years of Northern Ireland's political existence, been equality of civil rights for all.

The issue of the local government franchise was a minor one and one on which the government had no serious inhibitions or anxieties about meeting a genuine public demand. But Republicans, after giving relatively little attention to it for many years, suddenly chose to represent it as a major and burning issue and as a pretext for organizing a campaign of violent rioting.

SOCIAL COMPLAINTS

Housing

A major Republican complaint about local government authorities in Northern Ireland was that these authorities exercised discrimination, on religious or political lines, in allocating or not allocating housing. About

10,000 tenancies were changing hands each year under local government control, and it would have been astonishing if some cases of complaint or grievance did not arise. In fact extremely few cases of contention did arise. The Cameron Commission of 1969 recorded complaints about seven out of 68 local government authorities then functioning. When Mr. Austin Currie found a case of allegedly unfair allocation to publicise in 1968, he said significantly, "If I waited a thousand years, I'd never get a better case than this one".

After study of a survey made in 1968 of patterns of tenancy in relation to the political pattern of control, Professor Richard Rose concluded that he could find "no evidence of systematic discrimination against Catholics". He added, however, that "the greatest bias appears to favour Catholics in that small part of the population living in local authorities controlled by Catholic councillors". Local government housing going to Roman Catholics was shown in fact to be proportionately greater than that going to other religious groups, and this was the case in some of the local government areas where discrimination against Roman Catholics had been alleged by Republicans.

The 1971 Report of the Commissioner for Complaints, John Berm, states "... it is clear that the results of two years work investigating complaints about housing allocations provide very little evidence of discrimination by Housing Authorities".

So that there may be no doubts or untrue allegations in the future, the Northern Ireland government has removed housing from the control of local authorities and placed it in the hands of a Central Housing Executive. There has also been established a Commissioner to deal with complaints at levels of administration not covered by the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner.

The general housing situation in Northern Ireland has been good by British standards. More than 40 per cent. of families in the province are living in homes built since 1945.

Employment

The employment situation in Northern Ireland has been rendered highly competitive by the fact that so much of the province's industry is relatively newly established. As the result of government policy in attracting new industries, the rates of expansion and productivity are higher than in the rest of the British Isles. This means that Northern Ireland is also ahead of other areas in the extent to which automation and rationalisation of methods have entered the scene and so is already facing problems which every advanced industrial country is soon going to have to face. For the new automated industries create employment for skilled workers but make the position more difficult for workers who are unskilled or whose skills are less developed. Rationalizing of methods is also causing a decline in the number of persons employed in agriculture.

This competitive situation has been used by Republicans to argue that redundancy and failure of certain workers to get easily placed in jobs is a sectarian matter and that joblessness is the result of religious discrimination. Yet the very situation which gives the employment situation its pattern tends to ensure that religious discrimination does not enter into it. Large

firms, or indeed anybody giving employment on a substantial scale, will employ those who are best fitted to do the work and do not go into questions of theological affiliation. The majority of enterprises operating in Northern Ireland are branches or subsidiaries of larger industrial enterprises with headquarters outside the province, and their employment policies are totally dissociated from any local consideration of religious prejudice.

Similarly, public employment is allocated on merit by centralised bodies. In some cases the government has been criticised for “falling over backwards” to facilitate Roman Catholics.

The 1971 Report of the Commissioner for Complaints — the “local Government” ombudsman, concluded that his investigations had not provided any evidence of discriminatory practices in the making of appointments or promotions by public bodies.

In small private or family firms it is natural enough for people to want in some cases to employ those of their own “sort” if they have to work on fairly close terms with them. But this works in more than one direction. The highest degree of religious discrimination in the province is to be found in those trades, such as the licensed drink trade, or sections of professions, such as the Roman Catholic education system, where Roman Catholics are in control. In some of these sectors it is virtually impossible for a non-Roman Catholic to obtain employment.

It had often been alleged that the largest employer in Northern Ireland, the shipyard of Harland and Wolff, did not employ a sufficient number of Catholics. This yard however now has an apprentice employment in a ratio to 50:50 Catholics to Protestant — the reason why this has only been achieved recently being the inability of large families to support apprentices who were in the past poorly paid.

One problem which has not been given the study and research which it obviously requires is how far, in a highly competitive employment situation, certain people are placed at a disadvantage by aspects of their social and even religious background. It has, perhaps inevitably, been suggested that the separate sectarian education system conducted by Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland, although as well financed and materially provided for as the state system, does not always equip its young people for the demands of modern life as well as the non-sectarian system does. There must also be speculation as to whether the inadequacies of nurture which are sometimes a concomitant of an absence of family planning do not gravely handicap some of those who seek to enter an intensely competitive labour market.

The broad truth about the employment situation is that where there are jobs people stay at work, and where there are not jobs they have to go away. Keeping this in mind, the reader should glance once again at the figures and the diagram on page 13 which show how, under a non-sectarian government in Northern Ireland, the Roman Catholic minority has expanded and how, under the blatantly sectarian regime in the Republic, the Protestant minority has now been reduced to less than half its former size and is still being squeezed out. It is not in Northern Ireland that there exists ground for deep concern at religious discrimination.

Change and Reactions to Change

To meet expressions of grievance and complaint the Northern Ireland government adopted from 1968 an extensive programme of enactments to ensure that real grievances were unlikely to occur and that administration at all levels was not only just but could be seen to be just. But it is unlikely that such changes can make a very big difference to most people, for what preceded them had nothing gravely wrong with it.

There was certainly nothing in the past administration of Northern Ireland to justify the wild charges made by Republicans who, in most cases, were not so much concerned with obtaining a redress of any grievance as with causing a breakdown of the government and the placing of the province under the government of another country.

The meeting of complaints by administrative and legislative changes has not evoked expressions of satisfaction from Republicans, for the eliciting of improvements and reforms was not their object. As each complaint has been met, they have only widened their demands and treated as of no account the most generous responses to their earlier demands. They never really wanted golden eggs but only to kill the goose that laid them.

Nevertheless there will be many who will see merit in a substantial effort to satisfy even the most unrealistic grumbles; and if this can spike the guns of some very unreasonable critics it will be all to the good.

Suspension of Democracy

One of the most fundamentally definitive statements about the constitutional position of Northern Ireland was made in October, 1948, by Mr. Attlee, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and already quoted, when he said, "The view of the government of the United Kingdom has always been that no change should be made in the constitution of Northern Ireland without Northern Ireland's free agreement".

In spite of this and many other past assurances, some of them very recent, the United Kingdom government of Mr. Edward Heath introduced direct rule over Northern Ireland in March, 1972, suspending the Parliament of Northern Ireland and placing the government in the hands of a Secretary of State, to be advised by an appointed Commission and not by those whom the people of Northern Ireland had elected to represent them in parliament.

A Government's Record

One of the major concerns of Mr. Brian Faulkner, who was Prime Minister of Northern Ireland immediately prior to this event, was to discover what adverse criticism of the Northern Ireland government and its record Mr. Heath and his colleagues had to make which might have prompted this action. In response to question, Mr. Heath admitted, and Mr. Faulkner claimed publicly, that no such criticism of the Northern Ireland government had been entertained.

On the contrary, it was admitted that every action of the Northern Ireland government over several past years had been creditably designed to lower tension and to reach a viable accommodation with opposition parties for the province's future good and tranquility. And it was acknowledged that the programme of progressive and reforming legislation introduced and carried through the Northern Ireland Parliament by the governments of Captain Terence O'Neill (now Lord O'Neill of the Maine), Major James Chichester-Clark (now Lord Moyola) and Mr. Faulkner, involved a degree of hard work and political courage such as would have daunted any administration at Westminster in a comparable situation.

The reaction of the Ulster public to direct rule was very adverse, since it was seen as a capitulation to terrorism and to outside interference and pressures. The suspension of the constitution and of democratic government was felt as a setback for everything that governments of Northern Ireland had striven to achieve over half a century and as a deeply unjust penalizing of the innocent majority in order to appease those guilty both of violence and cruelty and of undermining the democratic way of life. An early restoration of normal standards of justice, democracy, civil rights and the rule of law has been desired by an overwhelming majority.

11

A GENERAL VIEW

The Achievement

The story of Northern Ireland is a story of a democratically and ably governed province which has moved on in fifty years from a relatively backward condition to one of growing success and prosperity. In 1926 its population was less than one and a quarter million. In 1971 it was over one and a half million. In 1924 the value of its exports was under £58 million. By the beginning of the 1970's the value of its exports was over £700 million.

One could go into many details of comparative figures which show not only growth and expansion but a vast improvement in the whole quality of life. One could show many ways in which, during those years, Northern Ireland pioneered developments in administration, industry, agriculture, engineering, medicine, physics and many other pursuits of universal human value. The province has also moved forward in the arts and has developed a more humane and cultured way of life.

As something of an experiment in the devolution of government, Northern Ireland has fully justified itself.

The Drawback

There has been one major drawback to it all. There has been a perpetual factor of danger and disturbance from the physical and psychological greed of Northern Ireland's less happy and less successful southern neighbour. This has found expression in the worldwide diffusion of untruths about Northern Ireland, in continuous incitement to violence and counter-violence within the province and in the extending of facilities and support south of the frontier to persons prepared to murder the province's inhabitants.

This propinquity of a socially and economically sick and restless neighbour has involved the province in events and situations such as no other part of the United Kingdom has had to endure.

The Solution

For this problem the Unionists of Northern Ireland offered one comprehensive solution. It is the solution to which their government pledged itself in 1925. They both offer to and ask from their southern neighbors mutual recognition, mutual consultation and mutual co-operation. With this they regard as inseparable a complete abandonment of any aim on the part of either government to interfere with the other or to seek dominance of any kind over the other's territory.

With this policy of live and let live they want to associate the maintenance within Northern Ireland of the fullest British standards of civil and religious liberty for all. And they would rejoice to see the re-establishment of those standards in the Irish Republic.

The Future

The Unionists of Northern Ireland continue to seek in every way to bring about the modernising and development of the physical and economic conditions of life in the province. In this we need to enlist the energies of all our people, regardless of creed or any other factor that may have been divisive in the past.

In spite of the damage and suffering that have been caused by those who have attempted to impose their will upon the province by organised crime and violence, and the stupidity of those who have imagined that anybody could gain anything by that violence and cruelty, Northern Ireland continues to set its face in the same direction as in the past.