

VIOLENCE AND NORTHERN IRELAND

JUNE, 1972

Published by the New Ulster Movement, 3 Botanic Avenue, Belfast.
Telephone Belfast 27510

Printed by Spectator Newspapers, Main Street, Bangor.

A New Ulster Movement Publication

DEATHS: (From August, 1969 — 16th May, 1973):

ARMY	...	...	...	...	...	...	180
U.D.R.	...	...	...	...	...	...	35
R.U.C. ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33
R.U.C. RESERVE	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
CIVILIAN	...	...	...	...	...	...	538

CASUALTIES FROM CIVIL DISTURBANCES NEEDING
HOSPITAL SERVICES: JULY, 1970 — MARCH, 1973:
8,574

68 Protestant churches damaged, 5 destroyed; 45 Roman
Catholic churches damaged, 3 destroyed.

SECTARIAN KILLINGS (in 16 months):

101 Catholics 53 Protestants

VIOLENCE AND NORTHERN IRELAND

ON SOCIAL VIOLENCE

In the world at large it has been estimated that in the relatively short span of 70 years some 65 million people have died as a consequence of human violence of one sort or another. The level of violence in Northern Ireland, however, can be exaggerated. Despite the amount of antagonism and injustice in this province there has been less overt violence than in many other parts of the world with comparable problems. In 1971 more people were killed on the roads and in the factories of Northern Ireland than in political violence. Intercommunal fighting in Belfast itself was just as vicious in the 19th century as it has been in the past fifty years. Yet all through this period there has been strong hostility and antagonism lying just below the surface. That this violence has not erupted openly more often is surprising. There are many partial explanations, such as increasing affluence, the extent of official violence and so on. Yet none of these partial explanations really holds up. Increasing affluence has not had much effect in the ghettos and many surveys have tended to indicate that the violence of attitudes does not decrease with rising income, although affluence does affect behaviour (see R. Rose 'Governing without consensus' ch. 2 and 5). With regard to the level of official violence, as expressed through the Special Powers Act and the institution of the 'B' specials, it is important to note the small size of these forces in Ulster. The events of 1969 showed that the forces of the state could be neutralised in the face of a sustained and determined revolt, given the constraints on those forces.

A more complete explanation of the relatively low level of violence would have to pay attention to the idea that in a province containing two opposed communities, the communities themselves find ways of coping with violence and containing it. Thus marching and parading, the use of flags and symbols and rioting in large groups some distance apart from one another, provide channels for the expression of opposition which at the same time ensure that the violence does not cause too much damage and injury in each community. The violence of 1969, for example, was notable for the large numbers of people, often armed, who confronted each other without inflicting very serious mutual damage. Of course, non-violence was a deliberate strategy of many of those who took part in the confrontation of 1969; even so, it is nonetheless remarkable that such a strategy was at all

possible in the society that can produce the violence of Burntollett or of 1972.

One further general observation is relevant at this point, namely that police forces have from time to time become involved in the fighting on a sectarian basis. The Commission reporting on the Belfast riots of 1857 found the Belfast police to be 'undisciplined, partisan and suspected by all decent inhabitants'. A small core of policemen, tragically, have carried this tradition through to 1972 (Chief Constable Young 1970 and Scarman 1972). This is important in the context of trying to understand how violence is handled in our society. The slightest police involvement in sectarian fighting means that there is no neutral party for the parties to turn to. It means that fighting does not take place within a framework of law and order. On the contrary, the fighting itself and the conventions that govern it, constitute the framework of law and order. Thus 'normality' is defined by a balance of power. When this happens in a society the main problem no longer relates to the establishment of 'law and order', the problem of whose law and order and what kind of order are precedent to that. This is why we have consistently argued that 'Community Relations' rather than 'Law and Order' should be central to government and central to our social processes.

Several conclusions emerge from these observations. Violence is often regarded as a pathology, a form of sickness in an otherwise stable and healthy society. This is a doubtful statement to make in the context of Northern Ireland. The eruptions of violence that emerge from time to time are a manifestation of an opposition that exists all the time. Violence does not occur in spite of society. It is an intrinsic part of the way society functions. **The primary problem therefore is not the violence, but the causes of that violence.** This is why political deaths and injuries are far more salient than the industrial and road accidents which after all, bring just as much grief and suffering to the people directly involved. The fears expressed about and through political violence represent fears about the values that people feel are denied to them or feel to be threatened. It is not enough to wish these fears and aspirations away or condemn them as being unreasonable. **Both the Republican and the Unionist have deeply held and fundamental reasons for clinging to their values and their way of life. The potential for physical violence will not disappear until these values are accurately stated and accommodated within suitable political institutions. That is why there is no such thing as a military solution to the Northern Ireland problem.** This truth is recognised by the military men themselves e.g.

various policy statements by General Freeland and General Tuzo.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF VIOLENCE

When considering the psychological effects of three years of violence on our people we must distinguish between normal emotional reactions such as fear, anxiety, worry, frustration, despondency and more serious mental illness. A Belfast psychiatrist (Lyons, British Journal of Psychiatrists March 1971, British Medical Journal Feb. 1972) has reported that there has been no significant increase in the incidence of mental illness as a result of the civil disturbances. In fact, certain types of mental illness have actually shown a decrease in some areas. Similar findings were reported from many of the countries involved in World War II (Sainsbury 1968). Suicides too have shown a 50% decrease in some areas although attempted suicides, which are an entirely different phenomenon, have escalated by up to 75% (O'Malley, Irish Medical Journal March 1972).

On the other hand there has been a great increase in the level of anxiety and fear in the community. The consumption of tranquillisers, sedatives and hypnotics has increased, at times up to a maximum of four fold, especially in Belfast and Londonderry. This use of drugs by family doctors appears to have controlled the epidemic of anxiety, and has prevented, in most instances, the development of more serious types of nervous breakdown.

The section of the community most liable to develop psychological symptoms are the young and middle aged adults who live in riot areas. Many of the younger people enjoy the excitement of civil disturbance and develop strong group identities. The number of teenage gangs which are to some extent politically motivated has grown considerably in recent years in Belfast, e.g. the "Tartan" gangs. Children and teenagers need to belong to a group, especially if there is insecurity in their homes or communities. Vandalism is a problem in many urban areas of the Western world but in some areas of Belfast and Londonderry vandalism is no longer seen as an anti-social activity if it is directed against the forces of law or against property belonging to the 'establishment'.

Many of the doctors working in West Belfast have seen people who have broken down under the stress of violence and have required psychiatric help, but many of the residents of this and other riot areas have found a new sense of purpose in their lives because of the civil upheaval. Some parts of Belfast are areas of deprivation with high unem-

ployment, poor housing and inadequate recreational facilities. Residents of these areas experience a discrepancy between their level of expectation and their level of achievement. This has led to a high level of frustration without any satisfactory means of expressing it. In recent years this repressed frustration has been expressed partly by violence, but also by the growth of local citizen action committees of various types. This in turn has resulted in a heightening of the level of expectation, although it has also given to some people a new and rewarding role to play.

On the debit side violence hardens and fixes attitudes. Children, many of whom have been actively involved in violence, have learnt to hate their fellow citizens who belong to a different religious denomination. The attitudes of hate develop at a very formative time in their lives (being discernable at the age of 5 years) and will be difficult to eradicate. Many children have lost respect for the rule of law and when peace eventually ensues, this generation of teenagers may have genuine difficulty, not only in overcoming their bigotry, but also in suddenly stopping violence and respecting the rule of law.

In every society, but especially in large urban complexes with areas of deprivation, there are a number of anti-social young men who are aggressive, impulsive, egotistical, and have a ruthless disregard for the feelings of others. They enjoy danger and resent authority. Usually these psychopaths are the outcasts of society and find their outlet in criminal or other anti-social behaviour. They are apprehended by the law in normal times as they find no support in the community. But in Belfast and Derry to-day they have found a home among the ranks of extremist and terrorist organisations. Instead of being the outcasts of society they become 'acceptable' and in some cases are publically recognised as leaders. A similar pattern was seen in Germany in the thirties and forties, and in Algeria in the fifties. Some of the recent atrocities in our cities would seem to have been perpetrated by this type of man. No one section has a monopoly. There is certainly a number of anti-social, aggressive psychopaths among Protestant extremists, also, who only require the leadership of evil men to unleash their violence on society.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF VIOLENCE

Economically our community has always been one of the most deprived areas of the U.K. Following a series of studies, Prof. Townsend, of Essex University, and the Child Poverty Action Group, concluded in June 1970 that we had the lowest standard of living in the United Kingdom and

predicted we would fall further behind our fellow citizens if rioting and killing continued. With endemic unemployment averaging 7.5% rising at peak times of the year to over 10% and having pockets of unemployment as high as 20% in some of our provincial towns and even 48% in the ghetto areas of Belfast, one would expect that, as a community, all our creative ideas and surplus energy would be channelled into providing solutions to counteract these unpalatable facts. Why should the English, French, German or Italian people enjoy a standard of living infinitely superior to our own?

During the 60's this effort was not only being made—it was bearing fruit. Despite a decline in our traditional industries—especially agriculture, textiles and ship-building—the base of our economy had been radically broadened, capital investment was steadily, and at times dramatically, improving; wages were increasing and an air of economic optimism could be sensed amongst businessmen and trade unionists alike. We seemed set, at last, for prosperity.

The past three violent years have effectively reversed this trend. We have put at risk for a decade not only future investment, but the lives, jobs and property of every man, woman and child in the province. As early as January 1969 and following the Burntollett incident the three economists appointed to draw up a 5 year development plan for our community wrote to the government of the day in some despair and said, 'It is commonplace that political stability is an important factor in contributing to economic development. One must, therefore, view with deep concern the effect of recent occurrences in Northern Ireland. Not only do events of this kind undermine the attempts to achieve a feeling of common purpose in the community but the difficulty of attracting new industry to the province must be greatly increased.' These sobering words have been ignored almost entirely since then and our condition today is far worse than it was.

It has been estimated that bomb damage alone will cost us £30 million to repair and replace. Ten manufacturing companies have closed permanently and will never be re-opened—although they were all fairly small employers of labour. Major ship repair contracts have been reported lost to the port of Belfast because of the fear ship crews had of being caught up in sectarian violence. The tourist industry has been badly hit with income dropping from £29 millions in 1968 to £21 millions in 1971. A further decline is forecast for 1972. Six hotels have been completely destroyed and four of these will never re-open. Eleven other major hotels have been seriously damaged. In Belfast

alone 35 retail businesses have been destroyed and virtually all city centre retailers have reduced their staff—sometimes by as much as 25%—because of bomb attacks and the resultant fall in business activity. A small community like ours cannot absorb this kind of economic battering for very long.

Many employers and trade unionists have co-operated to keep sectarian and political troubles off the shop floor. Nonetheless the protestant Vanguard movement organised a political strike in March 1972 which cost our community an additional £4 millions. If further industrial action threatened by Vanguard and by left wing action groups materialises, then our industrial outlook will be extraordinarily bleak. No one will escape the effect. Many jobs will be lost for good.

The pressure of civil rioting, political strikes and violence has persuaded many of our people to emigrate as analysed later in this pamphlet. Although our administration does not carry out a statistical analysis of those quitting our shores it seems clear that two key groups are included. The first are the managers and the business executives. Apart from a small pool of accountants there is no surplus of managerial skills in Northern Ireland. The second group includes the skilled tradesmen—the engineers, fitters, turners etc. Young men just out of their apprenticeship also are leaving our community. This social haemorrhage is a drain on our most vital material asset—our people and their skills.

Two further problems emerge. Confidence in Northern Ireland is at an all time low. Machine suppliers, raw material suppliers and even customers, in both textiles and engineering, in a number of cases, have prohibited their staff from visiting our province for any reason whatsoever. Our life lines are being cut and we are in danger of becoming the industrial leper of Europe.

Secondly, and most important of all, investment of outside capital has dried up almost entirely. Many international companies now classify Ulster as a 'high risk' area and are directing new investments elsewhere. This has been partially offset by some encouraging growth and movement from within our economy and in 1971 7,200 new jobs were created from this internal source. This, however, cannot possibly replace 'outside' investment. Our economic future is, therefore, extremely bleak if violence continues to dominate our headlines. Small wonder that Sir Alec Cairncross, former head of the Government Economic Service in Britain, when asked about the underlying industrial and

economic situation here, said, 'It would be wrong to suppose that the long term outlook is as rosy as it was in the late 1960's. There has been very little new industry coming into Northern Ireland, so that although output has held up there and unemployment has not risen as much as might have been expected the long-term outlook is disturbing.' 'Disturbing' might be regarded by some as a masterpiece of British understatement.

PERSONAL ASPECTS OF VIOLENCE

In a situation where violence and opposition are built into the social structure, there are important problems associated with determining personal responsibility. It is difficult unambiguously to blame a person for acting out attitudes which are implicit in the way everyone lives. Many will remember the arguments about war guilt at Nuremburg. Who was guilty, the man who turned on the gas, the man who ordered him to, the government, the society? In the same way we can note that the people who in each community, decide that in a particular set of circumstances it is necessary to resort to violence—either to promote political change or to prevent it—are acting out the consequences of a set of beliefs and attitudes that are widely held in the respective communities. People at all levels, both inside and outside Northern Ireland, are implicated in one way or another, with the political accommodations and injustices over which people fight.

The people who undertake the actual physical fighting are concerned about major problems. The Protestant who takes to the streets is concerned for his employment, his rights to state benefits and freedom from clerical interference. As neither a true Irishman nor a true Englishman, his fight for the Orange and Unionist cause is a fight for the identity of a million people. In the same way that the Unionist is prepared to fight to retain his rights and maintain his identity, the Northern Ireland Catholic is also prepared to fight for rights which he feels are denied him. These are considerations which affect every person in both communities, and many outside. Where can we place the blame? On the Catholic and Protestant workers who fight about precedence to jobs and houses—or on scarcity of resources that makes such fighting a rational exercise? The conflict of course, has its tribal aspects; but that is only a statement of how things are, not why they remain that way. This is a matter of general responsibility in which we all share.

None of this is to imply that men lightly expose themselves to physical violence, or incarceration in a penal

institution. They have homes, jobs, families and all the responsibilities that go with trying to maintain some standard of personal security. Much of the fighting between the communities is carried out in symbolic terms, although it must be emphasized that its symbolic aspects in no way detract from its reality or potential for physical confrontation. The fighting takes place only in the poorer areas. The people unfortunate enough to live in the poorer areas have traditionally tried to make the fighting more tolerable by confining it to certain times of the year and carrying it out within a mutually understood framework of social conventions or rules. Very few people then indulge in violence for its own sake, except perhaps for some gangs of unemployed youths who derive satisfaction from street-fighting. However this is a comment on the normal quality of the lives they lead when street fighting becomes the most challenging and stimulating task they can find.

It is far too easy in this context to emphasize the negative side of the coin. Opposition and fighting is only one feature of festivals and parades that also gives both communities a sense of warmth and cohesion that are becoming increasingly rare in the rest of the United Kingdom. Strong neighbourhood traditions which involve love and care for one's neighbours and kin are dying out elsewhere. If violence and opposition were the only or the main cause and result of parading and marching in both communities the problem would be relatively simple.

The violence of the winter of 1971/72 waged by the state, the army and certain sections of the Catholic community was therefore abnormal. It caused profound and intense misery in the areas where it was waged and imposed enormous emotional tensions on the rest of the community. To continue this type of fighting men need to be either enormously well-disciplined or very angry and in both cases they need to be firmly convinced of the rightness of their cause. Most research done on wartime conditions shows that few soldiers can be persuaded to point their guns at an enemy let alone fire at him (See "Armed Force Power" by Wendell J. Coates Pages 147-148).

The conclusion from all this is obvious. Our society is one in which people are prepared to go to great lengths to defend and attack certain values and rights. Such opposition can, from time to time, produce overwhelming animosities and passions. Yet society manages to contain such opposition fairly successfully for lengthy periods of time by the use of various devices that we have described. This draws attention to an obvious problem. Firstly, we need to explain why such protracted violence of the kind

we have recently witnessed occurred when it did and why it lasted so long. As we have suggested, to find the answer to these problems we have to look at some aspects of the social structure.

SOCIAL VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Of course, any explanation of the recent levels of violence must relate to the role of the army. The tactic of a peace-keeping army is always to be marginally stronger than the opposing forces, and if the peace-keeping force also takes on police work, it will be opposed. Each time the opposing forces look like neutralising the strength of the army, the army must necessarily increase its own strength. As they have the power to do this indefinitely, a step by step escalation is the natural result in the absence of political initiatives. Furthermore, such fighting is likely to widen in scope. A bombing campaign is one natural result of the superior firepower of the British army and 'soft' targets replace 'hard' targets as army arrests become widespread and effective. Furthermore the fighting will tend to be prolonged as the army needs to win, whereas the insurgents need only not to lose!

However, none of this explains why such a spiral should be embarked on in the first place. Despite all arguments about the relative merits of withdrawing the army now, it would take a brave man to suggest that had they not arrived in 1969 there would not have been a drastic outburst of violence between the two communities. So we are left with the question why?

To answer this it is necessary to refer to those changes in the social and economic structure that produced a conciliatory sub-group in the Unionist Party, led by O'Neill, and a Catholic middle class large and confident enough to support the 'Campaign for Social Justice' and the 'Civil Rights Association.' Once these two new strands came to have influence in the politics of Northern Ireland a deadly game was commenced. It can be described here by analogy as a four-person game. The rules are that the moderate Protestant has to concede enough to satisfy the moderate Catholic, but has also to give away sufficiently little to avoid being outflanked by the Protestant extremist. On the other hand, the Catholic moderate has to ask for sufficient to avoid being outflanked by the Catholic extremists. None of these parties is certain of the support commanded by itself or by the other parties. In addition, each party will delay in its response to others. This game resembles Blind Man's Bluff. The possibilities of finding a stable point, if there is one at all, are remote. The use of the term 'game'

is not meant to be frivolous. A game is a situation where each party has a fixed goal in mind and a set of constraints on how to achieve it. We suggest that as long as this 'game' is played, there is no solution, and peace will be unobtainable.

The 'game' we have described has an effect on the community at many levels. It ensures that each section of society constantly has its hopes alternately raised and dashed to the ground. As time passes the future becomes more uncertain and menacing. Hostility, mistrust and suspicion are the natural result. A deep and abiding depression grips large sections of the community. The community 'polarises', insecurity deepens; many people, often the best, emigrate. The last 12 months has witnessed a 5 fold net, annual outflow of people, from 5,000 to approx 25,000.

Neither side appreciates the processes which produce the attitudes of the other side. Each side only sees that each time it concedes a set of demands, more are produced. The vast majority of Catholics now believe that no Protestant was ever serious about reform, and there are few Protestants to be found who believe that in 1969 all that most Catholics were interested in was participation in Northern Ireland and not the destruction of the state. All this has been superimposed on existing realistic fears. No loyalist is ever secure so long as he knows there is a possibility of his being outvoted into the Republic, and no Catholic is unaware of the Catholic minority position. This double minority problem means that the actions of both sides are dictated by fear. Scarman rightly reported (March 1972) that Catholics and Protestants "exhibited the same fear" and were "haunted by the same ghosts."

The present level of actual and potential violence is therefore the result of a long process which has frustrated everybody, frightened most people and benefited no-one. Of course, the costs and frustrations have, as usual, been heavier on working-class people than on anyone else. Perhaps this was best epitomised by the senseless destruction, by the I.R.A. of the Belfast Co-operative Store (May 1972) at the cost of £10 million, the loss of 1,000 jobs and untold hardship borne by working-class Protestants and Catholics alike. This process has produced at least two important considerations. The first is that the growth in mistrust and the decline in communication has meant that now no-one knows what anyone else wants.

None of the main political parties is sure of the grounds on which it has support or the extent of that support. This

is, of course, more true on the Catholic side than the Protestant side. However, one of the main activities of politicians of late has been providing explanations and interpretations of the actions of their constituents in a situation where the only obvious truth is that people are reacting in a confused fashion to an immediate series of events and have no clear ideas about long-term goals. We have talked to Catholics in the Lower Falls district of Belfast and the Bogside of Londonderry who claim to have no great interest in the unification of Ireland. We have also talked to Shankill Road Protestants who favour the suspension of Stormont and the radical reform of the Unionist party.

There is a nonsense in the situation where violence is the most accurate form of communication; if the other man will not understand the argument, perhaps he will understand a punch on the nose. Secondly, the chances of reducing the level of potential violence by using the same kinds of political manoeuvring that have been used over the past few years is remote. The first rule of attack is never to reinforce failure, yet many still retain a belief that an old medicine will cure new ills. We cannot pour new wine into old wine skins. We need a decisive break with the past.

INDICTMENT OF VIOLENCE

Violence has both social and personal meanings. One hears many times the observation, "I suppose if I had been born on the other side, I would behave in the same way as the other fellow". This sentiment contains a recognition of the degree to which men become servants of society rather than societies being the servants of men. Society casts people into roles—in Northern Ireland a man is seen as Irish or Catholic, or Republican, or Protestant, or Unionist, before he is seen as a man. When a man is killed or maimed for political or social reasons, the reality is; that a man has been sentenced to execution or injury for the crime of being the only kind of person he knew how to be.

This is, of course, not only an indictment of violence; the treatment of a person as a social category is an indictment of every kind of social inequality or injustice. And it is this consideration that has complicated all pacifism. A. J. Muste, a leading pacifist, said, "One must be a revolutionary before one can be a pacifist. Before one can condemn physical violence we must condemn the violence on which the present political and social order is built and all the suffering, both spiritual and material, this entails for countless masses of people. Unless we are dealing adequately

and honestly with this 90% of the problem, there is something hypocritical in our condemnation of the 10% of violence employed by the rebels against repression."

The greatest difficulty in the justification of violence of any kind is that it is never clear whether its use will bring an improvement or deterioration in any situation. Yet the use of violence that brings no improvement is surely immoral as well as stupid. It is also clear that violence should be used only as a last resort, yet few people are prepared to try all other means before they resort to violence. In fact, violence often seems to constitute a form of social gravity,—a law of least resistance. In a situation of frustration and uncertainty the easiest way out is to classify tiresome people as 'the enemy' and prepare to fight them. This makes the situation certain once again, everyone knows what to do. This is as true of the I.R.A. reinforcing the hatred of the very people they profess they want to live with in a United Ireland, as it was of the Unionist Government increasing the fears and suspicions of the minority in the North.

In fact it is apparent that most of the people caught in and exposed to violence, far from having a clear social and historic conception of its purpose, are swept fearfully along in a malign chain of action and reaction. The vast majority of people caught in this spiral do not understand how things got to this stage and want to get out of it. The paradox is that if violence is the only means presented to people for getting out of a spiral of violence, they will use it—and the spiral takes another downward twist.

One of the results of such situations is that people increasingly tend to listen only to their own arguments. Current television interviews or discussion programmes with our 'politicians' exemplifies this. Before the middle of 1971 there was no sizeable Catholic political party which did not pay some attention to Protestant attitudes, and there was no Protestant political party which did not pay some attention to Catholic demands. But after that time there was increasing lack of attention paid on each side of the sectarian line to the realities presented by the other side. There was an increasing belief in Republican circles that inside every Protestant there is a united Irishman crying out for liberation, and an increasing acceptance on the Protestant side of the new mythology that there was never any injustice ever done to the Catholic population. Such arguments are necessary rationalisations for the use of extreme tactics and they will be used more frequently. Of course, such attitudes can be defended on the grounds that there is little point in addressing arguments to deaf ears.

Violence is not, nor ever has been, short of spokesmen. The late Franz Fanon was a leading theorist of violence. "Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence educated and organised by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to those social truths violence on a national scale liquidates tribalism and regionalism while binding the community together and committing each individual in the eyes of themselves and others." These words were written in the Algerian context, however, their inappropriateness in the Northern Ireland situation tells us something about the use of violence here. "The people" in Northern Ireland do not exist as an entity—there are two communities who compete for that title in their chanting, "We are the people". That term only has meaning for those who accept the "two nation" theory of Ireland in political terms and promote the need for a new partition of Ireland creating a Protestant enclave of two or three counties. Under these circumstances, present violence might just be described as liberating. If sectarianism is a "social truth" then violence certainly allows "the masses" to understand it.

It is of course not just sufficient to say that the hooligans, gunmen, soldiers, marchers, vigilantes and so on are operating on a false social theory. So long as the Catholic community is terrified of having their men pulled out of their beds by the army and the Protestant community is frightened of being bombed in their beds by the I.R.A. each of these immediate groups will have a justifiable purpose and support for it. And who is to deny people the right to "do something" about their situation? Few are unaware of the feeling of cohesion and release when a group of people decide they have had enough and are going to "have a go" at the other side. This is true regardless of the periodic changes in the equation which will bring the army into conflict with either of the two communities or either of the two communities into conflict with each other or the army. **So long as sectarianism is a source of political as well as cultural identity, there will be a rationale for the kind of fighting that only makes matters worse.** To make the problem more complicated, it must be admitted that it is not possible to accuse any of the parties of operating an entirely false social theory. The Provisionals would argue that their bombing has put a United Ireland on the political map. And the Unionists believe that it is possible to defeat the I.R.A. by force.

We have argued then, that violence is a function of a particular kind of social and political structure. The violence expressed in Northern Ireland represents genuine

fears and anxieties, yet because of the sectarian elements in the conflict it is unlikely that violence, which is an imprecise social tool at the best of times, can achieve anyone's ends. However, we have pointed out as long as people have immediately rational reasons to fight they will do so, despite the suffering and confusion that it entails.

It seems clear then that it is impossible to condemn violence out of hand. Before violence can be condemned on social grounds the social conditions which justify that violence must be removed. Secondly, credible solutions to the main problems that are capable of implementation must be presented. Finally, adequate non-violent means of attaining these solutions must be presented. Unless this can be done, the condemnation of violence on social grounds is politically dishonest. And before anyone can condemn violence on personal grounds, they must be honestly sure that none of their attitudes are violent and that they have no part in the injustices to which violent people point. It is also necessary to decide whether all forms of violence are to be condemned, and if some types of violence are condoned, to be sure on what grounds they are condoned. To the extent that people condemn violence without having first met these criteria, they are guilty of that form of hypocrisy which can only breed further violence.

THE TERMINATION OF VIOLENCE

Such criteria are not easily met. However, this examination of social violence may have provided some clues. It was noted earlier that the motivation for protracted social violence has its roots in the defence of particular social values. The values that are relevant in the context of Ireland are widely recognised: religion and cultural freedom, political freedom and civil rights, welfare values that concern work, housing and state benefits. It is the defence of these values, in many cases common to both communities, that forms the basis for arguments about particular political frameworks. And this brings us to a central point. Different political and constitutional structures are only frameworks within which various values can be expressed and acted upon. Yet as violence escalates, it is those frameworks which form the centre of attention rather than the values they are meant to promote or preserve. A stranger would assume that there are only two possible alternative frameworks—the status quo or a United Ireland. (Direct rule is only a bridge towards one of the two options). If that is the case, settlement and peace is still some way off. However, there are a number of alternative solutions and arrangements which could be discussed in terms of their

suitability to the demands of different groups. It is possible for example to conceive solutions which increase the autonomy and sovereignty of a Northern administration on matters like fiscal and economic policies while at the same time allowing for greater interaction on an all-Ireland basis on matters of trade, social policy and the like.

It is important to note that at this level of debate there can be considerable agreement across sectarian lines. Groups are often fighting to preserve identical values in the belief that these values are competing rather than complementary, as though security, for example, were something that one group could only gain at the expense of another group.

There is thus a need for the sort of dialogue that starts at a stage before discussing particular political structures. Particular political solutions must always promote some interests and harm others. They will, therefore, be perceived by some as threats, as weapons. They are a part of the problem, not a part of the solution.

ON TALKS

The decision of the Official I.R.A. to call a unilateral cease-fire (May 29, 1972) is a small step towards sanity. Although the Officials' decision has been welcomed by almost every shade of opinion in Northern Ireland, it is not surprising that the "Provos." and the Protestant Vanguard movement, which have certain common characteristics, have both seen fit to pour contempt on it. We, therefore, conclude this analysis of communal violence with a consideration of the problems involved in talking. Talking is, after all, the alternative to fighting. This however is nothing more than a platitude if we cannot be specific about the particular type of talking that is needed in a particular situation. Discussion at the level of basic values which involves an appreciation of the processes behind the proposals of the adversary, is time-consuming and of necessity involves activity at all levels of the community, involving all the interested parties. It must involve 'people' as well as 'leaders'. We really need a massive programme in public education. Solutions themselves are only as useful as the procedures which produce them. Northern Ireland has for a long time echoed with the banging together of separately conceived 'solutions'. This is mere horse trading and it is the hallmark of horse trading that one criticises the other man's proposals rather than examining his reasons for making them. This can produce only solutions based on power, in which only one side is satisfied, or solutions based on compromise, in which neither side is satisfied.

We noted above that before violence can be condemned on social grounds, the social conditions which produce that violence must be removed. It is a difficult task to invent panaceas for these short-term conditions. Many, including ourselves, have talked about removing the bar of internment. In honesty, this merely transfers the rationale for violence from the Catholic community to the Protestant community. If panaceas cannot be easily found, all the more reason to start talking and inquiring into the basic problems involved. **Talks that are meant to find formulae that will ease the grievances that cause people to fight cannot be conditional on the ending of that violence; that is a contradiction in terms. If moderate parties cannot talk for fear of being outflanked, then talks must involve those parties who cannot be outflanked.** This will eventually happen in any case; history is littered with negotiations between groups who swore never to talk to each other.

If such talking is to be credible, it must not be conditional on the ending of violence. It should itself be a part of the process that ends it. People are fighting, or threatening to fight, just because they feel that talking has failed. To offer talks as a reward for the end of fighting is not sensible. It is only a question of how much more violence there will be before this is realised.

June, 1972

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