

NATIONALISM AND VIOLENCE: THE IDEOLOGY  
OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

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ACADEMY OF GRADUATE STUDIES



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Oct 11, 85

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B.A., University of Sheffield, 1982

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS  
in the Department  
of  
Political Science

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard



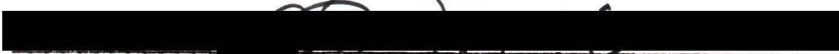
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July 1985

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## ABSTRACT


The Rising of 1916 set in motion a chain of events which was to culminate in the secession from the United Kingdom of twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties. The Irish Republican Movement, both in its military and political manifestations, regards itself as the inheritor of the ideological legacy of the 1916 leadership. It considers the national revolution commenced in 1916 to have been betrayed and incomplete as six counties remain subject to British sovereignty. The ideological underpinnings of the Rising are thus considered by republicans to remain valid and crucially important for the achievement of 'national liberation'.

This thesis suggests that the Republican Movement of today closely follows the doctrine laid down by James Connolly and, to a lesser extent, Padraig Pearse. By examining the doctrinal boundaries within which the movement chooses to operate, it is possible to illuminate a consistent rationale behind its practice. It is argued here that the movement has faithfully remained within the parameters set by its founding fathers even in the face of difficult or unforeseen political developments. By identifying a coherent belief system, and demonstrating its influence, the commonly levelled charge that the movement is a nihilistic and purely militaristic organization is challenged.


After outlining the theoretical origins of the movement, the study examines three major developments in its history from 1969 to the

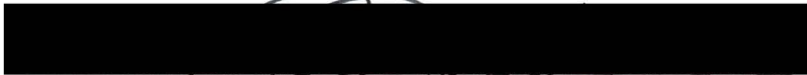
present day. One of these is the split between what became known as the Official and Provisional wings of the movement. The second is the movement's reaction to the 'two nations' theory of nationality. The third is the policy commonly known as the 'Armalite and the ballot box'. The study attempts to assess the importance of tradition and early republican ideology in the movement's reaction to those developments.


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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Acronyms .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vii
Introduction .....	1
Endnotes .....	7
I. The Rising and Republican Antecedents .....	10
Endnotes .....	28
✕ II. The Split: 1969-1970 .....	36
Endnotes .....	65
✕ III. Nation and Nationality in Republicanism: 1975 .....	73
Endnotes .....	97
✕ IV. Republicanism and Electoral Politics: 1975-1985 .....	102
Endnotes .....	124
Conclusion .....	127
Endnotes .....	131
Selected Bibliography .....	132

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ICA Irish Citizen Army—formed as a labour defence force during the Dublin 'lock-out' of 1913. Fought under Connolly in the 1916 Rising.
- ICO Irish Communist Organisation—numerically small Irish Stalinist grouping with pro-unionist position. Later became British and Irish Communist Organisation (B)ICO.
- INLA Irish National Liberation Army—paramilitary group established in 1976 as a defence force for the IRSP.
- IRA Irish Republican Army—the armed wing of the republican movement split into two sections in 1969. That section known as the 'Official IRA' is said to have been disbanded.
- IRB Irish Republican Brotherhood—sometimes noted as the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood. Synonymous with the Fenians. Originated in America and organized an abortive rebellion in Ireland in 1867.
- IRSP Irish Republican Socialist Party—formed in 1974 in reaction to the new Stalinist line being taken by the Officials.
- ISRP Irish Socialist Republican Party—formed in 1897 by James Connolly from the Dublin Socialist Club.
- NICRA Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association—anti-discrimination coalition formed in the late 1960s and modelled on the black civil rights movement in the USA.
- NLF National Liberation Front—coalition of leftist groups following the 'Stages' theory of the Officials in the late 1960s.

- NORAID     Irish Northern Aid Committee—republican fund raising organization in North America.
- RUC         Royal Ulster Constabulary—largely Protestant police force of Northern Ireland. The RUC took over from the Royal Irish Constabulary following partition.
- SDLP        Social Democratic and Labour Party—formed on August 21, 1970 from the remnants of the old Nationalist Party and a large section of the lesser constitutional nationalist parties.
- SFWP        Sinn Fein, the Workers' Party—was originally Official Sinn Fein. The organization later dropped the Sinn Fein prefix.
- UDR         Ulster Defence Regiment—Regiment of the British army, recruited locally, replacing the B Specials.
- UVF         Ulster Volunteer Force—formed originally by Edward Carson to resist Home Rule. The name re-emerged in 1972 with a loyalist paramilitary organization.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

More often than not, with the end of Bachelorhood in sight, the Master's candidate scribes his or her indebtedness to all those "without whose invaluable assistance this work would never have been completed." Few, I suspect, have been able to pen the above appreciation as genuinely as I, about so many for so much.

In Ireland I am indebted to the staff of the Linen Hall Library and particularly to Mr. and Mrs. Howell in Belfast who provided me with invaluable advice and endless cups of tea. My thanks, of course, to my parents. In Britain my thanks are due to the staff of North Manchester College for pushing me towards academe and to Ms. ten Tusscher for moral support. In Canada I would particularly like to thank Mrs. Eleanor Lowther whose help in this endeavour was genuinely invaluable in providing not only typing but also stirring advice and excellent home-made soup. My gratitude is due to Cathrine Lowther and the other residents of Puffin Manor for service above and beyond the call of duty. It is due also to my fellow graduate students with whom my education here proved to be a rewarding and cooperative process. May they prosper! Thanks to all those members of staff who taught me and for the excellent scotch from one who didn't.

Last, and certainly not least, I wish to thank my committee, particularly my supervisor, Dr. Birch, for suffering through the earlier drafts of this work with unflinching dedication and immeasurable patience. Needless to say, the mistakes and inadequacies herein are solely my own

responsibility and are there sometimes, I am sure, at my insistence despite their untiring efforts.

## INTRODUCTION

The central theme of this thesis is an examination of the development of the Irish Republican Movement and the major planks of its political doctrine. The republican movement is a shorthand term for the Irish Republican Army (IRA), together with its political alter ego Sinn Fein,<sup>1</sup> and its various departments.<sup>2</sup> While all those advocating the unification of Ireland by the disestablishment of the northern six-county state would be recognizable as republicans, the term republican movement has come to have a fairly specific meaning. The present Republican Movement is an explicitly socialist organization founded upon the doctrines articulated by James Connolly and Padraig Pearse, both of whom were leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916 in Dublin.<sup>3</sup> The ideology of the movement represents a coalescence of the ideas of the founding fathers', a renunciation of constitutional means to achieve their ends, and the advocacy of the complete restructuring of society following "national liberation." The doctrine and practice of the republican movement today can only be understood in the light of the theoretical contributions of Connolly and Pearse. As Danny Morrison, until recently vice-president of Sinn Fein, has pointed out:

We believe in the 1916 proclamation of independence. We draw all our recent philosophy from that document.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis will argue that the all-important source of republican legitimacy, the idea of historical continuity with the 1916 leadership, has been carefully nurtured, and the original doctrine as closely as

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possible adhered to, by the movement. This task has not been without difficulty and the movement has executed what amounts to a skillful balancing act by remaining upon the line of Pearse and Connolly while being buffeted by the exigencies of ongoing political developments. In following the republican path essentially two currents must be seen to be in operation, one a form of "hibernicised marxism"<sup>5</sup> and the other being more a method than a doctrinal contribution. While Connolly's work has provided the backbone of the movement's doctrine, Pearse's method is so deeply embedded that it is rarely emphasized. Ireland, in Pearse's view, is to be free, not only from British political power but also from penetration by British culture, both of which he perceived to have been part of the process of subjugation begun in 1169. The rectification of this situation of colonial oppression he considered to lie in only one path, armed uprising. The contributions of the two major figures in Irish republicanism are really only separable for the purpose of analysis because they became inextricably fused in the crucible of Easter 1916. But Connolly's ideas are more important in relation to the formation of modern republican ideology.

Chapter one will outline the conditions and events leading up to the 1916 Rising and [will highlight the major theoretical contributions of its leadership to the movement which followed.] While Pearse and Connolly are regarded as the locus classicus of republican doctrine, there has been a noticeable imbalance in the emphasis on their respective contributions. This is caused not by any lack of esteem for Pearse, but because his teachings have become so ingrained that reiteration

hardly seems necessary. As MacEoin argues:

The simple issue of violence for "the cause" has simply been isolated. It long ago ceased to be subject to the judgement of the church or of anybody.<sup>6</sup>

Because Connolly's theoretical work is more pronounced in the formation of republican ideology, chapter one will focus more closely on his contribution than on the tactical or military aspect which is derived largely from Pearse.

Following the failure of the 1956-1962 campaign of violence, the republican leadership under Tomas MacGiolla and Cathal Goulding attempted in 1968 to alter the direction of the movement from that which was regarded as the pristine line of republicanism. The reaction to this deviation ultimately resulted in a "split" which sundered the movement and precipitated a particularly bloody period of internecine feuding over doctrinal purity. To some observers of the 1969-1970 split this represented a separation of the militarist from the socialist coteries within the movement. Chapter two will examine the issues involved and will argue that such a simple dichotomous view is misconceived.

By 1975 the increasing popularity of a theory justifying the partitioning of Ireland in 1921 forced a significant reformulation of the way in which republicanism perceived the nationality of the loyalist community. That reformulation presented republicans with substantial difficulties insofar as the pressures to adhere to Connolly's views were considerable. Chapter three will investigate the bases for the republican view of nation and nationality, the opposing "two nations" approach

and its repercussions in the changing republican perception regarding the loyalists.

The emergence of a new radical leadership in Sinn Fein and the IRA in 1975, together with the impact of British policy decisions on Northern Ireland, necessitated the development of an increasingly sophisticated response by the movement to its situation. Chapter four will outline the changing republican policies since the mid-1970s, noting particularly the new line of "the Armalite and the ballot box" which marked the return of Sinn Fein to the electoral process. This chapter will examine also the ultimate objective of the Republican Movement's campaign, the Gaelic socialist society, Comhar na gComharsan (neighbours' cooperation) and the abandonment of the federal plan.

Having defined the Republican Movement as an organization built upon the twin pillars of insurrectionary nationalism and socialism, it is clear that within the confines of the definition exist two bodies other than Sinn Fein which seemingly warrant attention, namely the Workers' Party and the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP). The Workers' Party, formerly the "Officials" or the "Stickies"<sup>7</sup> did, for a time, claim to be the true repository of republican ideals though this they have now relinquished. "The Republican socialist tradition of Tone and Connolly," they proclaimed, "blemished and shamed by sectarian action, is and will be upheld by the (Official) Republican Army, the army of the people."<sup>8</sup> By 1970 it became clear that the "Officials" intended to abandon the insurrectionary aspect of the republican equation. Certainly the "Officials" did delete the principle of armed force

but, despite the rhetoric and denials of the leadership, the Official IRA does still exist, albeit in a restricted capacity.<sup>9</sup> More important however in this context, the Officials abandoned Connolly by adopting the stance of a reformist party in the mould of the Second International. In Connolly's view (see chapter one below), proletarian unity would come about in no way other than by first achieving national liberation. The Officials, by relinquishing the Sinn Fein prefix from their former title, "Sinn Fein, The Workers' Party," acknowledged their stance to be outside the republican pale. The abandonment of the title was a reflection of the principles for which it stood. As Magill reported:

From 1972 onwards the Official I.R.A. and Official Sinn Fein gradually abandoned the pursuit of the movement's declared objective of a united Ireland in favour of the more immediate aim of attracting working-class loyalist support.<sup>10</sup>

The IRSP originated under the direction of Seamus Costello, who objected to the new line being taken by the Official tendency in the movement. Costello had been vice-chairperson of Sinn Fein and adjutant general of the Official IRA. The IRSP membership came mostly from the ranks of the Officials, already suffering from membership losses to the Provisionals after the split. The Officials responded violently with physical assaults, petrol bombings and shootings. Bernadette (Devlin) MacAliskey, who was briefly associated with the party, remarked that "there were so many beatings that in 1975 our largest party branch was in the Royal Victoria Hospital."<sup>11</sup> The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) grew up as a defence force for the membership of the IRSP. This diminutive liberation army has been subjected to severe attacks, not only by the forces of the British and Irish states, but also from other

paramilitaries and even from their own membership.<sup>12</sup> The differences between the INLA/IRSP and the Republican Movement are particularly difficult to ascertain, indeed Sinn Fein is reputed to have asserted that there are no differences and that there is no reason for the IRSP to exist.<sup>13</sup> While there are reasons of interest for including the IRSP at some level in this work, this will have to await further study and extensive fieldwork.

## ENDNOTES—INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>Sinn Fein (ourselves) has been commonly, if mistakenly, translated as "Ourselves Alone." Despite the inaccuracy of the translation, ourselves alone, or in Irish, Sinn Fein Amhain, does neatly encapsulate the basic philosophy of the movement. Contained in the two words are the strict autarchy demanded by Connolly and the notion of separatism in Pearse. The term itself was imposed upon the revolutionaries of 1916 as a form of denigration. The Sinn Fein party, under Arthur Griffith, first articulated its views in 1902. Griffith's "Hungarian policy" demanded that Ireland should establish a national government by the restoration of the 1782 constitution which gave legislative independence to Ireland. Griffith's new Ireland would then share the British monarchy after the example of the Hungarian deputies of 1861. On the application of the term to what later became known as Sinn Fein one scholar points out:

[T]here is no question about who gave the name to the movement for Irish independence. It was the British government through its authorities in Ireland. Seeking to depreciate the Easter Rebellion and to portray its leaders as members of a small obscure splinter group favouring a strange unintelligible programme, the British authorities officially referred to it as the Sinn Fein Rebellion. (Joseph, "Sweeny, Why Sinn Fien?" *Eire-Ireland*, Summer 1971. p. 38)

<sup>2</sup>Sinn Fein today comprises a number of departments among which are the Women's Department, the Youth Department, a Cultural Department, a Foreign Affairs Department. It includes also the journalists and staff of the Sinn Fein weekly newspaper, *An Phoblacht* and the full- and part-time staffs of the various Advice Centres.

<sup>3</sup>The Sinn Fein constitution of today demonstrates the crucial importance of the rising's ideological foundations in the understanding of the movement. Outlined as basic principles are the following:

That the allegiance of Irishmen and Irish women is due to the sovereign Irish Republic proclaimed in 1916.

and

That the sovereignty and the unity of the Republic are inalienable and non-judicable.

Its objects are listed as:

- (a) The complete overthrow of English rule in Ireland and the establishment of a democratic republic based on the Proclamation of 1916.
- (b) To bring the Proclamation of the Republic, Easter 1916, into effective operation and to maintain and consolidate the Government of all the Republic, representative of all the people of Ireland, based on that Proclamation.

- (c) To establish in the Republic, a reign of social justice based on Christian social principles [this has now been deleted], by a just distribution and effective control of the Nation's wealth and resources and to institute a system of government suited to the particular needs of the people.
- (d) To promote the restoration of the Irish language and the Irish culture and the widest knowledge of Ireland's history; to make Irish citizens conscious of their traditional and cultural heritage, and to educate citizens in the Republic to their rights and responsibilities.

<sup>4</sup>Danny Morrison quoted in *Marxism Today*, December 1980, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>Bernard Ransom, 1980, p. 6 ff.

<sup>6</sup>G. Mac Eoin, "The I.R.A.," *Eire-Ireland*, Summer 1984, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>The term "Stickies" or "Sticks" originated in the "Officials" custom of using adhesive backed Easter lilies to commemorate the Rising. The Provisionals used lilies fixed by means of pins and were briefly referred to, in some quarters, as the "Pinnies."

<sup>8</sup>*United Irishman*, May 1972.

<sup>9</sup>The function of the "Official" IRA has now been relegated to a position as a fund-raising organization. One section, known as "The Dirty Dozen," reputedly robbed as much as £200,000 in one four-month period. See *Magill*, April 1982, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup>*Magill* April 1979, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>In 1982 a Lower Falls group of INLA personnel shot and wounded their northern organizer, Jackie Goodman, IRSP city councillor Sean Flynn and his brother Harry, a leading IRSP member. Goodman turned Queen's evidence and his arrest led to the arrest of more than thirty leading INLA figures. In 1983 fourteen people, including the IRSP chairperson, were arrested on the testimony of Harry Kirkpatrick, another INLA supergrass.

<sup>13</sup>An IRSP interview states the following:  
In certain areas the IRSP shares agreement with the Provisional Republican Movement. For example, as you are aware, like the Provos we place particular emphasis on the need for British with-

drawal and Irish self determination. To state, however that this similarity in the objective warrants the non-existence of the IRSP is absurd. There are many areas of disagreement between both organisations.

The spokesperson goes on to say that the IRSP is a truly revolutionary party while the republican movement is merely 'populist'. This would appear to be a reference to the IRSP adherence to the 'clear cut' period in Connolly's development (see chapter one below). This is a misrepresentation of Connolly's later development for he displayed no such ideological purity when he combined forces with the 'advanced' nationalists in 1916. The major difference of opinion between the IRSP and Sinn Fein was held to be the latter's objective of a "vague Federal structured society" while the former's "clearly stated *aim* is that of a workers' state."

Given that the Republican Movement has now jettisoned the federal aspect of its future plans, the differences tend to become more apparent. (From an interview published by the IRSP.)

## CHAPTER ONE

## THE RISING AND REPUBLICAN ANTECEDENTS

National revolution in Ireland was a late arrival to that clutch of European nationalisms spawned in the late eighteenth century. The establishment of a national insurrectionary tradition awaited the pre-conditions for its birth: the diminution of rural isolation; the elaboration of a coherent ideology; and, the provision of an "eruptive factor."<sup>1</sup> It was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century that the Irish nationalist movement finally took hold, and was ushered into history by the conflation of a series of economic and social events which culminated in the Easter Rising of 1916. The Rising was a watershed in Irish history<sup>2</sup> and the point of origin of modern republicanism.

Nairn argues that, in the drive for modernization, peripheral nations have to introduce the material form of "progress" in the shape of hospitals, schools, factories, and parliaments. But they must do this in such a way as to reject the "mere implementation of these things by direct intervention or control."<sup>3</sup> To mobilize the people against their economic backwardness, "the middle class intelligentsia had to invite the masses into history; and the invitation card had to be written in a language they understood."<sup>4</sup> In Ireland, the movement for cultural revival was the way in which the task was to be undertaken, to galvanize the people for what Nairn refers to as the painful forced march on their own resources.

The notion of cultural revival and the reversal of the effects of English "cultural penetration," articulated in the late 1800s by the language revival movement, were translated into a revolutionary doctrine by Padraig Pearse. To Pearse, the romanticization of the past was in itself a revolutionary undertaking, based on Davis' prediction that:

The first step to nationality is the open and deliberate recognition of it by the people themselves. Once the Irish people declare the disconnection of themselves, their feelings and interests from the men, feelings and interests of England they are on the march for freedom.<sup>5</sup>

As Davis rightly argued, what is important is the recognition of their cultural distinctiveness *by the people themselves*. It is precisely here that the seemingly arbitrary differentiation of events before and after 1916 is justified. Nationalism after 1916 moved from the preserve of a tiny minority of intellectuals to the national community in the form of a doctrine of insurrectionary national separatism. Political nationalism, as a doctrine of political demands made by a national community and based on national sentiment, only became a reality after that point. The emphasis to be placed on the works of Pearse and Connolly in relation to the republican movement which followed them is in no way opposed to Gellner's assertion that nationalism seldom springs from the "extremely abstruse lucubrations of philosophers."<sup>6</sup> Clearly the material conditions would have produced a brand of national revolution, with or without Pearse and Connolly, but its form and content would have been fundamentally different.

The Gaelic League, in attempting the revival of the Irish language and culture, was undoubtedly important in the origins of republicanism,

but the point has frequently been overstated, not least by republicans themselves. Michael Collins, a later republican leader, was to say of the League:

Irish history will recognise in the birth of the Gaelic League in 1893 the most important event of the 19th century. I may go further and say not only in the 19th century but in the whole history of our nation. It checked the peaceful penetration and once and for all turned the minds of the Irish people back to their own country.<sup>7</sup>

The language movement was neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the upsurge of nationalism in Ireland. The Irish language was spoken all the way through the political oppression of the Penal Laws without anything resembling a national revolutionary tradition appearing. Political nationalism is not a necessary concomitant of cultural nationalism. The language revival movement simply provided a catalyst in a set of pre-existing social conditions. In November 1913, Pearse declared that the Gaelic League had served its purpose and fulfilled its potential: the task to which it had been set, the unification of a people under a common name, could go no further. Political nationalism would have to go forward from the base which the cultural revival had helped establish.

I have come to the conclusion that the Gaelic League, as the Gaelic League, is a spent force and I am glad of it. I do not mean that no work remains for the Gaelic League, or that the Gaelic League is no longer equal to the work; I mean that the vital work to be done in the new Ireland will be done not so much by the League itself as by the men and movements that have sprung from the Gaelic League or have received from the Gaelic League a new baptism and a new life of grace.<sup>8</sup>

What toppled the League's activities from poetry into insurrectionary politics, in the nineteenth century, was the realization of commonality

expressed in cultural terms and empowered by the possibility of association in the cities.

Earlier native protests in the eighteenth century, against dispossession and legislative oppression, manifested themselves in the isolated though widespread violence of the agrarian secret societies against the landowners. The fact that the landlords were, more often than not, English provided the impetus for later nationalists to mistakenly view these attacks as demonstrative of a primitive nationalism.<sup>9</sup> In reality, they were reactions to local stimuli such as eviction, enclosure and dearth, constituting in terms of nationalism "a muscular spasm rather than a nervous system."<sup>10</sup> Organizations such as the Defenders, the Whiteboys and the Ribbon societies were agrarian both in membership and objectives, totally lacking in political ideology. While it would be imprudent to suggest that there is a clear and definitive line between events occurring before and after April 1916, the earlier reactive agrarian belligerents must be seen as elements in the environment which produced the Rising, rather than precursors to the republican movement which followed. Both republican violence and the ideology which functioned to justify it to its followers today take their point of origin from the 1916 Rising. The social and economic environment which produced agrarian violence would ultimately create the sociological base for the national revolution, in the form of the new Irish proletariat.

In contrast to the above view, Cruise O'Brien argues that "the beginnings of the Irish revolution—that is the revolution of the

Catholic Irish—are as much in America as in Ireland."<sup>11</sup> Thus, he emphasizes the role of the emigrant Irish who, in seeing in American history the reflection of their own oppression by Britain, "became more anti-English than were many Irishmen who remained in Ireland."<sup>12</sup> Indeed the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) which originated in America did stage a rebellion for national liberation in 1867, fired by the belief that England would never withdraw "except by the persuasion of cold lead and steel."<sup>13</sup> On the 4th of March 1867, the IRB, more familiarly known as the "Fenians," proclaimed themselves a provisional government and issued a copy of their proclamation. "The real owners of the soil," it pointed out, "were removed to make room for cattle, and driven across the ocean to seek the means of living and the political right denied to them at home . . . but we never lost the memory and hope of a national existence."<sup>14</sup> The similarities between the tactics of the Fenians and the republicans of 1916 are striking, but the rising was an utter failure, defeated in a matter of hours. It was, in essence, simply an incident in which an emerging nationalist ideology threw ill-equipped and badly organized peasants against British military might. Cruise O'Brien's suggestion that it was from the association of the emigrant Irish in America that the origin of nationalist revolt arrived ignores the fact that support for the Fenian revolt was suppressed by the straightforward application of land reforms. In his history of the IRB, Leon O'Broin states that by 1916 "it is not unfair to say that by this stage, after more than half a century of existence, the IRB had achieved no practical result whatsoever."<sup>15</sup> While the ideological underpinnings



of Irish nationalism had appeared, the social bases in which it could flourish were, as yet, undeveloped.

The republican ideology, as the product of the liaison between Connolly's socialism and Pearse's "physical-force" nationalism, cannot be understood if divorced from the conditions which diminished rural isolation and established an Irish rather than a British commonality. The structural necessities of capitalist (in this case English capitalist) development manifested themselves in the rationalization of agriculture through the consolidation of tiny farmlands, and for the first time precipitated the basis for a genuine "imagined community."<sup>16</sup> The throwing together of the displaced peasantry in urban centres increased the perception of commonality which was to be sensitized by the Gaelic cultural revival. Thus, rather than originating in agrarian struggles and being carried to the cities, nationalism began with the urban population and by a process of acculturation spread to the peasantry. It was not only the conflicting orders for the commencement of the Rising that restricted the battle of 1916 to the city of Dublin. A member of the IRB remarked at the time on the contrast between the intense revolutionary activity in Dublin before the Rising where "every person one met seemed to be a rebel of some sort" and the atmosphere in the countryside where "the first enthusiasm had disappeared and trying to make any headway seemed like rolling a stone up an endless hill."<sup>17</sup>

It was in the nationalist movement's appeal to the new proletariat that this stage of Irish revolt differed from the earlier reactive agrarian uprisings. Fostered by the creation of this class and the

severity of its subsequent exploitation, an ill-defined national sentiment finally burst into political nationalism with the Rising providing its eruptive factor. The growing urban populations in Ireland in the late nineteenth century reflected in many ways the conditions of the English proletariat in the era of nascent capitalism. However, to the ills of uncontrolled social domination were added the disadvantages of national domination. The lack of any ability to protect infant industries, due to the absence of national government, had been further compounded by the continued export of capital upon which indigenous industry would have to feed. Marx estimated the amount paid to absentee landlords in 1834 to be in the region of over \$30 million.

Middlemen accumulated fortunes that they would not invest in improvement of land and *could not*, under the system which prostrated manufacturers, invest in machinery etc. All their accumulations were sent therefore to England for investment.<sup>18</sup>

The changing rural economy produced massive numbers of evictions<sup>19</sup> which swelled the urban population, while the simultaneous export of capital resulted in a system of underdevelopment manifesting itself in horrific social conditions in the cities.<sup>20</sup>

The growing problems of violent disaffection in the countryside,<sup>21</sup> and the growth of a "Home Rule" movement<sup>22</sup> hoping ultimately to enforce a degree of trade protection, were answered by a series of concessions which, while blunting the edge of rebellion, maintained British domination. The Land Acts of 1881 and 1886 culminated in the 1903 Wyndham Act, which offered to the landlords financial inducements to sell their property. The peasantry paid dearly for the repossession of the land, and only a few of them benefitted, but the policy of concession together

with the depopulation of the countryside combined to take the steam from the boiler of rural revolt. J.C. Beckett points out that "since the settlement of the land problem, the driving force supplied by the grievances of the tenantry had almost disappeared and the social discontent of the towns helped to provide a substitute."<sup>23</sup>

The Home Rule Bill, a "vehicle for preserving British rule in Ireland in a more acceptable and a less naked form,"<sup>24</sup> became law in 1914. The Act, enabling a degree of legislative independence and containing within it a plan for the partition of the island, was subsequently suspended for the duration of the war. The arming of the Ulster Loyalists, in defiance of the British attempt to impose Home Rule, had precipitated an alliance between the Volunteer movement<sup>25</sup> and the socialist republican movement.<sup>26</sup> The leaders of these two organizations, Pearse and Connolly, were to become the founding fathers of republicanism. However, the import and breadth of the leadership's contributions to the republican movement which subsequently developed were unequal. Pearse's political writings, in contrast to Connolly's, spanned a comparatively short period of time. Pearse distinguished himself by elevating to a point of principle in republicanism what the Fenians had perceived as the necessity to use armed force to expel the British from Ireland. "England," they argued, "would never concede self-government to the force of argument only to the argument of force."<sup>27</sup> That principle has rarely been questioned within the movement. As a romantic nationalist, Pearse concerned himself simply with what Nairn refers to as inviting the masses into history. In large part, that invitation was accepted in the period

between 1916 and the establishment of the Irish "free state."

For Connolly, national liberation was simply a precondition for the social liberation of Ireland's proletariat. He saw independence not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. Therefore, contra Pearse, he believed the removal of British power to be the point of origin of a significant social transformation, rather than its completion. National liberation to Connolly was not simply the acquisition of the symbolic representation of nationhood in emblems, anthems and legislatures.

The struggle for Irish freedom has two aspects, it is national and it is social. The national ideal can never be realised until Ireland stands forth before the world as a nation, free and independent. It is social and economic because no matter what the form of government may be, as long as one class owns as private property the land and instruments of labour from which mankind derive their substance, that class will always have it in their power to plunder and enslave the remainder of their fellow creatures.<sup>28</sup>

The possibility of social advancement in Ireland, Connolly believed to be contingent upon its complete secession from Britain. It was to be Connolly's detailed work which would provide the font of historical legitimacy from which the republican movement was to draw. It is for this reason that the movement takes pains to assert "we are the true revolutionaries and the true inheritors of James Connolly."<sup>29</sup>

Although by 1916 there was what amounted to an organic coalescence of the ideas of Pearse and Connolly, they approached the revolutionary situation of that year by significantly different routes. To Connolly, the implementation of a degree of trade protection through Home Rule, while still maintaining British domination, was drastically misconceived. It was clear to him that, with the era of imperialism now firmly

established, the amelioration of Ireland's economic backwardness demanded more radical measures. Because of the crisis of overproduction and underconsumption, the markets of the world were being fought over by the already developed nations. "Bear this in mind," Connolly argued, ". . . that Germany, France, Belgium, Austria and Japan are entering into the struggle; that each of them is striving hard, not only to provide what it had formerly relied on England to provide but also to beat England out of the markets of the world."<sup>30</sup> For Ireland to jump into the fray for markets at this time would lead to an unbridled renewal of social oppression and a "state of social wretchedness for which no savage land can furnish a parallel."<sup>31</sup>

It is well to remember that even under the most favourable conditions, even if by some miracle we were able to cover the green fields of Erin with huge, ugly factories, with chimnies belching forth volumes of poisonous smoke and coating the island with a sooty desolation—even then we would quickly find that under conditions born of the capitalistic system our one hope of keeping our feet as a manufacturing nation, would depend on our ability to work longer and harder for a lower wage than the other nations of Europe in order that our middle class may have the opportunity of selling their goods at a lower price than their competitors. This is equivalent to saying that our chance of making Ireland a manufacturing country depends on us becoming the lowest blacklegs in Europe.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, he believed, considering not only the paucity of the materials for industrial advance but also the inappropriate timing of entering this commercial battlefield, the English socialist alliance with the Liberals in support of Home Rule was mistaken. Home Rule and its provision of some measure of trade protection would provide no answer to the problem. Ireland, Connolly believed, could not progress towards socialism in the "Darwinian" way suggested by the British socialists,<sup>33</sup>

but would have to jump a stage and progress directly from its pre-capitalist condition to a socialist autarchy by revolutionary means. Succession and then socialism he considered to be the order and the means by which the social liberation of Ireland's working class could be achieved. The program of the Irish Socialist Republican Party concluded:

That the subjection of one nation to another, as of Ireland to the authority of the British crown, is a barrier to the free political and economic development of the subjected nation, and can only serve in the interests of the exploiting classes of both nations.

That, therefore, the national and economic freedom of the Irish people must be sought in the same direction, viz. the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic, and the consequent conversion of the means of production distribution and exchange into the common property of society to be held and controlled by a democratic state in the interests of the entire community.<sup>34</sup>

To Connolly, it was apparent that the oncoming partitioning of the island would crush any hope for the realization of proletarian unity:

Such a scheme . . . the betrayal of national democracy of industrial Ulster . . . would set back the wheels of progress, would destroy the oncoming unity of the labour movement and paralyse all advanced movements while it endured.<sup>35</sup>

He recognized, in the attitudes of the Protestant workers of the north, the emergence of the same sectionalism which was characteristic of the upper echelons of the craft unions, a labour aristocracy. The Protestant workers would rightly perceive their elevated position to be due to British rule and thus their support of British political domination would ensure their continued social domination. Independence would result in equal democratic rights for both the loyalist and nationalist sections of the working class, a situation to be striven for even in the face of opposition from the loyalist population.

The loss of its privileged position will mean for Protestantism the possibility of an immense spiritual uplifting, and the emergence into a knowledge of its kinship with its brothers and sisters of different creeds.<sup>36</sup>

The union with Britain, he believed, was a barrier to social emancipation, for not only did it hold back real economic development but it would ensure as long as it survived that sectional interest would take precedence over class interest. A socialist republic, operating under a system of strict autarchy, would constitute the only way forward, for only by this means could the objective interests of the proletariat emerge from under the weight of capitalist hegemonic power.

Remove the barrier, throw the Irish people back upon their own resources, make them realise the causes of poverty, of lack of progress, of arrested civic and national development, are then to be sought from within and not from without, are in their power to remove or perpetuate, and ere long that spirit of democratic progress will invade and permeate all our social and civil institutions.<sup>37</sup>

Pearse, as a cultural nationalist, believed strongly that the granting of Home Rule was the insertion of a lever which would eventually part Ireland from England. Those who derided the Home Rule Bill as insufficient to the needs of Ireland he compared to

the prisoner who refused to have one of his manacles taken from him when his oppressors would not remove the second one too. That prisoner did not understand that to remove one of the manacles would make it easier for him to escape, and perhaps it would have been a weapon in his hand given to him by God.<sup>38</sup>

However, his support of the bill was based on the willingness or ability of the British government to secure its passage, and Pearse had already become sceptical, having seen the first two bills run aground on Conservative intransigence. Speaking from a Dublin platform, he prophetically warned against governmental procrastination: "If they trick us again,"

he said, "I will lead an insurrection myself."<sup>39</sup> He vacillated for some time from a revolutionary to a reformist position, hoping at one moment for Irish unity under Redmond and threatening the British government with "red war throughout Ireland"<sup>40</sup> the next. Despite this, the seeds of his later belief in the necessity of armed force to end cultural penetration were beginning to germinate. Pearse's newspaper, *An Barr Buagh*, which ran to a total of eleven issues, preached "the elementary political truth that the liberty of the people can only be guaranteed by its readiness and ability to vindicate it in arms."<sup>41</sup>

Between 1912, after the collapse of his newspaper, and 1913, Pearse dedicated himself to the upkeep of his school, which had neared financial ruin during his preoccupation with politics. His writings, in *From a Hermitage*, between 1913 and 1914 reveal a new transformation. He became passionately aware that Ireland's individuality would not only become submerged, but that its colonial status would be passively accepted. He admonished the quiescence of the Irish people in accepting their inferior colonial status, fearing that the perennial undercurrent of revolt would finally expire. "There comes to a slave," he argued, "as there comes to a tortured child or a tortured animal, a time when stripes seem normal and it is easier to endure than to protest."<sup>42</sup> The very life of the nation would depend upon a demonstration of resistance, "a very passionate assertion of its nationality," the form of which would "depend largely on the passage or non-passage of the Home Rule Bill."<sup>43</sup>

His commitment to armed resistance was steadily reinforced as the possibility of legislative independence grew more distant. The deter-

mination of the Loyalists to resist the passage of the Home Rule Bill had remained for many the subject of derision. It seemed that a minority of a minority in Ireland could not resist the will of the British parliament. England was after all, as Pearse acknowledged, a tiger among beasts and a shark among fish.<sup>44</sup> To some extent, Pearse still held out hope that the bill would be enforced. But if Orange resistance was sufficiently substantial then the nationalists should support them.

It is unquestionable that Sir Edward Carson's Provisional government would govern Ireland better than she has been governed by the English cabinet; at any rate it could not be worse.<sup>45</sup>

Pearse did not espouse armed revolt as an all-encompassing principle but rather as one which was applicable in Ireland's particular relationship with England.

Obviously, if a nation can obtain its freedom without bloodshed, it is its duty to so obtain it. Those of us who believe that in the circumstances of Ireland, it is not possible to obtain our freedom without bloodshed will admit that much.<sup>46</sup>

Strictly speaking, there was no absolute dichotomy between the perspectives of Pearse and Connolly immediately prior to the Rising. The doctrines of Pearse's "physical force" nationalism and Connolly's socialism are not separate hues on the canvas of republican ideology but rather like still wet water colours were inextricably mixed at more than one common point. Pearse's conservatism was considerably eroded by his reading of Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*, while Connolly's belief in the efficacy of "physical force" was demonstrated by his participation in the Rising. As Edwards argues, "within his emotional limits Pearse was ever open to intellectual argument and Connolly was to have a

profound effect on him."<sup>47</sup>

Having previously seen only national oppression Pearse began, under Connolly's influence, to perceive a greater wrong. He said:

My instinct is with the landless man against the lord of lands and with the breadless man against the master of millions. I may be wrong, but I do hold it a terrible sin that there should be landless men in this island of waste yet fertile valleys and that there should be breadless men in the cities where great fortunes are made and enjoyed.<sup>48</sup>

Connolly believed that the rebellion was justified not only because of Ireland's particular situation but also because such an action would precipitate a European revolution (much in the same way that the Bolsheviks expected this to follow 1917).

Starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war-lord.<sup>49</sup>

Pearse, like Connolly, saw the possibility of a European uprising, but as a consequence of the re-emergence of militarism and the "exhilaration of war." Undoubtedly the war raised for Pearse remarkably similar questions to those of the revolutionary left:

What if the war kindles in the slow breasts of the English toilers a wrath like the wrath of the French in 1789?<sup>50</sup>

Both men were infuriated by their generation's lack of vigour and zeal, preferring to talk rather than act. Pearse had railed:

A nice figure we cut during the Boer war! We *talked*. Assuming our warlike declarations were seriously intended, what prevented us chasing the British garrison, small boys and militia men out of the country?<sup>51</sup>

Connolly heaped similar amounts of sarcasm upon the passive Irish.

With war in Africa, war in China, war in India, we of the unconquered Celtic race would rise up in our millions from Malin Head

to Cape Clear, from Dublin to Galway, and—well, pass strong resolutions, and pray that someone else may beat the Sasanach.

The Boers are invulnerable on Kopjes, the Boxers are death on missionaries, but we are irresistable on "resolutions."<sup>52</sup>

Both had succumbed to the Fenian maxim that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity, and both had determined that another opportunity should not be allowed to pass.

Certainly Pearse trod part of the way on Connolly's path, but he remained a populist seeing national oppression and only vaguely seeing the class oppression which underlay it. He declared himself ultimately at peace with his "fellow slave, whether capitalist or worker" for "God knows that we, poor remnant of a gallant nation, endure enough shame in common to make us brothers."<sup>53</sup> What he perceived as the evils of cultural penetration had fired in him a revolutionary impulse, but his education in "the school of the Gaelic League,"<sup>54</sup> while enabling him to see the results of political domination, had provided him with only a fantastic and utopian vision of a free Ireland which would be governed "as no external power—nay not even a government of angels and archangels—could govern her."<sup>55</sup> The cause of Ireland's plight, both social and economic, resided purely in its inability to govern itself and all its ills could be alleviated by the acquisition of that ability. "Before God," he said, "I believe that the root cause of the matter lies in foreign domination."<sup>56</sup> He failed in the end to plumb the depths of Connolly's analysis that,

If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain.

England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers.<sup>57</sup>

While it would be pointless to postulate the direction and extent of

Pearse's political development had a firing squad not interrupted it, it is clear that a dichotomous view of the beliefs which fired the Rising is inappropriate.

Pearse's contribution to the ideology of the republican movement has remained a source of controversy which has, if anything, grown increasingly enigmatic with each revelation of his "true" character.<sup>58</sup> He has been at once a selfless revolutionary hero,<sup>59</sup> an eccentric obsessed with the notion of sacrifice of himself and others,<sup>60</sup> and a "proto fascist" whose "mouthings . . . about blood and soil evokes . . . nausea."<sup>61</sup> By his participation in the Rising, Pearse embroidered into the fabric of cultural nationalism an uncompromising insurrectionary tradition. The assertion of the principle of armed uprising he saw in Ireland's case to be a duty about which there could be no misgivings.

Whatever soul searchings there may be among Irish political parties now or hereafter, we go on in the calm certitude of having done the clear, clean, sheer thing. We have the peace of mind of those who never compromise.<sup>62</sup>

Pearse and Connolly moulded the clay of nationalism to produce the doctrine which proclaimed its end to be a socialist republic and the means to armed revolt. Both of these notions were to be encapsulated in the Proclamation of 1916, to which the modern republican movement believes itself to adhere. That document declared "the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies."<sup>63</sup> Should the Rising not have sufficiently demonstrated the republican method, the Proclamation states that the Provisional government should hold the administration in trust "until *our arms* have brought the opportune moment"<sup>64</sup> for the realization of an

elected national government. The material they shaped from "physical force" nationalism and socialism was vitrified in the crucible of the Rising and has proven its durability in the years which followed it. The Republican Movement of today sees itself as the inheritor of an incomplete or "betrayed" revolution which left one section of the island unfree. The completion of the revolution commenced in 1916 will continue to be carried out according to the doctrine etched into republicanism by its founding fathers.

## ENDNOTES — CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup>A.H. Birch, 1979, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>To claim that the Rising represents a watershed in Irish history is seemingly to state a truism, for it is widely accepted that the history of the Irish republic began at this conjuncture. But there has been a tendency to overstate the importance of the actual event itself. In the first place, the Rising brought to a head the conditions of revolt which had been maturing for some considerable time. The pull of the industrial centres and the push of large scale evictions, in facilitation of enclosure, had created in the cities the conditions in which the ideology of republicanism could flourish. The Rising was an eruptive factor which simply detonated materials which were already present. It strains credibility to suggest that the execution of the leadership of an unpopular armed plot, in a time of war when executions would be expected, could initiate the startling about-face of an entire population. Kelley's recent work is to some extent representative of this view.

Home Rule no longer held much attraction after such a terrible blood sacrifice. Instead of pleading in the British parliament for a bit of self government, Ireland now sought to redeem its honour and pay homage to the Easter dead by demanding a republic. Nothing less would be proper or acceptable. (K. Kelley, 1982, p. 33.)

Detonators do not produce such explosive results by acting in empty space. This image of posthumous legitimation is certainly a romantic and attractive image, but it has little to do with reality. While the Rising was well placed to do the most damage, it should be noted that other indications suggest that a more separatist attitude may already have begun to manifest itself prior to this event. The membership of Redmond's National Volunteers, that is those who merely demanded legislative independence, reached a high point of 191,644 by mid-September 1915 and dropped by no less than 39,554 members in mid-December 1915 (see B. MacGiolla Choille, 1966, p. 201). The revolutionary section of the Volunteers under MacNeill gained 3,804 members in the same period (ibid.).

<sup>3</sup>T. Nairn, 1977, p. 339.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 340.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in T. Boden, 1977, p. 67.

<sup>6</sup>E. Gellner, 1983, p. 126.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in T. Boden, 1977, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup>P.H. Pearse, 1962, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup>See P.S. O'Hegarty, 1952, pp. 462-64.

<sup>10</sup>C. Townshend, 1983, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup>C.C. O'Brien, 1972, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Robert Kee, 1976, p. 38.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>L. O'Broin, 1976, p. 140.

<sup>16</sup>The necessity to rationalize agricultural production was facilitated by the onset of the famine. The potato famine, although at its worst in 1847, was already well established by 1845. In attempting to effect a remedy the British government's repeal of the Corn Laws, while proving totally ineffectual at slowing the death rate (see T.A. Jackson, 1970, p. 245) did increase international competition for the sale of foodstuffs. The concomitant decrease in prices reduced the ability of the peasantry to pay rent by the sale of agricultural produce and spurred the landowners' demands for consolidation. Following the famine, the depopulation of the countryside through starvation or emigration facilitated the consolidation process and the formation of large livestock producing estates. As Marx observed:

Through the repeal of the Corn Laws, Ireland lost her monopoly position on the English market, the old rent could not be paid. High prices for meat and the bankruptcy of the still remaining landowners further contributed to the eviction of the small peasants and the transformation of their land into sheep pasture. (Marx and Engels, 1971, p. 141)

Tenants thus cleared from the land tended to gravitate towards the urban centres or to areas where land could still be rented. The net effect of consolidation in the countryside was to acutely raise the level of competition for the land still available and to drive rents steadily upwards. At the same time competition from North America, Australia, New Zealand and the Danish dairy and bacon industries drove prices downwards and exponentially increased the misery of the peasantry. The growing despair in rural areas was responsible to a large extent for the outbreaks of peasant violence.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in C. Townshend, op. cit., p. 301.

<sup>18</sup>Marx and Engels, 1971, p. 133. Original emphasis.

<sup>19</sup>See S. Clark and J.S. Donnelly Jr., 1983, p. 393.

<sup>20</sup>By the beginning of the 20th century, Dublin had burgeoned into an industrial city inhabited for the most part by those too poor to emigrate to either America or England. Arnold Wright's publication, *Disturbed Dublin*, subsidized by the employers to put their side of the Dublin lock-out of 1913, outlines the conditions in which the new proletariat existed:

The Dublin slum is a thing apart in the inferno of social degradation. Nowhere can there be found concentrated so many of the evils which are associated with the underworld of our modern civilization. To say that men and women live like beasts of the field is the merest truth. In buildings—old and rotten and permeated with both physical and moral corruption—they crowd in incredible numbers. At the Government Inquiry into Dublin housing conditions, held in November, 1913, some astounding facts were brought into prominence. . . . Although there appear to be in the city 5,322 tenement houses accommodating, if such a word can be used, 25,822 families or a total population of 87,305, no fewer than 20,108 families occupy one room each, 4,402 of the remainder have only two rooms each. (R.M. Fox, 1944, p. 18)

<sup>21</sup>The situation in the north had been substantially different from the rest of Ireland, for the method of exploitation of the land had been modified by the plantations. In the south, large estates had been acquired by individual colonists while the north was let to large numbers of lowland Scots, reducing colonial landholdings to a small size. The occupiers of the land in the north benefitted from an advantageous tenurial system known as the "Ulster Custom." This system granted to the tenants of the London "undertakers" fixity of tenure, fair rent and free sale. There has been considerable debate concerning whether this custom spurred on the industrial advance in the northern province. But what is important in this context is that this may have made a significant contribution to the relative peace among the northern tenants.

<sup>22</sup>Gladstone's attempts to placate the peasantry by means of concessions deeply alarmed the Conservative element in Ireland and they moved towards the federal ideas of Issac Butt, a Protestant lawyer. Butt suggested that domestic politics should once more pass into the hands of an Irish, and less radical parliament. At the time of its conception in 1870, the Home Rule movement was dominated by Irish Conservative landowners whose primary concern was to restrict the slide towards peasant proprietorship. It was necessary, they said, in view of the events of the last five years of unrest, "as we value the welfare of our country and regard the safety of all we possess to make some steps towards a reconciliation or agreement with the national sentiment"

(quoted in A. Dures, 1973, pp. 44-45). In only four years, the Home Government Association was reorganized into the Home Rule League, the Conservative membership numerically overtaken by the Liberals, and their policies extended from simply legislative independence to include land reform and state supported interdenominational education. The weapon forged by the Conservatives was seized by those against whom it was intended to be employed.

<sup>23</sup>J.C. Beckett, 1982, p. 150.

<sup>24</sup>D. Reed, 1984, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup>In the run-up to the Rising, the relationship of the Volunteers, who were to fight under Pearse, and Connolly's Irish Citizen Army was far from amicable, presumably because Connolly was not informed until relatively late of the Volunteers' true revolutionary character. The military council of the Volunteers had gone a long way to maintain a facade of constitutionalism. Redmond's participation in the passage of the Home Rule Bill had made him immensely popular, given the prevailing optimism in the ability of the British state to enforce it. Realizing this, the Volunteers attempted to co-opt him into the movement. The submission of the Volunteers to Redmond's demand for the inclusion of twenty-five of his nominees, as a condition of his entry, had parted the ICA and the Volunteers further. Redmond and his supporters participated in order to assist the British government against the loyalist reaction in the north. It was never a commitment to revolutionary politics. The coming of the war and the subsequent shelving of the Government of Ireland Act discredited Redmond and split the Volunteers into pro- and anti-Redmond sections. The National Volunteers followed Redmond while the Irish Volunteers now contained only the revolutionary membership.

<sup>26</sup>Three organizations participated in the Rising of 1916, the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), Cumman na mBan and the Irish Volunteers. James Connolly led the ICA while the Volunteers, having been infiltrated by the IRB, fought under Pearse. While the importance of Cumman na mBan (the women's army) should not be underestimated, their diminutive size and the fact that they did not differ from the main participants leaves them somewhat peripheral to the focus of this study. The ICA, which organized under the direction of Captain Jack White D.S.O., a Protestant Ulsterman, was not an army of national liberation but an armed wing of the Transport Union. The size of the ICA was never accurately ascertained for "those who marched and drilled occasionally regarded themselves as members of the Army equally with those who carried out systematic and regular training" (R.M. Fox, 1944, p. 59).

<sup>27</sup>Quoted in T. Boden, 1977, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup>Quoted in C.D. Greaves, 1961, p. 60.

<sup>29</sup>Quoted in Morgan and Purdie, 1980, p. 83.

<sup>30</sup>Quoted in O.D. Edwards and B. Ransom, eds., 1973, p. 179.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>The commonly held view in British socialism was that working class emancipation would come about by the gradual and progressive clipping away of capitalist rule. The transition to socialism would be achieved only when the developmental potential of capitalism had expended itself and thus, considering Irish industrial backwardness, the way forward for the Irish proletariat was through close alliance with their British counterparts. In effect, because of the advanced nature of the English working class, the socialist transformation would be achieved off the back of the English revolution. This analysis followed closely an earlier assertion by Engels that the social liberation of Ireland would be achieved by alliance with the English Chartists.

The mass of the Irish people will undoubtedly unite more closely with the English Chartists and will act in accordance with a common plan. This will bring the victory to the English democrats, and hence the liberation of Ireland, considerably closer. (Marx and Engels, 1971, p. 50)

Connolly's view of the necessity of Irish separation for social advance followed Marx's own conversion to this view. In the letter to Engels in 1869, Marx stated:

For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendancy. I always expressed this point of view in the New York Tribune. Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will *never accomplish anything* before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general. (Marx, in Marx and Engels, 1971, p. 384)

As Connolly was to argue:

The doctrine that because the workers of Belfast live under the same industrial conditions as do those of Great Britain, they are therefore subject to the same passions and to be influenced by the same methods of propaganda, is a doctrine almost screamingly funny in its absurdity. (Connolly, 1975, p. 53)

<sup>34</sup>Quoted in C.D. Greaves, 1961, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup>Quoted in R.D. Edwards, 1981, p. 133.

- <sup>36</sup>J. Connolly, 1975, p. 26.
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 20.
- <sup>38</sup>Quoted in R.D. Edwards, 1977, p. 245.
- <sup>39</sup>Quoted in D. Ryan, 1919, pp. 11-12.
- <sup>40</sup>R.D. Edwards, 1977, p. 157.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 158.
- <sup>42</sup>P.H. Pearse, 1962, p. 147.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 155.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 188.
- <sup>45</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup>Quoted in R.D. Edwards, 1977, p. 256.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 184.
- <sup>48</sup>P.H. Pearse, 1962, p. 177.
- <sup>49</sup>J. Connolly, in Berresford Ellis, ed., 1981, p. 238.
- <sup>50</sup>P.H. Pearse, 1962, p. 217.
- <sup>51</sup>Quoted in D. Ryan, 1919, p. 18.
- <sup>52</sup>J. Connolly, *Workers' Republic*, June 30, 1900.
- <sup>53</sup>P.H. Pearse, 1962, p. 177.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 93.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Connolly, in Berresford Ellis, ed., 1981, p. 124.

<sup>58</sup>Great significance has been attached to the thrust of Pearse's play, "The Singer," which depicts a revolutionary leader, MacDara, who in the latter part of the script suggests that "one man can free a people as one man redeemed the world." Most, if not all, commentaries on Pearse's life have pointed in evidence to the fresco in Scoil Eanna quoting Cuhulainn's words, "Bec a brig liom sin sa gen go rabar acht aenla ocus aenadaig ar bith acht go marat m'airscela ocus m'imthechta dimm esi" (I care not though I live but one day and one night if only my fame and my deeds live after me). Fortunately, an examination of Pearse's political writings may legitimately circumnavigate such tenuous and ambiguous indicators of the state of his psyche. While a brief sketch of Pearse's political thought cannot devote itself to an exoneration of the "man of sorrows," the fact that such a sketch is considered instructive is in itself an implicit rejection of George Russell's charge that the leaders of the Rising "had no intellect. Connolly was the only one with a grip on his mind" (quoted in H. Wilson, 1983, p. 44). Of course evidence from a play which may (or may not) have been autobiographical, from Yeats's poem, "The Rose Tree" and a fresco in a boys' school may indicate a megalomaniac impulse requiring satiation by blood sacrifice. But it should be remembered that in the run up to the war both propaganda and the recruitment drive were becoming increasingly hysterical. One should compare the conclusion of Pearse's sanguine and much quoted statement on the virtue of bloodshed with that of a contemporary:

There are many things more horrible than bloodshed and slavery is one of them. (P. Pearse, 1962, p. 99)

F.E. Smith, later Lord Birkenhead, states in remarkably similar terms: Violence is always deplorable. So is bloodshed. Yet violence and bloodshed in Ulster would be an incomparably smaller misfortune than cowardly acquiescence in slavery. (See T. Johnson, 1918, p. 16)

Pearse's works were, for the most part, purposive in a particular direction. He wrote to steel a relatively small social aggregate against an empire and in this undertaking was encouraged to express himself in stridently nationalist terms. Writing to Tom Clarke for advice on the peroration he was to give at the graveside of O'Donovan Rossa, he was told, "make it hot as Hell, throw all discretion to the winds" (in R.D. Edwards, 1977, p. 245). It is important to distinguish the oratory from belief and the poetic from the political.

<sup>59</sup>See D. Ryan, 1919.

<sup>60</sup>See R.D. Edwards, 1977.

<sup>61</sup>H.W. Wilson, 1983, p. 44.

<sup>62</sup>P.H. Pearse, 1962, p. 87.

<sup>63</sup>The Easter Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE SPLIT: 1969-1970

The ideological foundations upon which republican violence was justified were progressively undermined by the apparent liberalization of the six-county state and the seeming economic collapse of the south. The movement seemed incapable of presenting to the nationalist minority in the north any semblance of a revolutionary strategy beyond the traditional rejection of British domination. Connolly's view that working class unity could only follow the abolition of the two partition states seemed to be decreasingly relevant in the light of social and economic development. As Coogan has pointed out, there "had been no sectarian rioting since 1935 and the comradeship of the war years had taken the sting out of Protestant-Catholic relationships."<sup>1</sup> Further, during the 1950s, while the six-county economy had become increasingly stagnant and discrimination remained central to its operation,<sup>2</sup> the situation of the southern working class did little to attract their co-religionists in the north. Unemployment rates in the south were consistently higher in the period up to the end of the 1950s<sup>3</sup> and emigration there had totalled over 960,000 between 1926 and 1966.<sup>4</sup> The British Labour government's imposition of the welfare state upon the Unionists in the course of the late 1940s,<sup>5</sup> dulled substantially the lustre of the republican demand for the severance of the link with Britain. It may be safely assumed that the Catholic hierarchy's veto on state-administered health services in the south in the 1950s<sup>6</sup> also diminished the appeal of secession while

reinforcing the Loyalist view of the nature of the Catholic dominated southern state.

It was within this social and economic context that the IRA carried out its 1956-1962 campaign of military action, largely unsupported by those on whose 'behalf' they saw themselves operating. There was no attempt to politicize the population they believed themselves to represent and this was to some extent due to the fact that contrary to Mao's dictum, the revolutionary party was controlled by its military wing. The very existence of the IRA was precariously balanced upon a base of public support which was steadily dwindling and on a populace increasingly alienated from its aims. As a revolutionary movement, the IRA required for its survival, if not the willing support then at least the passive acceptance of the people among whom it operated. Cathal Goulding later 'official' chief of staff, was under no illusions as to the depth of the crisis:

As a famous revolutionary once said, "a guerrilla must move through his people like a fish moving through water"; we I think moved through our people like a fish moving through a desert.<sup>7</sup>

The Sinn Fein newspaper, *The United Irishman*, was in debt to the extent of some three to four hundred pounds, its circulation having dropped over the course of the campaign from 100,000 to 14,000. More serious still, as support diminished in Ireland, so also did economic aid from America. IRA finances by 1962 amounted to about £12. According to Liam MacMillen of the Belfast brigade leadership, the total membership in 1961 was twenty-four men and the entire extent of their armaments numbered two serviceable short arms.<sup>8</sup>

As Reed has pointed out, "it is precisely in such periods of demoralisation and defeat that revisionist influence can take root in a revolutionary movement."<sup>9</sup> The movement, now militarily stagnant, began to re-evaluate its position in the light of its recent defeat. Parachuted into the leadership were a number of Left academics, notably Anthony Caughlan, a lecturer from Trinity College and Roy Johnston who was to become the movement's "education officer cum political commissar."<sup>10</sup> There was also a transference of membership from the Stalinist Irish workers' party who brought their weight to bear on the constitutional side of the movement. Following on the heels of the 1962 ceasefire, a conference was called which was to be both a post mortem on the failures of the concluded campaign and a policy 'think tank' for future action. Large and hitherto sacrosanct sections of republican orthodoxy came to be critically scrutinized and the revolutionary or 'physical force' side of the movement came under attack. The conference produced an internal document, later published under the title, *Inside the IRA*.

The post mortem aspect of the document was unequivocal:

1. The army had no solid base among the people.
2. It has no clear-cut ideology which could define for the people what the struggle was all about.
3. The army had concentrated its attacks upon the British military occupation of the six counties to the exclusion of direct assaults on the British economic and cultural penetration of the six and twenty-six counties.
4. Free statism had been left free of . . . military, political and economic assaults and was merely attacked for its failure to take the six counties and its coercion of the Republicans.<sup>11</sup>

It was during this period of critical self-evaluation that the republican movement was caught and dragged along by a wave of politico-economic

events which was to shatter the passive uninterrupted progress of Unionist rule in the north.

The Second World War had significantly facilitated northern exports and bolstered the economy but the industrial base was still detrimentally reliant upon the export of goods from its declining sectors, notably in textiles and heavy industry.<sup>12</sup> The end of the war signalled the downturn of the ability of those sectors to maintain large work forces because of renewed competition and reduced demand. During the period 1950-1970, employment in shipbuilding fell by 60 percent, textiles by 70 percent and agriculture by 45 percent.<sup>13</sup> In 1954 the north began to look outwards in an attempt to attract international capital by establishing a program of capital grants to new industries. This strategy, based on multinational capital, had a number of significant political ramifications, the major one being that as the West Belfast textile mills closed, the new synthetic fibre plants were installed in Loyalist East Belfast. Thus, again the legitimation of the northern state was reinforced at the cost of its nationalist work force. Important in the events which were to follow, the state, painfully aware of the frailty of its economic position, became exceptionally accommodating to the wishes of multinational capital and through this it was to come into conflict with the local councils, still under the control of the traditionalist bourgeoisie.

Unemployment continued to spiral upwards and the disadvantages of an overdeveloped "reserve army of labour" were controlled by an enormous increase in emigration which tended to keep the unemployment rate steady

at around 7 percent.<sup>14</sup> Despite this, unemployment, usually high in nationalist areas, now began to spread into areas of Unionist support. The Unionist monolith had ruled, unaffected by the politics of class, since the inception of the state, mainly through its ability to dispense patronage upon its loyal supporters. As a consequence of the decline of the north's economic fortunes, the Unionists' ability to provide privilege noticeably contracted. With the prospect of long term unemployment spreading to the previously sheltered Loyalist working class, the Northern Ireland Labour Party's unprecedented 26 percent of the poll in the 1962 Stormont elections added the spectre of class politics to the worsening problems of industrial paralysis. Significantly, the Hall Report of 1962 seemed to suggest that the British exchequer was unwilling to stretch itself further to economically buttress its parasitic colonial remnant. The report did little to impress or encourage the northern entrepreneurial class for its conclusion suggested that further attempts to resuscitate the moribund corpus of the northern economy were in vain. On the prospects of the northern economy the report was particularly fatalistic. The northern working class, regardless of loyalty, were to be encouraged to abandon the ailing province and this prospect was undoubtedly viewed with some trepidation by the dominant interests involved. It was the view of the report that "[f]urther steps should be taken to find employment outside Northern Ireland and to induce unemployed workers to avail themselves of them [employment opportunities]."<sup>15</sup>

With the obvious reluctance of the British state to enlarge the annual 'grant in aid', and with the Protestant working class "threatening

to desert the Unionist party *en masse*,"<sup>16</sup> the modernization of the northern state became a matter of the utmost importance. The Hall Report, Terrence O'Neill (later Prime Minister of Northern Ireland) commented,

is a great watershed in our affairs. It has given us a cold impersonal look at ourselves. It has tested the ability of the Imperial government to help us in certain areas and met a negative response.<sup>17</sup>

If Unionist hegemony was to be continued, indeed if the state was to continue at all, foreign capital had to be enticed into the area, and to facilitate this the tarnished and undemocratic nature of the northern state had to be cosmetically altered.

At the same time and in contrast to the downswing of the northern economy, the south had divested itself of its earlier *laissez faire* approach and turned to economic planning. The First Programme for Economic Expansion had been introduced in 1958 and had moved the government towards a policy of export oriented, foreign financed industrialization. The Industrial Development Authority was enabled to give grants to factories in the south and to provide a suitably attractive environment by waiving taxes to incoming business for up to fifteen years. Economic growth in the south had caught up to the north by 1960 and surpassed it by 1970.<sup>18</sup> Employment increased, emigration slowed and the tourist trade was booming. Here, if nothing else, was a rapidly growing market for the goods to be produced in the north by incoming capital.

O'Neill's premiership, begun in 1963, saw the first tentative moves towards improved economic relations between the two states. The economic policies of the north and the south were virtually indistin-

guishable and the applications of Britain and Ireland for membership in the European Common Market poured oil on the border issue. Sean Lemass, the Irish Teoseach, visited Stormont in 1965 for economic talks, an action by which O'Neill gladly pointed out he implicitly acknowledged the legitimacy of the northern state.<sup>19</sup> The Nationalist Party, in the new spirit of reconciliation, abandoned its traditional policy of abstention and occupied its seats as the official opposition in Stormont. The IRA had abandoned its military aspect and was debating entering constitutional politics to achieve their aim. If their appeal was to be promoted equally in the Nationalist and the Loyalist camps, then the demilitarization of the movement was seen as a necessary concomitant. To the Nationalist minority in the north this was undoubtedly the dawn of a new era of political liberalization and the northern state seemed now, as never before, capable of progress and reform.

Fifteen years after the imposition of the welfare state its effects now bubbled to the surface of the north's political effervescence. The extension of free post-secondary education had produced a nascent Catholic professional class. However the systematic discrimination against Catholics in the private sector and those parts of the public sector controlled by the local councils meant that a high proportion of Catholic graduates hit an artificially low ceiling very early in their ascent up the socio-economic ladder. It was this group which, motivated more by a desire for social reform within the existent state than traditional nationalist politics began to voice their discontent. Liberals, Republicans and members of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association combined in 1967 to form the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

(NICRA) and followed as closely as possible the pattern set by the American black civil rights movement. Certainly conditions had improved in the north, public services developed, new housing was being initiated and wages, for those fortunate enough to be employed, were rising steadily. One of the most commonly quoted aphorisms among that section of the Loyalist community which objected to the temerity of NICRA was "give 'em an inch and they'll take a mile." But as Toqueville has explained, it is not in continued or increasing oppression that revolutions are fomented:

Revolutions are not always brought about by a gradual decline from bad to worse. Nations that have endured most patiently and almost unconsciously the most overwhelming oppression often burst into rebellion against the yoke the moment it begins to grow lighter. The regime which is destroyed by a revolution is almost always an improvement on its immediate predecessor. . . . Evils which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable become intolerable when once the idea of escape from them is suggested.<sup>20</sup>

While the O'Neill section of the Unionist party was sufficiently sophisticated to realize that an accommodation of the new Catholic middle class would place little strain on the system and would act as a buffer between it and the Catholic working class, they were opposed by their own right wing together with the local councils.<sup>21</sup> The hard line Loyalist response was that the demise of traditional Catholic docility, personified by the civil rights movement, was a republican plot designed to overthrow the state. While this was patently untrue, their unease was justified for the dependence of the state upon the unequal allocation of goods for its survival left it with a very narrow corridor of operation. Any substantial attack upon loyalist privilege would function to

subvert the cohesion of the Unionist power bloc for it was in the administration of that privilege that they maintained the one party state. Thus an end to discrimination would mean the loss of marginal privilege, the very device which had so effectively restrained the emergence of class politics.

The response of the northern police and their quasi-military reserve, the 'B Specials', to Catholic demands was customarily violent but was, on this occasion, scrutinized by the world's news media. A civil rights demonstration in which three of the protesters were Westminster M.P.s was brutally attacked by the police and eighty-eight people were left injured. Aware of the rising tide of Loyalist indignation at Catholic temerity (and of the blood-soaked appearance of a British M.P. on television), the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, summoned O'Neill and his Home Affairs minister, William Craig, to London on November 4th, 1968. Under threat of a "very fundamental reappraisal" of Stormont/Westminster relations, O'Neill agreed to implement the demands of NICRA in the face of Loyalist opposition. To O'Neill fell the unenviable task of convincing the Catholics that the reforms meant everything and the Loyalists that they meant nothing. He failed in both. In vain he had insisted to his fellow Unionists, "I do not want Ulster to change its nature but rather to show again its best face to the world."<sup>22</sup>

Reaction to what was perceived as an erosion of the political power of the Unionist party began to fracture the Unionist monolith itself and Craig appeared at the head of the right wing section. As a gesture of

strength, and a fairly convincing one at that, O'Neill confronted the atavists and fired Craig from his cabinet. But a more expansive gesture was required to reinforce the crumbling walls of the Unionist block and O'Neill, in an effort to consolidate his position and mandate for reform announced an election for February 1969. The election, as a gesture of strength, was unconvincing and the tenacity with which O'Neill attempted to hold the ring proved insufficient. O'Neill narrowly defeated Ian Paisley, a fundamentalist Presbyterian clergyman,<sup>23</sup> by 7,745 votes to 5,331.

In April, the Loyalist paramilitary group, the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), posing as the IRA, detonated explosives at the Silent Valley reservoir, an electricity pylon at Kilmore, and a water supply line.<sup>24</sup> The effect of the disruption of these utilities was correctly estimated to provide the Unionist Right with sufficient leverage to topple the O'Neill administration. By this action the linkage between reform and insurrection had been established, clearly the Catholics having attained an 'inch' of reform were en route to demand the 'mile' of national unification by violent means. The liberal wing capitulated and O'Neill called up a thousand B Specials as the last line of Loyalist defence. The mobilization of the 'B men' poured fuel on the fires still smouldering in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry. Police and Loyalist gangs invaded Catholic areas, in one of which the police had entered using Shoreland armoured vehicles, firing Browning (.30) heavy machine guns, killing a nine year old boy and a British soldier home on leave.<sup>25</sup> By April, unable to drag his party with him and with the six counties in

chaos, O'Neill resigned.

It was against this background, the apparent inability of the state to sustain democratic reform and the violent reaction of the Loyalist majority to Catholic demands for equality of opportunity, that a tendency within the republican movement advanced a theory of stages. This notion, increasingly popular among the southern leadership, was a derivative of the Marxist theory of the stages of development<sup>26</sup> [which maintained that democratic revolution must be completed before the socialist revolution can materialize.] The two revolutions, it was assumed, could be separated by a considerable time lapse. By a mechanical application of this theory it was concluded that the six counties would first have to progress towards democratization before national revolution could be envisaged. Towards this end the Irish proletariat, in both its loyalist and nationalist subdivisions, would have to be united. The fact that unionism's historic bloc was disintegrating in the face of the civil rights campaign seemed to demonstrate the efficacy of "social and economic agitation" and if the campaign was pushed to its conclusion then the precondition for ending Loyalist false consciousness, the cessation of marginal privilege, would open the path for unity. The Loyalist working class having lost the major ideological linkage with the northern bourgeoisie would see clearly their 'objective' community of interest with the nationalist minority. The conditions for the advent of socialism would have been established.

A simultaneous agitational struggle under the direction of Sinn Fein in the south for improvements in social conditions would eventually

lead to a similar emergence of socialism there. [Having established socialist states in both the six and the twenty-six counties, the border would become an irrelevance for through their respective socialist parties the proletariats would effect an historic reconciliation.] The socialist demand for the peoples' possession of the means of production, distribution and exchange would mean an attack upon British political dominance and British imperialism. But while military action may thus be necessary in the long run, given the perceived success of the tactic of agitation, its premature appearance would only prove counter productive to the aim of northern class unity.

In effect, the strategy demanded the implementation of three stages. The first, [a period of broad agitation, was to combine with a second which involved itself in political persuasion which would overflow into a third in which armed struggle may ensue.] The modus operandi was graphically described:

Our methods were to be,

1. Economic and cultural resistance by the people to penetration and exploitation and to the enslavement by gombeen men.
2. Political action by the people to defend their rights, to achieve certain objectives or simply to demonstrate their strength and power.
3. Military action to back up the people's gains and eventually to carry through a successful national liberation struggle.<sup>27</sup>

The group which moved into [opposition to this revision of republican orthodoxy retained Connolly's analysis] and operated from a completely different evaluation of the reformability of the northern state. This tendency [perceived the six county state as an artificial construct which functioned as a foothold for British colonial and imperial

interests and believed that those interests would ensure that the partition issue continued to function as a wedge driven between the two sections of the working class. Hence for the social liberation of the Irish people to come to fruition the colonial link would have to be forcibly broken. ] Whereas the strategy of the reformist tendency required not only the retention but the active support of the Stormont parliament which would be captured in the socialist ascent, the purists wanted it prorogued in order to clarify the struggle as primarily an anti-colonial operation. [ Social agitation without armed struggle in this perspective is an unbalanced and misconceived strategy. ) Danny Morrison argued:

They think, and they're wrong, that you can create a socialist movement in the North and a socialist movement in the South, and then the two socialist movements will coalesce. It's an impossibility because of the way that partition has dictated the political values of either community in the North. And that's why we believe that only through breaking the union with Britain, and breaking the back of British imperialism in Ireland will the Protestant section of the working class eventually come round to a different point of view.<sup>28</sup>

[ Thus while the reformists saw the direction of political activity as necessarily running from social liberation to national revolution, the purists tended to perceive the position as reversed. The base of the theory espoused by the purists rested upon a firmly held belief that the origin and function of the six county state was anti-democratic and rendered it incapable of implementing the reforms demanded by NICRA. ] By extension from this then the state, unable to compromise, would be forced to retaliate with all the means possible. [ The reformist argument, that the demilitarization of the movement was necessary to prevent the

movement's alienation from the Protestant proletariat, was seen as a piece of ridiculously inappropriate timing, tactically incorrect and ideologically reprehensible.]

You could not keep demonstrating in the streets without the Loyalist state reacting in some violent form, there had been a taste of it in Derry in 1969 when the police invaded the Bogside. The IRA, even though everyone else thought otherwise, knew that they weren't responsible for the explosions carried out on the water facilities and the electricity pylons. To the IRA it was clear that inside the Loyalist camp there was an attempt to remove O'Neill, that the more you tried to demand reforms from the state the more it was bound to retaliate. Even before the RUC were involved in trying to get into the Bogside, after the Apprentice Boys march, there were incidents at Unity Walk flats where the RUC were involved in beating the people and trying to come in hard to show that they were in control of the situation; and in the midst of all that the people who were advocating social and political agitation as a single strategy were also demilitarising the IRA.<sup>29</sup>

The pessimistic attitude of the purists towards the reformability of the six county state was founded on their belief that "those who were tied to the philosophy of loyalism, despite their being working class, have a vested interest and have marginal privileges over the nationalists and would always opt for the state."<sup>30</sup> While it is of course true that the patronage dispensed by the Unionist Party was particularly appealing to those who stood to benefit, the reverse side of the same argument was equally or more important. The provision of a clearly defined 'out group' or substratum functioned in three major directions. Firstly, the very existence of a large minority, alienated from the state by harsh treatment and discrimination was functional to Unionism insofar as it ensured that every election was fought on the issue of the security and continuation of the state itself. As both the emerging factions in the republican movement realized, this was the means by

which the issue of class was suppressed and the north was maintained as a one party state. Thus the Unionist Party had ruled uninterrupted for almost fifty years. As O'Neill's biographer pointed out, "Caligula's horse would have had no difficulty reaching Stormont once he obtained the Unionist nomination."<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, lack of equal access to marginal privilege for the minority was vital to the maintenance of Unionist domination also for by this means differential emigration could be secured. Given that, according to O'Neill, the proportion of Catholic school children was 51 percent of the total,<sup>32</sup> a situation aggravated by a higher Catholic birth rate and a lower death rate due to its younger age,<sup>33</sup> the continuation of Unionist rule depended upon their ability to secure differential emigration. Thus the state was structurally incapable of implementing reforms demanded by NICRA for to do so would be to destroy the very *raison d'être* of the state. This reality had been perceived by Sir Basil Brooke who had reigned as Northern Ireland's Prime Minister from 1943 to 1963.

Thinking out the whole question carefully . . . I recommend those people who are loyalists not to employ Roman Catholics, ninety percent of whom are disloyal. . . . I want you to remember one point in regard to the employment of people who are disloyal. There are plenty of good men and women available and the employers don't employ them. . . . You are disenfranchising yourselves in that way. You people who are employers have the ball at your feet. If you don't act properly now, before we know where we are we shall find ourselves in the minority instead of the majority.<sup>34</sup>

Thirdly, the Catholic unemployed provided a particularly noticeable reserve army of labour, the threat of which functioned in the interests of capital to keep wage levels in the six counties signifi-

cantly below those of workers in Britain.<sup>35</sup> By 1961 the average weekly wage of workers in the north was 71 percent of that of workers in Britain.<sup>36</sup> The existence of a Catholic substratum bolstered the environment in which loyalism was reproduced as an ideology and emasculated the Trades Union movement. This Catholic substratum was also functional to the state insofar as its very existence provided the loyalist workers with a safety net through which they could not pass. So long as the Catholic unemployed and the Catholic workers remained beneath them the loyalist working class could feel socially mobile upwards. This was the realization of Connolly's worst fears of the outcome of the partition system, that the loyalist stratum would duplicate the attitudes of the labour aristocracy.

At one time in the industrial world of Great Britain and Ireland the skilled worker looked down with contempt upon the unskilled and bitterly resented his attempt to get his children taught any of the skilled trades; the feeling of the Orangemen of Ireland is but a glorified representation of a big stage of the same passion inspired by the same unworthy motives.<sup>37</sup>

The purist tendency in the movement had decided that resistance to the demilitarization of the movement was justified by the elemental flaws in the "agitational" theory. The amelioration of the position of the Catholic working class and its reunification with the loyalist population could not be achieved without secession from the British state in whose interests they saw sectarianism as functioning.

[The movement] had discovered in practice that the small efforts to bridge the sectarian gap were met with distrust from Unionists and that when small gains were made on bread and butter issues they were easily reversed by the intervention of Unionist politicians. Their theory of working class unity being pushed by the Dublin leadership was more than useless when faced with such intransigence. . . . This group [the Purists] accepted James

Connolly's idea that a real socialist/Republican movement could not be built by temporising in front of the Orange ascendancy. It believed that it was the British connection and not the demand for Irish self determination that was the cause of religious sectarianism and that little meaningful progress could be made in winning over Unionist workers while the British government upheld the system of privilege which divided the Unionist and non-Unionist working class. Loyalist and Nationalist working class unity was impossible under the British connection because it ensured that the Loyalists had not real reason for moving away from their position of privilege.<sup>38</sup>

This was of course Connolly's own attitude for as he had argued in 1913, "A real socialist movement cannot be built by temporising in front of a dying cause such as that of the Orange ascendancy, even although in the paroxysms of its death struggle it assumes the appearance of an energy like that of health."<sup>39</sup>

[The new direction being asserted by the southern leadership could not be implemented without the abandonment of Connolly's directions for the realization of social liberation in Ireland. It entailed also the deviation from another related republican tradition, that of abstentionism. It was traditionally held by the republican movement that although, by virtue of its propaganda function, it was acceptable to stand for election to the imperial or 'partition' parliaments, to attend any of those institutions was to acknowledge their legitimacy. The only parliamentary institution recognized as legitimate in Ireland by the republicans was (and is) the Dail Eireann (Parliament of Ireland)]  
 assembled in 1919.<sup>40</sup> This was composed of the majority of representatives elected in the 1918 elections, prior to the partition of the island and who had absented themselves from Westminster. By 1967 a commission was established and was assigned the duty of "charting a new

course between the Scylla of Abstentionism and the Charybdis of Anti-Abstentionism."<sup>41</sup> The commission produced two major recommendations:

That the relationships with other radical groups involved for the achievement of limited objectives be now brought a stage further, that it be formalised into an alliance to be known for the sake of convenience as the National Liberation Front. Further that subject to certain conditions, Republican elected representatives should participate in Westminster, Leinster House and Stormont.<sup>42</sup>

The resolution of the issues involved was not to be left to chance and in order to assure their acceptance, the leadership began to rearrange the balance of voting power prior to the 1970 Ard Fheis (annual conference) at which those issues were to be raised. Unco-operative Cumman (branches) were to be disaffiliated or simply disbanded. The northern leadership became aware that a coup was about to take place when the Army Council, originally antagonistic to the new line, was expanded from seven to twenty members, the more recent of whom were supportive of the anti-abstentionist policy. The reformed council voted in 1969 to terminate their traditional adherence to abstentionism by a majority of 12 to 8.]

By this time the Belfast IRA were on the verge of splitting, for many of the purists who had drifted away from the movement during its recuperation period now progressively rejoined the organization until they were sufficiently strong to overthrow the reformist element in the north. [On the 22nd of September, one hour prior to a scheduled meeting of the battalion staff, a plan to sever all links with the Dublin junta was approved.] Billy MacMillen, then Officer Commanding, was retained on the understanding that the Belfast brigade no longer had any connec-

tion with the 'revisionist' leadership in the south and that the brigade would absent itself from the forthcoming IRA convention.

The introduction of the new participatory line was, in reality, being presented to the movement at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis as a fait accompli. With the Belfast brigade already split, the stage was set and the actors waited impatiently in the wings for the denouement of a drama which was to affect the political situation in the north significantly and to result in a particularly bloody period of internecine feuding within the movement. The motion that "all embargoes on political participation in parliament be removed from the constitution and rules" passed easily, but narrowly failed to achieve the 67 percent majority necessary for a constitutional amendment. This eventuality, it seems, had already been catered for as an Armagh delegate proposed from the floor that the meeting should endorse the policies of the new Army Council. By this means, by side-stepping the constitutional matter, the original motion could be carried on a simple majority. At this point, MacStiofain argues, "there was no longer an IRA. There was a \*<sup>?</sup>NLF (which the media with little regard for the facts were to christen the Official IRA)." <sup>43</sup> Taking this as a cue, the purist element withdrew from the hall to a prearranged meeting place.

[The split was subsequently depicted as the opening of a tactical and ideological chasm which irreversibly separated the 'militarist' or right wing from the 'agitational' or left section. This misconception was derived principally from two sources: the dichotomous view portrayed by the media and the revelation that the Fianna Fail party in the south

had offered money to the 'Provisional' leadership to provide a bulwark against the socialism of the Officials.

While the misunderstanding of the causal factors and the dramatic personae involved were not entirely a media creation, the media significantly contributed to its longevity. The titles with which the media dubbed the participants in the schism, while being based on a misconception, were clearly influential in moulding the perception of the two sides being antithetically opposed. Those who wished to revise the teaching of Pearse and Connolly were titled the 'Officials' while the 'Caretaker Executive' were to become known as the 'Provisionals'. While the Officials, were inaccurately portrayed as being firmly tied to the pristine moorings of republicanism, the Provisionals were depicted as a militaristic and nihilistic grouping which had broken away. As one side, the Officials were explicitly socialist and willing to participate in the political process, the others, as opposites, were nihilist, fascist or in fact not only apolitical but 'anti-political'.<sup>44</sup> Some of the opposition delegates at the Ard Fheis held a similarly simplistic and dichotomous view and one described the purists as "fascist sectarians."<sup>45</sup> To some extent the invocation of the apolitical militaristic image proved to be a useful tool of denigration in the hands of the Official leadership and they contributed to its continued use. "Some of our members," one suggested of the scission, "were so blinded by pure militarism that they could see no good in anything else and didn't even recognise that in the past Britain had a history of provoking militarism as a method of destroying potential revolution."<sup>46</sup>

Based on this misconception, the Provisionals, as nihilists, become 'addicted' to violent action which is seen as their "sole motive and justification"<sup>47</sup> and without which they have "no other purpose or raison d'être."<sup>48</sup> Some later observers so immersed themselves in this perspective that they began to draw comparisons between the Provisionals and Hitler's NSDAP.<sup>49</sup> Others, having adopted this position, strenuously defended it for some time after evidence to the contrary had made adherence to it an embarrassment. As late as 1979 one observer maintained:

The Provisionals in effect left the Official IRA not so much because of a fundamental disagreement over long term ideological issues but because certain strong minded personalities wanted to engage in full scale guerrilla warfare immediately and formed their own group to do so. The niceties of political debate they left and still leave to the future.<sup>50</sup>

The emphasis upon the "strong minded personalities" in the Provisional leadership and the allusion to the militaristic nature of the membership, as with most vulgarizations, did have some limited foundation in reality. The embryonic Provisional movement led by Sean O'Bradaigh, Ruari O'Bradaigh and Sean MacStiofain did appear to have emerged as an anti-socialist reaction to the new line in the movement. To some extent the undue emphasis which the media placed upon the political leadership obscured the real nature of the movement itself. The stance which the leadership adopted towards the Marxism of the Officials] was in many ways short sighted and politically naive and [remained a central tenet of their philosophy for some time to come. To the executive, particularly MacStiofain, Marxism was an alien intrusion into the Gaelic body politic, a dangerous and atheistic creed which led inexorably towards "Soviet style capitalism" and "political and

intellectual tyranny."<sup>51</sup> MacStiofain's anti-Marxism was primarily a rejection of socialism's Soviet variant but was heavily influenced by a republican abhorrence of the reformism of the Officials, derived as it was from the attitudes of the Second International.<sup>52</sup> Ireland, the leadership pointed out, already had its own indigenous form of socialism based on Comhar na gComharsan which was eminently more suitable to its needs. ) od so... Omben...

We the lawful leadership of the Republican movement once more publicly declare our objective to be the establishment of a democratic socialist republic based on the Proclamation of 1916 and on Christian social principles.

Accordingly we reject the atheistic Marxism propagated by the Goulding, MacGiolla clique and we are supremely confident that the overwhelming majority of the Irish people will reject this alien philosophy.<sup>53</sup>

While the commitment to socialism is clearly stated, the precise meaning of 'Christian' principles is somewhat more difficult to ascertain. However the foreword of the Eire Nua document catalogues as one of Sinn Fein's aims "a reign of social justice based on Christian social principles by a just distribution and effective control of the nation's wealth and resources."<sup>54</sup> It is impossible to accurately assess just how representative the anti-Marxist view was of the movement as a whole. Certainly there were large numbers of people who flocked back into the movement after the violence of 1969 and who were motivated more by the necessity of communal self defence than the determination of the correct socialist path. Many of those who had earlier become alienated from the movement, and who may indeed have constituted a militarist tendency, rejoined in 1970 but as Gerry Adams (now President of Sinn. Fein) has argued, "they were out of step with the politicisation which had taken >

place in their absence."<sup>55</sup> Morrison is clear on the import of the early denunciations of Marxism:

people who were with the Republican Movement, like Gerry Adams, probably saw the split as a logistical thing to put the movement back on the rails again and may not have seen the relevance of statements being made at the time. And again, the people who issued the statements were people who the press clearly identified as personalities and I wouldn't place that much emphasis on it. People tended to take up diametrically opposed positions which meant that people simply threw things at each other. The 'stickies' went all out, proclaiming us "right wing fascists, Tory gunmen, linked in with and controlled by Fianna Fail." On the other hand, people were saying that the others (the 'Officials') were controlled by Moscow, that they wanted to bring about a communist Ireland. In fact the 'Sticks' don't want to bring about a communist Ireland, nor of course were they controlled by Moscow either.<sup>56</sup>

While the pronouncements of the Provisional leadership did much to fuel the misconception that the movement had split into Right and Left, other extraneous factors conspired to reinforce the image of the Provisionals as counter revolutionaries. [ In February 1969, a group of Fianna Fail Teachta Dails (T.D.s) approached the Derry brigade of the IRA and later some of its Dublin leadership, suggesting that substantial funds and ordnance were available should a new northern leadership be established and Leftist policies be renounced. ) Hamilton suggests that it was not secret that,

the governing party, Fianna Fail, if not the government itself, had been deeply interested in neutralising the 'National Liberation Front' wing of Sinn Fein IRA and bringing its influence to bear on the 'traditionalist' faction whose programme for the abolition of the border does not also include as a high priority the destruction of Stormont and the overthrow of constitutional authority in Dublin.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that Blaney, Boland and Haughey of the Fianna Fail cabinet were charged with importing into Dublin airport firearms to the value of

£80,000 led the Officials to the conclusion that,

the Provisional campaign was from its very beginning inspired by the right wing elements of the Dublin government. Fianna Fail wanted to divert the democratic struggle away from its correct path and direction and into the sterile backwaters of sectarian conflict.<sup>58</sup>

Sean MacStiofain acknowledges that Fianna Fail were indeed supplying funds in the form of compensation for loss of earnings for those involved in Citizen's Defence Committees. However, he suggests that these funds, originally supplied directly to the Provisional staff in Belfast, were terminated after only five weeks. He argues that "far from giving us money, as soon as the Provisional Army Council was formed, Fianna Fail people actually took steps to prevent funds reaching us."<sup>59</sup> Sinn Fein is unequivocal in its views on this matter. Morrison asserts that the theory that Fianna Fail tried to undermine the radicalism of the Officials is "patent nonsense":

The truth of the matter is that most of the money which was set aside actually ended up in the coffers of those who subsequently became known as the Workers Party and I think that for the Fianna Fail government it was their one single, peripheral involvement with the whole thing. . . . The only relationship at that time, and at this time, between the Fianna Fail and what subsequently became known as the Republican Movement was that the people on the ground were very open and sympathetic to the IRA, more so that the Fianna Fail middle ranks or hierarchy, but there is no basis for the allegation that Fianna Fail armed, financed or were responsible for the inception of the Provisional IRA.<sup>60</sup>

Despite Morrison's suggestion that the northern section of the Provisionals "may not have seen the relevance of statements being made," it seems apparent that the socialist base of the movement was to some extent tactically obscured. There was certainly justification for the belief that the majority of the Catholic population would not be

supportive of an explicitly Marxist line as many laboured under misconceptions of the nature of the socialist state. As Morrison has suggested, "the people are told that under such a philosophy their personal property will be taken off them and that the state will control their lives and this really scares them."<sup>61</sup> Further, given that after the split the bulk of Irish-American funding shifted to the Provisionals through the offices of the Irish Northern Aid Committee, it was expedient that their aim of "creating an irremediable conflict between the needs of local capitalism and international imperialism and those of the popular masses"<sup>62</sup> be suppressed in the very inner sanctum of capitalist enterprise. Maria Macguire highlights the way in which socialism was to be tactically eclipsed by nationalism in American fund raising:

Anti-British sentiment, recalling Cromwell, the potato famine and the Black and Tans could be profitably exploited. By no means should anything be said against the Catholic church. And all reference to socialism was to be strictly avoided.<sup>63</sup>

In reality the split never conformed to the image of complete fracture by which it was portrayed, for the Provisionals opened their first policy statements with an outline of their conception of socialism and the Officials, despite their rhetoric to the contrary, never completely abandoned their military wing.<sup>64</sup> The perception of the Provisionals as a militaristic, apolitical movement is a caricature for as early as 1972 they echoed the sentiments of Connolly in stating that:

The Irish Republican Army know that physical force is not the sole means of revolutionary social change. Guns do not have political principles. The Republican movement is agonisingly aware that armed struggle without a just goal and based on a reasonable chance of achieving either defence of a beleaguered community or the liberation of our country is monstrously without merit. Possession of arms is no certain test of patriotism

but, like Connolly the IRA believe that the risks of a carefully planned and principled campaign are nothing to the shame of slavery.<sup>65</sup>

The split cannot be seen as a purely militaristic reaction to the movements 'going political', rather it resulted from an analysis of the political situation in the north, the rectification of which, to the Provisionals, dictated the necessity to "destroy the very source of working class disunity, the link with Britain."<sup>66</sup> The controversy between the Official and Provisional tendencies over which was the true repository of pristine republicanism was no mere puerile posturing over a desirable title, nor indeed was it a quasi religious rejection of hereticism. Cathal Goulding of the Official leadership complained that "they [the Provisionals] seek to place the different points of the constitution on a par with the revealed truths of religion, immutable, beyond the reach of members to change or amend."<sup>67</sup> [While it is true, in some sense, that to the Provisionals certain areas were indeed immutable and sealed by definition into republicanism, what may have been equally or more important than the Officials' transgression of the holy writ, was that demilitarization threatened to abandon Catholic enclaves to Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and Loyalist incursions. The split occurred on three separate criteria of justification, the defence of the Catholic ghettos from Loyalist reaction to NICRA's demands, the disagreement over which way the existent situation could be most profitably be exploited to bring about the desired end—the thirty-two county socialist republic, and a strongly held objection to the abandonment of republican tradition.

The Officials disregarded the fact that the movement's claim to legitimacy was based largely on its integrity with its founding fathers and failed until too late to see tradition as a source of strength rather than weakness. Tradition was seen as a hindrance to the progress of unification. "We seek to subvert a system," Goulding announced. "We seek to create a new Ireland dedicated to the concepts of social justice, of equality of opportunity. We cannot do the job if the dead hand of tradition is allowed to rest on our throats."<sup>68</sup>

Nairn, in his celebrated essay *The Modern Janus*, argues that "as mankind is forced through its [modernity's] doorway, it must look desperately into the past, to gather strength wherever it can be found for the ordeal of development."<sup>69</sup> The historical continuity of the republican movement has always been such a source of strength and explains to some extent the Provisionals' seemingly eccentric presentation of the survivors of 1916 to endorse their claim to integrity with the past. Those who may be seen as the heirs of earlier insurgent organizations, the Volunteers, the Citizen Army and the Dail Eireann could lay claim to the most powerful font of political legitimacy, 'those who had gone before'. ] Pearse and his doctrinal offspring understood with crystalline clarity the import of this element in the creation and reproduction of national sentiment.

Life springs from death and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The defenders of this realm . . . think they have pacified Ireland . . . they think they have foreseen every thing, think they have provided against everything but the fools, the fools they left us our Fenian dead and while Ireland holds these graves Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.<sup>70</sup>

The transformation of fatality into a source of social cohesion within national units has been a common activity of nationalist movements since their inception<sup>71</sup> and the republicans have attempted to utilize its potential to the full. The claim to the possession of the inherited memory of the numerous fatalities of the Anglo-Irish conflict was to some extent responsible for the violent quarrel between the two factions for the legitimizing title of Sinn Fein. Weber's insight in this respect is illuminating:

The individual is expected ultimately to face death in the group interest. This gives to the political community its particular pathos and raises its enduring emotional foundations. The community of political destiny, i.e. above all of common political struggle of life and death has given rise in groups with joint memories which often have a deeper impact than the ties of merely cultural, linguistic or ethnic community. It is this "community of memories" which as we shall see constitutes the ultimately decisive element of "national consciousness."<sup>72</sup>

The Official tendency, in the view of the purists, miscalculated badly on two major issues. Not only did they underestimate the Loyalist reaction to any attempt at the reformation of the state by ignoring the teaching of Connolly, but they failed to understand how deeply entrenched tradition is in the base of the movement's legitimacy. The Officials, campaigning as The Workers' Party, subsequently became marginalized in Irish politics and may, by this loss of support, demonstrate the way in which the republican movement's legitimacy must rest upon both the socialist and the physical force traditions. The Officials' viability as a political movement was further threatened when the IRSP broke away in 1975 demanding a return to the principles of Connolly that national revolution must precede social liberation. The IRSP demanded:

a new organisation prepared to use force to throw out the British as a preliminary step to creating a workers' republic throughout the whole island in the spirit of James Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army.<sup>73</sup>

The view that the Provisionals have "adopted fully the IRA tradition of the superiority of the military over the political" and that the Officials, "on the other hand, do genuinely preach the secular doctrines of the United Irishmen, as interpreted by Connolly"<sup>74</sup> is inaccurate and unsustainable.

## ENDNOTES — CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup>T.P. Coogan, 1982, p. 335.

<sup>2</sup>The evidence of discrimination in the north of Ireland is now well documented: see Cameron, 1969; Wallace, 1971; Barret and Carter, 1962.

<sup>3</sup>Unemployment remained significantly higher in the south until 1961 when there was a substantial reversal of this trend (see below).

Year	North	South
1951	6.1	7.3
1956	6.4	7.7
1961	7.5	5.7
1966	6.1	6.1
1971	7.9	7.2
1981	16.1	8.9

Source: New Ireland Forum, *The Economic Consequences of the Division of Ireland since 1920*.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>The Unionist representatives in Westminster repeatedly tried to block every piece of legislation providing a 'socialist' welfare state system for the north. The Unionist hierarchy complained about the necessity of continuing the 'step by step' policy with a Labour government. They felt that pursuing the policies of a socialist government would result in the loss of taxes for policies that were not in the interests of the northern state. The taxation for these measures may "well drive us in spite of ourselves and in spite of all constitutional safeguards(?) into a socialist economy" (see Hepburn, 1980, p. 176).

<sup>6</sup>In the early 1950s the Catholic hierarchy in the south crushed the 'Mother and Child' bill which would have provided state administered health services to those supporting children. As a member of the Dail expressed it:

The most disquieting feature of this sorry business is the revelation that the real government of the country may not, in fact, be exercised by the elected representatives of the people as we believed it was, but the bishops, meeting secretly and enforcing their rule by means of private interviews with ministers. (Quoted in de Paor, 1970, pp. 130-31)

<sup>7</sup>Cathal Goulding interview in *New Left Review*, Nov./Dec. 1970.

<sup>8</sup>Liam MacMillen, "Separatist, Socialist, Republican: The Role of the IRA," Repsol Pamphlet No. 21, 1962, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Reed, 1984, p. 139.

<sup>10</sup>J. Magee, 1974, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>"Inside the IRA," Repcon Pamphlets, Philadelphia, 1974, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>In 1962 Harland and Wolfe shipyards in Belfast laid off 8,000 of its 23,000 workers. The synthetic fibre plants between 1958 and 1964 lost 27,000 workers. See Greenberg, 1980, p. 251.

<sup>13</sup>See Denis O'Herne, "Accumulation in the Irish Crisis," *Monthly Review*, March 1981, p. 33.

<sup>14</sup>Despite the seeming success of this tactic in controlling the escalation of unemployment at a rate of 7 percent, it should be remembered that even at the end of the 1960s unemployment in England had only barely topped 2 percent.

<sup>15</sup>The Hall Report, Report of the Joint Working Party on the Economy of Northern Ireland, HMSO, 1962, Command 1835; quoted in B. Probert, 1978, p. 80.

<sup>16</sup>Bob Rowthorne, "Northern Ireland, an Economy in Crisis," *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1981, No. 5, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>T. O'Neill, 1969, p. 32.

<sup>18</sup>GDP Growth 1851 to 1973: Average Annual Percentage of Rates

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>BRITAIN</u>
1951-60	1.7	2.8	2.6
1960-68	3.8	4.1	3.2
1968-73	4.7	3.6	3.0

Source: New Ireland Forum, *The Economic Consequences of the Division of Ireland since 1920*.

<sup>19</sup>T. O'Neill, 1969, p. 158.

<sup>20</sup>Toqueville, quoted in Davies, 1971, p. 135.

<sup>21</sup>The role of the local councils, in a Northern Ireland context, are enormously important in terms of real political power. They build and own one-third of all housing and control applications for the remaining two-thirds. They are thus able to manipulate the size, density and political composition of the electoral wards. They also control education, health and welfare, utilities and road building. The councils may thus raise or lower Catholic emigration almost at will by restricting the construction of housing in Catholic wards and by discriminatory selection of employees. The Cameron Report states that:

[T]he arrangement of ward boundaries for local government purposes has produced in the local authority a permanent Unionist majority which bears little or no resemblance to the relative numerical strength of the Unionists and non-Unionists in the area. As we show later, we have to record that there is very good reason to believe the allegation that these arrangements were deliberately made and maintained, with the consequence that the Unionists used and have continued to use the electoral majority thus created to favour Protestant or Unionist supporters in making public appointments—particularly those of senior officials and in manipulating housing allocations for political and sectarian ends. (Cameron, 1969, p. 14)

<sup>22</sup>O'Neill, 1969, p. 55. The reforms instigated at this time were not substantial in nature. The 'B Specials', the sectarian paramilitary wing of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, were indeed officially disbanded though replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). As Chichester Clarke announced, "the Specials are not being disbanded, only their name and organisation will change" (Boulton, 1973). The business vote was abolished though ward boundaries remained unreformed. The new offices of the ombudsman were so ineffectual that both were entrusted to a former permanent secretary to the Minister of Education. The Special Powers Act was in fact strengthened. In April 1963, J. Vorster, the Minister of Justice in South Africa, said that he would be willing to exchange all the legislation which comprised the Coercion Acts "for one clause of the Northern Ireland Special Powers Act" (see Reed, 1984, p. 85).

<sup>23</sup>Ian Paisley founded the Free Presbyterian Church in 1951. He was elected to Westminster in June 1970 and established the Democratic Unionist Party the following year. He acquired an impressive array of academic qualifications from the Pioneer Theological College in Illinois and from the Barton College and Seminary in Colorado. Both of his doctorates were obtained by mail order.

<sup>24</sup>D. Boulton, 1973.

<sup>25</sup>An anemic account of this episode is given in the report of the Scarman Tribunal which states that "The evidence adduced puts beyond doubt that during the period that the three vehicles were in Divis Street a considerable number of rounds of Browning ammunition were discharged in the direction of the flats on the south side of Divis Street" (Scarman, 19 , p. 148). Others suggest that the police fired "indiscriminately at anything that moved" (de Paor, 1977, p. 197) and that they "randomly fired bursts of Browning machine gun fire into the nationalist Divis flats" (Reed, 1984, p. 133).

<sup>26</sup>The Stages Theory, although it does have its background in Marx, only became the doctrine of the communist parties in the Stalinist era. It reflected the conservatism of the established regime in the USSR and the contradictions between the material interests of the Soviet state and its need to justify itself ideologically.

<sup>27</sup>"The IRA Speaks," Repsol Pamphlet No. 3, Dublin, n.d.

<sup>28</sup>D. Morrison, interview in *Marxism Today*, December 1981, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup>D. Morrison, personal interview, Belfast, August 24, 1984.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>O'Neill, 1969, Preface, unnumbered.

<sup>32</sup>de Paor, 1977, p. 127.

<sup>33</sup>According to one report (*New York Times*, March 14, 1982) the birth rate for Catholics was 21 per thousand as against 14 per thousand for Protestants. (Kelley puts this higher at 28.3 per thousand for Catholics; see Kelley, 1982, p. 82.) Because the Catholic population had become progressively younger its death rate was lower than that of Protestants at 9 per thousand as against 13 per thousand. This situation still provides some acute worries as it was recently shown that all five Northern Ireland school boards have Catholic majorities. See Peter Taylor, "Britain's Irish Problem," *The Crane Bag*, 1, No. 1, 1980, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup>Sir Basil Brooke quoted in de Paor, 1977, p. 106. In 1933 Sir Basil explained that "Roman Catholics were endeavouring to get in everywhere and were out with all their force and might to destroy Ulster (sic). There was a definite plot to overpower the vote of the Unionists in the North" (Kelley, 1982, p. 63).

<sup>35</sup>Source: John Simpson, "Economic Development: Cause or Effect in the Northern Ireland Conflict," in Darby, 1983, p. 95.

<sup>36</sup>This figure rose to 90 percent by 1970 but high unemployment, large families and lack of work for women meant that per capita incomes were often very low. By 1970 consumption per head in Northern Ireland was still only 75 percent of the U.K. average (Rowthorne, 1981, p. 5).

<sup>37</sup>James Connolly, *Forward*, 2nd August 1913.

<sup>38</sup>Gerry Adams, quoted in *Fortnight*, September 1983, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup>James Connolly, *Forward*, 23rd August 1913.

<sup>40</sup>The Dail Eireann was an explicitly socialist body which in 1919 proclaimed:

We declare in the words of the Irish Republican proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible, and in the language of our first president, Padraic Pearse, we declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the nation, but to all its material possessions; the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the nation and with him we reaffirm that all rights to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare." (Quoted in Cronin, 1980)

In actual fact, only 27 Sinn Fein M.P.s attended as 34 were in prison and 8 were abroad.

<sup>41</sup>*United Irishman*, January 1970.

<sup>42</sup>*An Phoblacht*, February 1970.

<sup>43</sup>MacStiofain, 1975, p. 43.

<sup>44</sup>Bernard Crick, "The Pale Green Internationalists," *The Listener*, December 15, 1977.

<sup>45</sup>*The Irish Times*, 12th January 1970.

<sup>46</sup>T. MacGiolla, speech delivered to the Boston Irish Forum, 31st August 1975.

<sup>47</sup>Maurice Tugwell, in Wilkinson, 1981, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup>Martha Crenshaw, "The Persistence of IRA Terrorism," in Alexander and O'Day, 1984

<sup>49</sup>Maurice Tugwell, in Wilkinson, 1981, presents a somewhat hysterical account of the "Politics and Propaganda of the Provisional IRA," in which mysterious meetings between the KGB and the prisoners in Long Kesh somehow result in the deaths of the demonstrators in Derry during Bloody Sunday (p. 24). The media are infiltrated by the radical left and IRA "agents of influence" persuade Labour Party officials and the trade unions of the justice of their cause (p. 29). He suggests that the Provisionals dwell on violence "glorifying not just the ends but the means" and that "people who fall into this category, as Hitler and his Nazi party did through their terrible era, are apt to become addicted so that in the end, actions—violent actions—become their sole motive and justification" (p. 30).

T.E. Utley (1975, p. 58) adds: "Over a period of years, the Provos like Hitler before them, were at pains to make plain not only what they stood for but how they meant to get it." It is perhaps not surprising that writers such as Tugwell, who are singularly unencumbered by anything approaching a grasp of the situation, should suggest that the Provisionals exhibit similarities with the nihilism of the Nazis. As Jäckel said of this perspective relating to Hitler: "If, as had long been asserted, there were no such goals, then there was obviously no need to look for them. And if one did look for them nevertheless one might even come under the suspicion of intending to add features of greatness to the tyrant's portrait" (Jäckel, 1972, p. 27).

<sup>50</sup>Villiers, 1979, p. 53.

<sup>51</sup>*An Phoblacht*, April 1972.

<sup>52</sup>The attitude of uncompromising adherence to the principle of revolution and the rejection of reformism is essential to the understanding of Connolly's development. The Paris International in 1900 recognized Connolly's diminutive Irish Socialist Republican Party as a body legitimately distinct from the British labour movement. Particularly controversial at this International was a censure motion against Alexander Millerand for his acceptance of a cabinet position in the Waldeck-Rousseau government. The age of imperialism had provided the socialist movements of the world with severe theoretical problems and a rift appeared between those prepared to integrate the labour movement into the framework of imperialism and those who demanded the rejection of the reforms which the profits of imperialism had made possible. Thus the International split along a fault line created by the new era and parted 'revolutionism' from 'reformism'. A resolution of the Millerand case was proposed by Karl Kautsky which, in effect, executed an historic side-stepping of the problem. The political situation, Kautsky suggested, necessitated such "dangerous experiments" and Millerand's action should

be seen as "as a question of tactics and not of principle." The voting on the Kautsky resolution was significant in the way it shook out the reformist from the revolutionary coteries. Britain, Germany and Austria voted in favour while Ireland and Bulgaria voted unanimously against. On the principle of revolutionary purity the ISRP and Rosa Luxemburg were in unison, but Luxemburg's denunciation of Kautsky and reformism included her assault on nationalism as an epiphenomenon linked with the fate of class society which was to become the orthodox Marxist line. While Connolly would clearly support the former assertion he was vociferously opposed to the latter.

<sup>53</sup>*An Phoblacht*, 1, No. 1, 1970.

<sup>54</sup>Eire Nua, literally New Ireland; see chapter four below.

<sup>55</sup>G. Adams, quoted in *Fortnight*, September 1983, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup>D. Morrison, personal interview.

<sup>57</sup>J. Hamilton, 1970, p. 17.

<sup>58</sup>*The United Irishman*, May 1972.

<sup>59</sup>MacStiofain, 1975, p. 137.

<sup>60</sup>D. Morrison, personal interview.

<sup>61</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 10, 1979.

<sup>62</sup>Quoted in Wilkinson, 1982, p. 146.

<sup>63</sup>Macguire, 1973, pp. 69-70.

<sup>64</sup>Sean Garland of the Officials in a speech at Bodenstown, June 1972, stated:

Let no one take from this gathering and from this repudiation of terrorism any suggestion or even any hint that the army of the people will not be used and when necessary fully employed to defend the interests of the working people. . . . No movement of the people, no revolutionary party has the right to demand of the people that they set aside the weapon that is so viciously used by the gangsters who act in the name of the law and in the name of the continuing capitalist order. We will not do it. (See Magill, April 1982.)

<sup>65</sup>*An Phoblacht*, April 1972.

<sup>66</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 3, 1979.

<sup>67</sup>*The United Irishman*, December 1970.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup>T. Nairn, 1977, p. 349.

<sup>70</sup>P. Pearse, 1962, p. 34.

<sup>71</sup>As Anderson (1983, p. 19) expresses it: "The absurdity of salvation: nothing makes another style of continuity more necessary. What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. As we shall see few things were (are) better suited to this end than to the idea of nation."

<sup>72</sup>M. Weber, 1968, p. 903.

<sup>73</sup>Gavin Esler, *Fortnight*, June 1983.

<sup>74</sup>S. Cronin, 1980, p. 209.

P.37?

CHAPTER THREE

NATION AND NATIONALITY IN REPUBLICANISM: 1975

The mid-1970s saw in the publications of Sinn Fein the signs of a subtle but significant change of attitude towards the loyalist sector of the northern population. The republican view of nationality had, with reasonable consistency, followed Connolly's analysis that the loyalist working class was Irish but had been misled by "pastors and masters who had deceived it . . . in order that they might enslave it."<sup>1</sup> But in 1975 *An Phoblacht* stated that the loyalist population of the north are "a foreign community lodged in one of the provinces of the Irish nation."<sup>2</sup> That such a shift in perception should occur was not in any way novel among Irish nationalists for as has been remarked, "we have had a habit, when it suited a particular case, of saying they were Irish, and when it did not suit a particular case, of saying they were British or planters or the seed of planters."<sup>3</sup> The sharpening edge of the social division between loyalist and nationalist in the north in the mid-1970s together with the increasing popularity of a theory legitimizing partition combined to alter the way the Provisionals perceived the nationality of the loyalists. What was significant in this re-evaluation was not so much the change itself but that it was achieved in such a way that Connolly's view was preserved intact. The policy repercussions of this conversion were substantial and will be discussed below but importantly the historical and ideological continuity with the founding fathers could still be shown to be undisturbed.

The difficulty involved in dealing with the question of nationality and national delineation in relation to the six-county province is renowned. It is a distinctly shadowy unit in terms of cultural boundaries, which do not coincide with territorial boundaries, and also in terms of sovereignty, which de facto resides with Britain but which is also claimed by the twenty-six counties. The population of the six counties comprises a minority of about a third who feel no allegiance to the state in which they reside<sup>4</sup> and a majority of two-thirds who consider themselves to be British or in some cases "Ulster." Further difficulty is added by the fact that what is sometimes known as the Ulster state is but a six-county section of the nine-county province from which it takes its name and thus the "people of Ulster" refers to members of two separate states. Despite the clear difficulties involved, republicans, like nationalist movements per se, must attempt to demonstrate the unambiguous and unproblematic nature of the national claim. The justification of the armed struggle, and thus the legitimacy of the IRA itself is contingent upon its ability to demonstrate that Ireland is an historical and political unity. Thus as *An Phoblacht's* Freeman points out, the definition of nation and the extraction of the criteria for nationality have for the republican movement a deeper significance than academic concern with etymology or etiology. It is not, as he rightly argues, "airy fairy stuff . . . of no practical importance."<sup>5</sup> Rather it is a fundamental necessity, the outcome of which is required to provide legitimacy not only for the ultimate objective of nationalist aspiration, but also for the method by which the struggle is to be carried out. If

the six-county state can be successfully portrayed as an "unnatural amputation" held only militarily by Britain against the democratic wishes of the majority, then the military strategy for its liberation appears justified. As Cruise O'Brien suggests:

the IRA derive from the intensity of the vision that grips them an abundant sense of justification. Since England is synonymous with guilt and oppression, any blow against England, however terrible it may seem, is a blow for righteousness and liberty.<sup>6</sup>

For a significant period, republican orthodoxy in defining the nation was most forcibly articulated in the work of the North Eastern Boundary Bureau.<sup>7</sup> This suggested that the loyalist people of the north were unequivocally Irish both culturally and historically and that notions of racial differentiation were unfounded. While the work still has much to recommend it, the continued support for the perspective that the loyalists' nationality is Irish when it is precisely their rejection of this notion that forms the basis of their self-identification is questionable. In effect, the traditional republican view held that there is an objective nationality or nationhood which need not coincide with the population's subjective consciousness of it. This view was based largely on Connolly's suggestion that loyalism was essentially the pragmatic response of the northern Protestants to their economic situation. The loyalist working class, while remaining objectively Irish, was seen as having been 'bought off' by marginal privilege and was, it has been said, "not so much loyal to the crown as to the half-crown." In Connolly's view, the loyalists had been duped by marginal privilege in much the same way as the British "labour aristocracy." "The feeling of the Orangemen of Ireland towards Catholics," he said, "is but a

glorified representation on a big stage of the same passions inspired by the same unworthy motives."<sup>8</sup> This perspective has been particularly influential even among the constitutional nationalists on both sides of the border, providing the logic behind the various attempts to convince the loyalists that their economic and material best interests lay with unification.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the involvement of the constitutional parties with this perspective has meant, as Moxon-Browne has stated, that "the problem of national identity was virtually ignored presumably because it was thought to be illusory."<sup>10</sup>

The credibility of the republican 'objective' view of nationality is contingent upon their ability to objectively define the nation. Ultimately republicans, like most other nationalist movements, attempt to establish legitimacy upon some resolution of the problem of boundary definition in terms of territory, ethnicity and language. Territorially, nationalist movements have tended to confront discrepancies between the actual and claimed extent of the nation by proclaiming the disputed area to be the ancestral habitat of the national progenitors. In drawing the boundaries of the nation the nationalist must justify its existing or claimed frontiers by underscoring its particular ethnic, cultural or linguistic homogeneity, ever aware that should such homogeneity prove elusive, then that heterogeneity may be shown to be, if not beneficial, then at least no obstacle.<sup>11</sup> Nationalist movements may choose to emphasize one or more indicators of national unity while pragmatically ignoring others inappropriate to their purpose. The choice and emphasis of those indicators upon which the legitimacy of the national unit is to be

established is consistent transnationally only with their common maleability. As Anthony Smith has pointed out: "The important point is that nationalist writers and nationalist movements have emphasised every kind of cultural and other criterion in staking out their claims for their 'nation.'"<sup>12</sup>

Irish republicans have tended to suppress the factors of religion and ethnicity in relation to the north and, in attempting to demonstrate that the boundaries of the nation are coextensive with the boundaries of the island, have emphasized the notions of 'natural' frontiers, the historic claim to unity and also language. The emphasis upon language as an indicator of national unity in republicanism is curious for clearly the movement has found no impediment in carrying on a national revolutionary struggle in the language of those from whom it wishes to be free. Further, the distinctiveness of Irish culture and tradition, as Yeats and the Anglo-Irish literary movement have shown, may easily sit upon the shoulders of another language. Given the diminution of the Irish speaking areas or Gaeltacht, language can provide no accurate guide to the oneness of Ireland as a nation nor its separation from Britain. The prominence of position which language takes in republicanism is thus more accurately a claim to what republicans feel ought to be rather than what actually constitutes a means of differentiation. The reason for its recurrence in the modern literature is historically based for the nationalist movement grew out of the language movement. The *Freeman's Journal* recorded in 1917 that,

The Gaelic League has now in effect become the property of Sinn Fein. Its feisanna have been formed into Sinn Fein propaganda

figures for their own political purposes . . . Irish plays second fiddle to politics.<sup>13</sup>

Pearse had insisted that Ireland was to be "not free merely, but Gaelic as well; not Gaelic merely but free as well."<sup>14</sup> He lauded the work of Davis who had proclaimed that,

a nation without a language of its own is only half a nation. A nation should guard its language more than its territories—'tis a surer barrier and a more important frontier than fortress or river.<sup>15</sup>

Connolly too saw the Gaelic language as the highest expression of the distinction between Britain and Ireland and linked the decline of the language with the increase in political passivity. In condemning the attitude of O'Connell, 'the liberator', he argued,

for six hundred years the English strove to suppress that mark of the distinct character of the Gael—their language, and failed. But in one generation the politicians did what England had failed to do.<sup>16</sup>

The turning away of the people from their language was, he felt, "the beginning of the reign of the toady and the crawler, the seonin and the slave."<sup>17</sup> It is likely that Republican pronouncements today on the continuation of language as a symbol of nationhood are made out of reverence for the views of the founding fathers rather than on any analysis of the concrete situation. If this is not the case, considering the currently meagre numbers of Gaelic speakers, it seems difficult to rationalize statements made in the pages of *An Phoblacht* to the effect that,

The Irish language is said to be the badge of Irish nationality. If that is lost, we lose our identity as a nation and it only becomes a matter of time until we are completely Anglicised.<sup>18</sup>

Territorially, Irish nationalism has based its claims for political unity upon the notion of 'natural' frontiers. This notion sees certain nations as having been preordained by the possession of geographically defined boundaries which are proclaimed 'natural' or God-given. Normally included in this attempt at the objectivization of the nation are rivers, mountain ranges and unsular and peninsular geographic features. Irish nationalists have insisted that by virtue of its island status the extremities of the Irish nation have been defined and predestined. As Heslinga has suggested:

The absolute claim which the Republic makes to Northern Ireland ultimately rests on the assumption that "Ireland was always regarded as one nation, clearly defined and bounded by the hand of God." To many Irishmen it is almost dogma that the creator has predestined Ireland to be a national and political unit, because it is "a perfect geographical entity" in the sense of a natural (physical) entity.<sup>19</sup>

Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Fein, judged that "Ireland cannot shift her frontiers. The Almighty traced them beyond the cunning of man to modify."<sup>20</sup> So pervasive was this belief that even Connolly saw Ireland's sea boundary as divinely ordained and thus unchallengeable. While other nations with land boundaries could be interpreted as artificial constructs, Connolly, like Griffith, perceived Ireland's island status to be indicative of its natural and national unity.

Belgium as a nation is so to speak, but a creation of yesterday—an artificial product of the schemes of statesmen. Whereas, the frontiers of Ireland, the ineffaceable marks of the separate existence of Ireland, are as old as Europe itself, the handiwork of the Almighty and not of politicians. And as the marks of Ireland's separate nationality were not made by politicians so they cannot be unmade by them.<sup>21</sup>

If Ireland can be said to have been predestined as a separate and unitary nation by the good fortune of possessing a sea boundary, then the land boundary which surrounds the six-county state can be regarded as arbitrary and 'unnatural' amputation from the corpus of Ireland. But the notion of natural frontiers constitutes part of a polemical rather than a social scientific terminology. While a sea boundary has often been elevated to a position of primacy among natural indicators of nationhood, one must recognize that thalassocracies, or groupings of islands under one sovereign power and sharing a common culture have occurred with a reasonable degree of frequency in history.<sup>22</sup> On the whole, however, the natural boundary has been commonly perceived as somewhat less arbitrary than "the artificial product of the schemes of statesmen." As Febvre has suggested:

[W]ithin us, so deeply implanted that we no longer notice its hold on us there is a certain idea of the 'natural limits' of the great states which causes us to think of their boundaries as things in themselves, having an actual value, a kind of mechanical virtue, and a compulsory and at the same time a creative power.<sup>23</sup>

It was on the strength of this bias towards the natural frontier that the North Eastern Boundary Bureau based its assertion that Ireland was predestined as a unitary nation by virtue of its geographical features and emphasized the lack of any 'natural' division *within* the country. "Ireland," it argues, "is by design a complete geographical entity . . . [and] has no area throughout its whole extent separated by natural boundaries from the main body of the country."<sup>24</sup> But what are seen to be natural boundaries occur only in human perception and are as arbitrary as their hand-drawn counterparts. It has been argued in contrast to the

notion of Ireland's geographic unity that "the central Irish lowlands have for thousands of years served as a 'natural dividing zone' between the north and the south of the island rather than as a unifying force."<sup>25</sup> Further, it has been suggested that "the southern boundary is also composed of a range of mountains which separate it from the other provinces. As we glance at the map we see that there is a definite north-east corner."<sup>26</sup> Ireland's claim to national unity, outside of nationalist writing, cannot be held to rest upon geographic features which constitute natural demarcations separating it from others and symbolizing its oneness.

In the attempt to 'objectivize' the nation the historic claim to nationhood fares little better than the notion of natural frontiers. History, for nationalists, merely serves as a font of symbols from which they may select what best suits their particular purpose. The glories of a remote past, both real and mythical, are selected to provide those images which unite citizens within a certain set of boundaries to which they believe themselves to have a superior claim over their antagonists. The prevalent notion held by Irish nationalists, that the nation's natural unity was ordained by the deity, and thus unalterable by legislation, enabled republicanism to create its history in its own likeness. If Ireland had been predestined as a nation by the possession of a sea boundary, presumably since Genesis, then any and every action could be interpreted as a nationalist action. In this way Pearse could claim that "Ireland's historic claim is for Separation" from England and that "the Irish who opposed the landing of the English in 1169 were

Separatists. Else why oppose those who came to annex?"<sup>27</sup> Quite apart from the fact that those who landed at that time were Normans, Flemings and Welsh, not English, they were in reality invited by the King of Leinster to intervene in a struggle for the Irish High Kingship, not as an invasion force. By dispensing with the notion of predestination, Pearse's interpretation of history may be clearly shown to be anachronistic for as one authority points out, because of the conglomeration of independent kingships, local patriotisms and topographical fragmentation, the Irish became "a by-word for their prolonged failure to create an effective united Irish state."<sup>28</sup>

The objective view of nationality and nation functioned in republicanism from Connolly onwards to provide a picture of the Protestant working class as the victim of false consciousness. Its Britishness has been perceived as but a manifestation of British hegemonic power inculcated mainly through the educational system. In seeing history reflected through the prism of predestination, to republicans it appears that it is necessarily *Protestant* consciousness that is false.

It is quite true that Republicans are now mainly Catholic simply because the dissenters have been prevented by constant indoctrination from embracing republicanism which should be their natural philosophy.<sup>29</sup>

At the conclusion of the IRA campaign, when British influence is removed, republicans claim the natural or objective nationality of the loyalists will shine through the mists of deliberate deception and economic self-interest.

By 1975 an alternative theory concerning the nationality of the loyalist population, strengthened by the effect of political events, collided with the orthodox nationalist view, causing it to veer off course. The 'two nations' theory, as it became known, was not in fact a coherent system of ideas but rather constituted a broad perspective held by a variety of authors from both poles of the political spectrum. This approach held that the conflict in Ireland should not be seen as Irish nationalism confronting British colonialism but rather as the antagonism between two different strands of Irish nationalism; traditional Irish nationalism confronting a more recent 'Ulster' nationalism. The foundations of this approach are said to have originated with Disraeli's biographer W.F. Money Penny in 1912. Money Penny suggested that "the Home Rule struggle is a struggle between two nations, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic, or, as, to avoid the semblance of ministering to religious bigotry, they had better perhaps be called the Unionist and the Nationalist."<sup>30</sup> There is difficulty in aligning this conception with that of the modern notion as Money Penny's view appears to have been based on a Disraelian sense of two nations, that is to say, he perceived the conflict to be between two major classes rather than two nationalities.<sup>31</sup> The reformulation of the notion into its modern variant has been attributed to the efforts of the Irish Communist Organisation (ICO). The traditional republican view claimed that the conflict was the result of the efforts of the British and northern bourgeoisies to consolidate their rule by splitting the proletariat. This process republicans saw as having been reinforced and buttressed by the act of

partition. Partition, Connolly believed to be the tactic of those who wished "to keep up the fires of religious bigotry in order to divide the workers and make united progress impossible."<sup>32</sup>

In opposition to the republican view the ICO perspective holds that the antagonism between the nationalists and loyalists long predated partition. The Irish struggle is perceived as being one of conflicting — nationisms which sprang initially from economic conditions and in this they refute Connolly's view that there existed one Irish nationality, a section of which was duped by marginal privilege in the early 20th century. In the alternative view, the ICO suggest that:

The economic situation in Ireland in the 19th century gave rise to the abortive development of a second nationality. To state that Irish society existed as a single nation at the beginning of the 20th century is to engage in pretences.<sup>33</sup>

Nations, in the ICO perspective, are economically determined, developing out of national markets<sup>34</sup> and, they assert, had the Irish market developed out of Gaelic society there would have been a single nationality in Ireland. However, in the Irish case the market was split into two sections, one of which

raced ahead in Ulster giving rise to modern industrial capitalism by the middle of the 19th century. In the rest of Ireland the market was being generated at a much slower rate.<sup>35</sup>

The differential development of the two sections of the island, the ICO believe was not based on access to marginal privilege through the 'Ulster custom' but by the fact that the northern bourgeoisie under Wolfe Tone<sup>36</sup> was prevented from instigating a thorough-going bourgeois revolution in Ireland. Thus two bourgeoisies developed with different interests and at different rates. As nationalism in this perspective

is but bourgeois ideology, "the division of the working class reflected the division of the bourgeoisie."<sup>37</sup> The claim that nationalism is derived from bourgeois ideology locates the ICO perspective in the epiphenomenalist paradigm insofar as it regards superstructural phenomena as merely a reflection of the economic base. Thus it is claimed that a correct understanding of the economic infrastructure is necessary and sufficient for the understanding of the superstructure. Economic relations are seen as the only source of causality.

The epiphenomenalist perspective suffers from some substantial shortcomings. The appearance of nations and nationality cannot be understood by simply ignoring the specificity and relative individuality of political situations. The ICO perspective cannot, for example, account for the fact that the northern minority has not submitted to the ideology of the six-county bourgeoisie and is willing to forego the economic and welfare benefits to be gained from remaining under British rule. Consideration of events occurring at the economic base are clearly important in the analysis of superstructural developments but the ICO attempt to hang all ideology upon this one reductionist hook is misconceived.

Strangely in the ICO approach, a perspective purportedly Marxist, considerations of class conflict are compressed or simply ignored. If the differential rates of development between the north and the south are attributable to the emergence of two bourgeoisies, rather than on the system of patronage known as the Ulster Custom, then certain difficulties arise. In discounting the effects of the Ulster Custom and its later transference to an urban setting, explanation degenerates into

notions of racial or religious superiority. Once Connolly's view is discarded, the rapid advance of the northern bourgeoisie over its southern counterpart tends to decompose into a reformulation of J.B. Woodburn's view that "the religion of the north is one that inculcates freedom of life and conscience and must produce a more robust race of men than the south with its traditional and enervating Catholicism."<sup>38</sup>

The fundamental tenet of the two nations approach, that partition was a policy which simply took account of the existence of two nationalisms, has to confront well-documented evidence to the contrary. In 1800 when only 6 percent of the population of Belfast were Catholic, little sectarian conflict arose.<sup>39</sup> By 1815 with increasing numbers of the dispossessed Catholic peasantry making their way into the town, the existing chapel in Crooked Lane had become inadequate to their needs. Of the £4,100 raised by that date for the construction of the new St. Patrick's church, £1,300 were donated by the Protestant section of the population, providing something of an index of community accord.<sup>40</sup> There was in the north more a feeling of commonality between the Catholic and Presbyterian sections of the population than between the Anglican and Presbyterian communities. In 1835, T.G. Brown complained of the "monstrous union of presbytery and prelacy."<sup>41</sup> While the differential development patterns between the north and the south had already appeared, there had been no apparent dichotomy based on national or for that matter on clearly religious grounds by this time.

The antagonism which was later to polarize the two communities began to emerge by 1857 when the flood of mainly Catholic peasantry,

which had poured into Belfast following large scale evictions and enclosure, began to constitute a threat to the employment of the established Protestant proletariat. The Catholic peasantry provided an extremely effective tool for labour and wage control in the hands of the Belfast entrepreneurial class. The largely unemployed Catholic section of the community functioned as a reserve army of labour inhibiting working class militancy while at the same time those employed in Catholic areas undercut agreed wage levels of the Protestant workers. The Protestant antagonism towards their Catholic competitors was not based primarily on national or cultural differences but upon the same reaction as that exhibited by the English working class in the face of Irish emigration. As Marx observed:

The average English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers wages and the standard of living. . . . The antagonism among the proletarians of England is artificially nourished and supported by the bourgeoisie. It knows that this scission is the true secret of maintaining its power.<sup>42</sup>

The considerable threat to Protestant living standards constituted by the Catholic influx, fired by a degree of religious fundamentalism, and aggravated by periodic depressions resulted in sectarian conflict. By 1864 rioting in Belfast was of such an order of magnitude that 1,000 police together with 1,300 troops and artillery were employed to disperse the participants.<sup>43</sup> However, the Orange Order, which was to become the focus of loyalist resistance to unification, at this time manifested no desire to represent the interests of a separate nationality. In fact, just prior to 1886, the Orange Order remained unsupported by the northern bourgeois and petit bourgeois elements and its meetings had become

"little better than occasions for conviviality."<sup>44</sup> Dewar, the official historian of the Orange Order, notes that Lord Randolph Churchill did much to revive the flagging fortunes of the organization.<sup>45</sup> Certainly Churchill's chosen course "to agitate Ulster even to resistance beyond constitutional limits"<sup>46</sup> succeeded in sufficiently inflaming passions that in 1886 vicious attacks were made upon the Catholic population of Belfast. He was followed to Ireland by the most high powered Conservative orators in the British political system.<sup>47</sup>

It was the manipulation of sectarianism by members of the British Conservative party that provided the basis for the anti-partitionist claim that partition constituted the origin of the crisis rather than a solution to it.<sup>48</sup> The anti-partitionist view suggests, in contrast to the two nations approach, that the loyalists had not initially requested partition and further were actually antagonistic to it. This attitude is granted a degree of credibility by Gladstone who pointed out that:

In the year 1886 . . . I declared in the strongest terms that the minority ought to be protected. . . . I named among other methods that had been suggested, one of cutting off from Ireland that small portion of Ulster in which the Protestants are so concentrated as to form a great majority. . . . That particular plan has not been desired in Ireland and much to their credit, the Ulster Protestants . . . have entirely and vehemently protested against that plan.<sup>49</sup>

Gallagher, an able exponent of the anti-partitionist view, argues that the measure was proposed not as a solution to the problem of sectarianism but rather as a device by which such a solution could be stymied. By undermining the Home Rule Bill, he argues, the Conservatives hoped to pull down the Liberal government. That, Gallagher suggests,

was to be the basis for the fight against Gladstone, the Liberals and Home Rule. Demand something that cannot be conceded so

that nothing at all will be conceded.<sup>50</sup>

The English historian, T.A. Jackson, suggests that in response to rising radicalism in Britain in the form of escalating strikes, the emergence of Shop Stewards' Committees and the Women's Social and Political Union, the Conservatives mounted a "flanking attack" in Ulster.<sup>51</sup> The remarks of Sir Edward Carson, the hero of the loyalist cause, tend to substantiate the view that partition was utilized as a device by which the Liberals could be toppled from power. As he complained in the Commons:

I was in earnest. I was not playing politics. I believed all this. What a fool I was: I was only a puppet and so was Ulster in the political game that was to get the Conservatives into power.<sup>52</sup>

While the two nations theorists argue that partition followed as a logical response to the previous emergence of two nationalities, the anti-partitionist view, following Connolly, contends that Protestant working class insecurity was deliberately escalated to sectarianism for pragmatic ends. However, the evidence for the former remains questionable and the latter, by a narrow focus upon party politics, fails to perceive a major causal factor in the initiation of partition. The Reform Act of 1884 expanded the electorate in Ireland by a factor of three and in 1885 led to the election of 86 Home Rule members of parliament. Home Rulers took 82 percent of the available seats with only 16 of the 33 Ulster members taking a Unionist position. In a by-election which followed, that number was reduced to 15 members. It became clear that the extension of the franchise and the decline of British hegemony in Ireland would eventuate in serious military repercussions. Ireland had, throughout history, constituted a crucial factor in the defence of

the British realm, providing a potential landing place for an invasion force. In 1918, even before the Sinn Fein landslide victory in the general election, Lord Middleton outlined British fears. He argued that should Home Rule be implemented,

In its present form it would be a fatal blow to the Empire by establishing a state with a permanent majority in Ireland; and if a British government be ever prepared to put into force against our protests, I would spare no pains to secure such modifications of it as would mitigate its worst evils and secure the Empire against a disloyal state on the flank of Great Britain.<sup>53</sup>

The necessity of securing Ireland against the electoral success of a party or parties inimical to the interests of Britain would have, by itself, led to the tearing off of one section of the island which could be held militarily by a loyalist garrison. The perennial necessity to hold a section of the island was highlighted in 1948 when the British cabinet stated that it was unlikely that they could ever agree to Irish unification even with the consent of the loyalists.

Now that Eire will shortly cease to owe any allegiance to the crown it has become a matter of first class strategic importance to this country that the North should continue to form part of His Majesty's dominion.

As far as can be foreseen, it will never be to Great Britain's advantage that Northern Ireland should become part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree to this, even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it.<sup>54</sup>

The necessity to hold a country militarily in which the majority demand for legislative independence could well spill over into secessionism would have proven costly or even impossible. The partitioning of the country to provide a 'statelet' with a majority of loyal citizens, thus providing a defensive bulwark, would have appeared as a desirable option

to long term military control.

The two nations approach differs from the traditional republican conceptualization of nation and nationality by the fact that it tends to perceive these as being based on subjective rather than 'objective' criteria. In so doing, this approach benefits from its refusal simply to ignore the feelings and attitudes of the loyalist community and is reminiscent of Rupert Emerson's claim that,

The simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that it is a body of people who feel that they are a nation; and it may well be that when all the fine spun analysis is concluded, this will be the ultimate statement as well.<sup>55</sup>

If nationality may be assessed as simply self-identification and through this the loyalists may be seen to constitute a nation, then the *raison d'être* of the republican movement could be seen as hypocritical and ill-considered. The demand that Britain should militarily withdraw and legislate the loyalists of the six counties into a united Ireland could then be interpreted as a call to an external agency to coerce an Ulster nation into a multi-nation state—a situation analogous to the very way the republicans view the injustices done to Ireland by the act of union.

By the mid-1970s the ethos of the New Ulster movement, which proposed the substitution of a common 'Ulster' identity for that of British or Irish, lent support to the ICO view. This was reinforced by the reluctant acceptance in some quarters in the south that the inclusion of a million unwilling loyalists in a united Ireland would de-stabilize the southern state and substitute loyalist resistance in a unified Ireland for republicanism in the north. Fine Gael moved towards a confederal solution to the conflict and began to speak of a northern

Irish identity.<sup>56</sup> Equally reluctantly the British state realized that the military palliative was failing in the north.

The increasingly strident accusations of a British "sell-out to republicanism" following the introduction of an Irish dimension at the Sunningdale Convention of 1973 had sparked a loyalist workers strike. A loyalist para-military grouping, the Ulster Defence Association, by its organization and direction of the strike for a brief period increased the popularity of its aim of independence for "Ulster."<sup>57</sup> Unfortunately for the adherents of the two nations approach, what was heralded as an "Ulster identity" ultimately "proved to be frail . . . beset by geographic ambiguities and divisive political implications."<sup>58</sup> The illusory nationalism which seemed to demonstrate strength and coherence during the Ulster Workers Council strike subsequently shrank to diminutive proportions. Moxon-Browne's work in 1983 and the fieldwork of the MORI survey of 1984 show a clear reduction in the numbers of those holding an 'Ulster' identification.<sup>59</sup> In 1968 39 percent of northern Protestants regarded themselves as British, 32 percent as "Ulster" and 20 percent as Irish. By 1984, 77 percent identified themselves as British. It may, of course, be claimed that 'British' does not constitute a nationality and that as Britain is a multi-nation state it is possible to retain an Irish nationality while claiming to be British by political allegiance. But the meaning of the term British in Northern Ireland contains an implicit rejection of Irish nationality. As Richard Rose rightly warns:

An Ulster Protestant may describe himself as British, but by doing this does not necessarily mean he thinks as English, Scottish and Welsh people do when they identify themselves thus.

For the residents of Great Britain, this label supplements their primary nationality. For the Ulsterman it is a substitute for it.<sup>60</sup>

In the long run the two nations approach, by attempting to shoehorn the 'Britishness' of the loyalist population into a second Irish nationality, engages in a task which requires the same degree of brute force as the republican attempts to convince them that, like it not, they are 'objectively' Irish.

By 1975, coincidentally the year in which the new radical leadership assumed power in the Republican Movement, a clearly perceptible change in attitude occurred. Nation and nationality shifted noticeably from the objective to the subjective perspective and as republican attitudes hardened, conventional wisdom on the subject was questioned.

In a leading article *An Phoblacht* argued:

It is something of a tradition to say that those who continue to veto the progress of the Irish people are Irish. Surely this is an impertinence and a lie? If they are Irish, their allegiance is to Ireland and the Irish people. If they say their allegiance lies elsewhere, are we not deluding ourselves in asserting that they are Irish? We are approaching the moment of truth which has been avoided for so long. We and they have to face the truth. . . . It is high time that the nettle was grasped.<sup>61</sup>

The Provisional statements of the early 1970s, in keeping with republican tradition, had insisted that both loyalists and nationalists constituted one unitary nation and that Protestant self-conception was "a distortion of the facts."<sup>62</sup> The false consciousness of the loyalist community, in this perspective, would be pierced only by the ending of British rule which would result in their recognition of their 'objective' interests. The later revision of this view moves away from the traditional criteria

for nationality to take a stance firmly in the subjectivist camp.

The Irish nation is *not* made up of all those who are born and bred in Ireland. It is made up of all those who give allegiance to Ireland rather than to any other nation; and all those who, when asked what is their nationality, say "Irish" without qualification.<sup>63</sup>

The nationality of the loyalists had begun to be recognized in terms of their own self-designation and their refusal to be politically separated from 'mainland Britain' accepted.

The Ulster British are not a nation and do not claim to be a nation. They are no more a nation than a similar body of French people would be if they were settled for 300 years in Ulster and still calling themselves the French.<sup>64</sup>

The new analysis granted to the loyalist ideology a recognition of its durability and has taken one step back from the earlier optimistic perspective which saw it as being instantly alterable by the withdrawal of marginal privilege. To a large extent the shift in perception was imposed upon republicans by the increasingly obvious fact that loyalists would not simply acquiesce in a united republic following independence. "One way or another," *An Phoblacht* points out, "we may have to fight these people."<sup>65</sup> The federal plan in the Provisionals' policy document "Eire Nua," which was seen optimistically as the panacea for Ireland's ills, now came to be seriously questioned by the leadership of the Republican Movement. The federal plan, which will be discussed in more detail below, was expected to reassure the loyalist community that their political position in an independent Ireland was secure.

By creating a provincial parliament for the nine counties of Ulster within a new Ireland, the partition system would be disestablished and the problem of the border removed. The Protestant people of Ulster would have a working majority of

approximately one quarter million within the province and would have immediate access to power. That power would be the surest guarantee of their civil and religious liberty within a new Ireland.<sup>66</sup>

With the depiction of the loyalists shifting from an objectively Irish but unfortunately deluded community to one which saw them as "a foreign community lodged in one of the provinces of the Irish nation"<sup>67</sup> federalism came under attack. If false consciousness was not simply to fall away according to the traditional republican schema then the conciliatory nature of the federal plan was misconceived. As Morrison was later to argue:

The idea of a federal Ireland and a federal Ulster sounds grand and fair but you will have as much trouble getting Loyalists to accept a nine-county parliament as you will getting them to accept a united Ireland, so why stop short?<sup>68</sup>

In the early 1980s the republican view that the loyalist population should not be seen as Irish but as a British national minority living on Irish soil became more forcefully articulated. In 1981 O'Connell asserted:

The reality is that they are a colon class. They are the settler class that arose out of the plantation. Republicans accept the fact that they are a colonial breed.<sup>69</sup>

Adams, arguing for the deletion of the federal plan in 1981, stated:

We must recognise that the loyalists are a national political minority whose basis is economic and whose philosophy is neo-fascist, anti-nationalist and anti-democratic.<sup>70</sup>

Whereas Republicans had originally seen the Loyalists as Irish they now came to be regarded as 'West Britons' whose nationality was accepted as being determined by their own subjective consciousness of it. It was accepted,

because they say that by choice, history and loyalty—not merely by law—their nationality is British. In addition they expressly reject Irish nationality: they say they do not belong to the Irish nation.<sup>71</sup>

The adoption of the subjective model was fortuitous for the movement in two ways. In the first place the fear that the demand for a united Ireland be construed as "an appeal by our leaders to England to coerce a group of our fellow countrymen"<sup>72</sup> could be overcome. In the second place Connolly's view that after unification the Loyalists would perceive themselves as Irish need not be abandoned. If nationality is a question more or less of loyalty to a given state, real or aspired to, then the possibility still exists, after a period of readjustment, for the Loyalists to perceive themselves as Irish.

The Ulster British or their descendents will become part of the Irish nation only if, and as, an Irish national consciousness<sup>73</sup> and culture emerge which they voluntarily accept as their own.

## ENDNOTES — CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup>Connolly in Berresford Ellis, 1973, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>*An Phoblacht*, July 11, 1975.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Bowman, 1982, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>In the general election of 1983, "three anti-unionist parties, the SDLP, Sinn Fein and the Workers Party, together obtained 33.3%. This is the basic fact with which British policy in Northern Ireland must deal." W. Harvey Cox, "The 1983 General Election in Northern Ireland: Anatomy and Consequences," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 37, No. 1, Winter 1984.

<sup>5</sup>*An Phoblacht*, December 19, 1975.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in S. Cronin, 1980, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup>*Handbook of the Ulster Question*, Northeastern Boundary Bureau, 1923.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in Berresford Ellis, 1973, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup>The major efforts of the constitutional nationalists have been directed towards unification by consent. The manufacture of this consent is undertaken through various attempts to convince the Loyalist community that their economic best interests would be better served in a united Ireland. The entire thrust of the *New Ireland Forum*, in particular "The Economic Consequences of the Division of Ireland since 1920," seems to be focused on this endeavour.

<sup>10</sup>Moxon-Browne, 1983, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup>In this respect, Tadiseach John Lynch's remarks are particularly revealing:

Thus we are all Irish on this island even though history may have provided us with different ancestries, different wars, different religious and cultural traditions. But these diversities should be a source of strength rather than an excuse for division within the Northern community itself and separation from the rest of the island. (Lynch, 1971, p. 6)

<sup>12</sup>Anthony Smith, 1971, p. 18.

- <sup>13</sup>Quoted in T. Boden, 1977, p. 68.
- <sup>14</sup>P. Pearse, 1962, p. 135.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 307.
- <sup>16</sup>Berresford Ellis, 1973, p. 289.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup>*An Phoblacht*, February 10, 1983.
- <sup>19</sup>Heslinga, 1971, p. 41.
- <sup>20</sup>Quoted in J. Bowman, 1982, p. 11.
- <sup>21</sup>Connolly, *Workers Republic*, February 12, 1916.
- <sup>22</sup>See Weigert et al., 1957, p. 66.
- <sup>23</sup>Febvre, 1925, p. 297.
- <sup>24</sup>Northeastern Boundary Bureau, 1923, pp. 90-91.
- <sup>25</sup>Heslinga, 1971, p. 44.
- <sup>26</sup>Woodburn, 1914, p. 29.
- <sup>27</sup>P. Pearse, 1962, p. 232.
- <sup>28</sup>E. Estyn Evans, quoted in Boyce, "Separatism and the Irish Nationalist Tradition," in C. Williams, ed., 1982, p. 76.
- <sup>29</sup>"The I.R.A. Speaks," Repsol pamphlet No. 3, Dublin, n.d.
- <sup>30</sup>Quoted in C.D. Greaves, 1972, p. 33.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup>Connolly, in Berresford Ellis, 1973, p. 278.

<sup>33</sup>*The Birth of Ulster Unionism*, Irish Communist Organisation, Cork, 1970, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.* "Modern nations have been formed on the basis of the market. The nation developed from the national market."

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>Wolfe Tone came to be regarded as the figurehead of the United Irishmen, the most progressive section of the northern bourgeoisie. They included in their number the cream of the Belfast capitalist class. The organization had hoped to push through a bourgeois revolution after the pattern and with the help of France. They objected to being taxed by the British state and tithed by the Anglican church, seeking the aid of the Catholic masses to alleviate this injustice. France had promised aid but it came too late. By the time a state of readiness had been established in Ireland, Bonapart had risen above the French thermidor and the revolution had lost much of its earlier democratic altruism. Tone was arrested by the British forces after a short sea battle and committed suicide while awaiting trial.

<sup>37</sup>ICO, 1970, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted in Birch, 1979, p. 63.

<sup>39</sup>See M. Farrell, 1976, p. 63.

<sup>40</sup>F. Heatley, "Community Relations and Religious Geography 1800-86," in J.C. Becket, 1983, p. 133.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>Marx and Engels, 1971, p. 162.

<sup>43</sup>de Paor, 1977, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup>Dewar, 1969, p. 151.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>These included F.E. Smith, Walter Long (later Lord Long, Secretary of State for the Colonies), Lord Londonderry, Bonar Law (later

British Prime Minister), Lord Claud Hamilton, Lord Willoughby de Broke, Mr. Duke (later Chief Secretary for Ireland), Lord Allington, Mr. Joynson Hicks (later British Home Secretary), Mr. Austin Chamberlain (later Foreign Secretary), Lord Milner, Lord Robert Cecil.

<sup>48</sup>For this claim, see, *inter alia*, D. Greaves, 1972, p. 32; F. Gallagher, 1957, p. 58; L. de Paor, 1977, p. 69; U. O'Connor, 1975, p. 38; S. Edmonds, 1971, p. 33; and D. Reed, 1984, p. 72.

<sup>49</sup>Gladstone, quoted in Gallagher, 1957, p. 62.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>51</sup>T.A. Jackson, 1970, p. 372.

<sup>52</sup>E. Carson, quoted in C.D. Greaves, 1972, p. 34.

<sup>53</sup>*Irish Times*, October 1, 1918.

<sup>54</sup>Cabinet Paper CAB 128/32, quoted in *The Guardian*, December 16, 1980.

<sup>55</sup>R. Emerson, 1923, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup>"Even those who favour the political connection with Great Britain for emotional or practical reasons usually feel a sense of a Northern Ireland, or as they express it, an Ulster identity" (*Ireland, Our Future Together*, Fine Gael offices, Dublin, February 1979).

<sup>57</sup>Independence had been posited as the loyalist response to Home Rule in the early 1900s. The Independent Orange Order, a populist variation of the original under Edward Saunderson M.P., made noticeable inroads into Unionist right wing support until they demanded independence in their Magheramorne Manifesto drawn up by Fred Crawford. The manifesto offered "the right hand of friendship . . . to our countrymen" suggesting an "Ulster" commonality. The Order consequently lost all popular support. As S.E. Long states, by 1910 "the influence of Independent Orangeism was gone except perhaps in North Antrim. It had been for a brief moment under Crawford, a political force of some consequence and influence, and with a vision of large screen dimensions on a small screen world" (Rev. S.E. Long, in Dewar, 1969, p. 154). The Loyalist reaction to the demand of the radical tendency of the Ulster Defence Association for independence was more brutal. Between 1972 and 1974 the UDA had purged itself of its entire radical wing by threat or assassination (see *The Leveller*, May 30-June 12, 1981, p. 10).

<sup>58</sup>Moxon-Browne, 1983, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup>Moxon-Browne, 1983, and Market and Opinion Research International survey carried out for London Weekend Television, May 1984.

<sup>60</sup>R. Rose, 1971, p. 206.

<sup>61</sup>*An Phoblacht*, July 11, 1975.

<sup>62</sup>*An Phoblacht*, July 30, 1970.

<sup>63</sup>*An Phoblacht*, July 11, 1975.

<sup>64</sup>*An Phoblacht*, December 19, 1975.

<sup>65</sup>*An Phoblacht*, July 11, 1975.

<sup>66</sup>*An Phoblacht*, August 29, 1975.

<sup>67</sup>*An Phoblacht*, July 11, 1975.

<sup>68</sup>O'Malley, 1983, p. 282.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>70</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 5, 1981.

<sup>71</sup>*An Phoblacht*, December 19, 1975.

<sup>72</sup>D. Barrington, "Uniting Ireland," *Studies*, Winter 1957, p. 389.

<sup>73</sup>*An Phoblacht*, December 19, 1975.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## REPUBLICANISM AND ELECTORAL POLITICS: 1975-1985

From the formation of the Provisionals in 1969 the leadership viewed the way forward as a simple and straightforward operation: to break the connection between Ireland and England by undermining the will of the British to remain. This they assumed could be achieved by the destruction of the economic infrastructure in the north. Due to the involvement of the Officials in 'agitational' politics a perceived linkage had been established between electoral participation and reformism. The electoral path, the Provisional leadership assumed, could ultimately only lead to a dilution or termination of the armed struggle due to the necessity of broadening the electoral base. However by the 1980s Sinn Fein had been transformed from an appendage of its military alter ego, the IRA, to a significant political force in its own right. To its electoral gains in the north, the party had added a noticeable political advancement in the south. It has taken over the chair of five local authorities in the twenty-six counties and has assumed a leading position in many neighbourhood associations, trades unions and women's groups. According to the *Sunday Times* it has "increased its number of committed activists from 1,000 to 4,500 in three years and thrown the main political parties into disarray."<sup>1</sup>

The transformation of Sinn Fein from a body merely supportive of the military role of the IRA to a political organization of not inconsiderable stature was problematic. Dissention has been, and still is,

voiced within the movement at the apparent pulling away from Connolly's view that the colonial link must be broken before social advancement can be made. The guarded support that the party has received from the 'hard-liners' in the movement has been contingent upon its continued success. So far Sinn Fein has managed to avoid any major contradictions of the fundamental tenets of republican doctrine by maintaining a degree of autonomy from the IRA. A 'twin-track' policy has been established in which the political efforts of Sinn Fein are expected to develop independently of and in no way to the exclusion of the IRA's military campaign. What has become known as the policy of the 'Armalite and the ballot box' is seen by the IRA as a result of the "need to build a political base; the need to be seen clearly as public representatives of the people we profess to lead [and] the need to stop collaborationist elements masquerading as representatives of the nationalist people."<sup>2</sup> The operation of both organizations is seen as separate but complementary, both striving towards national liberation while avoiding the traps of reformism.

In seeking the origin of such a transformation attention has been drawn to the ascendancy of a new, radical, northern directorate dating from around the mid 1970s.<sup>3</sup> But the conditions which provided the impetus for the take-over were rooted not only in the political maturation of the movement itself but to a large extent in reaction to a reformulation of British policy in the north. In an analysis of the 1983 general election in Northern Ireland, W. Harvey Cox argued that British policy may have been the paramount factor in the advancement

of the party. "Arguably," he suggests, "the rise of Sinn Fein was a product of what Mrs. Thatcher did with her 1979 Westminster majority (that is to say the impact of her economic policies and her handling of the hunger strikes of 1980-1981)." <sup>4</sup> The new and politically aggressive policy of Sinn Fein in pursuing its electoral ends was derived from its attempts to reverse the trend in which nationalist resistance was being channeled into a constitutional path and also in reaction to British efforts to deal with the military campaign.

By the mid to late 1970s the majority of the north's Catholic population remained alienated from the state, still bearing the brunt of escalating unemployment and still dismayed at the reluctance or the inability of the British state to confront pressing social issues rather than militarily address their violent symptomatic manifestations. The collapse of the Stormont surrogate in 1972 had returned the care of the northern state to the Westminster parent without any appreciable amelioration of the social situation of the nationalist community. At the same time the British attempt to deal with the problem militarily by focusing on the nationalist ghettos ensured a degree of support for the IRA.

O'Malley has pointed out the scale involved:

The breadth of house searches alone conveys the scale of possible support: more than thirty-six thousand in 1972, double that again in 1973 and 1974, thirty thousand in 1975, thirty-four thousand in 1977, fifteen thousand in 1978. And in every household searched there was left behind a sense of estrangement, of the anger felt when one's privacy is rudely and brutally invaded.<sup>5</sup>

While there had been "an enormous influx"<sup>6</sup> of volunteers into the ranks of the IRA and personnel presented no particular problem,<sup>7</sup> it became increasingly apparent that the conduct of the military campaign, as a

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single tactic, was at best inadequate and at worst counterproductive to their desired end of the establishment of a socialist republic.

The concentration on simply bombing 'economic targets' in an attempt to demoralize and ultimately expel British financial interests was based on a significant miscalculation: that the struggle would be of short duration. The views of MacStiofain, Twomey and O'Conaill were that the national question could be concluded following a short, sharp confrontation at the conclusion of which the British would militarily withdraw. The British abandonment of Cyprus in particular was upheld as indicative of the lack of resolve on the part of the British state to hold together its colonial territories in the face of armed opposition. *An Phoblacht's* pronouncement in 1974 suggested in addition to being unwilling, Britain was financially incapable of continuing a long war.

As England totters towards economic collapse and bankruptcy she must cut every conceivable cost. The last outposts of Empire are to be abandoned with Cyprus, Malta and Singapore. Ireland is also to be evacuated. But Mason's terms are: when the RUC and UDR are ready to take over.<sup>8</sup>

The attitude that Britain would consider withdrawal seemed reasonable in view of the opinion of the British Prime Minister that a united Ireland was a legitimate goal. Harold Wilson had declared in 1971 that:

The situation has now gone so far that it is impossible to conceive of an effective long term solution in which the agenda does not include consideration of, and which is not in some way directed to finding a means of achieving, the aspirations envisaged half a century ago, of progress towards a united Ireland.<sup>9</sup>

Britain's amenability to at least discuss the issue of withdrawal was seemingly reinforced by the fact that the government had entered into

negotiations with the IRA in 1972 and again through intermediaries in 1974 and 1975. Conducive to optimism in this respect also was the fond belief held by the IRA leadership between 1972 and 1975 that an "alliance of extremes"<sup>10</sup> could be fostered between the loyalist paramilitaries and their republican counterparts. The loyalist Ulster Defence Association by espousing an Ulster nationalism and confronting British right to rule in the six counties by the tactic of a general strike, seemed to provide a natural ally. After all, the Provisionals reasoned, with the retreat of the British, the veil of false consciousness dependent upon marginal privilege and reinforced by the union would no longer obscure the 'true' nationality of the loyalists. The later spate of sectarian assassinations carried out by the loyalist paramilitaries was to shatter this belief.

The period between 1972, which *An Phoblacht* proclaimed "The year of victory," and 1975 saw within the movement a significant readjustment to the changing political situation. The unexpected duration of the struggle not only surprised the Provisional leadership but demoralized those supporters for whom the efficacy of the IRA plan seemed to have been demonstrated by the toppling of the Stormont regime. The broad base of support in nationalist areas was diminishing, largely due to disillusionment following the lack of visible progress to compensate for living inside the 'war zone'. More important, however, for the Provisionals was the increasing appeal of constitutional nationalism in the form of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). The SDLP was founded on August 21st, 1970, absorbing the old Nationalist Party and a

large section of the lesser constitutional nationalist parties. In one respect, the SDLP posed an equal or more dangerous threat to the Provisionals than British military intervention insofar as it could reduce the base of the IRA support inside traditional republican enclaves. With the increasing strength of the SDLP the simple reliance on the military tactic to provide the basis for national liberation came to be questioned by the Provisionals' membership in the north. While the customary fluctuations in popularity could be remedied by reorganization from the traditional army structure into a system of cells which to some extent reduced the necessity of the 'friendly sea', the SDLP encroachments in republican areas were more serious. Sinn Fein was at that time only "a protest organisation, capable in moments of emotionalism, of mobilising for a short period of time a very large section of the people, but it didn't have the organisation capable of keeping those people or a sizable section of them."<sup>11</sup> Those supportive of republican ends though unwilling to participate actively were effectively frozen out of the movement onto the periphery of nationalist politics, or into the ranks of the SDLP.

The mid-1970s confirmed the earlier signs that the phenomenal costs of underwriting the social and political life of the province were in no way diminishing the tenacity with which the British state held on to the six counties. A ceasefire, proposed by Daithi O'Conaill as a breathing space for negotiations with the British government, brought the military campaign to a temporary standstill. In the ensuing months, far from demonstrating any desire or willingness to leave, the British

determination to remain and their improving ability to deal with the situation became increasingly apparent. The abolition of Stormont had fulfilled the wishes of the Provisional leadership insofar as it had presented a clear-cut picture of the conflict as being Irish nationalism confronting British colonialism, with loyalism tactfully pushed into the background. But following the ceasefire the British government made a sustained effort to extricate itself from this position of prominence and to distance itself from the conflict. This effort was to be approached by the interjection of 'Ulsterization' and 'Criminalization' policies between Britain and the object of Irish nationalist aspirations. *need to level political side →* Ulsterization was a policy conceived by Merlyn Rees in 1974 in which the RUC and the locally recruited Ulster Defence Regiment were to be given an increasingly dominant position in the defence of the state, leaving the British military presence with a lower profile. Criminalization was the decision to end "special category" status for those prisoners convicted of politically oriented offences. This measure had two major purposes: to reduce the legitimacy of the movement (and thus its objective) by classifying republican prisoners convicted after March 1st as criminals and to reduce the embarrassingly high statistics of political prisoners in British gaols. The latter tactic created an anomalous situation in that all those convicted before March 1st continued to hold special category status for the same offences which were to be condemned as criminal the following day. It was largely in the implementation of these two policies that Westminster by the 1980s was to fuel the revival of the political fortunes of the IRA.

At the same time the months of the ceasefire proved to be a testing ground for Sinn Fein, for with the military aspect of the struggle temporarily constrained, the political aspect was highlighted and found to be inadequate. One observer noted in a review of 1975:

\* The reason why Provisional Sinn Fein proved itself so politically inadequate throughout the year was not merely due to the inadequacies of its policies. . . . It was because Sinn Fein was never allowed to develop politically, independent of the Provisional army council so it never learned to walk. When the political challenge of the ceasefire arrived, and Sinn Fein was invited to join the race against the SDLP, its wobbly legs never allowed it even to get off the ground.<sup>12</sup>

For the struggle to be a protracted one, and the revamped British policies suggested that it would be, then the need for development and autonomy in Sinn Fein was crucial for the very existence of the movement.

The early prognostication that British withdrawal was imminent was replaced by a more sober assessment. At the Bodenstown commemoration Jimmy Drumm articulated a changing attitude among republicans in the north:

The isolation of socialist republicans around the armed struggle is dangerous and has produced the reformist notion that 'Ulster' is the issue, without mobilising the working class in the 26 counties. . . . The British government is *not* withdrawing from the six counties and the substantial pullout of business and the closing of factories in 1975 and 1976 was due to the world economic recession, though mistakenly attributed at the time as symptoms of withdrawal. . . . Indeed the British government is committed to stabilising the six counties and is pouring in vast sums of money . . . to assure loyalist and secure from loyalists, support for a long haul against the IRA. . . . We find that a successful war of liberation cannot be fought exclusively on the backs of the oppressed in the six counties, nor around the physical presence of the British army. Hatred and resentment of the army cannot sustain the war.<sup>13</sup>

Politicization of the northern community, the republicans felt, was no longer a task which could be relegated to some undetermined time follow-

ing national liberation, it had to be undertaken simultaneously in order to avoid the debacle of 1956-62. The prevalent notion that the IRA could liberate the north on behalf of its nationalist population and without its involvement, following the pattern of 1916, began to be questioned. Beyond the publication of the 1972 Eire Nua policy document the movement had done little to involve itself in broadening its appeal or involving those marginally supportive. The initiation of the Ulsterization policy effectively emptied the slogans "Brits Out" and "Troops Out" of any real meaning due to the steady diminution of the number of British troops in the north. As the movement was later to make explicit:

The gradual withdrawal of the overt trappings of British military rule in the six counties—replacing troops in the streets with 'the police' and replacing forts inside nationalist ghettos with a centralised system of strategically sited barracks—dictates an increasingly sophisticated response. The mistaken (if understandable) equation of 'sticks' with politics needs to be firmly rejected.<sup>14</sup>

The necessity to build an effective political organization to combat the SDLP and to concisely articulate the purpose of the struggle in the face of criminalization and Ulsterization motivated a number of northern radicals to position themselves in leadership roles. The IRA executive, due to recognized policy, had remained vitrified and unassailable since 1969. The IRA leadership is a body of fourteen to fifteen members elected by the annual Army Convention of local commanders. When the IRA is engaged in a campaign, the last elected executive remains in power until its conclusion. Thus those elected in 1969 were still occupying leadership positions in 1975 and much of the opposition to 'politics' remained. The new aspiring leadership, most of whom had

spent time rethinking the position of the movement in Long Kesh prison, began to make itself felt. The process of taking over the movement was accelerated when Seamus Twomey, the IRA chief of staff, was arrested in 1975 and a northerner, Gerry Adams, assumed the leadership of the Army Council. The new leadership articulated the desire of the radical membership in the north to make explicit the aims of the movement and argued that the expulsion of Britain from Ireland had to be shown to be not an end in itself but the means through which the socialist republic was to be established. The strict emphasis previously placed on the attainment of national liberation before social issues could be addressed had to be reassessed. The preoccupation with the military campaign to liberate the north had resulted in the virtual neglect of the southern population and it was towards this potential pool of support that Sinn Fein turned in the late 1970s. As Adams argued in 1979, "today's circumstances and our objectives dictate the need for the building of an agitational struggle in the twenty-six counties, an economic resistance movement linking up republicans with other sections of the working class."<sup>15</sup>

The new emphasis being placed upon the end product of the campaign rather than the means of achieving British withdrawal raised the spectre of political defeat after the campaign's conclusion. The traditional scenario in which Sinn Fein would sweep to victory following the independence of the north was criticized in 1980 as "simplistic" and "elitist."<sup>16</sup> There was no doubt that in the event of the British government relinquishing its hold on the north, Sinn Fein would be

electorally opposed by individual constitutional parties, or alliances of the same, whose programmes and political ability were already proven. Thus elections following a military victory would see,

Republicans contending against conservative forces of a Fine Gael complexion. Also a Fianna Fail type party will almost certainly be organised nationally. This will leave Republicans, notwithstanding their military success, with the radical rump of Irish political life, a rump incidentally which will be furiously contested by other left wing parties.<sup>17</sup>

For this reason, as well as the threat of being upstaged as the voice of the northern nationalists by the SDLP, the political immaturity of the movement had to be overcome. A struggle of economic resistance had to be undertaken, Adams believed, to involve uncommitted nationalist support "because our most glaring weakness to date lies in our failure to develop revolutionary politics and to build a strong alternative to so-called constitutional politics."<sup>18</sup>

In attempting to strengthen the movement, the socialist undertones, always present though generally obscured in practice, were by 1980 pushed to the fore. It was in this period that the traditional Utopia of early Provisional republicanism was revised. The social system which the movement had hoped to create was based on the notion of Comhar na gComharsan or neighbours' cooperation. The basic ideas of this system were developed in 1939 by the IRA publicity department and broadcast over 'IRA Radio'. The editorial staff of the republican newspaper, *The United Irishman*, in developing this notion had emphasized the decentralization of power and cooperative ownership overlaid with Catholic religious terminology. While the exploitation by individuals of others' labour was denigrated, the right to private property was defined as

paramount in defending liberty. "It is the duty of the Christian state," they argued, "to see that every citizen possesses this freedom which comes of ownership, and to guarantee him in its possession, by protecting him from the encroachments of those who would divest him of it."<sup>19</sup>

The right to private property was considered not only as protective of human freedom but as being also in accordance "with the divine plan."

The 1972 Eire Nua document, as the definitive work on Sinn Fein policy, had remained permeated by the notion of "Christian social principles" and the quasi-feudal notion of individual ownership of the means of production combined with the repopulation of the countryside. The document highlighted the desire of the earlier Provisional leadership to institute a socialist system according to the dictates of republicanism but constrained by their abhorrence of the Soviet state.

In the drafting of the programme our aim has been to outline a social and economic system which would strike a balance between Western individualistic capitalism with its poor and hungry among plenty on the right and Eastern Soviet state capitalism (or any of its variations) with its denial of freedom and human rights on the left.<sup>20</sup>

While the banks and the commanding heights of industry would be nationalized, "firms which make reasonable efforts to orient themselves towards the development of a national economy will be left in private hands."<sup>21</sup>

The revision of this document in 1980 still emphasized cooperative ownership though secularized its terminology and revealed a more explicitly Connollyite rejection of private enterprise. The right to private property became severely curtailed and ownership limited to "personal, non-productive property such as clothes, food, etc."<sup>22</sup> Small businesses would be tolerated on a self-employed artisan basis, otherwise "where

private enterprise is permitted there shall be workers' participation." The most controversial alteration to the document was the abandonment of the federalist scheme for government. P.117

The federalism issue was not only important insofar as it altered the political end-product of republican aspiration but it had a significant demonstrative effect in showing the primacy of the new leadership over the republican old guard. Attitudes were changing and although the new leadership would deny that any significant movement to the left was initiated, this was clearly the case. Along with this the isolationism and singlemindedness encapsulated in the title 'Ourselves' was being overcome as relationships with Third World and other European national liberation movements were being established. Many of the attitudes which underlay the commitment to federalism had been eroded through the period of adjustment to British policy. The federal plan, conceived by the Provisional leadership around 1969, was an attempt to address three broad issues. The leadership's fear of that they perceived to be the logical conclusion to the establishment of a strong state could be assuaged by the emphasis on decentralization and strong local government. It was an overt attempt on the part of the leadership to allay the fears of the loyalist minority in Ireland that they would be swamped within a Catholic state. The degree of self-government allowed within the plan would ensure that legislative freedom could be ensured while at the same time any abuse of power could be curtailed by the national parliament. This latter check on loyalist power, it was felt, should be largely unnecessary as the withdrawal of their privileged position would enable them to

see clearly their commonality with their fellow Irish citizens. Finally, the British, who it was thought would be banished after a brief military confrontation, could be convinced prior to their departure that provision was being made for their former subjects.

So highly was the federal governmental format regarded by the republican leadership in the 1970s that it was enshrined as a fundamental principle rather than as a policy in the Sinn Fein constitution. The plan suggested that the government of Ireland should exist at four levels: local, regional, provincial and national. At the local level, District Councils elected by a system of proportional representation would replace the existing local authorities both north and south. At the regional level, representatives of the District Councils together with a commission of experts appointed by the Provincial Parliament would be empowered to coordinate the economic, social and cultural affairs of the regions. Following British withdrawal Ulster would be returned to its former nine counties and would constitute one of the four Provincial Parliaments. The four parliaments would follow the historic division of Ireland into four provinces: Uladh, Laighean, Connacht and Mumhan. Above this structure and situated in Athlone would be a national tier in the form of a federal government. By reuniting the province of Uladh (Ulster) with the three counties abandoned during partition, the loyalist community would still retain a working majority due to the depopulation of the western section although the Catholic/Protestant ratio would be less askew.

By the late 1970s it had become apparent that the *raison d'être*

of the federal policy was being undermined by political developments. The MacStiofain-O'Connell leadership was now being isolated within the movement. The sectarian attacks upon the nationalist community at precisely the times that IRA activity was low or when the ceasefire was in operation convinced many in the movement that the "alliance of extremes" was illusory. The notion that the Britishness of the loyalists was a delicate tissue of false consciousness which would be shredded following a British withdrawal had become questioned by the membership. The loyalists were now more likely to be compared with "the Africaners in South Africa, the Pieds Noir in Algeria or the Israelis."<sup>23</sup> Further, \* the separation of the proletariat into hostile camps, republicans assumed, could as easily be manipulated to the advantage of indigenous capitalism after withdrawal as it was perceived to have been done previously in the interests of Britain.<sup>24</sup>

The realization that the British presence was becoming more rather than less entrenched during the course of the 1970s significantly reduced the necessity for the federal plan to provide a form of reassurance to the Westminster government prior to their withdrawal, and hardened attitudes towards the loyalists. There were now those who considered that no special provision should be made and no area of privilege offered. The implementation of federalism in this perspective was a retrograde step in terms of national liberation. As Morrison argues: "If you fight to get the Brits out and then hand everything back to the very people on whose behalf the Brits have been here then it's a nonsense."<sup>25</sup> This attitude surfaced in the 1980 Ard Fheis in Mansion House, Dublin where

the debate on federalism raged for two and a half hours. The division of the more traditionalist leadership and those representing the radical left was highlighted by the arrangement of forces for and against the federal issue, O'Conaill and O'Bradaigh arguing for its retention and Morrison, Adams and Carron demanding its deletion. Adams argued:

The ard comhairle [party executive] wants that tier of provincial parliaments removed, with the other tiers, of a national government and the regional and decentralised government structures remaining intact.

We believe that these regional tiers supplemented by a decentralisation of economic and industrial resources deal adequately with our aim of de-centralised socialism and de-centralised government. . . . The Ulster provincial structure was offered as an olive branch to unionists—it is essentially a sop to unionism, loyalism and Orangeism.<sup>26</sup>

Federalism, he continued, would, by granting a privileged status to the loyalist population, prolong those attitudes engendered by partition and slow any transition to socialism. While the first vote on the issue was 196 out of a card count of 294, and thus was sufficient for a constitutional amendment, a recount left this significantly short. As a policy, federalism was defeated 167 votes to 124, leaving the party with the anomalous situation of having federalism remain as a principle though deleted as a policy from the programme.

Surprisingly the electoral issue in 1980 provoked little reaction within the Ard Fheis. As *An Phoblacht* reported, "the potentially most controversial, but in actuality little contested, section of the day's debate was on electoral policy."<sup>27</sup> Participation in elections was for a long time a particularly difficult subject to broach in the Republican Movement as all electoral activity was seen as being the thin edge of a wedge which could introduce the means by which recognition of the

imperial and two partition parliaments could be initiated. Electoral 'intervention' was another tactic postponed until liberation. This view had to be confronted in the light of recent political developments.

Adams argued:

People were reluctant to get involved early on because of the experience of the late 1960s. Now they've realised that what was wrong was a bad leadership, a reformist one, and that now there's revolutionary potential and the necessity to push on two fronts—on the national issue and on all other issues that involve the national issue.<sup>28</sup>

The necessity to confront British propaganda that republican support was "obtained and retained by intimidation alone"<sup>29</sup> in itself would have pushed Sinn Fein into electorally testing its strength in the nationalist areas of the north but the need to combat the SDLP and British policy compounded this. Given the reluctance of the membership to follow the Officials into obscurity, the 'twin track' policy of electoral intervention and physical force was cautiously advanced for the purpose of propaganda as early as 1976. *An Phoblacht* proclaimed:

It is an iron and unchanging law of politics that any major political transformation requires two kinds of persuasive action to bring it about; on the one hand, physical persuasion—the persuasion which operates through the application of physical force; on the other hand, imaginative persuasion—the persuasion which operates through the direction of a set of images at the minds of a given public with the aim of inducing it to move in a certain direction.<sup>30</sup>

Electoral intervention was not, as has been suggested, forbidden by Sinn Fein policy and simply reversed for the sake of the election of Bobby Sands, the hunger striker, in 1982.<sup>31</sup> Elections fought on a non-attendance basis by Sinn Fein date back to 1917 when the death of J.J. O'Kelly in Roscommon precipitated a by-election. Count Plunkett (a papal count)

fought the campaign in the absence of any real policy, merely rejecting partition and Redmond's party. Joe MacGuinness began the tradition of forwarding prisoners in 1917 when he fought and won on a simple slogan: "Put him in to get him out." In 1918 Sinn Fein had taken 73 seats in the general election and in 1955 two prisoner candidates were elected in Fermanagh/South Tyrone and in Mid-Ulster.

Ultimately it was the issue of criminalization that propelled the movement into the centre of the world stage, increased the flow of money from America and reinforced the electoral line being advocated by the leadership. British army intelligence had prophetically warned in 1978 that "the current muted support for the forces of law and order will remain delicately balanced and susceptible to any controversial government decision or security force action."<sup>32</sup> Thatcher's intransigence during the hunger strikes of 1981, staged as a rejection of the criminalization policy by the Long Kesh prisoners, unbalanced the political situation in Northern Ireland. Despite the ultimate failure of the strike to achieve its aim of overturning the criminalization policy, "Sinn Fein discovered a potential prize far more glittering—a reserve of electoral support waiting only to be tapped."<sup>33</sup> More important in its effect on the movement was the fact that Owen Carron's electoral victory following the death of Bobby Sands and increasing the previous poll showed that the emotional issue of the hunger strike may not have been the only reason for their success. While Carron polled a total of 31,278 votes in the north, the election victories of Doherty and Agnew in the south must have convinced many sceptics in the movement about the

considerable propaganda value in contesting elections. As Morrison suggests:

What contesting elections does do and did, especially in the case of Bobby Sands, is that they completely undermine British propaganda which states that republicans have no support. They show that republicans have popular support.<sup>34</sup>

An IRA spokesperson explained in 1981 that since the 1969 split there had been a "simplistic republican attitude" to the position of the Officials and that this had resulted in "a reaction within the Republican Movement against taking political control within the nationalist community or examining methods, even electoral, for doing this." The statement went on to explain:

For those who would be concerned that such an intervention in the West Belfast election is a new tendency or departure, they can be assured that the military struggle will go on with all the energy at our disposal, and, in fact, victory would actually be hastened with the development of a complementary radical political offensive.<sup>35</sup>

Elections, it was decided, should be fought on an obstructionist basis also, for the IRA feared that they were actually providing the SDLP with their political leverage. Were it not for the fact that the Irish national issue was being pushed into the foreground by the IRA military campaign the British government, they believed, would have simply ignored the demands of any constitutionalist nationalist party. By contesting elections the republican movement could either gain a propaganda victory of a Sands-Carron type or, at worst, split the nationalist vote, ensuring that "the SDLP would have a hard job, and probably an impossible job, of getting into power."<sup>36</sup>

The Ulster Assembly elections, the first real electoral outing of Sinn Fein as a party, resulted in a significant poll of 10 percent of the vote and taking five seats of the available 78. The 1982 Westminster elections compounded this success in that Sinn Fein increased its lead to 13.4 percent of the vote, polling 102,601 votes. Sinn Fein however failed to make any significant inroads into the SDLP vote, the greater part of its increased vote having come from "working-class first time voters who might well hitherto have abstained from the polls."<sup>37</sup> To some extent, this substantiates Morrison's claim that "[g]etting involved in electoral politics allowed us to expand our organisation and bring into the struggle a lot of people who otherwise would be sitting on the side lines as observers and we have made activists of them."<sup>38</sup>

Hainsworth argues that Sinn Fein had approached the 1984 elections with two basic intentions:

to surpass the 100,000+ votes won in the 1983 election, to narrow the gap (34,000 votes, 4.5%) between themselves and the SDLP, and to prepare for the 1985 district council elections where Sinn Fein aspires to upstage the SDLP.<sup>39</sup>

Morrison argues that, in fact, Sinn Fein had not entered the election in the hope of defeating the SDLP whose leader, John Hume, had managed something of a publicity coup with the New Ireland Forum just prior to the election.

Before the election we reached the conclusion that it was unlikely that we would outpoll John Hume. But inside the election directorate I argued that we had to hold out the prospect of success to the people to motivate them because the European election wasn't the same as the Westminster election where, for example, in Fermanagh, an unknown SDLP candidate was fighting against Owen Carron who had a much higher profile. . . . My argument won the day with the people on that committee so we had to suggest that we were going to outpoll Hume. It was a mistake and what actually

happened was that some people who had voted Sinn Fein in the past . . . voted for John Hume on the basis of his track record in Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Hainsworth was however accurate in his assertion that Sinn Fein saw the election as a preparatory process for the local elections in 1985. These election are particularly important for two reasons: in the first place any seats taken will be occupied, as local elections are considered to be far enough from the imperial structures to be legitimate and in the second place because Sinn Fein believes that the SDLP survives as a 'one man show' based on Hume's popularity, the sheer numbers of candidates involved will militate against an SDLP success.

If Sinn Fein does not make any significant showing in the 1985 elections the consequences for the political line will undoubtedly be serious. It seems clear that there will be a reaction among the traditionalist element in the movement. Political action undertaken by Sinn Fein has proven expensive. It now operates five advice centres or clinics in West Belfast, four in Derry, one in Strabane, five in Mid-Ulster, four in Fermanagh-South Tyrone, and three in Armagh-Newry. Rural constituencies have four to five full-time members each, while West Belfast and Derry have fifteen full-time members each. An interview in *The Listener* provides an insight not only into the cost of the political tactic but also the possible reaction to it.

If you're in the Falls or the Creggan and you have your tiles blown off and the Housing executive are a bit slow in getting round to deal with it, you'll have a Provo shinning up a ladder to stick them back for you. . . . He won't put in a bill, but his services still cost money, and a lot of the lads would prefer to see the money going on arms and ammunition.<sup>41</sup>

Given the increasing success of the authorities in both the north and

south in uncovering IRA funds together with recent attempts to discredit NORAIID in America, these costs will be seen as a particular burden, the only compensation for which will be a sufficiently large showing at the polls. The veracity of Daithi O'Conaill's charge that the Sinn Fein leadership is unrepresentative of the movement as a whole<sup>42</sup> may soon be tested. On the weekend of 17th March 1985, the army council met to discuss the continuation or abandonment of the electoral strategy.<sup>43</sup> The result of this meeting has been withheld from the membership and, in all likelihood will not be revealed until after the elections of May 1985. The electoral strategy will therefore be tested at a significant disadvantage for the amendment of the Representation of the People Act barring a convicted felon from candidacy in elections will deprive Sinn Fein of a significant number of their most suitable candidates.

Whether the electoral strategy will continue is a question which will only be answered after the upcoming elections but what remains clear is that the campaign will continue supported by electoral victories or not. As British army intelligence states:

The Provisionals' campaign of violence is likely to continue while the British remain in Ireland. . . . We see little prospect of political development of a kind which would seriously undermine the Provisionals' position.<sup>44</sup>

## ENDNOTES — CHAPTER FOUR

NOTE: Variations in the noting of *An Phoblacht* are due to its change from a monthly to a weekly in the late 1970s.

<sup>1</sup>*The Sunday Times*, April 27, 1984.

<sup>2</sup>*An Phoblacht*, April 1, 1982.

<sup>3</sup>See: O'Malley, 1983, p. 280; Paul Wilkinson, "The Provisional IRA: An Assessment in the Wake of the 1981 Hunger Strike," *Government and Opposition*, 17, No. 2, 1982; Adrian Guelke, "The Changing Politics of Ulster's Violent Men," *New Society*, July 29, 1982; Edgar O'Ballance, "IRA Leadership Problems," in Wilkinson, 1981, p. 74; Vincent Browne, "The Provos Settle Down for a Twenty Year War," *Magill*, August 1982, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>W. Harvey Cox, "The 1983 General Election in Northern Ireland: Anatomy and Consequences," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 37, No. 1, Winter 1984, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup>O'Malley, 1983, p. 259.

<sup>6</sup>Vincent Browne, "The New Provo Strategy," *Magill*, November 1981, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>*Northern Ireland, Future Terrorist Trends* is published in full in Cronin, 1980, pp. 339-357.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted in D. Reed, 1984, p. 217.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted in A.C. Hepburn, 1980, pp. 119-200.

<sup>10</sup>Guelke, 1982, p. 172.

We may reach agreement through dialogue and so forth. It is a fact that we have had talks with various elements who wouldn't have entertained talks with us, say twelve months ago. We have had talks with the UVF. We have had talks at a political level, some of our political people talking to UDA political people. There are some people we prefer not to mention. But we had, it's no empty claim, not a boast it's a statement of fact that we have had dialogue right across the board. Such is progress, and in a

new climate, and there definitely would be a new climate once the British said they were going. . . . Having such an open approach, we believe is very necessary and we would hope that from be it loyalist, unionist, nationalist, call them what you like, that they would have the same approach. We believe that such a situation, such a scenario is feasible in a climate of post-declaration. (Irish Republican Information Service, November 22, 1974)

<sup>11</sup>G. Adams quoted in *An Phoblacht*, February 30, 1984.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in *An Phoblacht*, February 6, 1976.

<sup>13</sup>Jimmy Drumm, quoted in Kelley, 1982, p. 265.

<sup>14</sup>*An Phoblacht*, September 5, 1981.

<sup>15</sup>G. Adams in *An Phoblacht*, June 23, 1979.

<sup>16</sup>*An Phoblacht*, April 19, 1980.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 3, 1979.

<sup>19</sup>Quoted in *An Phoblacht*, February 1970.

<sup>20</sup>Eire Nua Policy Document, 1972, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup>*An Phoblacht*, January 26, 1980.

<sup>23</sup>*Magill*, July 1983, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup>*An Phoblacht*, February 6, 1976.

<sup>25</sup>Personal interview, 1984.

<sup>26</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 5, 1980.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

- <sup>28</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 3, 1979.
- <sup>29</sup>E. O'Ballance, 1981, p. 81.
- <sup>30</sup>*An Phoblacht*, February 6, 1976.
- <sup>31</sup>Cox, 1984, p. 83.
- <sup>32</sup>Quoted in Cronin, 1980.
- <sup>33</sup>Cox, 1984, p. 43.
- <sup>34</sup>Morrison, quoted in O'Malley, 1983, p. 276.
- <sup>35</sup>*An Phoblacht*, September 5, 1981.
- <sup>36</sup>Morrison, quoted in *Marxism Today*, December 1981, p. 5.
- <sup>37</sup>Cox, 1984, p. 46.
- <sup>38</sup>Personal interview, 1984.
- <sup>39</sup>Hainsworth, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 37, No. 4, Autumn 1984, p. 449.
- <sup>40</sup>Personal interview, 1984.
- <sup>41</sup>*The Listener*, August 23, 1984, p. 16.
- <sup>42</sup>*An Phoblacht*, November 17, 1983.
- <sup>43</sup>*The Sunday Times*, March 17, 1985.
- <sup>44</sup>Quoted in Cronin, 1980, p. 356.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis contends that the republican movement in Ireland sees itself as carrying on an incomplete revolution commenced in 1916. Consequently the doctrine of Connolly and, to an extent, of Pearse is overwhelmingly important in understanding the movement's *raison d'être* and longevity. The legitimacy of the republican cause is derived largely from the movement's ability to demonstrate, in ideological terms, its linear descent from the leadership of the 1916 Rising. The governments of the Irish state, while denigrating the movement's methods, have never been able to question its historical legitimacy or denigrate its ideology. The aims of the Republican Movement and the southern political parties (particularly Fianna Fail) in seeking the achievement of a united Ireland are identical. But while the southern state would consider unification as an end in itself, republicans, with Connolly, would consider this a means to an end. But the commemoration of Easter 1916, by which the southern state celebrates its own conception, also functions to some extent to reiterate the efficacy of armed rebellion and the legitimacy of the republican cause.

The Republican Movement benefits from positioning itself in the reflected glory of the 1916 insurgents. The ends and the means of the struggle have been predetermined.

The Republican Movement regards the Proclamation of 1916 as its foundation stone; the Republic we seek is that of Pearse and Connolly; and like them we believe that the fundamental question is the removal of the British presence from Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The means by which the British presence is to be removed remains defined

by Pearse as "physical force." To quote a representative of the movement:

We recognise that even if the entire nationalist population in the six counties voted for Sinn Fein that wouldn't be enough. There must be an increase in political activity in the twenty-six counties so that they also demand that the Brits get out. Even that wouldn't be enough because the only thing colonial rulers will listen to is force.<sup>2</sup>

In the period up to 1962 military activity in the movement took precedence over the political aspect of republicanism. This is not to say that Connolly's contribution to republicanism was either ignored or refuted. Rather his insistence that national liberation must precede social revolution pushed political activity temporarily into the background. The pressures not only of a failing military campaign but also of a changing political and economic situation in the north persuaded some leading figures in the movement to abandon republican orthodoxy. That section of the organization later to become known as the Officials attempted to stand Connolly's teaching on its head by insisting instead that social emancipation must precede national liberation. In order to achieve national liberation via the instigation of socialism, both north and south of the border, physical force was to be abandoned. As a consequence the movement split into purist and reformist coteries. The purists, known as the Provisionals, remained faithful to Connolly's teachings and continued to be dominant in the movement's grass roots.

The Officials misunderstood the importance of tradition in the maintenance of legitimacy within the movement. As a consequence of their abandonment of traditional doctrine, the Officials, later to become known as "The Workers' Party," were banished to the periphery

of Irish nationalist politics. The Provisionals never conformed to their media image as a nihilist reaction to the political line of their Official counterparts. Nor may they be considered to have been followers of Pearse "committed to the simple ideal of freeing [their] country from its oppressors, authorised to use all available means for that end, seeking no glory other than martyrdom."<sup>3</sup> While Pearse considered the root cause of Ireland's ills to be simply foreign domination, Connolly recognized independence to be but a precondition for ending class oppression in Ireland. In 1974 the Provisionals argued that "the republican movement has never looked on the ending of British rule in Ireland as an end in itself but rather as a means to restore the ownership of Ireland to the people of Ireland and the establishment of a system free from any exploitation of man by man and which will be truly democratic right down through society."<sup>4</sup> Connolly's teachings came to be more forcefully articulated following the debacle of the 1956-1962 campaign.

The retention of Connolly's approach in the face of later political developments proved difficult, particularly on the question of the loyalists' position in a republican Ireland. The 'two nations' theory which appeared in a revised form in the 1970s threatened the legitimacy of the republican endeavour. Essentially it argued that the six counties should be seen not as an appendage of Britain but as constituting a nation in their own right. Connolly's view that loyalist self-perception should be seen as false consciousness was attacked. The Republican Movement, in adjusting its position to deal with this approach, significantly hardened its attitudes towards the loyalist

population. The shift in republican perception had significant ramifications in the political plans of the Republican Movement insofar as the federal nature of the New Ireland (Eire Nua) programme was abandoned amidst strong protest. While the essence of the republican view of the loyalists seems to have changed, the kernel of Connolly's view was retained.

The Republican Movement has so far managed successfully to chart a course between the wreckage of the purely military campaign of 1956-1962 and the 'political' line of the Officials prior to 1969. But the execution of the military campaign has constituted a liability in the run-up to an electoral campaign and demonstrates the way in which the movement must juggle with sometimes conflicting facets of its inherited doctrine. The broadening of Sinn Fein's electoral appeal by the enforced curtailment of military action prior to elections has caused tensions as yet unresolved within the movement.<sup>5</sup> Whether these tensions will be sufficient to shatter the organization and precipitate another split it is too early to postulate. But the history of republicanism, particularly recent history, has shown that military action can be profitably supplemented by a clear exposition of the political ends of the campaign, Connolly's socialist republic. Although the balance between the political and military aspects of the movement will remain liable to readjustment it seems clear that electoral participation as a means of propaganda has proven its worth and will continue for some time. The Republican Movement's current policy, which has become known as "the Armalite and the ballot box," represents the embodiment of the traditional doctrine of Connolly and Pearse.

## ENDNOTES — CONCLUSION

- <sup>1</sup>Sean O'Bradaigh, quoted in *An Phoblacht*, April 1975.
- <sup>2</sup>Quoted in *Magill*, July 1983, p. 7.
- <sup>3</sup>Gary MacEoin, "The Irish Republican Army," *Eire-Ireland*, 7, Summer 1974, p. 4.
- <sup>4</sup>Statement issued by the Irish Republican Information Service, June 26, 1974.
- <sup>5</sup>See *The Sunday Times*, April 21, 1985.

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