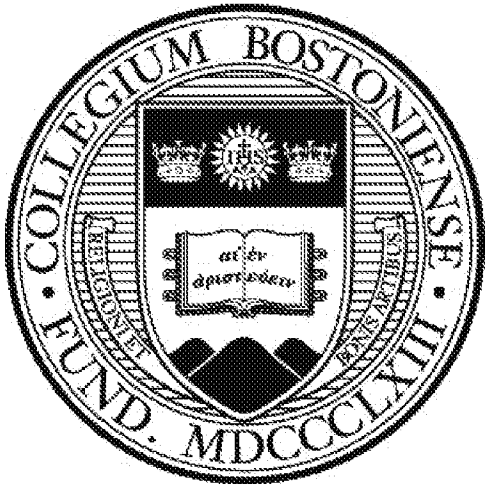


BOSTON COLLEGE

Professor Helmick

Irish Papers

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Coursepak for FM386, *Conflict Resolution Film*
and TH592, *Film as Peace-Making Tool*
all the same course

Boston College

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IRISH PAPERS

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD TO 1999 EDITION, WITH ADDENDA, 2000 p. iii

PART ONE: THE YEAR OF THE CONFERENCES. p. 1

Introduction p. 3

Paper I: The British Army. January 1980 p. 8

Paper II: Options and Who Should Choose. March 1980 p. 14

Bridging Passage p. 26

Paper III: A Freeport as Alternative Base for the Northern Ireland Economy. June 1980 p. 28

Bridging Passage p. 39

Paper IV: A Respectful Appeal to the Republican Movement. April 1980 p. 42

PART TWO: THE PRISON CRISIS AND ITS AFTERMATH. p. 49

Introduction to Part II p. 51

Letter to Daithi O Conaill, 10 February 1981 p. 56

Bridging Passage p. 64

Article in *The Tablet*: "Northern Ireland in Moral Focus." 30 May 1981 p. 65

Bridging Passage p. 67

Paper V: Major Lines of Policy. June 1981 p. 68

Paper VI: Weighting the Options. June 1981 p. 82

Bridging Passage p. 91

Intervention in the Hunger Strike p. 94

Paper VII: Present State of the Republican Movement. September 1981 p. 100

Epilogue (1983) p. 113

APPENDICES

I. Article from *The Month*, August 1977: "Church Structures and Violence in Northern Ireland" p. 117

II. "The Context of Group Identifications and their Conflicts: A Four-Factor Theory of the Dynamic of Conflict," lecture for the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights Conference on Reconciliation between Populations, Vienna, September 1996. p. 123

III. Chapter: "Legal Issues and Internment," extracted from *A Social Option: Suggestions for an Overall Social Planning Approach to the Problems of Northern Ireland*, by Richard Hauser and Raymond Helmick. Privately published by the Centre for Human Rights and Responsibilities, London, March 1975. p. 134

IV. Sketch Summary of Recent Northern Irish History as seen from opposite sides of the community. June, 1997, revised August, 1998. p. 142

NEW MATERIAL. 1996 THROUGH 1999 EDITIONS. p. 165

"Northern Ireland: The Essence of the Problem." November, 1992. Occasional Paper prepared for a visit by the Irish American Partnership to Northern Ireland. p. 167

1994 Correspondence. p. 172

1995 Correspondence. p. 188

1996 Correspondence. p. 208

1997 Correspondence p. 257

1998 Correspondence p. 282

1999 History Supplement and Correspondence p. 309

2000-2001 Correspondence p. 325

FOREWORD TO 1999 EDITION

Since I first began teaching this course on the Northern Ireland Conflict at Boston College in 1985 I have used this collection of papers, written to the parties during 1980 and 1981, my last two years resident in London and constantly visiting Northern Ireland, as documentary background to the course. That they should continue to seem current and still pertinent to the situation over such a long time gives witness to the degree to which the Northern Ireland conflict had stagnated. Nothing much new seemed to happen. More people were hurt or killed, more bombs went off, but nothing changed. Even the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in November 1985, which seemed at first an enormous event, was met with an intransigence which showed that it had failed to change anything in the minds of those it sought to influence.

My own long relation to the conflict became a minor element in my life after I returned to the United States late in 1981. I was more occupied with the Lebanese, the Israeli-Palestinian and the Kurdish conflicts. I followed events in Northern Ireland as well as I could from this distance, but the principal thing I could see happening on the American scene with regard to Northern Ireland, the McBride Principles campaign, made no sense to me. "All-Party Talks" initiated by the British and Irish governments with the Constitutional (i.e., non-violent) Northern Irish parties had desultory results.

In the Fall of 1992 I was invited to accompany a group organized by the Irish American Partnership on a visit to Northern Ireland. For them I wrote a short paper on what I called "The Essence of the Conflict." Since the group was intended to include several members of the U.S. Congress (as well as a number of U.S. business people), and they would be meeting political people of all descriptions in the province, it seemed to me requisite that they should meet Gerry Adams or some representative of Sinn Fein. That was nearly arranged, but was effectively prohibited by British government when a ranking civil servant gave it as his private opinion -- he said it would be his recommendation -- that government withdraw all cooperation from the Irish-American Partnership if anyone associated with the group's visit met anyone in Sinn Fein. Most of the Congressional delegation dropped out of the visit when that was clear.

But something was indeed happening behind the scenes all that time, a process of rethinking the conflict by key figures in Sinn Fein, led by Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, who from early in the 1980s were presenting to the IRA's Army Council ideas of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Through 1993 we kept hearing of the Hume-Adams meetings and eventually of a Hume-Adams agreement, first public evidence of a major peace effort initiated jointly by the Nationalist parties, SDLP and Sinn Fein. By December 15th, after much communication among these parties and the two governments, the British and Irish governments issued their Downing Street Declaration, offering wider All-Party Talks that would include parties associated with the militant factions if they declared ceasefires and demonstrated their good faith by maintaining them for a duration of ninety days. This led, by what seemed a slow process, to the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the IRA on August 31st, 1994, and ceasefires by the Loyalist paramilitary groups, UVF and UDA, six weeks later.

Stagnation was over. Suddenly the entire situation was fluid and bursting with expectations of peaceful progress. I was back in Northern Ireland, guest of a Californian businessman friend, Mr. Tom Tracy, who was keenly interested in the peace of Ireland, in February 1994, and had the opportunity then to reopen dialogue with many new and old friends in the province. With subsequent visits in November 1994 and numerous times since, a great deal of new correspondence was generated. The outcome is so unclear -- cease-fire broken, cease-fire restored -- that I don't yet feel myself ready to give a full analytic picture in writing, but it is clear to me at least that I need to supplement the papers I have used in this course since 1985. Since 1996 I have been more recent adding correspondence to this collection each year, and as of last year a summary history (Appendix IV). These last years have involved me in an unusual amount of confidential correspondence, but I have added what I could.

Addenda, 2000

For the first time in several years I have no further correspondence to add to this collection. The writing I have done about Northern Ireland since the Fall of 1999, actually pretty extensive, has all been about individuals seeking entrance to the U.S., or in one case return after deportation, all individual cases of exclusion from the U.S. by the INS because of their conflict-related activity in Ireland.

When we finished this course in December last year, the Mitchell Review has just succeeded in getting the Assembly parties to agree to set up the Executive that would finally make the Good Friday Agreement operational. Students' mood was exultant, and I recall warning them, good as the news looked, not to underestimate the capacity of these good folks to screw it up again.

George Mitchell had returned reluctantly, in the Fall of 1999, to chair meetings among the parties, particularly between the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein, to bring them past the impasse created when the UUP reused to enter an Executive with Sinn Fein until the IRA had actually "decommissioned" (handed over) some weapons. Sinn Fein leaders kept saying that they could not deliver the IRA's consent to that, as the IRA was a separate body not subject to their direction. Mitchell, by bringing the leaders together in sessions designed to open their personal human contact and mutual understanding, working this time without deadlines, obtained the Unionist leadership's consent to enter the Executive with the expectation that decommissioning would then follow.

In announcing his agreement to this, David Trimble effectively set a new deadline for the IRA's decommissioning of weapons, saying his party would remain in the Executive only if they saw some actual decommissioning by the time it held a Party Conference in February 2000. The Executive was duly sworn in by January and began to function to general applause, with members from the UUP, SDLP, Sinn Fein and Paisley's DUP. People supposed that somehow it would last, but when the February conference came the UUP delegates voted to leave the Executive, despite a last-minute statement by General John de Chastelain that substantial progress on decommissioning had been made. Gloom descended again over the Province as the impasse appeared unbreakable and another Orange marching season loomed. George Mitchell, this time, announced that he had had enough of this, and would not be back to mediate again.

To most people's surprise, the IRA then announced in May that it would open a number of its arms dumps to inspection by international observers who would report regularly to the de Chastelain Commission, giving assurance that the arms remained unused. The observers would be Cyril Ramaphosa, South African confidant of Nelson Mandela, who had won the confidence both of David Trimble and of the IRA's Brian Keenan in the course of several years mediating in the Northern Ireland conflict, and Mati Ahtissari, former President of Finland who had mediated the end of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia during the fight over Kosovo the previous year. Ramaphosa appears to be the man who made the difference. This sort of inspection differed from the decommissioning that Unionists had demanded, but so effectively did put the weapons beyond use that the parties could at last restore the Executive. They did so in June, barely on time to prevent dispute over this point to inflame the passions of the annual marching season.

The Portadown unit of the Orange Order, nevertheless, tried to make the traditional demand for a march down the Catholic Garvaghy Road from the Drumcree Church into a flash point once more. Local leader Harold Gracey called for massive turnouts of Orangemen all over the Province. Protestants with a long tradition of Orange membership understood him as calling for violence and rejected his appeal. Now members of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the dissident breakaways from the Ulster Volunteer Force, began to appear in the front ranks of Gracey's followers and it became evident that the most hard-line paramilitaries were taking control of the Orange Order, which had for so many years denounced and rejected their violent tactics. Johnny "Mad Dog" Adair, Ulster Freedom Fighters leader who had benefited from the early release of prisoners, made a joint appearance at Drumcree with these LVF activists just as they began shooting at the police and British Army.

All of this resulted in a catastrophic discrediting of the Orange Order. The more moderate Orange leadership that had headed off such disaster the previous year, such as Presbyterian Ministers Brian Kennaway and Warren Porter, along with Chaplains William Bingham and others, were forced out of the Order by these new militants. Saner Protestant and Unionist opinion was horrified. The hold of the Orange Order over Ulster politics seemed definitively broken.

What this would mean for David Trimble and the UUP leadership in the Assembly and Executive remained unclear. Outright opponents of the Good Friday Agreement still seemed to be gaining in the party and might yet displace Trimble, overturn the Executive and the Assembly itself and send the whole Province back to the impasse that preceded the Agreement.

British government, meanwhile, with Peter Mandelson as Northern Ireland Secretary, left the Nationalists with the impression that it would water down the recommendations of the Patten Commission on reform of the police beyond the point where they had real public accountability. That would clearly make it impossible for the police to gain the confidence of the Catholic community, and postpone any real political accommodation between the two traditions until the government thought better.

And in late August a festering conflict between the Loyalist paramilitary organizations broke out into open violence on the Lower Shankill Road that brought the Army back onto the streets for the first time since the Good Friday Agreement. Johnny Adair of the UFF, backed at every point by John White of the Ulster Democratic Party (political arm of the UDA/UFF), led attacks on the UVF and its political leaders in the Progressive Unionist Party, ordering 36 UVF families to leave the Lower Shankill Road. Riots and killings followed, and Johnny Adair was sent back to prison for violating the terms of his early release.

Most commentators at least hoped that this internal feud among Loyalists would not bring a return to sectarian attacks, but held their breath against that possibility. The police and the Northern Ireland Secretary hesitated long over interfering with this infra-Protestant fighting, with the result that both were forfeiting authority day by day.

Addenda, 2002

Little has needed to be added these last two years, though they have been active years in Northern Irish politics. Efforts to maintain the institutions established by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement have their ups and downs.

Because the parties do now deal directly with one another, my own direct role has been less than over many previous years, with a brief exchange of letters with President Clinton in the closing days of his Administration, an intervention with Dr. Martin Mansergh over the Colombian adventure of three IRA figures and a recent minor exchange with Gerry Adams. Most of the more recent events we will be looking at is in news articles of the year, which I will be sending to you by e-mail as the course proceeds.

The IRA has initiated the large-scale decommissioning of weapons that was so long sought, partly because of the colder atmosphere is met in U.S. politics after its Colombian caper and the events of September 11, 2001. Unionists have still been dissatisfied, and First Minister David Trimble has generally catered to his Right-wing dissidents, creating periodic crises for the new institutions. I was in Belfast last November as one more in a series of such crises was played out and the Good Friday Agreement rescued once again. We are likely enough to see more such crises and rescues as this term goes on.

PART ONE

THE YEAR OF THE CONFERENCES

INTRODUCTION TO PART I

The seven papers and one extended letter that make up this series carry dates between January, 1980, and September, 1981. Five of the papers were addressed to the Right Honourable Mr. Humphrey Atkins, at that time head of the British Government's Northern Irealnd Office. Two papers and the extended letter of February, 1981, were addressed to the leadership of the Republican Movement in Ireland, the Provisional Irish Republican Army and its political wing, Sinn Fein.

The papers were all presented privately, so that those to whom they were addressed could assess and respond to them without public pressures, but with the understanding that what was addressed to one side, Northern Irish Office or IRA, would eventually be shown to the other also. Through 1980 I maintained long intervals of about six months between the time a given paper was submitted to its primary addressee and the time it was shown to the other. By mid-1981, when the pattern was well established, I was delivering copies of the same papers to both almost simultaneously. The papers were the subject of correspondence with the Northern Ireland Office and of many conversations with representatives of the Republican Movement. A summary of the main points raised in that correspondence and dialogue will be given here in short bridging pieces between the papers.

That I should publish these papers now, after keeping them so private so long., is a matter of public accountability. As is argued throughout the papes themselves, the topics treated here are all amtters of public concern on which there should be open discussion, however much, by my whole procedure, I have recognized that Government and the leadership of the Republican Movement need the opportunity to reflect on such matters among themselves before having to anser to them in public. Before offering the papers for publication I have inquired of both addressees, NIO and IRA, if it was acceptable to them, that the papers should now appear in public, and have their assent.

* * *

For me to present such papers as these and have the attention of Government and the Republicans was relatively easy, but it does require same explanation. I am an outsider to the Northern Ireland scene, an American Jesuit priest. My professional training is essentially as a theologian, the graduate work done among Protestants at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Since 1972 I had been a fairly familiar figure about Northern Ireland. I had travelled there from the United States in that year with a band of 17 American clergy, seminarians, and other students from a variety of church backgrounds, to see if there were sensible initiatives for peace and justice in Northern Ireland that could be taken from an American inter-church quarter. With an American Presbyterian colleague, then-seminarian Jim Annelin, I spent that summer of 1972 on a building site in North Belfast, carrying hod for the reconstructyion of houses burned out in the rioting of the August, 1971, Internment Day, while meeting people from all parts of both communities. What I had first planned as just one summer's involvement in such work projects developed into a long-term commitment as I became active in the spread of community associations about Belfast, in the attracting of empoyment to the Province, and in being resource to many peace-oriented groups.

Motivation is important when anyone steps into or finds himself involved in such a role as this, and I must offer some explanation. In a general way, my motivation could be phrased in the terms subsequently adopted by the Jesuit General Congregation of 1975, that for the service of faith, the ultimate mainspring of a Jesuit's work, the promotion of justice is an essential and integral part. But there were specific things working at me, three of them, of which I should give account.

There was first an ecumenical motivation. No proselytizing venture this. I had entered doctoral studies ay Union Theological in New York with the intention of understanding American Protestantism and building the bases of common worl for a common profession of Christian faith. My activities at

Union meant that I was engaged in whatever was going on ecumenically, and when the journey of an inter-church American group to Northern Ireland was first suggested, at the end of 1971, I was an obvious person to sign on.

A second element was the peace movement. Through the period of the Vietnam war I had been active in the anti-war movement. I did not start from a pacifist position, rather from a judgement that this war was unjust, but I found over the period of my anti-war commitment that my revulsion against violence and war grew in conviction. I was at odds with the peace movement in that I never accepted the gesture as an adequate means of opposing war or injustice. Gestures, as Martin Luther King taught us, were the very opposite of the truth, a way of salving our own consciences so that we could feel better ourselves while the war or the injustice went on. I felt it necessary to devise strategies of peace and justice so that those most embroiled in violence and misery could build the peace. This peace motivation worked with my involvement in ecumenical strivings to bring me to Northern Ireland with my colleagues in 1972.

'The third motivating element was more private, but carried perhaps the greatest weight with me. I had long recognized the good will and honesty of conviction with which people I opposed in America were acting, much as I have since come to recognize it in Northern Ireland. I found yself often preaching peace in the United States of the Vietnam era. to people who did not wish to hear it, and I knew that they faced risks, the risks of war, for their convictions that I did not face for mine. That was quite unfair. I had the preacher's privilege of doing the talking while others listened, and had to work hard at devising ways for them to answer back and create a dialogue. Above all, as priest, I stood before these people to whom I brought the unwelcome message of peace and said, in the liturgy, "This is my body, which will be given up for you." The priest narrates these words of Christ's, and with him offers them as an example of life. If it were true, of those to whom I preached the disturbing good news, that they, their bodies, were at risk and given for me but not mine for them, then that had to be corrected, as a matter of good faith. That was what brought me to Northern Ireland.

I was resident in London from 1973, when I found that my intended one-summer's involvement hd grown into things I could not walk aay from. Besides the work on Northern Ireland, I was involved in similar ways with other communal conflicts, as in the Middle East, in Southern ASfrica, in Cyprus and many other places, and eventually I was heavily involved in the search for an end to nuclear armaments. Issues of community responsibility in many areas of life were equally part of the programme. Up to 1979, I worked with Richard Hauser and his wife, Hephzibah Menuhin Hauser, in the Centre for Human Rights and Responsibilities in London. In 1979, while keeping my close association with their work intact, I joined with fellow Jesuits of the English and Irish Provinces of the Slceity of Jesus in founding the Centre of Concern for Human Dignity, with the understanding that I would clear out of it after two years' work so that it would truly be what it had set out to be, a joint venture of the English and Irish Jesuits.

* * *

The occasion of my writing the earliest papers in this series was simple enough. I first envisaged only three papers, the first three in the series.

Mr. Humphrey Atkins, the then new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, began, at the start of 1980, a series of conferences and consultations on the political future of Northern Ireland. Other Northern Irish Secretaries had done as much before, and such consultations were an old story. But as this series got under way I recognized that it was occurring in a really new political situation. The difference was not in the approach from the Northern Ireland Office itself, though it was the first time in several years that any such approach had been made at all, but in the political convictions and expectation that the Northern Ireland community, especially the Protestant community, brought to the consultation process.

This had changed since the last time a British Government had attempted to test the political waters, in the Constitutional Convention of 1975. This was the first genuine and important change of political attitude I had seen in Northern Ireland since I had first become closely involved with its troubles in 1972, and I wanted to see that it was properly handled.

Always before, from the time the Northern Unionists first planned the partition and the Northern State in the 1910s and 1920s, Protestants had associated their safety from a takeover by Republican Ireland and subjection to Catholic Irish society with their close attachment to Britain. Now they had learned a lesson, first discerned by some of the Protestant paramilitary leadership in the mid-1970s and gradually permeating the Protestant community in the North, that they could not in future depend for their safety on Britain, but must somehow provide for it otherwise.

That recognition involved a very dangerous moment, in which Protestants might well have reacted with panic to the realization that their traditional safety-belt would not work. They survived that remarkably well, drawing on reserves of good sense and spunk which I find myself unable to analyze but can only admire.

Given that really new political context, I wanted to be sure that three quite specific things, which I found fairly obvious, should not be overlooked as the process of consultation went on. First, I did not want this new discussion to be bedevilled by cant argument about "British withdrawal" that would confuse the question of withdrawal of British Army activity from the streets of the Province with the withdrawal of British claims to sovereignty over Northern Ireland. There were distinctions to be made and ideas to be aired about the British Army presence, and their being clear was a condition for the political discussion being preserved from obfuscation. Second, the discussion should not be conducted on too narrow a front. Since the Protestants seemed really ready to discuss genuinely new things, and not just slight cosmetic alterations of a *status quo*, everything should be done to make all the political options truly accessible to people and to give the whole community of Northern Ireland a real voice in choosing among them. The reasons why any options other than the *status quo* were inaccessible hypothetical models only, and why Northern Irish people were not really free to discuss them, seemed very little noted, though as I say they were rather obvious. So they had to be stated crisply. That made the second paper. And third, the economic paralysis that left everyone in a state of hyper-caution when it came to any discussion of political possibilities for Northern Ireland needed to be broken up by some quite different new ideas. This was one of many topics that my colleague Richard Hauser and I had tried to raise some five years earlier. Our suggestion of a freeport as an alternative base for the Northern Ireland economy had simply been fumbled by Government and other bodies at the time, so I thought it should be floated again.

Why start with the Army? In fact the essential paper of this first set of three was the second one, on the political options. The other two were much more hypothetical matters. But it was impossible to approach the political options directly if there were not clarity about the Army's role and its eventual extrication, even if any implementation of a policy in that regard would have to wait on other developments. That had to be looked at first if the discussion of options were not to be a charade. And the basis of the economy was and remains so shaky that no one can seriously project political development in Northern Ireland without having some idea about how the Province can support itself.

* * *

In August of 1977 I had published an anlytic article in *The Month*, the English Jesuit journal, called "Church Structure and Violence in Northern Ireland." That article is so fundamental to all my views of Northern Ireland that it is reprinted as an Appendix to this book. The article attracted attention at the time, and was particularly well known to Mr. Atkins amd others in the Northern Ireland Office.

That in itself fairly guaranteed that other papers I would write would have attention in the NIO. All the same, I sent the first two papers initially to an MP of Cabinet rank whom I had known slightly before, and whom I expected to sit in the Cabinet Committee on Northern Ireland that was being formed at the beginning of 1980, rather than go directly to Mr. Atkins. That involved a bit of delay, as my acquaintance did not join the Cabinet Committee as I had expected, and only in May did he write back suggesting that I send the papers directly to Mr. Atkins himself.

The article in *The Month* of August 1977 should be mentioned briefly here for several things it does. It first of all identifies Protestant anxiety about the power role filled by the Catholic Church hierarchy and clergy in Catholic Irish society as the fundamental reason why Northern Irish Protestants will have nothing to do with the Irish Republic and live in fear of subjection to it, hence a most basic pre-condition of the whole violent communal quarrel. Second, it analyzes the psycho-dynamics of the conflict and singles out several directions, including that one of the Church power structures, in which concentrated effort would have serious results in building a society acceptable and desirable to all the many factions that live in Northern Ireland. And third, it introduces the use of an analytic tool that is applicable to other communal conflicts besides Northern Ireland, and gives measurements based on comparative experience of such conflicts.

For my own activity regarding Northern Ireland, that analysis set several goals. One was to encourage and help develop a process by which the various churches in Northern Ireland could come seriously to terms with the issue of the use of their institutional power. That whole effort hardly figures in this book, whose papers are addressed to other parties to the conflict, though such a church initiative remains a basic and very active area of my own concern for Northern Ireland. Next among priorities is to develop a new kind of politics in Northern Ireland in which everyone in the Province, of both traditions and of all classes and factions, can participate. Most of what this book contains works in that direction, both the initial set of three papers already described and the subsequent effort to draw even the most refractory of all the factions, the Provisional IRA, into a participation with others in a genuinely poltical process, which the special political and democratic genius of the Northern Irish Protestant commjnity should make possible. Third and most fundamental as goal is to get at the social roots of the discontent and greyness of Northern Irish life, the direction in which the papers of this series keep urging all parties to the ancient Irish quarrel. And here the Northern Irish are able not only to solve a social impasse for themselves but to be of service to many other parts of the world, as their troubles in this area are all too similar to the like socially depressing state in many other countries. The motivation exists in Northern Ireland, because of the surface conflict, to approach those far more fundamental aches and strains of contemporary society in a way that will provide useful models for us all.

* * *

The series here developed further, beyond the three papers originally projected. I had already, from October 1979, just ater Pope John Paul II's visit to Ireland, approached the leadership of the Provisional IRA to talk of ways they could come away from their military campaign toward a more constructive and political initiaitive. Tht conversation had been progressing slowly. I was much too timid in asking for meetings and had to learn eventually to walk in and talk rather than wait for constantly receding appointments. But by April of 1980 the discussion had got to a recognizable state that called for a written summation. I include that as Paper IV in this series, even though it is out of sequence by date, having been written before Paper III on the economy.

By summer of 1980, the long-brewing prison crisis was already coming toward its hunger-strike climax. This shaped the direction of any kind of political or peace-creative activity on Northern Ireland from that point on and was the context for the rest of the papers in this series. Details of my own

involvement with the internal crisis of the prison will be sketched in, so far as it is useful to understanding the purpose of these papers, in the proper place.

The Atkins conferences, and that whole effort of consulting the community of Northern Ireland, which was the origianl context for these papers, fell a victim of the prison crisis, as did almost anything else that made a rival claim on public attention in competition with the agony of the hunger strike. I remain very stubbornly convinced that the consultation process was valid and that some helpful things did come out of it, despite this sticky end it came to in the cauldron of the prison crisis. The common verdict is that the conference process was a total failure. The public lost interest in it very early, and many significant groups never made an effort to participate in ways that were quite open to them.

I don't find that the conference process was well pursued, even before the prison crisis overwhelmed it. For one thing, the range of discussion was too narrowly defined. All presentations made to the various parties by the NIO were about limited devolution of powers within the context of the United Kingdom. And while at the earlier stages it was obvious that wider options were actually on the table for discussion, everyone concluded sooner or later that the conferences would provide no serious forum for discussing them. That made the process rather uninteresting, leaving the more important issues, that could well have been handled in the framework of these conferences, to be dealt with instead in far more dangerous forums outside. For another thing, knowledge of what was going on in the conferences was kept too quiet, under too tight a lid. In Paper II of this series, on the political options, I had argued that, while the conference participants had to have the privacy to discuss the things that were never otherwise discussed, their thinking also had to percolate out into a wider public discussion, or their claims to leadership would be judged illegitimate. What happened was that the public heard so little of what was going on in the discussion that it concluded nothing was happening. And as nothing could happen definitively without receiving a full public seal, that is eventually what did happen.

That leaves the question whether the opportunity I believed was there at the start of 1980 was lost, and whether these papers, therefore, speak to a situation that no longer exists. I think not. The most basic observation that led me to begin this series of papers, namely that the Protestants in Northern Ireland no longer believed they could depend on Britain to provide them safety for the future but had learned that they had to look elsewhere, to themselves, remains true now as it ws then, and is even strengthened by the experience of the last three years. That nothing effective was done about this new political opportunity over the period of the Atkins conferences means not that the opportunity was lost but that this still remains on the agenda. But that and similar judgments must be made now on the basis of the papers themselves.

Washington, D.C., 1983

8 CENTRE OF CONCERN FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

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NORTHERN IRELAND PAPER I: The British Army.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
January, 1980

Public discussion regularly confuses two prospects that have practical and emotional importance for the two communities in Northern Ireland:

1. the termination or curtailment of the Army's role in maintaining civil order in the Province; and

2. the termination of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland.

'British withdrawal' is the term used indiscriminately for both. It must be a British interest to separate these two concepts firmly. Whatever constitutional options British policy may eventually hold open to the people of Northern Ireland, there must sooner or later be a way of extricating the Army from its task in support of the civil power. 'Withdrawal' of the Army need not mean that it is actually gone from Ulster altogether, though some of the political options might imply that, but only that the Army garrison, of whatever size or composition, be returned to barracks as it was up to 1969, no longer patrolling the streets but leaving the maintenance of civil order to more appropriate forces.

Sources of Confusion on the Army's Role.

The need for some plan to get the Army out of this position is made more acute, to my own mind, by what I see as obscurity or confusion as to its actual role in Ulster. However, the suggested steps that could lead to an Army withdrawal, to follow later in this paper, are quite independant of this analysis. Hence this whole present section on the sources of role confusion can be bracketed out.

Effectively, the Army is still in Northern Ireland's streets, neighbourhoods and country districts basically to protect the Catholic-Nationalist population from attack by its heavily armed neighbours. (This is what emerges as practical task from the more widely defined role of protecting community peace and safety in a communal conflict: the weaker party needs protection from the stronger. That the community as a whole also needs protection against arbitrarily disruptive forces is more the task of the ordinary peace-keeping forces of the community rather than so extraordinary a force as the Army, except in a peculiarly exacerbated situation.) That the Army was called in to protect the Catholics seemed clear at first in 1969, though there were sources of ambiguity even then. It remains true even now, despite an effort that has been made within the Army to redefine its role as the defeat of the IRA, and despite the far greater tension between the Army and the Catholic population than between it and the Protestant population. Yet it is not the customary or spontaneous response of people, whether in

the Army itself, in either Northern Ireland community or in government, to see the Army's role in these terms now, however true it continues to be. In my own experience, people in the actually endangered or threatened Catholic areas of Belfast, at the occasional moments when this role of the Army as at least intendedly their protector does become clear, tend now to say: 'We would rather put our trust in our Protestant neighbours than in the British Army.' The 'Protestant neighbours' invoked in that response are of course an abstraction, people not really known, living in a separate community setting so that, between them and the Catholic neighbourhoods in question there is little real communication. Whether in fact these Catholic neighbourhoods can put their trust in their Protestant neighbours, or would be safe so, is the government's policy question. It is government's acknowledged responsibility to provide that safety from some source.

The model envisaged for the Army's role as protector of the community peace and safety in a communal conflict is the pece-keeping force, such as the UN has mounted in various conflict areas. Several times British units have participated in such UN operations, with the result that many British officers have extensive experience with the working of such forces. (I think, for instance, of Brigadier Michael Harbottle, who was Chief of Staff to the UN force in Cyprus and subsequently an important theoretician and writer in the International Peace Academy.) Surprisingly little use was made by the Army of its experience in these UN peace-keeping operations. Basic rules of such operations were ignored in Northern Ireland.

Fundamental to any such peace-keeping force is that it establish itself, in fact and visibly to the parties in conflict, as a neutral third party to the communal dispute. This was made difficult if not impossible for the Army in Ulster from the start by the fact that it was, in the eyes of one part of the community, the national Army on national territory, '<u>our</u> Army,' while in the eyes of the other part of the community it was something quite other, the definitions in this case ranging from outside protectors of the minority population against majority violence at one extreme, to the British (foreign, colonial) Army of occupation on Irish soil at the other extreme. The Army's self-understanding and government's expectations of it were not made clear to the public at the early date when this was crucially important to the continuing character of the operation. This lacuna at the start can hardly be filled now.

Further ambiguity followed from the lack of certainty in the community at that early stage on whether the Army was accountable to Stormont or Westminster. This can of course be determined now and could have been determined then in strictly legal terms, but was not determined then in popular consciousness. By the time the suspension of Stormont removed this particular ambiguity, the Army's position had already become enmired in suspicions.

The Army also failed to operate by the next most fundamental rule for peace-keeping forces learned in the various UN operations in which British units had taken part, namely the employment of absolutely minimum force so as to earn the confidence of both sides in the dispute. Neglect of this, it can be argued, led to such tactical errors as the rather heavy-handed curfews and searches of 1970. In any event, the Army and the Catholic community which it had been protecting became progressively estranged. At this point, the Army tried to redefine its basic role in Northern Ireland as the defeat of the IRA, even though the IRA, in its Provisional wing especially, was reconstructed from a very low nadir only in response to the Army's own irritant presence.

The ten years of violence grow from the obscurities of that situation. The Army's basic role in fact is not the defeat of the IRA, but the still effective though now seldom mentioned or conscious role of protecting the Catholics. But in the prevailing indefinition the most ingenious suspicions thrive. One hears, for instance, in the Protestant community, that the Army is in collusion with the Republic and other obscure forces (within and outside British government) to keep the community struggle raw and sharp as a means of breaking the Unionist confidence that their lasting safety can come from Britain. In this context rumours circulate of the most devious sort of black operations by special Army units, as for instance that the murders of Catholic UDR men have in some instances been black Army operations to feed the community hatreds.

Given all this obscurity, I would conclude that the proper analogate for the Army's role when it first came into the Northern Ireland streets in 1969 would have been not the work of UN-style peace-keeping forces but rather the interventions in the United States of Army or National Guard units in race riots, such as those of Watts, of Detroit and Baltimore in 1963, or Washington DC at the time of the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. Those units, especially the ones drawn from the National Guard, had sometimes performed very badly, at other times quite effectively and humanely. The point of the analogy, though, is that by a basic rule they were always withdrawn after a matter of days or weeks, at most a small number of months. Comparison of the British Army's role in Ulster to these American operations for the restoration of civic order would have underlined the need for the speediest possible withdrawal, and that might well have made the subsequent reform of the local police and the many important pieces of legislation passed through the Stormont Parliament in 1969 truly effective. All that is spilt milk now, but it emphasises the present policy need of some way to extricate the Army. Even the most effective of genuine peace-keeping forces acts like a surgical dressing in a wound, keeping the wound clean but preventing the healing process. In this case, the ambiguity and suspicion that surround the Army's role prevent its being, in the terms of the simile, a clean surgical dressing. It has become itself a source of infection, and in fact returned paramilitary activity in force to two communities that were practically rid of it.

Steps Out of the Role.

The Army seems, over the last couple of years, to have been actually seeking ways to curtail or terminate its role in preserving civic order. The main problem has of course been in replacing itself in that role so that it can safely leave it. Two routes have been followed towards such a withdrawal, not to one another's exclusion but for the most part simultaneously. A long period of increasing reliance on the RUC finally gave way, last year, to a reassertion of the Army's prior status to the RUC, sealed by the appointment of Sir Maurice Oldfield, who appears to represent government's prior reliance on forces outside the RUC, whether drawn from the Army or from other intelligence resources. The second route has been to rely on the UDR as an eventual replacement of the non-Ulster Army units.

There are reasons to place very little reliance on either of these ways of replacing the Army's role as an ensurer of community safety, reasons which grow not from a biased judgment of these two forces themselves, the RUC and the UDR, but from an assessment of what they represent in the symbolism seen in the two communities.

The RUC has gone through an important transformation in recent years, at the cost of great effort from its personnel, to make itself become and be seen to be a non-political police force. That an occasional bigot appears in it is not surprising, and the force makes continuous and admirable efforts to eradicate any of the old political bias from its ranks. This has had its effect in the Catholic community, reluctant though people may be to acknowledge it. The effect is grievously marred, of course, by the constant stories of abusive practices in questioning prisoners, which are fully believed in the community. I have heard too many people whose considered judgment I respect credit these stories not to believe them myself, and in one instance I came across myself, about which I made a lot of noise at the time, I had good evidence of the intolerable abuse of a prisoner. Nevertheless, as I hear people's thinking, it is appreciated in the Catholic ghetto neighbourhoods that there is a distinction to be made between the efforts of the RUC as a whole to become a trustworthy non-political force and such abuses by officers in the interrogation centres. It is hard, for me or for people in these neighbourhoods, to understand the persistent refusal by Sir Kenneth Newman to investigate or stop these abuses other than as a collusive cover-up, and that as a wide-spread impression has had a dreadful effect on the reputation of the force in the community. But Mr. Hermon as the new head of the RUC has considerable recognition as an honest man from the Catholic community, well earned, and his period of command should do much to advance the acceptability of the force.

Given all this considered praise, with important qualifications and reservations, of the RUC's hard-won new record, it still remains that the force is predominantly Protestant, and so will continue to be politically suspect to the Catholic community (and of course expected to be politically biased in the Protestant community). That means necessarily that full reliance cannot be placed on its capacity to carry out the full responsibilities of a normal police force. That it is a Protestant force is of course not entirely or even mainly by its own choice now, as the intimidation and frequent murder of Catholic recruits shows. But it is a fact nonetheless. The RUC has therefore to be supplemented by something, which is to say that if that supplement is not to be the Army it must be something else. Why government so conspicuously retreated as it did last year from greater reliance on the RUC, whether for that reasonor because of the record on prisoner interrogation, or even because of simple lobbying by the Army for a greater place, I do not know. I take it as a sign of good sense that government should have recognised the need to supplement the RUC, and would be concerned that there should be a policy to prevent any consequent fall of morale in the force.

The effort so far, to supplement the work of the RUC by the Army where it could not carry out its task by itself, has been for the Army to take over the upper end of the RUC's task, the areas of greater responsibility where serious criminal and paramilitary activity was at issue, leaving the RUC to carry on the less responsible, more routine part of the job. My own suggestion would be to have a supplementary force, rooted in and thus acceptable to the local community, responsible for the lower end of the police task, the routine level where the irritant is greater, leaving the RUC itself responsible for the more serious matters which occur less frequently. This should boost morale, further motivate the RUC's effort genuinely to earn the whole community's respect, and provide an eventual recruiting ground for a more representative force.

12

The UDR, whatever good intentions its organisers or personnel may have, can hardly appear in the eyes of the Catholic community as other than a resurrection of the old B Specials as soon as it is given responsibility for the maintenance of civic order. That argument, I take it, should be sufficient to dismiss the possibility of the UDR's becoming a workable replacement of the regular Army as supplement to the RUC. It can in no way be a contribution in this role to community peace. It is important, I believe, to show respect to the effort the Protestant community has put into the establishment of this force by finding suitable tasks for it, and this will be taken up in a final section of this paper. But the only suitable tasks for it are those entirely removed from an internal policing role.

If these two routes, replacing the Army in its role as protector of civic safety by the RUC or the UDR, are both non-starters, the replacement must follow a different route. My suggestion is for a three-step process.

1. The gradual withdrawal of Army personnel from the streets, an operation that can be kept quite separate from any political withdrawal or relaxation of British sovereignty. Involved is a return of the garrison to barracks in the Province, a lessening over a planned period of time of the Army's visibility in public, a gradual reduction of numbers as units are removed to Germany or Great Britain or simply not replaced in the rotation scheme. It would always remain possible to increase the garrison quickly by airlift from either Germany or Great Britain if a public emergency should occur, and in such an event the analogy to an American National Guard operation in time of emergency should be kept in mind, rather than the treacherous analogy to a UN peace-keeping force. The actual reduction in Army numbers and visibility could be done with as much or as little drama or public announcement as suited any one of several plans that might be chosen to carry it out.

2. Community policing. A clear distinction should be made between two levels of offence: crime and misdemeanor. The RUC's responsibility should be kept to the more serious level of crime, and the lesser level of misdemeanor, as well as any routine work such as traffic regulation, should be assigned to locally-recruited forces accountable to their communities. Community policing of this sort, I know, is a proposal often made in the past ten years in Ulster and consistently rejected. I propose it again without embarrassment, as it is a far superior solution to reliance on either the RUC alone or the UDR to pick up after the Army. As I propose it, it should not imply derogation of the RUC or damage its morale. The community structures to which the local forces would be accountable would simply have to be designed (with the caveat that they could not truly be called community structures if the community itself has not an adequate voice in their design). This should not be an impossible task in Northern Ireland, where in recent years the local communities have given evidence of a greater learned capacity for self-organisation than people anywhere else in Europe. It is clear enough that this devolution of local police patrolling and responsibility would have to be predicated on, or might be parallel with and related to, a lessening of the civic violence. That such could be brought about is the matter of another paper in this series.

3. A European observer force. Britain has been reluctant throughout the Ulster emergency period to admit even a discussion of any outside peace-keeping force, of UN or other provenance, seeing that as a demeaning of British standards of law and the maintenance of order, and an admission of defeat by civil insurgency in the face of the world community. It has been clear as well that the Protestant-Unionist population of Northern Ireland would see such a step as abandonment by Britain, to some extent, of

her claim to sovereignty in the Province, and could consequently be expected to let loose panic reactions. What is proposed here is not an armed or in any sense a military force but a team of observer-conciliators drawn from the countries of the EEC. Such a step should not involve any humiliation either of British forces of law and order nor of the majority community in the Province. The conflict in Northern Ireland is quite legitimately a matter of concern to all of EEC Europe. In fact when one hears demands about an Irish Dimension to the Ulster problem and counters with mention of a British Dimension, it is quite reasonable to speak of a European dimension as well. The idea of such a non-military observer-conciliator task-force would have much wider application than to Northern Ireland, setting a pilot model for many other conflicts. Many skills are now available for such work and more would accrue to a task-force group at work in the Province. It is a most useful element in the position of the members of such a task force that they should be from outside the actual situation (therefore neither Irish nor British). They would be responsible to call in the law and order forces, up to and including the Army, when they are needed, but the whole essential character of their task would be to head off the circumstances in which that would be necessary.

With these three steps, Britain would have extricated her Army safely from a position that has become less and less tenable as time went on, leaving adequate guarantee of the public peace of the Province. The latter two steps would have been creative innovations of value in many other situations of conflict in Britain or elsewhere in the world. The whole question of Army withdrawal would have been cleanly separated from any question of the relinquishment of British sovereignty over the Province, not that that question should not also be legitimate matter for discussion, but it should be made entirely a separate question.

Deployment of the UDR.

A final word should be said about the use of the UDR for tasks that properly fall to it. The Protestant-Unionist population of the Province felt humiliated and let down when the old B Special force was dispersed and the RUC disarmed in 1969. Those two actions seem to be most praiseworthy and I only wish the disarming of the RUC could have been maintained. But the humiliation of the community is an element that should be avoided in any reasonable way. The UDR has been formed explicitly with relation to assisting the regular Army in the maintenance of order, thus giving the Northern Ireland community (but effectively only the Unionist part of it) a part in the defense of their own homeland against subversion. The consequence of my dismissal of the UDR as unsuitable for that task (because necessarily seen as a sectarian force, just as unacceptable as the former B Specials) could well be further humiliation and damage to the morale of the Loyalist population. Consequently it would be important to develop the UDR as an Army unit with normal Army disponability and strictly military tasks. It would be especially valuable if the UDR could be used in peace-keeping tasks in actual UN operations, and even more valuable as a healing element if it could do this in conjunction with elements of the Irish Army.

14

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NORTHERN IRELAND PAPER II: Options and Who Should Choose.

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1980 has begun in Northern Ireland as the year of the conferences, both the official ones convened by government and a wide variety of others. It seems the fashionable thing to express great skepticism about this process, which surely does run many risks from all sides. Personally I believe those many people are mistaken who claim that nothing is really happening in the conference procedure, though that is the opinion of many whose judgment I am accustomed to respect. My own reading is that there is a sharp distinction between this set of conferences and the many sequences of conferences and negotiations that have gone before. I believe Mr. Atkins' ministry has been handling the conference with great sensitivity and intelligence, and that the principal participants remain doggedly with it despite all reasons for discouragement because they know how this process differs from earlier abortive efforts.

The main difference is created by a judgment that, by my reading, has been made in the Protestant community of Northern Ireland, a judgment, namely, that their safety, confidence, hope in the future can no longer be based on Britain. Whether this judgment is welcome or unwelcome to Britain, I believe it is now a fact and will affect Northern Ireland Protestant actions and positions in the future, whether or not it leads that community to a solution of its problem through the current conference process. The judgment has been passed, as I read it, at many levels of the Protestant community. The leadership of the major political parties has reached it, though their response has differed, some paralysed by it while others (Mr. Paisley's DUP and Alliance) are stimulated to new activity to discover, if they cannot base their future hope on Britain, what they can have instead. Community opinion has come around to the same conclusion, even if somewhat obscurely, both in the middle and working class areas. There is greater reluctance and anguish about this in the sector I would describe as 'Bangor man,' the civil service and otherwise government-dependent elements of the middle class whose income and pension prospects are tied to Britain, but these people also have drawn the conclusion. Among the first to draw it were the Protestant paramilitary activist groups, who consequently began to come out with new political proposals some years ago.

Given this starting position, clearly a dangerous one as it might have or might yet cause panic in the Northern Ireland Protestant community, Mr. Paisley in particular has reacted with a level of responsibility which deserves great respect. He is not making concessions and is carefully husbanding the loyalty of his own constituency, but is unflinchingly pursuing the security of his community in the conference process, even though it involves him in a kind of political risk he has not faced before. The Official Unionists, having drawn the same conclusions about security in the future and sensing the same public judgment in their constituencies, have chosen instead to protect their own party from political risk. They are playing Mr. Paisley's previous tactic on Mr. Paisley himself: they wait on the sidelines for him to make a slip so that they can throw rocks at him. Mr. Paisley is naturally obliged to move to the periphery of the stage and bark at anyone who makes upsetting noises from outside, like Mr. Haughey or the American politicians, but he pursues the process of the conference nonetheless.

The Process of the Conferences.

There is no hope from any conference procedure in which the leadership of the parties does a deal while the population of the Province, the community at large, fails to move with the leadership. There has been too long a reluctance in the community to see any kind of 'solution.' People have preferred to remain in their hate, finding in the hatreds a feeling of security in their trouble. For this reason any leader who has moved ahead of his following (Faulkner, Craig) has been dismissed, and there has consequently been a peculiar lack of genuine leadership in either community in the Province. (Curiously, the one serious exception to this has been inside the very authoritarian ranks of the UDA, where Mr. Glen Barr successfully persuaded the leadership to give him, first, time to develop what was then a highly unpopular political proposal, and then the opportunity to convert the membership to a radically new kind of political thinking which has since become the group's official policy.)

Now, however, the community at large has made this judgment about its security in the future, which it shares with its leaders. It has come no further than the negative judgment, that security can no longer be based on Britain, but the glacier has begun to move and has to be given time to move at such a pace as it can. Otherwise political leaders who agree on however reasonable a solution will be left isolated, not behind but out ahead of their followings.

Hence it is praiseworthy in the Atkins conference/conferences that they go at a snail's pace. Quite reasonably, the meetings are protected from media publicity, as they can't go on under perpetual direct public scrutiny. Nevertheless, the matter of them does percolate through the community and generates further discussion at all levels of what has, by now, become a politically sophisticated public.

By the time the conference (or Conference A), at its snail's pace, has got through its chosen fourteen points of agenda, there is still no need to pronounce any definitive political judgment on it, or certainly no need to produce something that would be called a political 'solution' on the basis of it. Instead, within its terms of reference, it need only produce an awareness, in government and eventually in public, of how much or how little common ground there is among the parties for the next round of negotiation. The real matter on which a judgment is needed at that time is how far the popular process has gone in concurrence with the formal conference, and how that process can best be promoted. If there is any real reason to be alarmed or disappointed about the progress of the conference process, it is that so far too little conferencing and discussion is going on outside the conference itself. This is largely a matter of fine-tuning decisions about how much public information is let out of the conference and how an atmosphere of continuing though plodding progress is to be generated.

The pressure to be generated by such a snail's-pace conference is for other conferring to take place at all levels. One time-consuming element in this is that the Catholic community in Northern Ireland has not yet got the sense that there is something different at issue in the current process than has been at issue before; it is only within the Protestant community that the critical nature of that initial judgment on security in the future is realised. Mr. Hume appears to realise it, but to have less freedom within his party, which has not generally seen the point, than the DUP and Alliance leaders have in theirs. A widespread popular process of conferring needs to be generated in both communities, with a consciousness of the new things that are at stake. As this happens, some of this ferment will be reflected up into the main conference through constituency channels. Some will create an impetus for other parties to gain access to the main or to higher level conferences, as observers or full participants.

Essentially, the whole process is an internal one in the Province. It can easily be disrupted or thrown into reverse by any effort to preempt it or to make the decisions from outside. Hence there are distinct criteria of desirable conduct from the power centres outside the Province, and this at four levels: the two governments (UK and Ireland), the powerful American politicians who have interested themselves in the matter, and EEC Europe. In the remainder of this paper I will take up as topics: A. what the effective options are for the people participating in the internal process; B. what conduct from these four power centres outside the Province can help the internal process to go forward in the most democratic way; and C. who should be recognised as legitimate participants. The overall aim which I would hope is common to all the outside power centres is how to create an area of freedom within which the internal Northern Ireland participants can really choose among the available options.

A. What are the Options?

Essentially they are of four kinds:

1) Within the context of the UK. The ESRI study by Davis and Sinnott on public attitudes, published last October, is less dependable in its analysis of Northern Ireland attitudes than it is in its primary area of analysis in the Republic of Ireland, but it does give more credibility than existed earlier to the viability of such an option in the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. Many people doubt whether the British government is in fact open to any kind of option for the future other than one within the direct context of the UK. Increasingly I find that those who are convinced that Britain will never relax her hold on Northern Ireland are more and more confined to the more embittered Irish nationalists, whose need for a definable enemy requires them to suppose an entrenched British interest in retaining the Province as a part of the national territory.

It has become clear enough that the existence of the Province within the UK cannot in the future be the source of its security or confidence. This is the substance of the judgment that, in my reading, has made the difference in the Northern Ireland Protestant community, and it is also clearly a decision of British public opinion. The reliance of the Northern Irish (and here I include both communities under that name) has now to be on themselves and the arrangements they will freely choose for themselves. But a UK context outght not to be excluded as an available option if it truly proved acceptable to both communities. If it were denied, the British public, however little enthusiasm it has for Northern Ireland as a part of the national territory, would be left with an unacceptable guilty sense of betrayal.

2) Independence. This was the least popular kind of solution according to the ESRI survey, which of course was based on data of 1977, before this kind of thinking was much canvassed, besides being less dependable in its Northern Ireland findings than in its study within the Republic. It gets little hearing from the Republican activists, who see it merely as a way for the Protestants to regain control over the Catholic population of the North, but has the prospect of a better hearing from the Catholic ghetto people, whose consistent formula for some time has been: "We would rather rely on our Protestant neighbours than on the British." As a type of political solution it has the advantage of a great deal of serious and constructive thought that has gone into it, from a source which deserves much credit for moving in that political direction. The UDA's espousal of it seems now to be followed increasingly by the Republican Clubs. Since it is my own position that neither I nor any outsider has the right to make this sort of decision for the people of Northern Ireland, I have to check myself from becoming advocate for this variety of solution while recognising that it is my own prejudice. Like the New Outlook

group in Israel with their still unpopular partition proposals, the independence advocates have much to offer and can expect more public acceptance in a future that has a great deal of public discussion in it than they have now, particularly if they are realistic in confronting the relativity of their independence or autonomy concepts and the kind of relations implied to both the 'patron' governments of the two communities and the EEC.

'Sovereignty' is at issue here. It should have real meaning if this solution is to have any content distinct from number 4 below, but its real meaning can fit anywhere along a spectrum ranging from that of a 'sovereign' State of the United States to the absolute untouchability of an Albania.

3) Within some Irish context. There is a broad variety of these options, most of which look less probably open to acceptance in the Protestant community than the other options. However, it should be remembered that every step towards internal reconciliation of the two communities within the North is ipso facto a step towards wider Irish reconciliation. (This is doubtless one reason why so many people, especially within the Protestant community, have preferred to eschew any kind of political thought and rest their psychological security in their hatred, since they have seen any breach in this hate as eventually a step towards the feared 'united Ireland.') A condition of such reconciliation within the North leading to wider Irish reconciliation, however, is that the Irish Republic, which has so far done little of significance to establish any hopes for real cultural pluralism, should learn from the reconciliation process in the North and adapt itself to what the Northerners learn.

4) Condominium or some wider form of confederation. Any form of this, I would think, would likelier come after some intermediate solution within the Northern Ireland territory itself, if only because there is no current process going on in other parts of the British-Irish territory that leads in this direction. However I would think, in the context of some kind of independent or autonomous state (2 above), of the two related powers, UK and Ireland, as joint guarantors of the fairness of an internal settlement and process, with carefully stipulated grounds on which the guarantors would interfere, and perhaps a European oversight function over the guarantors.

B. In what sense have the people of Northern Ireland really been free to choose among these options, or to what extent could they be made so?

This question has to be answered separately for each of the four power centres (UK and Irish governments, American politicians and EEC) that, in diminishing order, have been in a position to restrict or enhance the choice. It seems obvious enough that freedom for the internal Northern Ireland parties to make this choice is

a desirable goal for all these four power centres. In practice, though, each of the first three (UK, Ireland, American voices) has consistently acted to restrict the choice (in different directions), while the EEC Europeans, in their apparent desire not to notice that the Northern Ireland problem is in their back yard, have done little if anything to promote such a freedom. But to examine in a bit more detail what promotes or restricts that freedom:

1) From the British side: many occasions have been offered the people of Northern Ireland by Britain to choose whether or not to remain within the UK context, referenda and other means (with every election in Northern Ireland actually a vote about the Border). However, barring some spelling out of what Britain would do, by way of financial and moral backing, to make possible any of the other options, this has never been a real choice. It has always come down to a choice between what is and leaping into the void, stepping off the cliff. When British official voices make their ritual profession that Northern Ireland will remain part of the UK so long as a majority of her people wish it, the proviso clause has become very conspicuous by now. The statement is understood by the Protestants as a polite way of saying that they are less unloved in Britain than, to their knowledge, is actually the case. Outsiders, in the Republic of Ireland, the US and elsewhere, as well as the Republicans within Northern Ireland, object that this sort of statement by Britain gives the Northern Protestant community a permanent veto over the aspirations of the Catholic community (seen as within Northern Ireland or within the whole of Ireland). I would think the problem is a different one: that Britain has not made the choice between what is and something else (any of the other options) a real one. Hence, especially now when the glacier has begun to move, it would seem to me an appropriate, and properly self-interested, British policy deliberately to legitimise these other options, making it clear what Britain will do to make any of them workable, and what is the prospect in each context of real security for both communities. This needs to be done without giving Northern Ireland a bum's rush out of the UK, thereby delegitimising option 1.

2) From the side of the Republic of Ireland: pluralism is the crucial factor, both in official policy (of government and other power poles, as the political parties and, especially, the church) and in public opinion and practice. Any true respect for and practice of pluralism in Ireland is so remote now, despite a lot of genuine effort being made in many quarters, that political options for Northern Ireland in the context of the Republic (from the prospect of a unitary State to all, even the most attenuated, forms of federation) are for that very reason the most remote of the possible options. However, this is a developing situation, and the point is that the growth of such real pluralism should be seen as a top policy priority in the Republic.

The first item of this pluralism, to legitimise the various options available internally in the North, is for the Republic to

to recognise the freedom of the Northerners to choose, as permanent or interim constitutional solutions, any of the options already mentioned. Public opinion has been so ambivalent in the Republic, wanting unification but not now or on any definable time scale, that it needs firm leadership from all the responsible leadership levels (government, other political parties, church)to recognise the legitimacy of Northern freedom to choose. At least we should have heard the last of pronunciations from the Republic's several power levels that only one of the options is really acceptable. It is understandable when some one of the internal power centres within the North says that only one of the options offers real prospect of success (the Republicans saying only some degree of unification, the Loyalists only a retention of the UK link, the UDA that only their new independence construct will work), especially if one can see these statements as bargaining positions. For the same sort of statements to come from outside, whether from the UK or the Republic of Ireland or from American politicians, can only be read as an effort to restrict the freedom of the Northern Irish to choose and an effort to preempt the decision from them.

3) From the side of powerful American politicians: there is an obvious interest of American politicians in promoting peace, a settlement, progress or some form of solution called by several other names in Northern Ireland. The tendency in Britain is to interpret this entirely in terms of electoral opportunism: Irish-American politicians looking for the Irish vote, even some others like President Carter or Congressman Biaggi looking for the Irish-American vote. I think this is much too cynical a judgment, since I know of several of the politicians involved that their concern is more genuine than that; that a Tip O'Neill in fact takes great political risks whenever he allows himself to venture beyond the blandest statements, that a Mario Biaggi in fact does not have a significant Irish vote in his constituency. Motives, I believe, are better than British opinion credits. More worrisome is the quality of information available to the more powerful of these politicians, who have plenty of other concerns besides Ireland to claim their attention and may be satisfied with very little solid information, especially if the little they receive confirms old stereotypes. The influence of these politicians has to be reckoned with. What can be expected of them, and should be worked for, is that they not take partisan sides in a dispute which is not a matter of one-sided oppression but of true confict between the vital interests of two indigenous communities. If they can achieve that, then they are in a position to be a resource of fairness for both Northern Ireland communities. They may be underfoot for the British and perhaps also the Irish Republic governments, but on this basis their contribution to a just outcome in Northern Ireland, while remote, could be a genuine one.

4) Europeans have stood further apart from the Northern Ireland problem, with some very helpful exceptions, perhaps most

notably from church and voluntary bodies in the Netherlands. Given my supposition that a recognition of legitimate political pluralism for the North by the major political forces of the Republic is one of the more difficult things for the Northerners to get, and a necessary pre-condition of the Northerners having real freedom to choose among the political options before them, I believe Europeans, at the different levels of governments, churches, other political parties and voluntary bodies, could do much to reinforce any inclination found in the Irish Republic to recognise this pluralism. This is a hand-holding role for the Europeans. They can also be looked to for a variety of specific service roles in relation to the North, of which the suggested observer task force suggested in my NI Paper I is an instance. And as will be developed in my NI Paper III, Europe should be seen as the necessary context of any viable future economy of Northern Ireland.

C. Who should be the participants in the internal political process in Northern Ireland?

This question can only be answered 'on principle,' not in any very specific way. Already in the earlier pages of this paper I have developed the idea that an agreement formulated among the leadership of the various political parties would be no solution at all if it were not the reflection of a popular process going on in the community, and need not expand further on that theme here.

It is the temptation for government, perhaps especially for a UK government which is used to the sovereignty of an elected Parliament, to expect the responsible political leaders to get on with the job of solving their problems and making their solutions stick. Mr. Atkins, as Secretary of State, appears to have realised well that this is not the situation in Northern Ireland, that the political leaders can appeal to no process of election to authorise the specific things they are doing in the current conference process, but are forced to work very hard for the legitimacy of their representative station every step of the way through this political event. The penalty for failure in this aspect of their work will be permanent dismissal as effective political forces in the Province. Hence my praise earlier in the paper for the sensitivity and intelligence shown by the Atkins team in letting the conference process go at a slow pace, leaving ample time for a communal political process to accompany it. It is for lack of understanding this that many, even in the House of Commons, are so impatient with Mr. Atkins' conference.

Up to the start of this conference procedure, I would myself have judged that the political leadership in the Northern Ireland parties had flunked the course and were to be dismissed as bearers of any serious political hope for the future, and that new sources of political leadership had to be sought in the Province. Now, as noted before, many friends whose opinion I am accustomed to respect believe

that nothing is really going on in this conference. I feel quite sure they are mistaken and will be shown to have been mistaken, and that this will have been true even should the conference procedure yet meet shipwreck. The Northern Ireland political leaders who have grasped the need for the conference and have stuck by its process have earned my respect, even if it was at first very grudgingly given, and deserve the help of Westminster politicians in being given adequate time and patience to carry their constituencies with them. The one sign that calls for serious alarm so far is the relatively little concomitant conferencing activity that is going on at the lower levels.

The crux of this question, who should participate in the conference process, is however whether anyone should be excluded. Obviously entry to the formal level of the conference is highly restricted, enough so that a strong magnet is established (or will be if the conference gains sufficient hold on the public imagination) for other thinking to express itself eventually through the forum of the conference, with groups that have no formal representation in the conference petitioning for a status related to the conference. The governmental conveners of the conference, while not devaluing the status conferred on formal participants in the conference or those who have achieved some other particular relation to it, need to develop a sensitivity to any other streams of opinion that have not achieved any such status, and be ingenious in devising ways that they can enter into the process.

The point of this is that those intent on a satisfactory outcome of the conference procedure, and I assume that includes government and all the actual participants, cannot afford to exclude anyone, to leave any significant disgruntled or embittered group about who would become the focus of further unrest or violence. I rather doubt that this is effectively realised or believed by all the participants, but I have no doubt that it is true.

Basically three types of group are involved here: first the community type of grouping that has become a steady fixture of the Northern Ireland scene over the last several years; second the formerly paramilitary activist groups (or in some cases more-or-less-ex-paramilitary groups who occasionally cheat on their cease-fires) who have in the last couple of years turned to positive political proposals; and third the one still fully outlaw insurgent group, the Provisional IRA.

About the community type groups I would not worry overmuch. The political parties will indeed try to exclude them, as they represent a new (community initiative and responsibility) type of political power that is in at least partial competition with the parties. But the community associations have by now been a fairly long time on the ground, and it will be a neasure of their acquired competence and their value to their communities whether they will manage to find their way into the conference, through the parties

by way of constituency representation or through the creation of other channels. It should be noted that, where they exist in the hardest of the ghetto neighbourhoods, these groups may choose that their representation should be through the other two kinds of outsider groups, the paramilitary groups who are still either just seeking or deliberately rejecting official respectability. What should distinctly not be acceptable to the conveners of the conference is that, at the end of the day, these groups who do in fact represent a kind of power that must be included in any settlement that is to be of real value, should conclude that the conference procedure and its result are things that have nothing to do with them and which they are therefore entitled to dismiss.

The second sort of group, the paramilitaries/ex-paramilitaries who have come deliberately into the political process by offering serious constitutional proposals, notably the UDA's New Ulster Political Research Group (NUPRG), the UVF's Progressive Unionist Group and the former Official Sinn Fein's Republican Clubs the Workers' Party, are more clearly on target so that choices are made by government and the local parties on whether to deal with them and admit them into the circle of discutants. One tendency of the parties, naturally, is to see all these groups as actual or potential rivals, and consequently to try to exclude them. Even the parties, and certainly the government, should see the danger to the whole eventual order of the Province if groups who have worked as hard as these have done at the political process should find themselves shut out. It is fair enough that the rules of admission to the circle should be strict, and that these groups have to win admission by the seriousness of their political thinking (oddly enough, this is a requirement not made with anything like the same urgency of those whose organisation is in the form of a standard political party) and the size of the following they can sustain by means other than intimidation. It does not help for those in positions of authority to refer to or think of them, in the term I have heard several times over, as 'the circus.' That kind of attitude constitutes a made-in-Westminster obstacle to the success of the process Westminster is otherwise promoting in the conferences.

With a view to eliminating that particular obstacle to the internal process going on in the Province, I have joined with Lord Hylton in the proposal for a long weekend's meeting, scheduled to take place at Ammerdown in Somerset in the latter part of June, at which we hope to have representatives of these groups discuss and compare their proposals with some government and Northern Ireland Office people. So that this will not be done behind the backs of the Northern Ireland political parties, they also have been invited to send representatives. These groups new to the level of politics they have recently been assaying have already had numerous meetings with groups of the public in Northern Ireland to express their thinking have had some common discussions among themselves, and at least once to my knowledge have shared a public platform with representatives of the local parties. They have not yet, to the best of my knowledge,

had this sort of meeting, they and the party representatives together talking with Westminster politicians. It seems important that these groups have made themselves participants at a serious level in the political process, and that they should have this kind of opportunity to demonstrate to the Westminster politicians to what extent they are or are not a 'circus.'

The last and most prickly of the outsider groups are those who still stand deliberately as outlaws to the political process, insurgents refusing to participate in a process whose legitimacy they deny, most notably the Provisional IRA. It is evident enough that they cannot be made to participate one-sidedly and against their will by government fiat or invitation, and that there are things they would have to do to establish their political (as distinct from paramilitary) credibility if they were to seek the standing of participants in a political process. I have heard it said on their behalf (I could not vouch for this being official policy on their part) that the contest is simply between them and the British Army or government, and that no other participants count. This I would reject as an arrogant dismissal of the rights and importance of everyone else who lives in the place, essentially fascist as it is saying that the issue may be decided simply by the exercise of force. Nonetheless, I hope sincerely that when government says it will never deal with 'the men of violence' or admit them to a part in the process, it has some essential distinctions in mind and realises that these statements are basically a ritual exercise. It is recently enough that this same species of statement was being made in and on behalf of Rhodesia about those who are now the recognised and honoured leaders of the new Zimbabwe, and the whole process is so familiar that further examples would be pointless. This is not to say that the Provisionals are in a position analogous to ZANU as representatives of popular aspiration in their community. I, at least, do not believe that. But they are in such a position that, if they were ultimately left out of a Northern Ireland settlement or made the scapegoats of the Province's discontents, it would be a needless tragedy for both communities.

My antennae tell me that the Provisionals are among those (like many others including a great number of Westminster MPs of all parties) who believe that essentially nothing is happening in the Stormont conference process. The course of events in the near future will show whether that opinion or my own contrary opinion is correct. Quite independently of that, however, it is insufficient, eventually of no use, on the Provisionals' own grounds if they defeat (were they to be able) the Loyalist community. Unless they want to establish a dictatorship over an insurgent victim population, a thing contrary to their whole ideology, they have eventually to win rather than defeat the Loyalists. From this they are now so remote, having nothing to offer that the Loyalist community wants, that the whole discussion becomes very abstruse. Like the British Army, the Provisionals have taken to pronouncing ritually at frequent intervals that there is no ultimate military solution to the Province's (or Ireland's) trouble, and like the British Army they are still tempted periodically

to try for one. Nonetheless, it has to be stated here, if only for completeness, that no one who wants a viable state of society in the Province can afford any solution that leaves these people out on the fringe, embittered and hostile. A great deal of process has to be gone through here, much of which has to be initiated and fostered by the Provisionals themselves, who at present may simply not want to do so. But no outcome that fails to include this can be accounted satisfactory, any more than the sort of outcome the Provisionals seem to envision themselves, in which the Protestant (they prefer to say Loyalist) community would end up defeated and subject.

I do not want to end this paper, which I have designed to be hopeful, with a declaration that the process is impossible. I do believe the process of what I see as a genuine community consultation is right, or at least capable of being made right if the elements of legitimising the freedom of local people to choose among the available options and of bringing everyone into the process of choice are implemented. I also believe the Provisionals, as I do the other paramilitary groups as well, when they profess their intention to serve the real interests of their community. Like any other group I know, they have their bullies and their idealists. Their internal mechanisms are better designed than those of many more outwardly respectable groups and institutions I know to see that the idealists rather than the bullies ultimately make the decisions of policy. If the process of community consultation in Northern Ireland is carried forward honestly and competently, I feel sure that the antithesis developed in this last section will also be overcome.

BRIDGING PASSAGE AFTER PAPER II

These first two papers, on the British Army and on the political options, arrived after some delay on the desk of Mr. Humphrey Atkins, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. I had submitted them both only after the second was ready, in March, to another MP who, I hoped, would get them to Mr. Atkins. Instead, he waited until May 27th, and then wrote suggesting I submit the papers directly to Mr. Atkins, which I did on May 29th.

Mr. Atkins already knew my article in *The Month* of August 1977, "Church Structure and Violence in Northern Ireland." He wrote back, through a private secretary, on June 16th, commenting on the two papers.

He was particularly cordial to the options paper. On the Army paper, he pointed out that the appointment of Sir Maurice Oldfield as Security Coordinator had not indicated prior reliance on forces outside the RUC, but was truly a work of coordination. By that time, in June, I had to acknowledge quite clearly that this had proven true. The Secretary expressed his confidence in the RUC for all its tasks, from traffic regulation to the most serious terrorist crimes, and dissented rather generally from the analysis in the "Steps Out of the Role" section of my paper.

He was dubious, on the basis of experience in other parts of the world, about the prospects of success for an international force. I felt he was reading my proposal at that point as if it were for a peace-*keeping* force from outside, which it was not. So I stressed in my response that I thought any shape or form of armed group from outside would be ill-advised. But I had proposed instead a European force strictly of observers, trained in deflecting trouble, in conciliation techniques especially for the most volatile and immediate trouble situations. It was distinctly *not* designed to intervene in the police and military ways that are the prerogatives of a peace-keeping force. I had also tried to avoid, by so defining the function and character of this group, interfering with or predetermining the position that the insurgency in Northern Ireland was an internal matter.

In welcoming the political paper, especially its favorable outlook on the conference process, the Secretary noted the need to pay due regard to the interest groups. He underlined particularly the stress (on p. 10 of my paper) on the size of the following which such groups were able to sustain by means other than intimidation. He saw clearly the need to involve the community directly in the consultative process, and forecast that the Government's Discussion Document, then soon to be published, would be subjected to that sort of wide consultation.

* * *

My own concerns at this period were precisely with this wide consultation. I was organizing a conference myself. Lord Hylton had, some years, before, set up a conference centre at his estate in Somerset, Ammerdown, and put it under the direction of the Sisters of Sion. He and they were good friends of mine, and when they proposed holding a conference on Northern Ireland I suggested a format and eventually chaired the meeting.

The Government had invited into its consultative process the various poltical parties of the standard sort in Northern Ireland, from the several splinters of the old Unionist Party across the spectrum to the non-sectarian Alliance Party and the Social Democratic and Labour Party, which had inherited the position of the older Nationalist Party in the Catholic community. Community groups and associations at the neighborhood and wider local levels had no outright invitation, but I felt they had been long enough about the scene so that it was a proper test of their effectiveness that they make themselves felt in the process. But another kind of group had been left out. There was very evident Government reluctance to talk with representatives of a grouping of political parties that had come out of the context of the various paramilitary bodies and private militias in both communities.

These were very disparate. The New Ulster Poltical Research Group, a most original and creative surge of political thought, was generated from within the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), the largest of the Protestant paramilitary otganizations. The Progressive Unionist Party, which had gotten members elected to the Belfast City Council, was not directly associated with but was well acquainted with the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), an older and smaller Protestant paramilitary group, which had come to the realization as early as 1973 that it was responsible for its own politics and could not act as an appendage of the older Protestant political parties. The Workers Party Republican Clubs was not at all a "new party," but the heirs of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, in this case the Official IRA, which had ceased for many years to operate as a military organization and was a purely political party: the oldest existing party in Ireland, they claimed, though now appearing in a rather new light. They too had elected members of the Belfast City Council, and had found there was a community of interest between their members and those of the Progressive Unionist Party and the NUPRG on a number of matters, however far apart they might be on others. The Belfast City Council had become a fascinating experimental chamber where these groups had learned to work together for such interests as they had in common.

In contrast to the regular political parties, whose objective was basically to win votes for established personalities and an established party line, those new groups had a different motivation. It was in their interest to find something new that would work differently and be more constructive of the peace than were the established policies of old.

With Lord Hylton and the Ammerdown Community's conference centre, I arranged a long weekend's meeting in June of 1980 to bring the leadership of these political groups together with a British group including civil servants, academics, and leaders of various fields, with the quite explicit purpose that personal links be forged and the British representatives become well acquainted with the kind and quality of thinking done by these unexpected Northern Irish groups. To be sure that this process would not go on behind the backs if the more standard-brand political parties of Northern Ireland, we invited them also to send representatives and several did, at a high level. The Northern Ireland Office was cooperative to the extent of showing much interest and sending an official representative. But word was apparently passed to MPs and members of the House of Lords, several of whom had expressed interest in coming or had even accepted invitations, that this was a matter to keep their hands off and leave to the NIO. All of them made their excuses and stayed away.

However, while this was going on, I had by June completed the last of the three originally proposed papers, the one on the economy. I presented it to the NIO with the same letter in which I responded to Mr. Atkins' comments on the first two papers, and also thanked him for the NIO's promised participation in the Ammerdown meeting.

[NOTE, 1997 edition: Over the many years that I have kept using these papers, it has seemed to me that they kept their pertinence. This economic paper is the exception, inasmuch as the development of the European Union has really not left much room for a freeport solution as proposed here. Richard Hauser and I had first proposed it, in 1975, in the context of his father's having, after World War I, been among the principal figures in establishing the Trieste freeport. Following our 1975 proposal, presented here anew, British Government did in fact take up the idea, but not particularly for Northern Ireland. Instead, freeport industrial zones were set up, by statute, in a number of British cities, seaports and airports. Belfast, in fact, got a small freeport adjunct to the Aldergrove Airport, but nothing that would become an alternative cornerstone of a Northern Ireland economy, as proposed.

What remains in my own awareness today, in different circumstances, is a realisation that Northern Ireland's economy can no longer be sustained by special favor in British policy. It relates already, in important ways, more to Europe.]

28

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Northern Ireland Paper III:

A Freeport as Alternative Base for the Northern Ireland Economy.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
June, 1980

The basic fragility of Northern Ireland's economy receives such wide recognition these days that it is taken as a major disincentive either for Britain to keep subsidising this drain on her assets or for the Republic of Ireland to take it on in any of the possible scenarios that could bring the Northern Province into the Republic's orbit. This economic weakness certainly inhibits any expectation that Northern Ireland could maintain itself on any economically autonomous course. The time is rapidly passing in which Northern Ireland could pride itself on its relative prosperity as compared with the Republic. Already, despite the still superior social services that have resulted from the British Welfare State, Southern advocates of unification point to the growing economic advantages of the Republic as an argument in their favour. The proponents of 'unity by consent,' such as Fine Gael's economic spokesman Mr. John Kelly (as reported in the Irish Times for June 2, 1980), see 'getting our economy right' as the path towards that goal.

More than five years ago (early in 1975) the present writer joined with Mr. Richard Hauser in producing an extensive paper called 'A Social Option: Suggestions for an Overall Community Social Planning Approach to the Problems of Northern Ireland.' That paper has by now become dated in various ways, but its final chapter, on the 'Economic Future,' laid down some analytic premises which have not yet been picked up, for use or refutation, elsewhere. What follows will be largely a modified restatement of those premises and some of the conclusions of the earlier paper. Other observers have variously blamed the economic instability of the Province on the long period of violence, which has discouraged investment; on the general economic recession in Britain and the world, aggravated in terms of its effect in unemployment and insecurity by the special circumstances of Northern Ireland; or on the particular troubles of the Province's basic industries, shipbuilding and cloth. The thesis Hauser and I advanced in 1975 seems neglected. It has two main premises:

a) that it is the traditional cornerstone of Northern Ireland's economy that is disappearing, namely a determination

in British politics to foster industry in the Province, especially in Belfast, by special and artificial favour. This determination gone, the survival of Belfast as a large built-up area with an industrial population needs to be premised on an alternative base.

b) that it is the peculiarity of the Northern Ireland economy that it attempts to maintain an industrial society without an adequate home economic hinterland. The now disappearing system of special policy favour met this peculiarity by providing a British home market for Northern Ireland's industrial products. An alternative system will have to make other provision for an economic hinterland.

It is to meet these two premises that we designed out proposal of a freeport as alternative cornerstone for the Northern Ireland economy. Should the actual proposal of a freeport not be found a useful or feasible response to the underlying need, it should be noted that the two premises still stand, and some other way of meeting them will need to be devised. The alternative to that is that Belfast as a large industrial city be allowed to decay to the point of abandonment, and the history of the last ten years and more has shown that that will be a bloody business.

A. Cornerstone of the Northern Ireland Economy.

The Second World War was the last period of really strong prosperity in Northern Ireland when the Province's contribution to the British economy carried weight. The Welfare State of post-war years made living more comfortable for the working population even as the actual contribution of the Province's industry slacked off. Diversification of industry, with many foreign companies entering the Province, sometimes as birds of passage for only as long as special tax concessions lasted, provided a flurry of employment opportunities for a period in the 1960s. But this was rather a way of giving the Province a very temporary economic cushion than of developing ways for Northern Ireland to make a positive contribution to the larger economic unit on which it was dependent and thus have a genuine basis for its prosperity. Nonetheless, industrialisation is of long standing in the Province and has been able to rely on thrift and hard work in the citizens, as the Protestants of the Province particularly will point out. It is because of its industries and skill tradition that Belfast especially has become an important city and major built-up area.

These industries, especially the fundamental ones on which the economy has traditionally been built, have now run into trouble, not merely or even primarily because of the prolonged conflict situation but more seriously because of the general world economic situation. The linen industry, long one of the two basic pillars of the Province's prosperity, has been skillfully at first supplement

and eventually nearly displaced by the manufacture of plastic fibres, but after all the effort put into this adaptation over a good number of years the man-made fibre industry itself now stands under the long-term threat of scarcity and soaring prices of oil. The shipyards, the other pillar on which Northern Ireland's prosperity has rested, exist now only through massive subsidies, kept alive by British choice. They have been accurately enough described as costly occupational therapy for people who would otherwise be unemployed.

Government, over a number of years, sought to diversify the Province's industrial economy by encouraging investment by foreign companies, not unlike the policy followed over these same years in the Republic of Ireland to the South. That policy has registered its successes, not only in providing employment but also in breaking down some of the old discrimination in employment through the constant movement it created on the job market. Its weaknesses and dangers are becoming increasingly apparent now, however, with the growing world economic crisis and the unregulated political and economic power of the vast transnational corporations. Quite apart from the threat of political control and tampering by these corporations where they have a dominant position in a local economy, one has to remember that Northern Ireland is a very small place. In any international economic fluctuations, one has to expect the the foreign companies will respond unfailingly in terms of their wider economic interests rather than to the local needs of this Province, pulling out of their Northern Irish plants just at the time when the employment they provide is most needed for local economic stability.

Far more fundamental than this, it is the basic point de départ for any planning of the future economic situation of Northern Ireland that the economic and industrial position of Belfast has depended to an increasing extent on special British favour. Over the course of the 19th century and through the Second World War Belfast industry proved capable of making a proportionate return to the general strength of the British economy, a return it has not been able to maintain since, but the city's industrial position was not less the result of special favour. An indefinite continuation of that special favour cannot now be counted on to sustain Belfast's industrial economy. This is not the place to anticipate or prejudge what the political future will hold for Northern Ireland, whether it will retain its British link intact, choose some detached or semi-detached status or form some sort of Irish or perhaps far wider association. Instead, it should be said that, quite independently of those considerations of the political future, because of the world economic situation far more than because of the current conflict or any political uncertainty, the new and distinctive fact about Northern Ireland's economic life is this: that it is no longer in the interest of Britain, and neither will it be in the interest of the Republic of Ireland, to maintain the industrial position of Belfast, whatever the political future of the Province. In economic respects particularly, the Province is going to be more on its own. To maintain

Belfast as a built-up area with sufficient employment and prosperity for its citizens, the economic planners have to replace that special British favour which the Province has until now enjoyed with a new basic stabilising element that will not leave the Province dependent on London, or as a substitute on Dublin, for subsidies or artificial support.

To speak of this special British favour in the history of the Northern and Belfast industrial economies is not to deny the talent and skills or the personal and community dedication that have gone into these industries throughout the period of their development. It is only to indicate that it is not only because of these qualities that, since sometime in the 18th century, such industrial development as there has been in Ireland has concentrated in the North and in Belfast. It was in the British interest to encourage the linen industry (itself an artificial substitute for the woollen industry which would have been a more natural development but which, according to the Mercantilist economic principles then in vogue. British policy preferred to keep at home in England) and shipbuilding there rather than elsewhere. At first this was done simply by a Mercantilist decision that a given industry would be permitted here rather than there. Later it was patronage of favoured industries through an old-boys' network. Eventually, since the Province ceased to carry its economic weight after the Second World War, it was through the maintenance of Belfast and Northern Irish industry by massive subventions, the practical replacement of the linen trade by man-made fibres and the far less successful effort to supplement the shipbuildin industry with an aircraft manufacturing industry. But this kind of artificial encouragement from Britain, which has been a constant feature in the economics of Northern Ireland, now rapidly approaches its end. Britain has all it can do to keep Midlands English industry afloat. Whatever comes politically out of the present situation, Northern Ireland cannot reckon in future that either Westminster or Dublin will interest itself in maintaining artificially the concentration of industry in Belfast. Dublin too, in any political outcome that might further Irish unity, would surely conclude that it is not in the general Irish interest to maintain the economic concentration in and around Belfast, but rather that such industry as develops in Ireland should be concentrated around Dublin and in the Western areas that the Republic is trying to bring back to life.

The economic prospects for Northern Ireland, then, are so depressing in themselves that it will not suffice merely to hold the line, repair the situation so far as possible and keep the current wolf from the door. Something better has to happen instead, a turning of the situation around so that the prospects will be most basically of hope and opportunity to do something new rather than of anxiety for a threatened and obsolescent status quo. Put with as little delicacy as possible, Belfast is at the point of losing its economic raison d'être. That raison d'être has been British policy, and there is no longer any advantage to Britain in maintaining that policy. Hence a first aim of any overall economic planning for the Province must be to provide a quite new basis for maintaining the employment

and prosperity of Belfast as a traditional built-up area and hopefully to enliven what has up to now been a dull social and cultural context in the process. Without that, the population of Belfast will sooner or later become underpaid Gastarbeiter in Europe, in that case leaving a devastated city behind them, and likely not much welcomed in Europe because of their reputation for violence and bigotry.

B. Lack of an Economic Hinterland.

Ireland, both North and South, is drastically underpopulated. At the time when Britain had a population of twenty million Ireland had eight million. In the intervening century and a half Britain's population has risen to well over fifty million, proportionate to the general population increase throughout Europe, but Ireland's has been nearly halved to just over four million, the only area in Europe (except for Scotland) where the population has precipitously shrunken, for reasons that are well known. The economic result of this is that a few industrial centres are left without a hinterland, in the sense that there is no substantial local market, such as is normally essential to make the rest of any country's (export) production competitive.

Although in the Republic the tide of emigration has recently stopped and perhaps even turned, in Northern Ireland there is still emigration of much talent. As of five years ago when these ideas were last presented in the 'Social Option' paper, we found that while in Britain engineers (in the widest sense) constituted 23-28% of the work force, in Northern Ireland the proportion had fallen in the several previous years to 18% and was still falling. (I have no more current figures at hand, but it would be worth while checking them.) Still more threatening is that any weakening of British economic ties, if not otherwise compensated, could force the rest of the male population of Northern Ireland (and not merely the more talented, such as engineers, who are better able to look after themselves) to look to emigration again as their only sustenance. This could not happen at a worse time than during a world economic recession which affects what have been the worker-hungry countries. Germany, Switzerland, France and other countries have been drastically cutting back on migrant workers. The EEC agreement would still make such worker emigration possible but language differences and other difficulties would make for low status even if jobs were available. That a country already so depopulated as Northern Ireland should become the source of a migrant labour force for Europe would surely be a massive tragedy.

Necessarily, because of the lack of a home market, the situation of an industrial economy in Northern Ireland is a dependent one. A large part of the produce still goes to Britain and the Province depends in turn on Britain and the Republic of Ireland for many consumer goods. Its capital market is mainly an annex to that of Britain. The Province has little in the way of primary resources: basically it has its sea-ports, its good water supply, a little lithium and of course farm produce (the agricultural economy being

nothing like so problematic). Since the Second World War period, the Province's dependency relation to Britain has been that of looking for crumbs from the table of a benefactor economy. Their budget has to be supplemented by other than local sources, specifically by taxes paid in Britain; their products are nothing it would not be more convenient for Brtain to make at home. Even if the Province's relation of dependence were shifted to the Republic of Ireland, this situation would not be changed, except that it would then be attached to an economic unit that has the same problem as itself, lack of a home market, and is just beginning to find its own solution to that difficulty. What Northern Ireland needs, then, for its economic health and its communal self-respect, is a relation to a larger economic unit (capable of supplying for the lack of a hinterland) in which it makes the kind of contribution to the larger unit that could not be had from elsewhere, i.e. a relation of interdependence (mutually beneficial) rather than of outright dependence, the sort of relation the Province had to Britain up to and through World War II and has not been able to manage since. This is the context of our freeport proposal, as one that would compensate for Northern Ireland's disadvantages by providing a hinterland in Europe, a relation of interdependence with the EEC in place of the suppliant dependence on Britain, while making good use of the Province's actual resources. Before developing this freeport proposal and a few corollaries, though, I should assert again that the premises outlined thus far in this paper stand even if the proposed solution should be dismissed, and in that case some other solution needs to be proposed to them.

Proposal: The Freeport as Cornerstone of the Economy.

The advantages of Northern Ireland as a small territory which needs to carve out its economic future are in its population, which has long demonstrated its energy and capacity for high skills in industry and commerce, its several fine ports and inland water system, its ample fresh water supply for industry and agriculture and, most centrally, its geographical position at the gates of Europe and consequently its capacity to develop as a free port.

This idea was first suggested by the writer's colleague in the 'Social Option' paper of 1975, Richard Hauser, who as a youth had the experience of his father's work in establishing the freeport situation of Trieste and Fiume.

A freeport can be made pretty much what one wants it to be. Basically it is a more or less extraterritorial area as far as customs duties are concerned, where many goods are off-loaded, in some cases are divided up or collected together to be sent on to other destinations. It can have assembly plants for various sorts of machinery, manufacturing units where raw products can be finished, or it can go in for packaging. In the era of containerisation, there

could well be a clear place for such a trans-shipment point to serve the genuine needs of Common Market Europe.

The attraction of a freeport is that it brings with it a demand for manpower, both skilled and unskilled; brings in firms and organisations of all sorts on such terms that the freeport area and its facilities are a valuable resource for them in fair and foul economic weather alike. Foreign firms are thus no longer the distant benefactors of the local economy, providing local employment on terms that they dictate and liable to pull up their shallow local roots in times of economic recession. The control of the freeport's facilities can remain firmly in the hands of the local community.

A freeport also stimulates the local cultural and economic life, making the city interesting to live in, a cosmopolitan centre whose character has to be bright. There are plenty of good houses in and around Belfast, left from its peak period, and plenty of space to build. The splendid port is the city's greatest resource, and if need be the ports of Derry and other places with good water access could be drawn into the plan as mini-freeports, satellites of the main complex in Belfast. Rotterdam, even without the formal status of a freeport, fills some such function with relation to Europe, though confined mainly to the transshipment of oil and without the pleasant living and working conditions that Belfast could provide. If even a comparatively small part of such Atlantic trade could be attracted to Belfast it would be of great value.

The lack of hinterland is Belfast's one great disadvantage as against a mainland port. Its advantage is that it is as well placed as any port for reloading to and from smaller vessels or vessels going in different directions, so that one main load can be scattered to twenty or more destinations from Belfast, together with other goods.

It would also be a great advantage for Belfast in the eyes of international trade concerns that any commercial conflicts would be dealt with by British-based law, which they would consider especially trustworthy. The skills available in the local work-force and the aptitude of Belfast workers for further training would be a further attraction.

If accepted and implemented, this freeport concept would be of such importance for Belfast that it would be the hinge on which a holistic economic development plan for Northern Ireland could swing. It would replace the special economic encouragement that the Province has hitherto had from Britain but can no longer count on from either Britain or Ireland. The concept would relate Northern Ireland and its economy to Europe, making the Province a net contributor to the economic well-being of Europe rather than a poor relation, making maximum use of its actual resources and a strength of its small and remote situation without any other hinterland than Europe, not

disrupting or conflicting with either British or Irish interests but leaving the Northern Ireland community master in its own house. Moreover the plan would work quite independently of which among the various available constitutional options were followed by the Province. It should have appeal to the European countries that would have to support it as it is a European interest too to have peace in this territory on Europe's doorstep.

Corollary Proposals.

The freeport proposal itself is so much the burden of this paper that supplementary or corollary matters should not be allowed to clutter it. However, these few should have brief mention:

1. A Five-Year Dowry from Britain.

Time to build the new economic underpinning would be the first requirement, serving both British and Northern Irish interests. Northern Irish and British industry are deeply interwoven as are their economies, with an enormous proportion of Northern Irish capital and the budget coming from the British taxpayer. Because the two have functioned so long as one unit there is a great deal of dispute and confusion about what and where are the subventions. If there were to be a fundamental turning of the economic direction of Northern Ireland, however, the Province needs a guarantee of five full years of a dowry from Great Britain equal to the subventions of the past, so that it will not lose the benefit of the long-time British economic connection. It is essential that Northern Ireland should not be handicapped by an impossible breakdown over these five years. A sudden change in this matter would be even more deadly than if the Army were pulled out precipitately, though the victims might not be as visible. Over the course of the five years efforts could be made to help Northern Ireland balance its accounts from other sources, so that economically it could be relatively independent. This could not happen without a plan, consciously and freely developed and implemented with determination. A clear commitment by Britain to provide this dowry would be a pre-condition for the Northern Irish freedom to pick it up.

2. Marine Industries.

The development of a freeport should of itself give new stimulus to the Harland and Wolff shipyards, which it should not be our purpose here to spell out in any detail. The shipbuilding industry in Belfast needs, in any case and whatever more basic arrangements are made for the economic future of the Province, to be put into a different category than that of expensively subsidised employment with the output per man less than that of similar establishments elsewhere. It would be helpful if Harland and Wolff and a part of the Belfast port could become a centre for oil exploration, within the freeport concept or independently with freeport elements

of its own. Belfast would be well located for the building and repair of oil rigs and exploration ships serving the newer fields in British and Irish waters.

One part of this development in the marine industries might be the establishment of a major fishing fleet. Recently in Holland a whole new fishing fleet was developed including a church-cum-hospital ship to enable the crews to stay out of port for as long as possible. These Dutch ships often go to areas much closer to Northern Ireland than to Holland, yet for some traditional reason Northern Ireland has never taken advantage of its obvious opportunity to build a great fishing industry. The Province could easily build up not only a deep-sea fishing industry but inshore fish farms for sea-foods as well as fresh-water fish farms in the water-rich areas in the centre of the Province. The Lough Neagh eel fisheries are a good prognosis of what could be done.

3. Manufacturing Industries.

If, through the freeport scheme, the Province's economy developed solid links to world commerce, on terms as advantageous to the foreign and mainly European users of the facility as to the Province itself, its dependence on large transnational corporations would be far less threatening than it is now for a suitor economy. Nevertheless, it would seem far healthier that local manufacturing industry should not be excessively dependent on foreign ownership and capital, which only serves to make local industry and employment more susceptible to the fluctuations of the international economy.

Far better would be a basic emphasis on locally owned and developed industries that would make the most of the available skilled craftsmanship. This would mean concentrating on highly specialised craftsmanly products which could be prestige exports, the most rational sort of product for a small and highly skilled work force. Training emphases should then be placed on the development of such skills and maximum adaptability to meet changing demands. Where possible the cooperative ownership approach should be used, as it has already proven its popularity in Ireland and much experience in its use has been gained.

Special attention should be paid to the allocation of manpower resources. In view of the current demonstrated trend for skilled manpower to emigrate, a special board should be established for this allocation. One hears that Harland and Wolff is now overloaded with skilled workers who are under-used, but whose skills are actually needed in other jobs in the Province.

4. Agriculture.

Every industrialised nation, not only Northern Ireland, has seen a decline of rural population, a decline in the need of manpower for agriculture and a consequent shrinkage of population

to the impoverishment of the general culture. One need only see the numbers that have left the land in Britain or the United States over the last half century. The chances of using the surplus manpower of the cities in existing forms of agriculture are very poor, but further depopulation of the land is a social blight one ought to plan against, and the forms of agri-business that, in the United States, have replaced and driven out traditional farming produce an environmental devastation that should never be allowed to happen in Northern Ireland.

Ireland and especially the Northern Province is so small a place that, if it is to have agricultural products for export, it has to do very specialised farming. Through the 19th century the whole island was run pretty much as an extensive cattle farm, raising beef and of course dairy products for the luxury trade in Britain. Irish cattle was normally shipped live for slaughter in Britain to provide fresh meat, while the imports from Argentina and New Zealand came salted. Since refrigeration made that pattern obsolete it has been sustained only by the inertia of established markets. Nowadays we have seen picketing of Irish cattle imports at the Welsh ports. This means a new specialty trade needs to be planned and developed, the expertise accumulated and communicated and of course the people directly involved, whether farmers or economic planners, drawn into an understanding of the problematic and the planning to meet it.

A possible very distinctive direction that could be a viable specialty for an area as small as Northern Ireland would be organic farming. As the oil-based and other fertilisers of intensive farming become scarcer and more expensive, this is going to be a critical world need. The suggestion goes quite against the grain of what is current policy in Northern Ireland's agriculture. But the farming society of Northern Ireland, distinguished by their educational level and their capacity for venturesome undertakings, could become leaders in producing pilot experience for this kind of farming in Europe and elsewhere, their farms a teaching and training facility for new techniques that would attract people from abroad. The Province itself could, in the process, be made more self-sufficient in food. The common diet of meat and potatoes, bread and tea current in the Province at present is nutritionally poor. A great increase in the local production and consumption of fruit and vegetables would benefit the health of the Province as well.

5. Tourism.

Everyone who has to do with the Province knows that the only thing that prevents it being a tourist attraction is the shooting. It has its show-pieces like the Giant's Causeway or Glens of Antrim, the potential for lively and attractive cities if Belfast and Derry should function as freeports, plenty of open space and a mild climate; a great many attractions to make up for a bit of rain. Emphasis on tourist development in a modest to moderate price range would turn these advantages to the service of the economy without turning the countryside into Kitsch and the population of the tourist areas into

a servant class. If in fact the Province overcomes its long agony of violence it is pretty sure to have done so by a great deal of social creativity and enterprise that will make it a model for many other countries. In that case, a lot of this inexpensive tourist accomodation could double as student digs for the many trainees in the special skills -- social, economic etc. -- that would attract them to Northern Ireland as a pilot area and educator of Europe.

Any such speculations, though, lie far in the future for an area that, as argued earlier in this paper, is losing its economic raison d'être. Replacement of that in a manner that recognises the other basic fact of Northern Ireland's economic life, namely its radical need to relate to a larger economic unit than itself for lack of a home market or economic hinterland, is the priority issue. The freeport proposal is an effort to respond to those basic needs, and if it should turn out not to be the correct response some other response will be urgently needed.

BRIDGING PASSAGE AFTER PAPER III

Communication slowed somewhat after this last paper. It was summer, which in Northern Ireland means not only the holiday season, but the marching season as well. For a good month leading up to the 12th of July, the date on which Orangemen celebrate the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, Protestant King William III's victory over Catholic King James II, attention in Northern Ireland is given over basically to parades and preparation for parades. It all culminates in the grand "Orange Walk" in every city on the "glorious 12th," when drums and banners and marching bands lead the massed Orange Lodges and Black Preceptories, with their families and friends, out from the towns to the nearby fields for a picnic lunch and an afternoon of scarifyng speeches denouncing Catholics and their Church and their Irish nationalism. Echoes of these celebrations reverberate down through the rest of July and on to August 12th, when the city of Derry or Londonderry celebrates its Apprentice Boys Parade in similar style, commemorating the day in 1689 when the apprentice boys of Derry shut the city gates in the face of James II's Catholic army and the siege of Derry began. After all this summer of marching everyone can return to his normal good humor, but no political discussion can take place while the marching season is on.

The Secretary of State did write back about my freeport paper, through a secretary, on July 21st. I was some weeks travelling about Ireland then, so it was only on August 5th that I responded to him, and that in a rush as I was on my way to an American trip.

Mr. Atkins took up the two most substantial analytic points in the paper: a) the way in which the basis of the Northern Ireland economy had been in special British policy favor, and b) the lack of an adequate economic hinterland.

On the first, he was anxious to point out that special provision in British policy for the Northern Irish economy still continues: that Capital Grants towards expenditure on fixed assets were available at rates of up to 50%; that modern factories were available on attractive rental terms with rent free periods of up to five years; that Interest Relief Grants could be paid for a period of up to seven years to offset interest payments on private sector loans. He could well have mentioned other steps, such as the huge investments the Government was just then making to bring the De Lorean and General Motors car plants to Northern Ireland, but he made his point well that the current attractive range of financial incentives demonstrated the U.K. Government's continued determination to foster industrial development in the Province. I could not question these generous measures, but I do see them as palliatives that cannot bring the economic health the Province needs. The U.K. will not want to do this indefinitely, especially if it does not in fact produce a sound local economy, and it is my supposition that Northern Ireland has been a charity case rather than a contributor in the U.K. economy ever since the end of the Second World War.

As for the obstacle of Northern Ireland's lacking an adequate domestic economic hinterland, the Secretary of State said only that the obstacle was not absolute, and that given the right conditions domestically and around the world there was still much potential for economic growth within Northern Ireland. Defining those right conditions and planning them is harder than that.

But this is an area in which my opinion is most a lay opinion, in need of study by competent economists among others. The freeport idea itself had been around since Richard Hauser and I had aumbrated it in 1975, and had doubtless occurred to others as well. The Secretary acknowledged its immediate appeal, but questioned whether it would have the same stimulative effect in Northern Ireland as it had had in Trieste, in Fiume, or in Colon in Panama. His argument was that its effectiveness related directly to the levels of tariffs, duties, etc., to which businesses would no longer be subject in the duty free zone. Where such tariffs were high elsewhere in the country concerned or in neighboring states, success might be guaranteed. But the United Kingdom had long had few trade barriers, and the advent of the EEC had reduced these even more. Hence the practical advantage to be derived from a free trade zone would be substantially diminished. He did recommend further exploration of ideas in this field with experts, particularly in HM Customs and Excise.

My own expectation is that even slight margins of advantage in this area would mount up to important incentives, and I know that, since the idea was first raised by Richard Hauser and myself in 1975, it has been mooted rather more seriously as a chance to revitalize the Thames Estuary than it has been for Northern Ireland. However, if the level of incentives is in fact too low to make this a practical alternative cornerstone for the Northern Ireland economy, then the conclusion from my two initial analytic premises still stands: because the old cornerstone of special U.K. policy favor is disappearing, and because there is no adequate economic hinterland in the place, it remains an implacable necessity to find *some* alternative cornerstone for the economy.

Interesting in that regard was the response when I let this paper be circulated among some labor union officials in Northern Ireland. Their response was immediately political, ignoring the technical problem altogether. They saw the freeport as giving aid and comfort to the aspiration for an independent Northern Ireland, associated this immediately with the UDA, whom they saw as dangerous people and not to be encouraged in anything, and hence rejected it out of hand. The technical problem as such could therefore be wished out of existence. It was a dicouraging response, as it showed lack of leadership in an important quarter.

* * *

Contemporaneous with all these three first papers, in fact beginning even before them, I had made an approach to the leadership of the Republican Movement. This had begun in October, 1979, immediately after Pope John Paul II had made his visit to Ireland and his appeal for an end to violence. I should let the contents of the paper that follows speak for themselves and not anticipate them here. But I had been anxious to explore the reaction of the Republican leadership to the Pope's plea, urge it and find practical ways for those who were willing to follow it.

The exchange had begun very slowly and laboriously. It seemed important for me to have a Northern Ireland Protestant with me for these meetings, one who had the trust of his community, if only so that he and I could witness and report one another's bearing in them. He and I both applied for appointments with the Republican leadership both in Dublin and Belfast. There was a preliminary meeting between a lower-echelon Republican and myself in Dublin before October was out, but response to our joint request was constantly delayed. Question was raised whether I should be talking with people in Dublin or in Belfast, and eventually it came out that the Republicans were altogether unwilling to talk with the companion I had proposed, I believe because they had failed to understand his own reason for asking the interviews. I had not wanted to meet them alone, but felt when it came to doing it so or not at all that I had merely been trying to cover my back by asking for the joint meetings. The problem about my meeting the Belfast or the Dublin leadership was eventually resolved by a Belfast man's coming to Dublin and meeting me along with a Dubliner.

As the conversation developed, I thought for some time that we would came apart with nothing to say to each other, with no common insight on which to meet. Where we did eventually meet was in the recognition that the Republicans, like myself, did not want to see the Northern Protestants coerced, defeated and bitter, into a life and a society that was hateful to them. Any such victory would be the most ultimate sort of defeat for the Republicans themselves. They could not bear it. There was a further recognition that the society and culture of the Republic of Ireland as it stood was not something the Protestants could live with, nor would the Republicans want to force them into it. But then mythology took over, in the form of a belief on their part that, with the withdrawal of "the Brits," the whole of Irish society, North and South, would be transformed, as in the twinkling of an eye. I gained no popularity with them by asking how long it took for an eye to twinkle just that way, wehther five years, or ten years, and what plans they had to utilize the interval. Their plans were only how to produce the moment, by

getting "the Brits" out of Ireland, not what to do with it.

By April of 1980, this conversation had reached a stage at which a paper seemed useful, as a record. I did not then anticipate the ways in which this dialogue with the Republicans, mostly oral, would link with the mostly written dialogue with the Northern Ireland Office, but I did realize that the paper should be made a part of the same series, and that eventually both the Republicans and the Northern Ireland Office should see and consider the papers that had been written for the other. I kept to a long interval, about six months, after presenting each paper to the party it had been addressed to, before showing it to the other, so that each should have ample time to reflect and make a considered response. When I wrote the paper that follows, in April, I had not yet written the economic critique, Paper III, that has preceded it in this book, but I knew quite well what would go into it. And so I numbered this appeal to the Republican Movement Paper IV.

42

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NORTHERN IRELAND PAPER IV

A Respectful Appeal to the Republican Movement.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
April, 1980

A main preoccupation for me as I present this paper is to avoid saying anything presumptuous or that is not really helpful. Readers will understand that I write from an anti-violence stance. To argue that would be no contribution at all, as I well understand that those in responsible positions in the armed Republican Movement, and doubtless in many other of the armed groups as well, are more devoted than most others to an end to this use of force in their community. When, in the wake of the Pope's visit to Ireland and his Drogheda speech, I requested and got a meeting with spokesmen for the Republican Movement, I put it this way: if you are so far contented with your current strategy of physical force that you see no need to supplement it with anything else, then I have nothing to say to you; but if in fact, as I expect, you are looking for or desire in addition some other than violent approach to the injustices you perceive in Irish society, then I would want to help.

My reason for approaching you is this, that I believe the Republican Movement carries responsibility for what happens beyond the time of armed struggle. When the armed struggle ends, what happens then?

The end of armed struggle, of course, on one scenario could be indefinitely postponed. Ten years from now things could still be at the stalemate position that many people see them as being now, and we could all be wondering, as now after the first ten years of this current phase of it, when anything will happen to break the deadlock. Some will not believe that could be the shape of another ten years, and especially for committed members of the Republican Movement it must seem close to despair to think it would go so, but the spectre of its going on so must haunt them.

If instead the armed struggle phase does end in the near or relatively distant future, it could be in one of three ways:

a) There could be a Republican victory, like Fidel Castro coming down from the hills to enter Havana. For myself, I don't really believe this is going to happen, and as I look at the people in or devoted to the Republican cause, I don't see that you believe this either. Neither do I see it as any part of your hopes or ideology that you should find yourselves the masters of a beaten and subjected population of the Northern Loyalists.

b) People could quit the fighting out of simple exhaustion, as has happened repeatedly in the past sixty years of Irish history. This time, as all those previous times, such a conclusion would only mean that the violence would be renewed again after a few years, and far worse than before. It is the least desirable of conclusions, even though most people would be relieved to see it and some are blind enough to be working deliberately towards that as a conclusion.

c) Other parties than the Republican Movement could make the decisive moves, transforming the situation of the North so radically that the Republican Movement would be left outside the process and irrelevant. I don't think of a British or Loyalist military victory here: that is, by their own admission and to everyone else's clear knowledge, just not a credible or available outcome. Rather I think of other internal elements coming to some resolution of the community conflict that so satisfied people as to leave the Republican Movement high and dry. As I indicated in conversation, I myself think that something is going on within the Protestant/Loyalist population and its leadership now that ought to be taken quite seriously as heading for a transformation of the political situation. Many of my friends and people whose opinion I respect, including those I spoke to in the Republican Movement, believe this is not so, and a little more time will show them or me correct on this particular bit of interpretation. But whether or not it is happening now, this remains one of the possible outcomes. Doubtless many people would be happy to see your Republican Movement left out and shamed in that way. I am not among them, as I think any outcome that left the Republican Movement as a remnant, bitter and neglected on the periphery, would be bad news not only for yourselves but for all your fellows in the Northern Ireland and wider Irish communities.

Whichever of these possible ends of the armed struggle should come, even on the hypothesis most favourable to your movement that it should be through an outright Republican victory, my initial question stands: what then?

Will it be a repetition of 1920 or 1922, civil war or the aftermath of civil war? Will it be a duplication of the state of Liverpool or Newcastle, bleak and stale? Will it be unemployment running at 50% or 60% after the closing down of a few vital industries, and a society in which general disillusionment in the whole Irish population is added onto the political bitterness of the Loyalists? These, I think, are questions that have to be taken up seriously by the Republican Movement, as agent of change. The questions can be restated this way:

a) What will people have for all they have suffered these last ten years and much longer? It is not right that the negative prognosis should come true, and that it be as socially poor a society as Britain, Europe or America, with crushing unemployment, political bitterness and disillusion added in.

b) What will the members of the Republican Movement then be doing? Your enemies would say you will then be following your established habits as 'men of violence,' finding other causes, specious or illusory, to go on with simple banditry. I don't believe that of you myself, though there could easily be odd individuals of this sort who have been attracted to your movement as a fringe, or people who have been psychologically crippled by such experiences as the H-blocks -- you yourselves would know that better than anyone else. However, in any of the possible outcomes, if the Republicans are not really carrying responsibility in making a better society than the one sketched above, they will be the scapegoats, blamed and persecuted for the whole demoralisation of Irish society. This is a more selfish reason for Republicans to be responsible social contributors to a better life than ~~that~~, less important to the idealists of your movement, who have already placed their lives at risk, than the fact that people in Ireland deserve better after all they have been suffering through these years. But the obvious fact that members of the movement will be the scapegoats of a demoralised society points to a further responsibility of the movement's leaders that this should not happen to their own followers.

Since clearly I am proposing something other than a physical force campaign here, I should make clear my recognition that if you simply stopped that campaign your movement would dissolve. Those I have spoken to in the movement have heard my own anti-violence argument and conviction. If it were simply a negative argument, against the use of force, it would carry small weight. I would not want to leave any doubt that anti-violence is my position. In the old 'Just War' theory and teaching that has always been held important in the Republican Movement, I recognise as a positive factor the element of taking responsibility for the restoration of justice that is involved in taking to arms. If I or anyone want to argue against the use of force for the restoration of justice (or the first establishment of it where it has never been before), then the burden of responsibility is on me to propose another and better way to bring justice. I do not presume to advocate that the responsibility be abandoned or neglected.

It is my impression that the Pope's anti-violence speech at Drogheda, joined with a strong appeal for justice, affects the members and especially the leadership of the Republican Movement very directly, not as a public stick to flog them with but as something that touches their own intuition. The Pope does not, by saying it, make something that is not true become true, and clearly enough there are elements of uncertainty around what he meant -- was he basically renouncing the 'Just War' teaching, denying its application in this case only and on what grounds? -- and what can be done with it. But he was genuine in what he said there, and sounded a note that gets a response in many people: e.g., in me, and apparently in you. I would quite like to run a series of articles in some such forum as the Irish Times that would explore this whole issue of the use of force, the Pope's position on it and the the chords it strikes in contemporary experience, with the expectation that such a series of articles would generate a useful correspondence, from supporters as well as opponents of the Republican Movement and its methods of campaign.

Proposal: A Peace Command.

My basic proposal is that the Republican Movement should have a Peace Command, supplementary to and parallel to its military command, for the planning of the future.

I would not see this as a quest by the movement for political power. When I compare what the Republican Movement has published as its political plans (Eire Nua and the few supplementary papers: rather little and rather old by now) with the planning that was done by Robert Mugabe's or Joshua Nkomo's movements in what has finally become Zimbabwe, my conclusion is that the Republican Movement does not see itself or believe in itself as coming into political power leadership. I think this is basically right, although, if the movement were to find itself covered with respectability through any future development, I would expect some political power leadership to come out of it as it has from any number of other insurgency movements. What I would see as more realistic and a more genuine contribution from the movement is that it make itself, through this 'peace command,' an influence body, designing the future society and becoming catalysts for it, not in fact making pre-digested decisions for people but enabling them to make them themselves.

This in fact, in my view, is a responsibility of the movement. You have set yourselves to determine, by your action, that others who have had no choice about it will come into a new way of life. There is an idealism in that which I recognise, but also a paternalism, which can easily become a despotism. Your movement is then responsible that:

a) the new life will be something humanly valuable. This involves a planning process far beyond any planning I see you engaged in up to now, your planning having been mostly confined to the military.

b) the others in the new society have a real voice in the design and planning of the new life themselves, learn the techniques of self-help, self-planning, self-motivation. This is the task that requires of the Republican Movement that it and its members learn to be catalysts, enablers rather than coercers of others.

For any such programme, if the movement chooses to adopt or even to explore it, I am gladly willing to make my own experience available, and will under separate cover send a copy of a basic methodological paper, called 'A Responsibility Charter,' which will give the basic orientation of what I would offer. That paper is one for which I share responsibility with Richard Hauser, of the Centre for Human Rights and Responsibilities, who is known to the Republican Movement. It is my understanding that Richard Hauser is also happy to be of help in these same ways, if the movement should desire it.

The techniques of the planning method offered are designed not to be the property of experts, but to be useable once learned by quite ordinary people, and such that those once trained in them can act as trainers of others as well. It is basically a method of wholistic planning. Few are engaged in such planning, but it is within the capacity of all, and within the capacity of society as a self-organised and self-organising whole.

Any such programme would have to start with an inner circle, a concerned group, within the leadership of the movement, but it would not be an elitist process. Instead it would spread throughout the membership of the movement in widening circles, until eventually the whole membership is included, and beyond that would spread further to collaboration of both the leadership and members of the movement with a larger public. This process would not involve the loss of any significant part of the movement's active membership, but instead would give the whole membership a wider horizon which would increase their human effectiveness.

This is not, I think, the place to develop the theme, which I would want to expand elsewhere, of the way an idealism centred on death -- the fear of death and the constant risk of death -- narrows the spiritual horizon and induces a one-directional, linear kind of thinking, while an idealism focussed on life and the expansion of life possibilities equips us for wholistic thinking. Too much technical explanation is involved in that and it would be a tangent in this paper. However, it is my understanding that the Republican Movement has a problem in the isolation and boredom in which its active units live, in filling the imagination of those who have been in the paramilitary situation from a very young age, with the limitations imposed by very tight centralised discipline etc. I may be mistaken on the particular profile of the concrete situation as it faces the leadership and members of the movement, as I have no direct experience of it, and I acknowledge the background of dedication in which it arises. It is a worrying and dangerous element in the internal life of the movement as it exists, for which the 'peace command' programme proposed here would offer many helpful directions.

The proposal made here does of course have eventually a non-violence horizon. I am not concerned to undermine or disparage the Republican loyalties of the movement, as much as I am in fact also in sympathy with the loyalties and human aspirations of other movements in the country, some of them plainly opposed to you. Effectively, I am proposing a programme which I expect would grow in importance for the Republican Movement until it eclipsed the strategy of physical force and became a more useful method for accomplishing aims which

are ultimately not, I am sure, narrowly sectional but intended for the good of the whole community, the Loyalists/Protestants included. As acknowledged earlier in this paper, any plea to stop the physical force campaign now is one to dissolve the movement at once, and hence a denial of the responsibility the movement is now striving (I believe in mistaken ways) to carry. Success of such a supplementary strategy as is proposed here would mean, very likely in not too distant a time, that this would no longer be so, that the movement would have its idealism and its purposiveness intact, the loyalty and morale of its members secured, even in the absence of the physical force campaign. I propose the 'peace command' strategy as a value in itself, not simply as instrument for this purpose, but with recognition that this will be one of its practical results.

Again as already mentioned above, I read the Republican Movement as not really wanting to be masters of a beaten and subjected population. As of now, you are seen in the Loyalist camp as offering nothing but death and violence, you have nothing on offer that the Loyalists want. None of them want to talk with you, and in fact it is the kiss of death for any of their parties or movements to talk with you or even propose doing so. I am convinced that, if the 'peace command' strategy were pursued seriously in the movement, it would in fact take very little time before the others were anxiously seeking to confer with you. The achievement of 'respectability' (not to be confused with surrender or pandering to the establishment) would be remarkably easy. As of now, all your opponents say (as is commonly enough said of all insurgent groups) that a cease-fire is absolute condition to talking with you about anything. Recognisably, a cease-fire is not one of the options open to you while you have effectively nothing to talk about when it comes. But if, contrary to the experience of other insurgent groups, the pressure on you to call a cease-fire were insuperably urgent at the time when the others really wanted to talk to you as a result of such a campaign, you would then find that you could afford it, as now you cannot.

The kind of development within the movement that I am proposing under this title of 'Peace Command' needs to be distinguished from two other experiences that you have already learned were not so productive as this. One is the situation of 1965, when the Republican Movement, with misgiving in many quarters, turned to a political strategy as total substitute for its physical force traditions. This happened in an atmosphere of failure, when the movement was ceasing to believe in itself, and is not a duplicate of the initiative proposed here. The other is the situation of 1972 and after, when a movement of community organisation spread through the ghetto neighbourhoods of Belfast and Derry and other areas of Northern Ireland. The Republican Movement then, in common with the other paramilitary movements and organisations, moved in to control whatever it could control and use these new organisations and associations for its already defined military purpose, even if only to raise funds or to maintain discipline within the neighbourhoods. I don't raise that subject with condemnation, as it was quite naturally within the logic of the Republican Movement's and the other paramilitary organisations' military purpose. It was not much good to the community movement, except insofar as they were able to resist it. But what is proposed here is quite different from the assertion of control over what others have built. It is that the movement learn to be catalyst for the others' capacity to build and retain what they have built under their own control.

The conclusion of this proposal should be adequately concrete. It is obviously necessary that the leaders of the movement have more opportunity than this paper offers to judge the content of what is offered as training. The paper on the Responsibility Charter will arrive in the post quite quickly, and other technical papers can be had on request. My own offer is to discuss the proposal and its concrete content with anyone the movement may appoint in order to have it better assessed, and if it is desired to give courses, workshops, seminars or whatever sort of working sessions may be helpful to enable the movement to mount such a programme. To my knowledge, my friend Richard Hauser is also willing to do as much. It is for the movement to decide what it wants on these lines from whom.

PART TWO

THE PRISON CRISIS AND ITS AFTERMATH

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

A long interval follows this last paper, the appeal to the Republican Movement, before I wrote Paper V in June, 1981. The interval was filled with much further conversation and correspondence. One of the letters, to Mr. Daithi Ó Conaill in February, 1981, was of such substance that it was the equivalent of another of the numbered papers of this series, and I include it here as such.

The period from late summer of 1980 on was dominated by the gathering storm over the prisons. This would be the place to give yet another history of the long process of the priosn protest, but I take it that is well known to readers of this book. Besides, I have given an interpretative chronicle of the protest in the course of Paper V which follows, and should not duplicate that here. It seemed to me for a long time that the Republican prisoners were in the right to claim that their reason for being in prison and the process that had brought about their convictions were not the same as for other prisoners, and that some acknowledgment should be made of those facts. It seemed just as plain that the issue was so politicized that the British Government could not practically afford to concede on the terms that were being asked without suffering a crippling defeat and humiliation. And while I saw some justification in the Republicans' case about their status in the prison, though not quite in the terms they demanded, I saw also just as clearly that they were basing their principal effort, the core of their whole campaign, on self-pity, looking to their enemies to do something nice for them, and thus making themselves wholly dependent on someone else's initiative. That is not the way to run a revolution, and left them in the demeaning position of destroyers without a program.

Over a period of some two years before the hunger strikes finally began in October of 1980 I had nursed an idea, which I shared with my friend Richard Hauser, that the prison protest, what at that time was being called "the blanket protest," could be resolved separately from the wider issues of Republican grievance, by granting the specific and concrete items of a different prison regime that the prisoners were demanding, not to them alone but to all prisoners in Northern Ireland, where the prison regime is, in any case, considerably different from that in mainland British prisons. And this general change of prison regime should be made not as a matter of granting the status of political prisoners, or any other different status, to the protesting prisoners, but as a general matter of prison reform.

The protest had originally been just about the requirement that the prisoners wear prison uniforms, which they saw as branding them criminals. This was a traditional form of Republican prison protest that had a long history. When the refusal to wear uniforms and the consequent wrapping themselves in a blanket -- "going on the blanket" -- had won the protesters nothing in two years (1976-78), they had escalated their action to refusing to clean out their cells and begun what was called the "dirty protest," creating incredibly unsanitary conditions in which any death of a protester would have led to intolerable tensions. The form of the protest, continued still for a period that amounted to years, was soul-destroying for both its participants and the warders in the prison. It was my expectation that both the Republicans and the Government would be anxious to end this protest situation inside the prisons, quite apart from any other issues between them, if given the opportunity. I shared this idea, for which I used the shorthand term "finesse," as it would simply have excised the prison protest from the other issues of the conflict, with many persons over that time, and doubtless others may have come to the same idea independently. Nevertheless, I was not about to recommend it without checking it out with the participants on both sides, as that would have been a one-sided intervention and not an effort to heal.

In one of the earliest meetings of my conversation with the Republican leadership I did raise this question of the "finesse," asking whether they would see this as simply robbing them of their means of protest or whether they would in fact welcome it as a way of separating the unproductive issue of prison conditions from the rest of their grievance. I would have thought that question would have required consultation among them, but instead I was given an immediate and unequivocal yes. They would welcome it as a way of ending a situation in the prison that was as volatile and destructive for them as it was for the British. From that time on I took to mentioning it to British MPs close to the Government

and to ranking civil servants as a possible way out of the impasse on any occasion that offered.

Through the late summer of 1980 and into October, two of the most important bishops of Northern Ireland, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, and Bishop Edward Daly of Derry, had a series of conversations with the Northern Ireland Secretary and his officials over the gathering crisis in the prisons. The fact that these conversations led to no break in the impasse, and that the long-scheduled departure of the Cardinal for an October Synod meeting in Rome was about to come without any preceding resolution of this threatening situation, brought the likelihood of a hunger strike escalation of the protest even closer.

About the time of the Cardinal's departure for Rome, the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace issued a statement in Dublin publicly calling for such an approach to the prison protest: making changes in the prison regime for all prisoners, as a matter of prison reform, without granting political or other distinctive status to the Republican prisoners as such. I wrote myself to Mr. Atkins on October 20th urging the same, in the belief that, if the protest was brought to the level of a hunger strike, attitudes would so harden that chances for any improvement in the whole situation of Northern Ireland would become far more remote. I understood well that the matter had been taken into the prisoners' own hands by this time, so that even the leadership of the Republican Movement no longer had it in their power to prevent a hunger strike. It was, incidentally, at this time also that I sent Mr. Atkins a copy of Paper IV, the appeal I had made in writing to the Republican Movement the previous April.

Decisions had doubtless already been made in the Northern Ireland Office by the time my letter arrived. Mr. Atkins announced on October 24th, following a meeting of the full British Cabinet, that all male convicted prisoners in Northern Ireland would from thenceforth wear, instead of the existing prison uniform, civilian-type clothing to be supplied by the prison authorities. In fact, the Secretary of State made two announcements on October 24th, and word was about that they represented two separate meetings of the Cabinet: the first was that male prisoners would wear civilian-type clothing (women prisoners were already wearing non-uniform clothing); and the second that this clothing would be supplied by the prison authorities. The Northern Ireland Secretary restated this decision in the House of Commons on October 27th, and it was the subject of statements by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, on October 28th and 30th.

The prisoners meanwhile began their hunger strike, rejecting this change in prison regime as too little. I believe myself that the change was far too timid, and an opportunity lost by the British Government to end the prison protest with dignity for all. A great deal of indignant comment was made by Northern Irish Protestant politicians and by Tory back-benchers on October 24th, between the first announcement of the decision about civilian-type clothing and the second that the clothing would be of prison issue. The appearance was given that the Cabinet had panicked, and knuckled under to this clamor.

The issues in the prison protest had swollen by this time from the original rejection by the Republican prisoners of prison uniform to a list, of which we heard incessantly all through the latter stages of the protest and the period of the hunger strikes themselves, of *five demands*. They were for:

1) civilian clothes;
2) exemption from prison work;
3) free association within the prison;
4) more visits and letters; and
5) the restoration of remission on sentences that had been lost through trhe protest itself.

The last two of those demands were bound to take care of themselves in any settlement, as the non-protesting prisoners already received as many visits and letters as the protesters were demanding, and the remission could be handled with relative ease. The free association demand was the most difficult of definition, as I eventually found when I became more closely involved with the prison crisis much later.

Response to my October 20th letter came on November 14th, not this time from Mr. Atkins but from Mr. Michael Alison (again through a private secretary), the Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office, responsible for prisons. It was a closely reasoned response, colored by the disappointment which was occasioned by the failure of the October 24th decision to head off the hunger strike. As Mr. Alison noted, the varieties of threat and pressure with which the prison protest was conducted did not make the consideration of penal reform measures any easier. It was his feeling that to grant the content of all five "demands" would create the gravest consequences for prison security, discipline and control, effectively handing over to the terrorist organizations ("terrorist" being his word for the insurgent organizations, consistently with normal British usage) responsibility for the day-to-day life of their members in prison. This practical control of the actual regime inside the prison by their own leadership had existed before, and was the reason why the Gardiner Committee had recommended the end of the "special category" status that insurgent prisoners of both Protestant and Catholic paramilitary groups had had from 1972 to 1975. To argue that the granting of the "five demands" was justified on humanitarian grounds, Mr. Alison felt, was to obscure that these would amount, if granted, to what the protesters and their supporters regarded as political status.

I remain convinced that a grievous tactical error was made by the Northern Ireland Office and the British Cabinet at this time. It was in the interest of all concerned, both the British Government and the Republicans, and the Northern Protestants as well, to put an end to the protest situation in the prisons. Unless one supposes, and I am quite unwilling to make this supposition, that the Government made its small gesture of prison reform in the hope of its being rejected and simply to put the Republicans in the wrong, then one must conclude that the decision of October 24th was an acknowledgement and acceptance by the Government that an end to the prison protest was its interest, provided it did not mean defeat and humiliation. Even at that time, without the more detailed knowledge thjat I acquired later of what would be entailed in various elements of the "five demands," I believed it would be possible to argue the toss on various items in the list and still come up with a far more substantial package of prison reforms than the Cabinet did. Before the hunger strike actually began, in late October of 1980, I believe that a package consisting of about one and a half of the five demands, a granting of civilian clothing of the prisoners' own and some quite moderate changes in the matter of prison work, would have ended the entire prison protest. Once the hunger strike was actually under way, it was clear that it would take more than that just to end the hunger strike itself, leaving the rest of the status quest as it was before. The Cabinet accepted the principal that any changes in prison regime should apply to all prisoners, not protesting prisoners alone, and should not amount to the granting of a different status. But then they tried fo do it too cheaply. That was the error.

I wrote back to Mr. Alison on November 27th, saying that much and trying to draw the effort further. Government had had bad luck, I felt, in what I interpreted as a genuine attempt to find a way out acceptable to both sides from an impasse which both they and the IRA wanted to escape. The "finesse" approach, trying to resolve the prison protest separately from all the other issues of conflict, had failed because too little was offered. I thought it no longer likely, in consequence, that the two levels of conflict, over the prison issues and over the wider socio-political issues, could be kept apart. The "finesse" had been a bright idea, possibly doomed to failure for just that reason, though I thought it could have worked if handled more generously. It would have pleased me no little if I could have come up with some other bright idea that promised to resolve the crisis, but I had none. Yet even if there were a bright idea, I felt a prior matter had to be established first before either side could be trusted with it.

It was necessary to test out, on both the British and the Republican sides, what people really wanted; whether, that is, they both really wanted a resolution of the prison crisis, or whether either or both really wanted the defeat and humiliation of the other. I believed then that both did want a resolution and had been disappointed of it by a tactical error. Later, in 1981, I was to conclude that this was no longer so, but that it had been at the time. Government, in its statements through late October and November and up to the time of the conclusion of this first series of hunger strikes, without deaths, on December 18th, kept stressing its openness to constant review of prison conditions and of its own reaction to recalcitrant prisoners, as had been urged by the European Commission on Human Rights. The flexibility appeared to be there. I was far less certain at the time of the Republicans' real desire for a resolution, but I was to find, each time I expected them to escalate their demands, that they always and consistently refrained from doing so. If each were fully resolved to seek settlement rather than vengeance, I felt, the bright ideas would be cheap by comparison, and would be found when they were needed.

What had become clearer to me by this time, though, was that the underlying conflict had descended to a level where it was intractable to piecemeal improvements. There is a rhetoric of conflicts. In the dispute between the Republican Movement and the British State, communication had broken down so far that there were no longer any verbal articulations of the conflict that amounted to any more than a cant recitation of old slogans. That left gestures as the only remaining form of communication, and all but the most violent gestures were progressively being eliminated. At that stage of a conflict, one cannot set first this piece and then that piece right, or resolve the issues one by one. Instead it is necessary to introduce new elements that will transform the whole. I could not spell this out at that time, but felt that the propositions I had made to the Republicans the previous April in my "Respectful Appeal" paper indicated the area in which such positive transforming elements could be found.

The hunger strike ended, or so it seemd, on December 18th. I was away in the United States at the time, making arrangements for my permanent return to my own country the following September, as I had planned to do since 1979. So it was long before I got enough sense of what had happened in the prison in mid-December to understand what went wrong. At the time, I was as relieved as anyone, glad there had been no deaths and believing, in consequence, that the polarization in the community would be easily enough healed. I thought that the hopeful initiatives that had marked the earlier part of 1980 could be resumed and would likely prosper. But the prison issue still festered, and much worse was yet to come.

A new element altogether now entered the Northern Irish political scene. For her semi-annual meeting with the Irish Prime Minister, the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, Mrs. Thatcher went to Dublin in January of 1981, bringing with her her Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, her Northern Ireland Secretary, Mr. Atkins, and her Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe. The two governments agreed to institute Joint Study Groups to examine "the totality of relations between Britain and Ireland," including inevitably, but in ways not spelled out in public, Northern Ireland.

There was good news and bad news in this announcement. In my own judgment, it was constructive to give some formal recognition to the real Irish stake in the future peace and social health of Northern Ireland, and it represented on Britain's part an effort to insert some of those positive new elements that, in my view, were necessary to transform the underlying conflict situation. But at the same time, the cryptic manner in which the whole agreement was phrased left the impression that Britain and Ireland were now about to make their own arrangements, from outside, on the future of Northern Ireland, and that the people of Northern Ireland would be left out of the decisions. I have never believed that the British Government would actually try to arrange a *Diktat* in that way for Northern Ireland, knowing as it does that it could never make such a decision stick without the consent of the Northern Irish community itself. But it did seem to me to be an atempt to threaten the Northern Irish, especially the Protestants, with the possibility of an externally reached agreement if they did not come up with some new thinking

themselves. After a year of the carrot, holding the wide internal consultations of 1980 in Northern Ireland, Britain seemed to be wielding a stick, even if not a very credible one. The Protestants were outraged, and the Rev. Ian Paisley quickly began his "Carson Trail" appearances, beginning with a dramatic paramilitary show, the midnight mobilization of 500 men in the Antrim hills, each brandishing not an actual gun but a piece of paper which was, so the invited audience of newsmen was assured, a legal gun license. Paisley continued with a series of public rallies in all parts of Northern Ireland reminiscent of Sir John Carson's meetings in the early part of the century, to mobilize Protestant resistance to this new British move.

The seeming settlement of the prison issue broke down over January, and by the beginning of February Bobby Sands, the IRA Commander in the Maze Prison who had agreed the end of the first hunger strike on December 18th, announced that he would himself begin a new hunger strike, the real one, on March 1st. I was quite convinced that the British Government, having new interests both in talks with Mr. Haughey and in withstanding the Paisley assault, would be implacable in a new hunger strike and would yield no ground at all. I went to Dublin on February 9th to meet Daithi Ó Conaill and Joe Cahill of the Provisional Sinn Fein, and argue the case for the more positive and political approach I had been urging since October of 1979, as an alternative to a renewed hunger strike, which I was convinced could bring nothing but harm. Returning to London that night, I wrote the following letter the next day as a summary of my part in that discussion. I include the letter here, as I consider it the equivalent of another of the numbered papers.

56

CENTRE OF CONCERN FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

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10th February, 1981

Mr. Daithi Ó Conaill
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Dear David,

I'm most grateful for the courteous way you and Joe Cahill received me and gave me a hearing yesterday. What I talked was far enough out of the familiar track that I ought to put it down on paper as a reference now.

I should declare my interest. You realise I am not partisan to yourselves, a Republic or a United Ireland. Nor am I partisan to Northern Protestant or British interests or aspirations. I have opinions about them which I see no reason to conceal from anyone, but am not about to make the decisions about any of these things. I am partisan to a just solution that will be seen as that by all parties and through that partisan to a real peace. And I have a steady interest in observing where dedicated people are hammering away uselessly at impregnable positions, and trying to find what alternatives there are that promise real progress.

Just now, I observed to you about the prospect of another hunger strike that it will gain nothing. A hunger strike means pressuring the British government to grant you something, and for two clear reasons they are not going to do it. The first is that Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Haughey have something planned between them (what it is they're not saying but I have an opinion) which is more important to them than you are. The second is that the British government is more threatened just now by the Paisley backlash than they are by your movement and its hunger strike.

I would agree that you were humiliated and made mugs by the end of the pre-Christmas hunger strike. I was away at the time it actually ended, so I don't know detail. But it is evident enough that your people agreed to end the strike on the understanding that there were benefits from that that never materialised. All the same, I feel that any new hunger strike now would be response to a past situation, not to the current situation that has changed in those two respects. Even in meeting that past situation, it would be planned as a response only to one part of the whole problematic you face, the internal situation in the prisons which is calculated

to 'criminalise' your people. On my hypothesis, that the British will not give in because of the other two factors, the only way you gain anything is in the stirring of the emotional pot that would result from actual deaths on the hunger strike. That pot-stirring would count for little in comparison with the emotions let loose by each of the other two things, the British initiative in going to Dublin and the Paisley initiative. In that it would be characteristic of your movement's current policy as I see it: paying extremely high prices for very small and fragile gains.

The other two factors deserve attention in their own right:

1. The Thatcher-Haughey arrangement, with the joint studies and the calculated lack of public information. I believe they are quite deliberately trying to throw the Prostestants off balance, giving the appearance that they are doing a deal, being in a position to deny it, and refusing to offer any clarification. The denials, I believe, are true enough, because I don't believe they have any real content to a deal. They have prepared between them a lot of wrapping paper, in the hope that sooner or later there will be a package to wrap in it, but they don't have the package as yet. I believe Paisley is quite right to object to this, and you should be very publicly supporting his objection to an effort to take the resolution of the political problem out of the hands of the people who will be affected by it. But more than that, you should be providing content for a package, not for a secret deal that would be undemocratic in this way, but ideas about what will really work between the two communities (in the North, in Ireland). You aren't in the position to provide the content of a package by yourselves, and shouldn't in fact do it other than jointly with the other people affected by it. But you are in a position to take the lead.

2. Paisley's initiative: the midnight review of troops and the new Ulster Covenant. This should be taken very seriously, not as an electioneering ploy or as a marching of people up the hill only to be marched down again, and I am sure the British government does take it that seriously despite disclaimers. It is a traditional blackmail, and one that no British government has yet failed to give in to. I take it for granted that Paisley has the details right, e.g. that each action and word is legal. He does plan things well. But I also suspect that he may have miscalculated on the major strategy on three counts:

a) He has redefined the conflict as one between himself with his followers (however many they may be) and the British government. I think that weakens him, and creates opportunity for you to take an altogether different line. True enough that every British government has always collapsed before this particular and very familiar attack. Mrs. Thatcher is a very stubborn woman, and my hunch is that she may stand up to it. However, I would place no reliance on that, but would calculate instead on the fact that Paisley has put himself and whatever part of the Protestant community he leads on a collision course with the British instead of with you.

b) He has calculated on the Republican Movement reacting with hysteria to his moves, and by doing so justifying him and delivering the Protestant public to his leadership. Part of his purpose is, of course, simply to create a counter-drama to your hunger-strike drama, and in that he is succeeding handily, but I believe his main concern is the Thatcher-Haughey arrangement which he wants to frustrate. I hope your movement has the sense and the stamina not to deliver him the hysteria he is counting on. As I wrote above, I believe he is right to object to the secretive and under-the-table character of whatever deal Thatcher and Haughey are cooking up or hoping to cook up, and in that you can easily support him. For you to support him, of course, would steal his thunder in a way I expect him to be totally unprepared for.

c) He is repeating the Carson show, with all sorts of pageant details that associate it with 1912-13, on the calculation that the Protestant community wil react just as it did in Carson's time. But the Protestants, knowing all about that show and all its sequelae, may just as easily decide that they have been through that and don't want a repeat. The show-business aspects of it -- brown suits and hats, signatures with broad flourish to anachronous language -- work against people's taking this for reality. And a show designed -- by Carson in another era -- for viewing from a distance with little competition from other distractions, is now to be played on television, with all the human warts showing, and in competition with all the other slick productions television offers. He runs the risk of the whole thing's becoming funny to the people it is aimed at. I would not be willing to place bets on whether he will carry off this aspect of his gamble or not, but I would recognise that he is teetering on the edge of a precipice.

All of this, I believe, while it is more important than anything going on in your present strategy, certainly than another hunger strike, and hence means that a hunger strike will get you no commensurate gains for the price you pay, creates opportunity for a quite different strategy which could put the initiative decisively in your hands. If you are attracted to it, I would hope you do not make the mistake the British government made recently over its changes in prison dress policy: namely trying to do it cheaply with little moves that turned out to be inadequate. A new strategy would have to be visible, astonishing, and create a different situation. I think the current stage of the overall conflict process is critical, much too serious to allow you the luxury of any policy based on partial response to just some one part of the problematic. Changing the internal conditions of the prison, even if you could accomplish it as I don't believe you can by a hunger strike now, is just not serious enough or important enough to measure up to the current crisis.

Opportunity: Proposals.

I presuppose here the 'Respectful Appeal' paper I wrote to the Republican Movement last April, also the three other papers I wrote to the Northern Ireland Office (on the British Army, the political options and the Northern Ireland economy) as read, also the four-factor analysis I am accustomed to make of communal

conflicts, which you have seen applied to Northern Ireland and, by way of comparison, to Israel/Palestine, in the two Month articles I left you, of August '77 and July '79.

In view of the changed situation, quite different now because of the two factors (Thatcher-Haughey, Paisley) we have been discussing, you could now declare, on your own initiative, an amnesty. This need not be the same thing as a total cease-fire. It could extend as far as you chose to extend it, though it should be with commitments not to go back on what you have once granted. The word is evocative, but also accurate in designating something whose extent you can determine in this way. The thing itself will have the more dramatic appeal, and shift the ground of the whole situation, the more widely you extend it. You are in a position to do that now because a different confrontation has been initiated now, that between Paisley and the British, which frees you to become constructive outside observers; and because a political process has been initiated, between Thatcher and Haughey, which is very under-handed as it stands, but which can be removed from the under-handed realm if you as well as all others who will be affected by it step in to take an active part -- designing the package that can be wrapped in all that wrapping paper they've prepared.

The amnesty would affect first of all the people in the H-blocks and Armagh Prison, who will not then go on hunger strike. There are more important things to do with and in prisons. The prisons have always been the universities of your movement. They should be so now not only for the traditional militancy purposes but for the 'peace command' purposes (to use the short-hand language of my 'Respectful Appeal' paper) that would now become far more important. A training campaign and planning process that took place in the prisons should become so important that it would be the center for comparable planning activity that involved others in your movement and your community, and why not the other community as well and the other community's prisoners. You could well get to the stage at which, instead of negotiating compassionate leave to bring prisoners temporarily out of the prisons, you would be negotiating access to the prison and its population for non-prisoners to take part in this process. As I mentioned already in my 'Respectful Appeal' paper, I would be more than glad myself to take part in such a training programme in the prisons, would not interfere in the planning process itself but be a technical resource. I know that my old friend and colleague Richard Hauser, who has my confidence and is as much for these proposals, would be as willing to help. But that is your own business, whether you would rather do such things, if at all, with or without such outside assistance.

Next affected by the amnesty would be the Protestant paramilitary groups. Violence between you and them has always been a shadowy area, cloaked with many denials and more often than not kept to a great deal of restraint. Currently the UDA is split badly between those who want to 'counter-terrorise' you and the politicals. Andy Tyrie, who has been trying to hold the ring, is being pushed towards the militarist side, courting a government ban

that would give them a more macho image, let them take responsibility for their killings instead of assigning them to flags of convenience like the UFF, and thus bring them in more recruits, and those of the most venomous kind. Your amnesty move could tip the scales here, make the UDA a serious discussion partner for yourselves and make it possible at last for the UDA to admit to talking with you. There is not really going to be serious progress towards a just situation unless the hard men of the two community sides are able to talk.

Your amnesty would further apply to civilians -- until recently it has not been your policy to kill civilians, and that is a great shocker when it does happen, as in the cases of the Stronges, discrediting your moral position and provoking retaliation in kind. It could include security forces to exactly the degree you would define in advance, or in advance of each new step. You know enough of my own stance to realise I would want all of this at once. The public and astonishing effect of your amnesty declaration would be the stronger the more widely it applied.

You had a resistance to this amnesty proposal when I first mentioned it in terms of your experience of the 1972 cease-fire, in which you relied on a bona fides from the British government and Army which you believe was, on specific serious counts, betrayed. I would distinguish this proposal from the 1972 cease-fire situation on two counts: a) the amnesty is specifically different from a cease-fire in that its extent is definable by yourselves at every point; and b) you would not be relying in any way on promises from or bona fides of the British or anyone else. The initiative would be wholly yours, even in the sense that it was declared regardless of the response or non-response of the other side(s). It would have to be understood and declared that, if the others failed to respond in kind but instead committed new atrocities, you would not retaliate, and you would have to make it clear if anyone did retaliate that it was not you.

However, the question is one for you to settle by a weighing of pros and cons that you would surely do among yourselves at a far deeper level than I could suggest to you. As to whether it would be or could be taken as a sign of weakness in the face of Paisley's or the British government's threats, I feel confident myself that it would be and be publicly interpreted by yourselves and others as a well-calculated response to a strikingly different situation created by the Thatcher-Haughey move and the Paisley confrontation with Britain.

Its effect, for yourselves, would be to cast you startlingly in the role of initiators while throwing both the Paisley-style forces and the British into confusion. It would take them a great deal of time to frame any appropriate response to your new kind of activity, and then their only response that promised reward would

be to cooperate with you in work on which you had taken and would retain the lead. This is an enormous reversal of roles, and if you examine it carefully I think you will find that the various parts fit into place and the whole works. I would think it quite reasonable that you should distrust me, knowing how anti-violence I am, on a proposal which involves decrease and possible elimination of violence rather than its increase, and it is quite true that I would not make proposals, even if I were to see my way coolly through them, that would increase the violence. Still, if you examine this from all sides, I feel confident that the doors I have described as closed -- notably the door to any sort of progress through a new hunger strike -- are in fact closed, and the the door I am pointing to does lead to a startling different and more advantageous situation.

There is an element pretty surely implied in this that I know meets your strong resistance in the Republican Movement, and that is that it would mean talking a wide variety of political options, including, as a possible outcome, Northern Ireland as a separate entity, presumably under some form of condominium or co-guarantorship, at least for a transitional period. You have your folk-memory of how the Stormont system worked against the Catholics as a community through the fifty years that it was practically a separate entity, in that the British Parliament never interfered in it. I would argue back that that happened when the pressure cooker was turned on, the rival claims to territorial possession from Britain and Ireland, and that a different situation would grow up when the pressure cooker was turned off, namely the preemptive claims from both sides renounced. I also believe that any reconciliation produced within the North by this sort of plan would inevitably have effect in transforming the Republic, and that the reconciliation would thus be a uniting factor for all of Ireland.

However, that is relatively useless speculation for the time being. It is much more important to see that at present there is a really serious crisis of constitutional order in the North, brought to a pitch by Paisley's midnight antics but latent in the situation over some time now. The North is at a point where there is no going back to a constitutional status quo ante <u>except</u> by one course: that is that there should be such total intransigeance on your own part that every alternative channel that had real possibility in it was stopped and there was therefore no alternative to going back the old way. You have Paisley in a situation in which he is right and deserves your support when he points to the unfairness of a Thatcher-Haughey deal that would leave his people without a voice. (And of course, yours as well; whatever it is Thatcher and Haughey are trying to cook up, you can be sure it is something that leaves you out.)

The internal logic of the situation is that the North has come to this crisis point, but there is nothing anywhere in the system that requires anything to alter in the Republic. You recognise yourselves that the Republic as it stands is not a society into which the Northern Protestants can be run: it doesn't satisfy you either.

The Republic as it stands is a very imperfect realisation of something that was conceived in Belfast in 1798. All sorts of things have changed since, and we no longer live in a situation that is response to a spanking new revolution in France. But it may well be that the form of a new society that is going to be satisfying to you and to the Protestants of the North -- the pre-condition of anything that is going to work -- also has to come in the 1980s from the North.

I don't ask that you accept this as a political nostrum for Ireland. What I would want to see, and consider as important to any such overall initiative as I propose, is that you have open as many of the political options as can genuinely be open. Your most important talking partner will be the UDA. It is not workable that their cherished and well examined plan should be dismissed from the outset, nor is that the only plan that deserves real study. As I told you, and as will be the theme of the next paper I write for the Northern Ireland Office, I believe that, of the various options available (within the British orbit, within the Republic's, within the North as a distinct entity, presumably with guarantor supervision from both Britain and Ireland), the options that work within the British orbit should now really be written off, and it is a responsibility of Britain towards the Northern community to make that clear. That, however, is an area of options that the UDA politicals do not take as a serious proposition anyway. If there were to be planning proposals shared between you and them, none of the possibilities seen as really open to either side should be ruled out of court from the start. I believe strongly enough myself in some sort of separate entity as an appropriate solution that I rather expect the UDA groups to demonstrate to you its strength. But that is a bit of prejudice on my part on which I may well be wrong, and a serious examination among yourselves would clarify that. The UDA does at least represent a determined striving for self-sufficiency of a total Northern community, and you know how that translates into your own language.

The most serious questions, in the meantime, have more to do with unemployment, in which Northern Ireland shares, at worst, not only in the general economic recession but the special British malaise. There is a picture that haunts me, which was given once to my friend Richard Hauser by Danilo Dolce down in Sicily. It is of a toothless old crone, wrinkled, emaciated, down-trodden, wrapped in her shawl. The woman was actually aged 35, had a husband who was a Gastarbeiter in Germany, who had little enough himself there, and who returned just once a year to give her a new baby and returned to Germany again. There in Germany, he had a mistress, a young sex-bomb also aged 35, as the one comfort in what was otherwise misery for him too. Dolce had her picture too. The thing is familiar enough for Ireland, as it was the way you lived your 18th and 19th centuries. Mother Machree was precisely that poor Sicilian crone, and this is what the logic of the present economic situation is bringing back to the North. That that should happen is worse than any of the things you are fighting, and you yourselves in danger of becoming

a sort of Mafia in all this, i.e., a group still hopelessly fighting for unwinnable causes through the centuries until the only stance left is that of an anti-government living off the land and discovering new ways of profitting from such a situation as the inevitable corruption sinks in.

I don't want to leave you with a depressing picture. The main picture I see is one of opportunity, in which you could quite suddenly be the most creative and accepted party in Ireland, with the others all trying to get some share in your lead and follow your initiative. I'm available for whatever help or consultation you might want for that purpose. As I told you, I will be about in London only this week, and in Israel/Palestine for the two weeks 14-28 February, which brings me up to the time the hunger strike is projected for, March 1st. I will see that this letter gets to you by a channel that won't be interfered with but quickly, and that still leaves little time for further contact before I am off to the Middle East. It is of course among your own people that any course like this would have to be weighed and decided and any outside resource like myself would be an improbable addition during the process. However, if while I am away you wanted a resource person with this kind of thinking, though in a different personal mode, I could genuinely recommend Richard Hauser, who does know what is discussed here. His London phone is 834 2457. Other than him and my two Jesuit colleagues in this centre, on whom I've tried out this thinking, no others know what is talked about here, since I realise that if you were to undertake any such initiatives as these you would need the element of surprise.

My greetings and thanks to Joe Cahill as to yourself,

sincerely,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

BRIDGING PASSAGE AFTER LETTER TO DAITHI Ó CONAILL

The hunger strike went ahead. I would stand by all I wrote to Daithi Ó Conaill in February, although the added element of Bobby Sands' election as a Westminster MP before his death on hunger strike changed the situation out of recognition from what I had anticipated without it. That a by-election should occur in so sensitive a constituency as Fermanagh-South Tyrone just at the time when the hunger strike was in progress was a windfuall for the IRA. It changed everything, and made what would otherwise have been a dead-end protest for the Republicans into a propaganda triumph.

During March I met several times with persons in the leadership of the Republican Movement in Belfast. The letter of February to Daithi Ó Conaill was the text for these discussions. Belfast Republicans were so much preoccupied with the Sands election campaign at the time that they were distracted, in these conversations, from considering anything beyond the predictable election victory. Nevertheless, I thought his winning the election would provide the right setting to end the hunger strike, and I hoped this would be the occasion to embark on the sort of course I had been suggesting. The expectation was quite widespread, in fact, that Sands' foreseeable victory in the election would mean the end of the hunger strike. The victory came, and was much celebrated, but the hunger strike went on.

On April 30th, shortly before Sands' death, I spotted a Letter to the Editor in *The Guardian*, signed by a group of eight supporters of the hunger strike. I read the letter as a plea from the Republican leadership for a last minute settlement. I wrote at once to Mr. Atkins, interpreting this letter, in the light of what I had been hearing in many conversations with Republicans in Belfast, as offering a workable resolution before there would be a first death in the hunger strike. (Living in London, I avoided any postal delay by simply carrying any such letter around to the Northern Ireland Office by hand.) By this time, many intermediaries had been trying to bring the strike to an end. The Secretary of State answered my April 30th letter only on June 5th, in coureteous terms but in a way aimed mainly at damage control. By then, there had been four deaths.

In addition, there had been enormous propaganda pressures mounted both by the IRA and the Government. These, I believed, served only to exacerbate the conflict and made no constructive contribution. In particular, I saw virulent attacks made on the Northern Ireland Catholic bishops, particularly on Cardinal Ó Fiaich, in the British press, and a mounting pressure on British Catholic moral theologians to speak their piece in defense of Government policy by condemning the hunger strikers as simple suicides. That sort of politicization of moral teaching prompted me, in May, to one of my rare ventures in actual publishing, and I wrote the following article, reprinted here from *The Tablet* of 30th May, 1981, in hope of putting an end to that particular phenomenon.

to rewrite medical textbooks seems exaggerated. One psychiatrist declared that if Sutcliffe was sane, either Sutcliffe was a very good actor or he himself was a bad psychiatrist. The majority of the jury may have concluded that Sutcliffe was a very good actor. There are a number of possible explanations. If it be said, how can a jury decide which is the right one, the question must be asked, who else, doctors, lawyers, theologians even — on the assumption that Sutcliffe may be possessed of the devil? When, inevitably, public opinion was so deeply concerned, especially in West Yorkshire, it would have seemed presumptuous on the part of the lawyers and the doctors to decide what was the appropriate verdict, apart from the logical inconsistency in Sutcliffe's saying — as by his plea of guilty of seven attempted murders he did — that he was responsible for forming the intention to kill when he did not succeed, but not responsible when he did succeed. It is curious that the judge, with no political experience, seems to have weighed the importance of the factor of public opinion more accurately than did the attorney general with his years of parliamentary experience. For both of them it must have been a desperately difficult decision.

Medical research into, and if appropriate treatment of, Sutcliffe's mental condition will not and should not end with his trial. No doubt, too, the Catholic chaplain concerned will not fail to take note of the fact that Sutcliffe is a lapsed Catholic. A trial of this character is bound to leave some imprint on our legal system, and without wishing to exaggerate the importance of the truism that justice must be seen to be done, reliance on which sometimes leads to the appearance being preferred to the reality, the case underlines that respect for public opinion should play its part both in the decision when to prosecute and in the decision when to accept, or not, pleas of guilty to lesser charges than the ones originally put forward by the prosecution. There is no hope of proper respect for the law being restored unless there is public confidence in its processes.

As for the question whether the Yorkshire police merit criticism because Sutcliffe was not charged earlier, all that it seems just or wise to say now is that there is surely a further alternative to laying charges prematurely or taking no action. Where a senior detective had pointed to a number of clues leading to Sutcliffe would it not have been possible to maintain a closer surveillance over his movements — and so to have saved at least three lives? It is to be hoped that there will be a thorough enquiry into this aspect of the case, and that it will not be conducted exclusively by police officers.

N. Ireland in moral focus

Raymond E. Helmick

With the death of each hunger-striker tension grows in Northern Ireland and polarisation increases almost everywhere. Moreover "we are witnessing a mobilisation of Catholic moral teaching for an essentially political purpose." Here is a patient attempt to clarify issues and offer principles for solution by an American Jesuit who is a member of the Centre of Concern for Human Dignity — a joint venture of the English and Irish Jesuits.

In all the moral discussion raised by the hunger strikes in Northern Ireland, whether this is to be defined as suicide or not, whether it is a means of violence or of non-violence (as people always thought when Gandhi did it), one fact should stand out clear to all of us. We are witnessing a mobilisation of Catholic moral theology for an essentially political purpose. Moral teaching is sought as a way of condemning and discrediting the hunger strikers, or as an apologetic for them.

What does all this accomplish? Condemnations evidently do not affect the strikers themselves: they even get described as "British theology." The Irish communal experience has dealt with this question long since and come to a much more qualified judgment. Those who do not accept or see the qualifications are reckoned not to have understood or appreciated this important communal experience. The net effect of the condemnations is, therefore, to make those who reject the hunger strikers feel more righteous, and thus to increase the polarisation.

We arrive at this most unsatisfying result by defining the moral question as narrowly as possible, and this is done for purposes of political controversy. Surely the Church or any other source of serious moral authority — including the community conscience and the consciences of all real participants in the confrontation — has the responsibility to state an objective moral norm, and to uphold this even while recognising the likely subjective good faith of persons who violate that norm. But nothing useful is accomplished by defining the bounds of the judgment, as is being done in this case, according to considerations of political advantage. We have to broaden the moral focus and find the level at which teaching on moral responsibility gets to the centre of the conflict and has therefore a genuinely ethical, rather than a propagandistic, function. It is in that context that I suggest the following.

Hunger strikes have generally been judged, despite the opposition we have to suicide, as a means of non-violence, even "the supreme" means of non-violence, rather than as a means of violence. Gandhi is so judged for his full dozen hunger strikes, each of which was intended to go to the death. He worked in terms, not of Catholic moral teaching, but of Hindu teaching that was even more opposed to the taking of life than ours. When people respond differently to the hunger strike of Sands, Hughes, McCreesh and O'Hara and others from the way they respond to that of Gandhi, or to the self-sacrificial deaths of Captain Oates or Jan Palach, the different response is not to the hunger strike itself but to the context and purpose of these hunger strikes in particular.

Gandhi's hunger strikes occurred in a context of non-violence. Most were carefully designed elements in non-violent protest against British policy in India. His twelfth and last, in Calcutta, was to prevent the two communities, Hindu and Muslim, from falling upon one another. Neither wanted its cause to be stained with responsibility for his death, so he succeeded. The Northern Ireland hunger strikes, by contrast, occur in a context of violence. Some of us, myself included, judge this from a stance that is radically opposed to the use of violence for political aims, but most people concerned in this question, in the two Northern Ireland communities, in British Government and public, are not basically pacifist in their judgments for or against these hunger strikes. They are judging them in terms of their approval or disapproval of the hunger strikers' aims. Nevertheless, the fact that these hunger strikes happen in a context of continuing violence, that soldiers and police and rioters and innocent civilian bystanders get hurt and killed in the growing conflict over the hunger strikers themselves, that the stance of the hunger strikers is itself an endorsement not only of a political cause but of this very context of violence in which we perceive their action colours our response, moral and human, to it.

Republican cause

The Republican Movement is advancing a cause which in fact we must recognise as a legitimate political one. They see an historic injustice against "Ireland," an injustice worked by the partition. We may judge their concept "Ireland" a rather abstract one, as we do most nationalisms nowadays, but the legitimacy of pursuing their position, at least politically, is unquestionable. Much of the provocation that has brought them to violence is in the political intransigence that consistently denies that there is any legitimacy to this at all. Far more concretely, the Republican Movement addresses itself to a long-continuing injustice done to a minority community in the North itself, and seeks to establish justice for these people. Restoration of justice is the key concept in the traditional just-war theory. If the other conditions for the use of force are present — genuine exhaustion of any alternative means, proportionality of the harm done by force to the good to be accomplished, and so on — this is the critical test as to whether the use of force is justified or not.

And this is exactly where the Republican Movement falls down. There is another political cause to be advanced, that of the Northern Unionist-Protestant community, which has its own equally unquestionable legitimacy. The Republican Movement, truly, has never in this current conflict taken any adequate cognisance of the rights in justice of this community, of the necessity that their voice be heard, their participation secured, their justice guaranteed in whatever is to come out of the conflict. Hence, in my own judgment at least, the Republican Movement is striving partly to advance a justice, and partly to impose an injustice on another people. They have not done their sums, and so fail on justification for use of force in their cause. I say this with genuine respect for the integrity and ultimate honesty of the people who have dedicated their life to this cause, and most particularly of those who have so dramatically put their life on the line in the hunger strikes. But the cause, while a legitimate one to advance in political conflict with an opposing and also legitimate one, is radically defective as a justification for violent action to impose it on an unwilling community.

There is a responsibility here for the Republican Movement which it simply has not met. The one most necessary thing to happen in relation to their cause is that they participate themselves, in such a way as to bring about Protestant participation as well, in the building of a society that is satisfying both to them and to the Protestants. They tend to define their fight as being with the British. (Ambiguity: are the Northern Ireland Protestants British or Irish, is the Republican Movement's programme for them expulsion or cooperation?)

By their hunger strikes, the Republicans have succeeded in defining a conflict as between themselves and Westminster's authority, in a way that leaves all the Northern Irish politicians, Catholic as well as Protestant, outside. The Republicans are winning hands down at this issue, as most of the world outside Britain sees far more clearly than it can be perceived from within the context of Britain's own anguish. But the Republicans have defined the issue wrongly. It is not an issue between them and an outside oppressor. It is between them and their neighbours. Their stunning success in the hunger-strike campaign brings them no nearer at all, in fact much farther away, from the building of a justice that will apply both to them and to their neighbours. That is the crux of the issue.

British conflict

On the British Government's side, and in the British public's sense of the issues, there is a comparable failure either to meet or even to define Britain's core responsibilities in the matter of Northern Ireland. I say comparable failure rather than equal failure because there have been some efforts, however timid and after however long a period of inaction, by the British Government in the last year and a half to meet the central responsibility of fostering the growth of a reconciled community, while on the Republican Movement's side I have yet to see any effort at all to come to terms with the rights of their neighbours.

However, both the British Government and that small part of the British public that pays attention to the question have two competing definitions of the central priority of policy on Northern Ireland that interfere with one another. On the one hand, there is the priority purpose of building, or helping to be built, a new social-political structure satisfying and reconciling to the two communities. Sometimes this is conceived in narrow and timid terms of minimal changes in the existing structures, sometimes in broader terms of responding to the maximum extent to the aspirations of both communities. But whether broadly or narrowly defined the concept does periodically reemerge as a definition of British responsibility for Northern Ireland. On the other hand, the idea of "defeating the IRA" has a competing attractiveness, for both British Government and public, that quite critically confuses the definition of policy priorities.

The IRA is not the problem in Northern Ireland. It is a symptom. To define the IRA as the problem is effectively to say that there is nothing else wrong in Northern Ireland than a breakdown of law and order. That is simply not true, as the British Government and public know quite well at those intermittent moments when they see the policy priority in terms of building a new and more just society in the place. Concentration on the "defeat of the terrorists" simply short-circuits that purpose of building the new thing. In saying this I do not quarrel at all with the need for government to protect all its citizens from violence. But that is quite another thing from defining as policy the defeat of an insurgent group instead of the meeting of the political challenge which its insurgence represents.

Central priority

It is by reverting to this alternative definition of its policy priority, that of defeating the IRA, even in the midst of a carefully planned (though still timid) effort to generate some justice and socio-political progress in Northern Ireland, that Britain has got into this terrible fix which the hunger strikes represent for its policy. This is presented, both in Ireland and on the world stage, as Britain's "intransigence" over the hunger strikes, the "we will not be moved" attitude. In fact it is something much worse. It is a failure to meet the central responsibility that Britain still has in Northern Ireland, to foster the kind of new society that will satisfy both communities. That is not easy, as everyone will have noticed over these last twelve or 60 or many hundreds of years. But it certainly cannot be done if there is this lack of clarity about what the central policy priority really is.

Both Britain and the Republican Movement recognise, in their more lucid moments, their actual inability to defeat the other militarily. That both keep reverting to military victory as a pleasantly diverting dream reflects the difficulty each side has in defining its priorities. It also represents a grievous failure on the part of each to face up to the responsibility that goes with the honest commitment each has to this conflict.

In fact, for either Britain or the Republican Movement, victory in this military sense would actually be the defeat of its real purpose. The Republicans could not live with the fact of a defeated population of Protestants, dispirited and embittered and hating their society forever. The result would be that the building of their new society, the thing they like to call "the Republic" in blithe disregard of the repugnance their Protestant neighbours have for that term, would be made permanently impossible for them, unless they were to take on themselves and their Republic the lasting guilt of the rejection of a people and mass expulsion of population that would effectively be genocide. That is not what the Republican Movement is there for, and they know it very well. For Britain, military victory over the IRA would have the shaming result that the whole issue would be postponed, left to be "solved" by some other government in the future for whom the next round of the "troubles" would be even worse.

Life not death

I do not offer these judgments of the real responsibility of the contending sides as a moralising weapon with which to thump either or both sides. Using the moral arguments for that sort of purpose has clouded the whole moral discussion of the hunger strikes. I see these considerations of the broader moral focus rather as a tool for defining priorities and responsibilities of both sides, a criterion to judge if each is realistically and responsibly meeting the existing challenge. There is no dignity, as I see it, in trying to impugn and discredit the good faith of young men who have gone through such an excruciating death ordeal as these hunger strikers. We all know that for those committed to their cause, and even for the wider public that is positively against their cause, they will remain heroic figures of resistance. There is in fact, as I would see it, genuine goodwill and commitment to justice, even if often mistaken and blinkered in the ways we have just been discussing, both in these men of the Republican dream and in the British who confront them. The hunger strikers' agony and effort, like the agony they bring on their neighbours, makes it in fact more difficult than ever for any of the participants in this tragedy to see and respond to these qualities in their adversaries. If this is, as it must be, the true purpose of their effort and that of their movement, then their thrust must eventually be for life rather than death, for reconciliation rather than convicting their antagonists of wrong. That has to be the policy responsibility of Britain as well.

BRIDGING PASSAGE AFTER *TABLET* ARTICLE

The *Tablet* article had its public effect of fairly stopping the effort to enlist moralists' opinions as partisan weapons on the hunger strike. Tom Burns, Editor of *The Tablet*, provided that shortly after the article appeared it was the discussion theme at the "Tablet Table," a dinner gathering he hosted once each month for a considerable gathering of publicists, MPs and other persons in public life. That meeting was held on June 4th, and entailed a couple of hours of questions and discussion.

But what had been said of the ambiguities both Government and Republicans clung to in defining their policy priorities had been handled much too cursorily in the published article. I owed it to both to write privately developing that theme. Paper V that follows is the way I sought to fulfill that responsibility toward the Government. I delivered it to Mr. Artkins' office on June 23rd, and I had more to say, about the weighting of the political options available for Northern Ireland. The paper on that theme, Paper VI, was ready June 30th, and I brought it directly over to the Northern Ireland Office too, without waiting for the Secretary's response to Paper V.

A paper addressed to the Republicans and expanding on what I had published in *The Tablet* was still owing. That was eventually to be Paper VII, but other events intervened before I was to write it in September.

68

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NORTHERN IRELAND PAPER V: Major Lines of Policy

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
June 1981

In an article published in The Tablet for 30th May, 1981, 'Northern Ireland in Moral Focus,' I argued that both the British Government and the Republican Movement (as the Provisional IRA and its Sinn Fein wing choose to be called) faced major ambiguities in the definition of their central policy priorities. These problems of definition, in my view, make it effectively impossible for either to meet the central responsibilities they have accepted in committing themselves, I believe in good faith on either side, to the present conflict.

A copy of that article accompanies this paper. The article is aimed at a separate popular issue of only transitory importance, namely the political effort to mobilise Catholic moral teaching to discredit or to support the hunger strikers in Northern Ireland, and brought in these considerations of major policy as a way of widening the moral focus. I owe it to both British Government and the Republican Movement to examine these issues of major priority without the trammels of that sort of journalistic controversy. This paper will concern itself mainly with British policy, though it will touch on the major policy issues and problems of definition of the Republican Movement and the Northern Ireland Loyalsit community. In due course copies will be made available to the Republican Movement, and copies of parallel material addressed to the Republican Movement will also be made available to Government.

'Defeat of the IRA' as British Government Policy.

In a paper of January, 1980, titled 'Northern Ireland Paper I: The British Army,' I had occasion to discuss (pages 1-3) 'Sources of Confusion on the Army's Role.' Wrapped up in several other levels of indetermination, most of them by now irretrievable failures of role definition in the earlier stages of the Army's task in support of the civil power since 1969, there remained a central confusion: whether the Army was now in Northern Ireland for its original purpose of defending the Catholic-Nationalist population from attack by its heavily armed neighbours, or whether its task is the defeat of the IRA. The defence of the Catholic population is, of course, practical task emerging from the more widely defined role of the Army in protecting community peace and safety in a communal conflict, as it

is the weaker party that needs protection from the stronger. That the Army's task, in this more broadly defined role of protecting community peace and safety, includes protection of the civilian Protestant-Loyalist population against attack by Republican insurrectionary forces, as preeminently in the border areas of Fermanagh and South Armagh, somewhat obscures this distinction. A confusion between the Army's conception of its role as community protection or as defeat of an insurrection remains, however, a major blockage to effective use of the Army as an instrument of policy, and a reason to replace it, as soon as can responsibly be done, by more appropriate forces, as was argued in my January 1980 paper. The prospect of being able to do that has become far more remote over the last six to eight months, while the prison hunger strikes have been going on. That regression is one index of the failure of Government policy over issues that could be seen with relative clarity eighteen months ago.

This is not the place to reargue the issues of that January 1980 paper, which remain basically the same despite the now larger scale of the crisis. I raise it only because it models, in miniature, what has now shown itself as a lack of definition in the central priorities of overall Government policy on Northern Ireland. At the time of writing that paper on the Army, I would not have thought that lack of definition in priorities was so crucial an element, or capable of becoming so fundamental a road-block to any sort of progress in Government's political programme. By now, having seen how the development of the prison crisis has created a political quagmire capable of swallowing up every effort at creating community consensus about any of the outstanding issues of the Northern Ireland conflict, political, social, constitutional or sectarian, I begin to understand that the same kind of unexamined contradiction in Government's conception of its central responsibility in Northern Ireland is the key to the problem. This was true in January 1980 when I wrote my paper on the Army, and I did not then see it. So I can hardly pass judgment on Government for not conceiving things in these terms at that time either.

The contradiction is between a conception of British responsibility as essentially about creating new conditions in Northern Ireland capable of overcoming the long-standing lack of a consensual basis for the society there, and a competing conception of British responsibility as essentially about the defeat of insurgency in the Northern Ireland Province of the United Kingdom. There are in theory, and there have been concretely in the course of events over these last twelve years, many buffers in the way of making these two concepts a radical contradiction. But in their pure form these two are as contradictory as the distinction between meeting a fundamental political grievance and suppressing the basic expression of it. The events of the last six to eight months have pitched Government, much against its inclination and, I believe, without responsible officials quite understanding how it happened, into an extreme choice of a 'defeat the IRA' policy, which becomes effectively a suppressive

policy just at the moment when the IRA most successfully defines itself, in the eyes of a wide public, as the spearhead of political grievance.

That the IRA's public success in so defining itself rests on vast areas of ambiguity and sometimes trumpery, that it largely disqualifies itself for that role by its lack of genuine political thinking, that it suffers itself, much as the British Government does, from an unexamined contradiction about its own central policy responsibility (all of which I would argue myself, but in a separate paper, addressed to the Republican Movement) may be quite true. It does not alter the fact that the British Government has let itself be cornered into a political position that makes the attainment of its real primary responsibility in Northern Ireland, action to promote the building of a consensual society, quite beyond its reach. If the Government were to achieve what it defines as its basic aim when in its other mood, namely the deafeat of the IRA, it would have succeeded in making the whole situation of Northern Ireland non-urgent, fit to be postponed for much later consideration when it became urgent again (as indeed it would). It would thus, in its very success, have defeated its own real priority, the consensual society. So long as the Government defines the IRA as the problem, it denies by implication, an implication that grows stronger and more absolute the stronger and more absolute is the condemnation of the IRA itself, that the problem is something quite other, of which the presence and activities of the IRA are a consequence and manifestation. And to exactly the same extent, Government makes itself incapable of defining its own policy priority as the setting right of the real problem, namely the non-consensual State.

It would be much more pleasant and an easier situation in which to design policy if the IRA itself had done its sums, got its priorities right and were clearheadedly pursuing justice for the whole of Irish or Northern Irish society. Instead, the IRA pursues the rights and restitution of justice for one part of the society while remaining blind and uncomprehending to the rights and needs of another, effectively seeking to impose another grave injustice in place of the one it seeks to overturn. I hear regular assertions that the Government is relatively undemanding of the Loyalist community and society that they demonstrate their Britishness or even their human deserts by the fairness and democracy with which they deal with their Catholic-Nationalist neighbours. I believe this is generally true despite strenuous efforts of British governments from 1969 to 1974 and to some extent even after to set fairness standards in Northern Irish society, but I recognise that this purblind outlook of the IRA is a great blockage to any such policy. This paper should not get lost in details of policy, as a subsequent paper will treat of those. But there is no chance of British Government evolving coherent major lines of policy while this unexamined contradiction in the defining of central Government responsibility remains at the core of the discussion.

The Prison Issue: Fulcrum of the Policy Confusion.

When the present Conservative Government came into office it initiated a new search for political consensus in Northern Ireland through a set of carefully designed conferences. The initiative was more than welcome, as it followed dispirited years of political inaction after the failure of earlier efforts. There were reasons to hope for genuine progress because of significant though submerged changes in the underlying political situation, as I commented at length in my March 1980 paper, 'Northern Ireland Paper II: Options and Who Should Choose.' An ungenerous opinion was then current that Government was merely going through the motions in order to appease foreign critics, especially Irish-American politicians in the United States. I judged that a false interpretation and credited the Government, and still do, with a serious intention to get at the root issues of Northern Ireland.

That effort can be criticised as too timid in scope, and I will in fact so criticise it in a subsequent paper, but without impugning its bona fides. I commented in my March 1980 paper that a fine balance had to be maintained between protecting the conference meetings from direct public scrutiny through the media, which would have made it impossible for the participants to talk directly, and letting the matter of them percolate through all levels of the community. This was necessary because none of the participating political leaders had authority (as the participants in the then recent Lancaster House conference had had) to negotiate for a following, but would simply be rejected as leaders if they agreed to things their communities had not already accepted. On balance, this fine regulation of privacy and disclosure was not successfully managed. The community at large did not hear enough of what was happening, the politicians themselves behaved with a timidity that accorded realistically with the fact that they had no community mandate, and the public concluded that nothing was happening. I think the public was mistaken on this, and that some significant results could be discerned from the necessarily slow process, though a lot has been destroyed through the subsequent prison drama.

Through all this effort, the Government kept a relatively low military profile. A GOC and a Chief Constable of high integrity were restoring the reputation of the security forces for fairness and the notion of defeating IRA insurgency through Army/Police repression seemed very profitably dismissed. This sensible policy was followed despite the major provocations of the Mountbatten murder and Warrenpoint that had first greeted the new Government, and the assassination of Mr. Airey Neave, shadow spokesman on Northern Ireland, before the election that brought the Government to power.

Government did not retreat from its effort to give priority to political progress despite the apparently meagre results of the 1980 conferences and their tepid public reception, but went on with

the new project of joint studies with the Dublin Government. I take a much dimmer view of this project. It does seem quite right to acknowledge and formalise the practical involvement of the Irish Government and society as they are the focus of the national aspirations and identity of the Nationalist part of Northern Ireland society. I don't expect the joint studies to have a very serious content, and I regard the project as basically an effort to pursue the same policy as in the 1980 conferences by another means, namely threatening the Northern Irish Loyalist politicians with the prospect of things being decided over their heads if they did not get on with it themselves. I don't believe it of Government that it would plan to carry through on such a threat, as Government would know that this could only result in more turmoil in Northern Ireland. I have commented on this in letters known to the readers of this paper, and will develop it further in a subsequent paper. But this effort to make some progress through Dublin, even if questionable at that level, still represents the British Government's defining its policy priority in terms of creating the conditions for consensual society in Northern Ireland, as I would wish to see it.

However, all the time this sequence of policy initiatives was going on, a rival policy direction, not of this Government's designing, held its independent and uncoordinated place. At the time last year's conferences were being projected, the internal protest in the prisons, while embarrassing, seemed to Government a cloud the size of a man's hand, and Government's policy of not wanting to be seen yielding to this pressure appeared, to myself among many others, merely a footnote to the main lines of policy. Now it has swollen up, in response to a crisis, to become the near exclusive motor of Government policy, and has paralysed any other policy thrust on Government's part. This is the unexamined contradiction at the heart of Government's planning process. As I had failed myself to realise this early enough, the earlier stages of it have to be examined now.

The IRA very aptly call the policy in the prisons that proceeds from the break with the former Special Category status and the institution of the Diplock courts a policy of 'criminalisation.' Its aim is to designate these prisoners as criminals in the same sense as any other prison inmates. This is a political tool by which to challenge and destroy the political standing of these men, in the eyes of their own community where they seek to present themselves as insurgent representatives of political grievance, in the eyes of the outside world, and if they conform in their own eyes.

At the time this policy was first instituted, it was not so clear that this was the principal aim of the policy. The greater concern seemed to be bring an end to the policies of internment and detention, which had become associated with an image of repression, with appeals to the European Commission and Court over charges of torture and an eventual conviction of Britain for inhuman and

degrading treatment of prisoners. In an effort to overcome these stigmas, the now famous H-blocks were built to such a standard as not only to meet but to surpass the standards of other British prisons. But besides cleaning up a rather tarnished image of its own activity, the Government of the day wanted some positive gain for itself, and therefore instituted the policy that the Republicans appropriately call 'criminalisation.'

The whole operation was done in such low key that it was hard to credit it as being the main thrust of Government policy. However, this was a time of great despondency and apathy in Government with regard to Northern Ireland. The Sunningdale-Executive power-sharing policy was in ruins, the succeeding Assembly and the period of IRA cease-fire had petered out with little or no gains. On the entire front of trying to be a consensual society Government, over a period of some years, simply quit. Hence there was no rival policy thrust to compete with the criminalisation policy as the major policy priority.

Such a policy made some sense as a political weapon in the Government's hand, even as the main front of policy, so long as the central objective of policy was seen as the defeat of the IRA, but only so long. It ran concurrent with varying Army and Police tactics, sometimes high-profile, sometimes low-profile, but had the advantage that it carried on regardless of these changing military policies. The prisoners' non-cooperation campaign took an extremely long time to build up, from an initial simple refusal to wear prison uniform through the wash and toilet stages and only after a matter of many years to the extreme stage of the hunger strike. It was hard to credit this slow wearing-down process as the principal strategy of Government's campaign, and it remained so, it seemed, only for lack of any concurrent effort towards political consensus. The hope was to stamp those in prison as simply and strictly criminals, with the effect that they would lose any credibility as revolutionaries or nationalists in their own communities. The corollary was to improve security, especially through the police, so that the Catholic community would come to rely on them rather than the IRA to carry out the protective role in cases of pogrom.

The policy was always open to strong criticisms. Presented as a matter of principle, it was vulnerable to the argument that these men were not of a sort who would ever have got to prison other than through the exacerbated political situation, and that the process of their conviction of crimes was radically defective. There was and is a standard defense of the special courts, namely that normal British due process, with cross-examination of witnesses, a jury, and judges properly wary of charges supported only by rather dubious confessions, were made impossible by the danger to which all who took part in judicial process against these men were exposed. That is quite true, but is also result of the political situation in a non-consensual State with resulting insurgency. Presented as an exercise in the evenhandedness of the law in a communal conflict,

the policy was also unconvincing. This can be seen in the numbers of prisoners convicted, through this defective process, for possession of firearms. Two of the actual hunger strikers, for instance, one of them Sands, were convicted for the same incident in which a gun was found hidden in a car which contained five men. The gun was unlicensed. If the group had been of the Loyalist community, even if they had been on a paramilitary terrorist action, there would have been a license. These are factors too evident to the local community to pass unnoticed.

Decisions on this policy, however, were not made on the basis of moral principle, but of politics. And they were made prior to the time in which the present Government was responsible for policy. This should be kept clearly in mind now, when the whole issue has become a matter of intense passion for all participants and banners of principle are being waved on all sides.

The policy had grave weaknesses from the start, also, as a matter of practical political judgment, quite apart from any assertions of absolute principle that are made about it. At the most corrosive point of the policy as one supposedly based on such high morality, there was always an intrinsic contradiction to the corollary policy about building up the standing and acceptability of the RUC, because the police interrogation practices that were a necessary part of the strategy had necessarily to lose the Catholic community's trust. If the police interrogators were to behave properly, the Diplock court strategy simply would not work, since it was already established and recognised that normal evidence, with witnesses who could be cross-examined, was unavailable to these courts, and confessions were not going to be produced by the prisoners simply to make their interrogators happy.

But the main practical political weakness of the policy was and remains that it is not appropriate for Government to set the defeat of the IRA as the principal objective of its policy. The prison policy was an alternative strategy to the military one for accomplishing that objective. As such it was merely one more postponement of the ancient and long-neglected task of providing for a society that would satisfy both communities in Northern Ireland or at least win their genuine acceptance. Any strategy that leaves the IRA/Republicanism on the outside as an embittered minority, rather than on the inside as contributing participants, is permanently damaging. Any that substitutes mere suppression of armed dissent for a resolution of the communal problem is simply heaping up ammunition for the next round of 'the troubles.'

For the IRA insurgents, I have always believed, and often told them, that it was a mistake to accept, as they did, the Government's definition of this issue, and let their main thrust of policy be merely reactive to something that was designed for Government's convenience. For the insurgents to concentrate their campaign on

complaints about the internal conditions in prison is to base it on self-pity. Justified or not, that is no way to run a revolution. Now that they are winning, and winning big, refuting, for their own self-understanding and in the opinion of their own community in the North, the general Irish public in the Republic and the greater part of world consensus, the Government's effort to brand them as undifferentiated criminals, and ensuring themselves the recruitment to run their insurgency campaign at the same or a considerably higher level for several years to come, I have to reconsider that judgment that I have held so consistently. My conclusion is that I was right about it all the same. It took an unforeseeable accident, the occurence of the Fermanagh by-election, and the concatenation of several unpredictable factors that produced a one-to-one race, to turn their losing gambit in these hunger strikes into a winning issue. Meanwhile, they have wasted five years of their own campaigning time and everyone else's agony, and it was unnecessary. And just as the Government, in defining its major priority as the IRA's defeat, is seeking a victory that would lose it its chance to reach its real goal, so the IRA, in winning on this issue, gains something of no real use to it.

Reactive Policy: Decisions Dictated by the Prison Crisis.

It would take a kind of insider's knowledge that I do not have to decipher what were the steps by which the Government found its way to its present policy position. I can only reconstruct on the basis of knowledge that was public. Hence, if the following reconstruction has any merit, it might be useful for those who have the insider's knowledge to compare it with their experience: what was the sequence, what questions were raised and debated, what issues passed by unnoticed and were determined without discussion.

When it came to office, the present Government determined to work for political goals in Northern Ireland, basically through a process of consultation with all interested parties in search of communal reconciliation. The Government's morale was high following its great Lancaster House success. Conferences were designed in which patience was the byword. No serious political options that could produce a consensual basis for society in the province were ruled out, though the stated agenda of meetings covered the ground of existing possibilities by slow steps calculated not to give alarm.

Military-police policy was attuned to a task of protecting the community against violence, not to attempt a military defeat of insurgent forces. The services of Sir Maurice Oldfield were used for a period to coordinate police and Army activities and prevent any competitive urgings among them from escalating to exaggerated responses. (This was the one area in which I most miscalculated in my January 1980 paper on the Army, as I read the Oldfield appointment as an Army victory in the rivalry with the police that had characterise the Roy Mason period. He was indeed coordinator, and succeeded in his task, largely through the high quality of those appointed to head

both Army and police.)

All of this was deliberately planned policy, in no way a result of happenstance. The basic design may well have been the work of Airey Neave before his murder. The devotion of the Prime Minister to the policy is a clue to that, as she was so urgent on the priority to be given to progress in Northern Ireland and so much committed to his memory. The policy, at any rate, is consistent with the way Airey Neave talked in the months before his death.

While a military policy of trying to defeat the IRA was not chosen, and the new political initiatives all aimed squarely at developing a consensual society, the prison policy left over from Roy Mason's time was not so thoroughly examined. What had begun, under Merlyn Rees, mainly as a programme to terminate internment and detention had become, under Roy Mason, the one coherent line of policy, aimed at undermining the emotional hold of the IRA by criminalising them. As a means of defeating the IRA, this was not endorsed as a primary or even equally pressing goal of policy. Neither was it denied that role. It was less interesting or imaginative than the new initiatives the Government was taking, and had produced embarrassments, both in the publicity surrounding dubious interrogation methods to produce convictions in the Diplock courts and in the sordidness of the 'dirty protest' inside the prison. The new Government seems not so much to have decided it would pursue this policy further as to have determined that it would not want to be beaten or humiliated over it. Within those limits, Government was prepared to be flexible. The issue had low priority so far as new initiatives went, as the IRA seemed less capable of producing either good or evil in the province than several other parties. It took some effort at that time to come up with any assertion of the truism that no solution was a solution of it still left this militant expression of Republicanism outside and embittered. That observation would, at that time, be duly noted, but no practical conclusions drawn from it.

When the prison protest began to move towards a hunger strike in the latter part of 1980, Government gradually sought some means of an accomodation that would not involve humiliation. It was evident that the IRA leadership were also uncomfortable about the dirty protest and anxious to head off a hunger strike, which they saw as too uncertain of success. Eventually Government accepted the idea of revisions of prison regime for all prisoners, not only for the paramilitary prisoners, seeing that as an accomodation without defeat. There was good reason to believe the IRA would accept that form of solution. The October to December hunger strike went ahead anyway, after Government had made a concession over prison dress (for all prisoners) that was regarded as simply too small a change. But both sides still apparently wanted a resolution that would excise this prison protest from the complex of outstanding issues, and the hunger strike was brought to an end. Government's policy, at this point, still appears to have given priority to its political search

for consensus. The prison issue was not one of absolutes, was not seen as the weapon to beat the IRA into final submission, but also was not to be a scene of defeat. In this last point was the sting, because while there were no positive absolutes in the Government's attitude about the prison protest, the refusal to see it end in a defeat was a negative absolute that, in crisis, became the principal motor force in Government policy, outweighing anything in the series of consensus-seeking initiatives that Government had thought were its priority goals: the unexamined contradiction.

The late 1980 hunger strike, coming after last year's series of conferences had seemed to peter out without result, had constituted a major block in the way of new initiatives. When it was settled, to everyone's apparent satisfaction and with no one quite sure who had 'won,' the way was open to further search for consensus. By the time the new hunger began on March 1st of this year, another factor had been added to the mix, the British-Irish initiative at the Dublin talks with its announcement of joint study groups. The hunger-striking prisoners had seemed a relatively easy opponent to Government when they ended their first strike in December. There were points to be gained with the Irish Government, which wanted to show progress on 'The National Issue' without concession to the IRA, by holding out on the new set of hunger strikers. Government scented the chance to win a victory over the IRA. This was not yet an absolute, but was highly attractive. Moreover, the Paisley response to the joint study groups was going into high gear, and that familiar Northern Ireland phenomenon, repeated down the century, has always frightened British Governments more than Republicans ever do. Avoiding trouble from that quarter was much closer to an absolute, whether acknowledged or not. Hence, there was good reason to warn off the IRA that they could expect no concessions from a Government that had a sniff of victory and two good reasons to refuse them anything. The Government by that time, without yet having erected this into a lodestone of policy, did not want a settlement of the prison issue, as it had wanted it before Christmas. As for the prisoners winning without concessions, by stirring emotions in the community that would constitute a victory over the Government's insistence that they were simply criminals, it could be said by that time (February-March) that the emotions they stirred would be no greater or even less than those stirred up by the Paisley campaign, with the result that, at very high cost, the prisoners would make only small and very fragile gains.

The Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election transformed this situation out of recognition. The Government was suddenly, quite unexpectedly, handed the one thing that had been considered unendurable all along, an outright defeat at the hands of the insurgent IRA, moreover one that had nothing military about it but was at the voting booth. Now the IRA was winning in all the ways already enumerated: in the emotional stakes at home and abroad, in the rejection, by voters and a wider public, of the Government's definition of these men as criminals, and in vast new recruiting opportunities. At this point Government drew the conclusion that

had always been lurking unexamined in its refusal to brook a defeat on this issue: Government decided to stake all on defeating the IRA on precisely this ground.

I call this reactive policy for the same reason that I would call the IRA's own policy for the five years leading up to the two episodes of hunger strike reactive. Each in turn, first the IRA and now the Government, has let the other's initiative determine its own basic policy. During the years, Roy Mason's time, when the Government's policy was little else but the effort to brand the prisoners as nothing other than criminals, that Government policy made some sense for Government, granted only the one premise, which I believe was mistaken, that defeating the IRA was the priority (rather than any effort to build a consensual society). It made no sense for the IRA to concentrate the whole basic thrust of its efforts into its H-block protest campaign, as it did. It was an issue of Government's choosing, and even winning it would have brought the IRA no nearer to any revolutionary aim. They lost five years of wasted campaigning. Even when the present Government started its distinctive policy as represented by last year's conferences, the IRA then had not the wit to come up with any response that gave them the initiative but simply soldiered on with the H-block protest for lack of any new ideas. Now, with the IRA suddenly handed a windfall victory through the chance of a by-election arising at so fortuitous a time, Government finds itself in a similarly reactive position. The IRA has no effective motive to back down now on its hunger strikes. Government accepts the terms of psychological-moral conflict as the hunger-strikers define them, despite the fact that defeat on the criminalisation issue is already accomplished and that further pursuit of the issue entails the sacrifice of every other element of Government policy.

That last point, that the rest of Government's policy falls victim to this issue, needs substantiation. The most intelligent comment I have heard on the present effect of the hunger-strike deaths was given by Paddy Devlin the day he found himself driven out of his home by the H-block support committees. He said, quite truly as my own soundings would indicate, that the effect on the Catholic population of the North could only be compared to that of the shooting of prisoners in 1916 Dublin. The Catholic population is being alienated from the British State to an extent that has never previously been the case over these last twelve years. At the same time, this population is being alienated from its Protestant neighbours in a way it has always taken pains to prevent in the past. In this are contained the seeds of outright civil war which all British policy has been trying to prevent throughout this period, and it is being fostered by the present British stance.

On the Protestant side of the fence in Northern Ireland, Mr. Paisley's 'Carson Trail' has not even had to be pursued further. It finished with the election of Mr. Sands to Parliament. Mr. Paisley and other extreme elements that represent simple Protestant rejection

of their Catholic neighbours have only to rake in the results of this new alienation, as the local elections made clear. Where a year ago it had become clear that Protestant opinion was looking for some new arrangement that would provide for Protestant security as a cultural community, their motivation has now been reduced to little else but this rejection of the neighbour. Other levels of thinking are simply swept off the board.

An enterprise that has occupied me for many years and that, but for this prison drama, would now be well on its way, namely encouraging the various churches to confront together, on an inter-denominational basis, the issue of concentration of power in clerical hands and the consequent atmosphere of suspicion about clerically-dominated society, is brought to a dead stop by this hunger-strike episode. The same is true of every level of effort at coming to new political understandings and the democratisation of Northern Irish society. When now the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announces a resumption of last year's political consultations to take place in a few weeks time (just as a new wave of deaths from the hunger strikes takes place), it cannot be taken seriously. It can only be a propaganda effort to distract attention from the hunger strikes, and as such it is bound to be a failure. The hunger strikes have much more news-worthiness than any such talks, and all the prospective participants in such talks are affected and polarised by the hunger strike issue itself. Hence Government, by choosing this line on the prison issue, defeats every other line of its own policy. The choice of the one priority, defeating the IRA on this issue, over every other possible priority has become absolute.

How did this happen? An answer to that can only be known to the insiders. One hears rumours, which none of the insiders can be expected to discuss and on which denials would necessarily by unconvincing, that the Prime Minister herself has taken to ruling on this issue, on far less information than is available to her colleagues, and on the basis of impulse. If true, that would be the most dangerous possible way for policy to be made on this matter of British responsibility in Northern Ireland. Mrs. Thatcher has provided the impulse that first brought about new political initiative over Northern Ireland after the several years of policy vacuum. It would be a great defeat, for her and for all who have a concern for real progress in the province, if that initiative were destroyed in this way. Damage could be done in the process to any future hopes of progress as well.

I detest being prophet of doom the way I have in this paper. I do it, not to send Government a rocket, but because I believe this Government has shown a capacity to understand even some of the more subtle things going on in Northern Ireland and to respond creatively to the small growths that give hope there. It has got itself on a wrong course at a moment when it was stung most demeaningly, and I can only ~~pre~~ hope that it will now recognise and alter that course.

I believe that the IRA is on an equally wrong course. The triumphs they are celebrating get them no nearer the new society they seek. They only make it more and more impossible to build a consensus with the Protestants who are genuinely a part of any society that can be built in their land. That they have gone down this route is a result of their also having muffed the definition of priority responsibilities. They hate to admit that their ancient quarrel has come down to a contest with their own Irish neighbours, and crow their hatred and rejection of 'the Brits' as a way of protecting themselves against that bit of self knowledge. The victories they are winning are only over 'the Brits,' and are thus irrelevant to their real quarrel. Their real responsibility is for the building of a society, and in this they have in fact much in common with the eventual, if presently ignored, responsibility of British Government. For them to pleasantly distract themselves with a war on 'the Brits' while they destroy the chances of accomplishing their real work is quite as irresponsible as for the British Government to enjoy its spleen in a war on the IRA that makes its own real work, on which it has been making real if agonisingly slow progress in the last two years, into a mockery.

It is normally right to scorn those who criticise without offering alternative solutions. In this case it does not seem appropriate to offer detailed proposals.

At an earlier stage of this prison conflict, when the Government had adopted the policy of making changes of regime for all prisoners but had offered too little change, bringing on the late-1980 hunger strike, I had occasion to write to Mr. Alison that it was not so important to come up with bright ideas to break the deadlock as it was to find out if, in fact, both sides really wanted a resolution. It could well be that they preferred the humiliation of the other side. This is precisely the problem I have been writing of throughout this paper. What is necessary is for Government to examine what its major priorities are, whether the defeat of insurgency or the building of a consensual society. The bright ideas will come cheap. If Government really wants to remove this road-block to progress in any other area, it will find the ways to do so. That the IRA is engaged in an equally blind policy tantrum does not matter to Government. Should Government come round to a more sensible policy and the IRA not, then the Government is ahead of the game.

Surely any sensible policy in this situation must be aimed at preventing the prison, as drama, from occupying the stage. The solution here is not going to be the creation of competing attractions in some other ring of the circus, as in a seeming renewal of last year's inter-party talks. The competing attraction won't manage to distract, and it would amount to making the real work into a disguise for the bloody-mindedness going on on the main stage.

Just shortly before the death of Bobby Sands I wrote to the Secretary of State pointing out what I thought was a signal coming from the IRA and the prisoners, even at that late hour, to say they were still looking for a solution by accomodation. This surprised me, as I had thought they would be looking for further humiliation of Government after winning the by-election in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. I still believe my assessment of that signal was right, and that Government lost another chance at that point to take the heat out of the prison situation and get down to the real work of Northern Ireland again. I have no knowledge beyond what is available to anyone of the state of sentiment inside the IRA or among the prisoners since the four deaths of hunger strikers, whether they would still be willing to come to an accomodation on the same terms or not. My expectation is that, after Government has refused the accomodation offered earlier, the price would now be higher. However, that would have been my supposition before, that the price would go up with the Sands election to Parliament, and if my interpretation of that signal just before his death is correct, I had been mistaken. However easy or expensive it may now be, this surely ought to be seen as Government's priority response to the hunger strikes, to take the heat and emotion and grievance out of the situation, deny it the stage as focus of grievance, and get on with the real work. If that priority can once be established, the bright-idea solutions will come easily enough.

82

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NORTHER IRELAND PAPER VI: Weighting the Options.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
June, 1981

A paper in this series, 'NI Paper II: Options and Who Should Choose,' written in March of last year, commented on the conferences that marked the year 1980 in Northern Ireland and the political process they initiated. The leitmotif of that paper, which seemed to meet an answering resonance in Government's intentions about this process of consultation, was ' how to create an area of freedom within which the internal Northern Ireland participants can really choose among the available options.' (Page 3 of the paper cited.) The paper summarised what options were actually available, discussed elements that were lacking as of then to make these options truly available for choice by the internal participants, and pointed out in broad terms what is needed from 'outside' powers and arbiters, most importantly British and Irish, more peripherally from powerful Irish-American politicians and from Europeans, to make those various options genuine.

The fifteen months since that paper was written have changed the underlying situation in some ways, but has left intact, I believe, the fundamental Government approach, that the ultimate choice of a political future should truly be an internal one. The conferences of last year, both official and unofficial, have brought some significant successes, most basically in providing a forum to work through the judgment made in the Northern Ireland Protestant community (and discussed in that March 1980 paper), that their future safety as a cultural community can no longer be based on Britain. It is popular to disparage those conferences and treat them as having failed. I believe those who take that line base it on expectations of the speed of any process of healing in Northern Ireland that are unrealistic. The progress has been real.

Several voices, even of the heavy-weight journalists, have been contradicting the supposition that the choices should be made internally. They have argued that the internal participants are too politically paralysed to make any real choices. I trust that Government, having worked as hard as it has to start a political process and to create the freedom in which the choices can be made, knows that those voices are wrong. Government itself has seemed to contradict the premise that the choice should be internal when it went to Dublin and agreed to the joint studies programme. The

traditional Unionist 'no-surrender' forces have taken alarm and Mr. Paisley in particular, after his stalwart and quite courageous participation in the conferences of last year, has chosen to invest his political capital in the familiar denunciations of a 'sellout.' This topic has already been taken up in Paper V of this series, with my own conclusions: a) that it is right for the Dublin government to be involved; b) that it would be quite wrong to use the Dublin connection as a threat to the Unionists that Government would go over their heads if they don't get cracking; and c) that I don't really suppose Government would go that road, though it does seem to have made a distinct feint in that direction, because Government would realise such a policy could only raise the same sort of insurrection among Protestants as already exists among militant Republicans. In the absense of further pursuit of last year's political initiative, this joint studies development would constitute a real threat to the freedom of the internal participants to choose, and so it may be seen as a healthy enough sign, and may even have been Government's intention, that there should be a substantial hue and cry from the Unionists over this development. It is right that Catholic voices in Northern Ireland should be supporting them in this. And at the same time, I would not take it seriously as Government's intention to go over the heads of the internal participants.

The freedom to choose is far more gravely undermined by the prison dispute and the consequent deepening of polarisation. Enough has been said on this subject in Paper V of this series, but no real progress should be expected in the political initiative as launched last year, or for that matter in any of the healing initiatives, until the hunger-strike crisis is resolved.

It has to be recognised that the prison crisis has changed the underlying political situation. So far as I can see, it has not undermined what I saw as last year's most fundamental observation, namely that the Protestants had drawn that conclusion about their safety in the future not depending on Britain. The turmoil over the prison and the Protestant disillusion and outrage about it have, of course, made them more strident in their demands on Britain, and made Britain, which has always been easily ready to collapse before that pressure, more nervous than before of offending them. Catholics have become vastly more alienated from the British State than before, as Paddy Devlin so acutely observed on the day he was driven out of his home by the prison-protest supporters. If in fact other options for the future than the continued attachment to the British State become really available, this will not turn out to be lasting harm, as the changed circumstances will bring a healing. But that the Catholics have also been alienated in quite new ways from their Protestant neighbours is far more lasting damage, limiting freedom to choose a future by consensus in the whole community far more than it was limited as of last year, and thus destroying much of last year's careful work, if not even creating new doubts of whether these conflicting communities can ever be reconciled.

My own basic supposition is that a resolution of the conflict will not come by concentrating on the direct confrontation, whether of Catholics-Nationalists and Protestants-Unionists or of the IRA and the British Government (hence the argument of my Paper V), but by working at the framework valuesof the various communities involved -- Catholic, Protestant; British, Irish. (On this subject I would refer to my August 1977 article in The Month, 'Church Structures and Violence in Northern Ireland,' already familiar to the readers of this paper, and to my parallel articles using the same analytic tools on the Middle Eastern conflict: 'Israel and the Palestinians,' in The Month for July 1979; and 'Breaking the Anxieties that Rule the Middle Eastern Struggle,' prepared for publication as a Discussion Paper this year in New Outlook.) There does seem to have developed a Catholic readiness to meet, jointly with the other churches, the corroding issue of suspicions about the use/misuse of power by the churches. And a Protestant readiness to extend democratic participation in the State to Catholics is indicated, not so much by the main-stream political parties as by the newer political groupings that have grown up on the fringes of the conflict. But to both of these high-priority healing initiatives, the prison drama constitutes a decisive blockage. It must be defused before anything serious can happen on other fronts.

After chewing over the prison crisis so extensively in Paper V of this series, I don't want to go back to it again. But by way of summary, I would put it simply that the prison confrontation involves a wrong definition of the conflict by both British Government and Republican Movement sides, as a confrontation between Britain and the IRA. Others, both politicians and public in both communities, are reduced to spectators. Yet they are the ones who really count if there is to be any genuine progress towards a consensual society. It is grossly muddled policy, either for Government or the Republican Movement, to let the conflict get stuck at this totally unproductive point.

Quite a different, long standing and more serious limitation stands against the freedom of the Northern Ireland participants to choose among the available political options: a projection of the unfinished business of Britain and Ireland onto Northern Ireland. Britain and Ireland are able to live pretty comfortably with each other despite a fair number of ancient and unforgiven resentments against one another, and the mechanism for it is to play out their unresolved conflicts in Northern Ireland. The issues themselves have generally gone cold, and as such are quite capable of being handily put to rest if this projection were terminated. Because they are cold, their existence is generally submerged in the picture one finds in Northern Ireland. Hence I state this thesis briefly at the start of this consideration of weighting the options in Northern Ireland. The thoughts represented here are in the background rather than the forefront of comments that will be made about the political options, but the concern for removing the projection is central to the paper.

Practicality of the Options.

The options, as outlined in my March 1980 paper, are:

1) Within the context of the UK, in other words some continuation of the status quo, however modified by the terms of possible devolution, or less likely a continuation of direct rule indefinitely or even total integration into the UK;

2) Independence, not necessarily on the model detailed by the UDA's New Ulster Political Research Group, which tends to overburden the concept with more constitutional specifics than it is ready to bear, but on one of several models;

3) Within some Irish context, ranging from the nearly unthinkable integration into the Irish Republic to various forms of strong or attenuated federation; and

4) Condominium or some wider form of confederation, within which context the most appealing is that the two governments, British and Irish, should be co-guarantors of fairness in some sort of independent or autonomous state.

My argument in that paper was that Britain, Ireland and other powers who have influence in the situation should be creating a degree of parity for these options. As of now, when the Northern Ireland community contemplates any sort of new status, it has a knowledge of its present state, with all its disadvantages and such securities as it contains, but no knowledge of what material or moral support, what security, what conditions it would have from whom in any other state. Hence the choice, when it is offered (and every vote is always about this question), is between what is and the unknown, therefore no real choice at all. Instead of establishing the reality and viability of the various options, so that people in Northern Ireland can actually assess them, the two governments, British and Irish, have tended to present one of them as the only viable choice: the British presenting only variants on futures within the UK context, the Irish only variants on some form of unification of the island, with the result that each reinforces the projection element felt by the internal community in Northern Ireland. What I am effectively looking for in this paper is that these two governments exercise a hard critical assessment of the options that are most close and natural to them, the British of the viability of Northern Ireland's future in the UK, the Irish of the prospect of unification, so that they can remove this pressure and take the poisoning projection element out of the internal process. At the time of writing, it is still unclear what the new government of Ireland will be. Hence the Irish part of this proposition will have to be assessed and presented to a new Irish Government in a later paper. This one will concentrate mostly on the British part.

There was a weighting of options in the 19th-century British approach to Ireland, and it was the wrong one, a mistake from which British policy should learn now. There were at that time three options: the union, home rule or independence. British policy defined the maintenance of the union as the good, home rule (even for its advocates, like Gladstone) as an unpalatable but necessary medicine, tolerable only to preserve the union in some form, and thus prevent the evil, which was separation.

As it stands now, Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom amounts to representation by elected MPs, and government by a Secretary of State whose accountability is not seriously to those MPs but to others in Government who are accounted to know better. Northern Ireland MPs are elected on issues about which they have no effective voice once they arrive at Westminster, and thus closely parallel the position of the Irish Nationalist MPs who were the spoilers in 19th-century British Parliaments. It is less conspicuous now because they haven't the numbers to do much spoiling. But their own position in Parliament is a mockery of democratic process.

The politics of the place is simply and quite entirely different from British politics, so that representatives elected on those issues have no place to make representation about them in Westminster. They can only be leeches on Westminster's democracy. The malfunction of the system repeats what had become true in the 19th century, and the best critique I know of it is that given by Asquith in his maiden speech in Parliament, delivered as early as 1887. Asquith wanted to know what value lay in representative institutions when the voices of the representatives were systematically ignored. 'What conceivable advantage,' he asked, 'can there be either to Ireland or to Great Britain from the continuance of this gross caricature of the British Constitution? There is much virtue in government of the people, by the people, for the people. There is much also to be said for a powerful and well-equipped autocracy, but between the two there is no logical or statesmanlike halting-place. For the hybrid system which the Government is about to set up, a system which pretends to be that which it is not..., a system which cannot be either resolutely repressive or frankly popular -- for this half-hearted compromise there is inevitably reserved the inexorable sentence which history shows must fall on every form of political imposture.' (I have this citation from Nicholas Mansergh's The Irish Question 1940-1921 3rd ed. 1975, p. 193. His reference is to Spender and Asquith, Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith, London 1932, vol I, pp. 53-5.)

The parallel holds very strong, and indicates that, in weighting the options now, Britain should see the forms of continued union between Great Britain and Northern Ireland as radically unworkable and an improbable formula for the future. Of the possible options, this is the only one that has been tried, and in several forms, in all of which it has failed spectacularly.

It has already been tried, throughout the entire 19th-century union, in its 'total integration' form, and produced a violent shambles. It has been given a fifty-year experiment in the form of devolution under the UK umbrella, and broke down so late only because British policy contrived not to notice its ill effects until the end of that period. It has now been tried for a decade in Proconsular form, and the result is the present straits in which British government and all parts of Northern Irish society labour.

A parallel case has to be made to a new Irish government. There has been no experiment in unification other than the unity under British rule, which gives no model for the future. There is still good reason to say that any attempt to move from a situation within the UK context to one within the Irish Republic's context would stir up at least as much grievance and violent response from the Protestant-Unionist population as the present one does from the Catholic-Nationalist population. The reconciliation without which no constitutional form for Northern Ireland society will work must be between those two populations. But so long as each has a godfather government behind its back, both these communities are left unable to effect reconciliation. When each looks at what is threatening it, it sees the godfather rather than its partner community. The Catholics, urged to reconciliation with the Protestants, can say the Protestants are not their problem: the problem is Britain. This is the way the IRA has been able to define the conflict as one between itself and British Government. The Protestants likewise, urged to reconciliation with the Catholics, are able to point to the encroaching spectre of the Republic, and say that the Northern Catholics interest them only as infiltrators for a take-over of their society by the Republic, not as neighbours they have to live with. This is a pressure under which a society common and acceptable to both cannot be constructed.

Thus the two options usually regarded (by their partisans) as the more likely, a future still within the UK or a future linked in some manner to the Republic, turn out to be the least practicable. Either is a formula for continuing violent strife. That leaves the options of Northern Ireland as a separate entity, either on its own released from the ties to its two godfathers or with the two outside governments, British and Irish, as co-guarantors, as far more practicable even if presently less popular. The question is one of the removal of blockages. The lesser popularity of the separate-entity options is explained by people's preferring the security of their blocked-in positions, complete with hates and stalemates, to facing the realities of their relation to one another within the society they actually live in. That society is made unworkable by the presence of the godfather governments and their projection of their own unfinished business onto Northern Irish society. The solution lies in letting Northern Irish society loose.

What would I expect or seek from British Government on the basis of this argument? I have already argued, in my March 1980 paper, that it would be an injustice that Northern Ireland should be given a bum's rush out of the United Kingdom, even if that appears to be the prevalent feeling in British public sentiment. Government can, though, make it plain that this is its actual assessment, and that it will do all the things necessary (including cooperation with an Irish government to make this workable) so that the separate-entity options are genuinely options. On my hypothesis of last year, that the Protestants have drawn their conclusion that their safety in the future must be based on something other than Britain, we will then find that this is in fact the practical assessment made by the Protestants themselves. They cannot entertain it until there is evident reality in the proposition, and it can be seen that their safety is assured in it. For Britain to make this assessment clear leaves Britain's responsibility for fairness in the Province intact, but relieves the Province of the burden of Britain's close embrace and ends the projection phenomenon from the British side.

As much needs to be done from the side of the Republic of Ireland, though that has to be argued in a separate paper written for the Irish Government. What is necessary, so that the Northern Ireland Province is relieved of the burden of Ireland's embrace and the projection phenomenon from the Irish side can be ended, is that Ireland let Northern Ireland go free from any a priori claims on its territory, or from any presupposition that the North must eventually and somehow or other be united with the Republic. Responsibility for the North, and for fairness in it, in conjunction with Britain, remains intact, despite any such recognition. But the way is prepared for the two Northern communities to come to living terms with each other, democratically and in accepted pluralism, once the two godfather governments are off their backs.

What can be expected ~~of~~ to come of such a weighting of the options, by both Westminster and Dublin governments? The Northern Irish are not ferocious-minded. Neither community wants the other's destruction or removal, however much they may be panicked in such directions by the present levels of anxiety. With the pressure cooker turned off in this way, they are quite capable of confronting the real social, political and sectarian problems of their society. It is from developments in their mentality towards themselves and one another that any real progress has to be sought: the process here recommended has to do only with the removal of external blockages.

The Protestant population has already thought through and come to terms with the idea that it has to rely upon itself rather than on the British umbrella. Would the Catholic minority in the North feel itself abandoned and left helpless in the face of second-class citizenship and exploitation if the Irish Republic as well as Britain were to take the stance outlined here? In my experience, Catholics in the North have been very slow to realise the important

changes that were taking place in Protestant outlook in the last couple of years. Through 1980, I kept putting to everyone I spoke with in Northern Ireland, of both communities, the observation that Protestants seemed to have come to the hard conclusion: their safety in the future could no longer depend on Britain. From Protestants, there were two rather equally frequent responses. One was to say that they believed this true, though they had not formulated it in those terms before. The other was to say it was quite true and immediately recognisable, though they wondered how I had spotted it, as they thought they had kept it pretty well to themselves. From Catholics, I found an almost uniform response: some puzzlement that anything of the sort could be said, then the accusation that the assertion was entirely daft, because 'those people will never change.' This was significant, as it indicated that an important real change in the Protestant outlook was happening right under the Catholics' noses, but they did not see it. It says something about the capacity in the Catholic community in the North, in its present traumatised state, to absorb new information about its Protestant neighbours. This year, 1981, one finds a greater awareness among Catholics that something different is going on among those Protestant neighbours, but the slow pace of recognition is certainly a discouraging sign. So is the far more extreme alienation from the Protestant community, as well as from the British State, that results from the hunger-strike experience, an alienation that will keep corroding the substance of the whole society as long as that confrontation is allowed to hold the stage. Some comfort can be taken, though, with regard to this slow perception of real change in the other community, as the Protestants have been at least as slow in observing changes in the Catholic community, of the Republic as well as the North itself, in the matter of clerical domination, the one thing that Protestants most fear in Irish Catholic society.

If the release of godfather pressures and projection is approximately simultaneous on the part of both British and Irish governments, the Catholic community of the North will at least know that it is not the only one affected, that the Protestant community is also in a new position, capable of new relations. There would have to be some new approach between these two communities that could capture the imagination of both, enable both to meet common problems of the resulting society. My own belief is that this would depend largely on Catholic readiness to tackle the old sectarian suspicions of clerically controlled society, and Protestant determination to construct democratic forms that would include their Catholic neighbours. These are things that can only be described as possibles, not as certainties of any sort; but possible only on the terms of such a release from the outside pressures and projection as has been recommended here. Of course, as talisman of any such positive possibilities, this sort of motion in both communities should be in train already, and of course, in some form, it is in train, though only at a very low level, impeded by the projection factors we have been referring to.

Whatever progress towards a reconciled and vital society is made in Northern Ireland will have eventual effect on the rest of Ireland as well. As things stand at present, there are some elements of a dynamic that should produce something new and quite different in Northern society. There is no equivalent dynamic that calls for anything significantly new to happen in the Republic. Any such stimulus will have to come from the North, rather than vice versa. Would such a reconciled and vitalised society, projecting its effects from the North into the Republic, eventually lead to some kind of amalgamation or federation or closer relation with the Republic? Quite possibly, though not without the Republic and its society having first become something the Northern Protestants could regard without dread and rejection. More important, whatever relation developed between Northern Ireland and the Republic, whether it had any eventual constitutional effects or were confined simply to cooperation in a number of areas such as trade, transport, tourism, energy policy etc., it would happen within the context of a civilized growth in the totality of relations between Britain and Ireland.

This paper, while raising large constitutional questions in its suggestions for a weighting of the options for Northern Ireland's future, has a really modest aim of removens prohibens so far as the growth of a more livable society in Northern Ireland is concerned. The danger is that Britain, and the Irish Republic as well, should settle for too little motion on their own parts and let such opportunities as exist pass by. This was largely the result of the rather timid steps taken in the sequence of conferences held last year. It was most strikingly obvious in the British Government's effort to settle the prison protest last October, before the hunger strikes began, with an imaginative new approach through general prison reform in the Province, when the endeavour was allowed to fizzle out on too trifling and stingy a reform in the matter of prison dress. If a serious new approach is to be made in this matter of removing the pressures and projections from Northern Ireland, it must not be reduced to triviality in the same way.

BRIDGING PAPER AFTER PAPER VI

I was anxious not to be graceless in saying the rather hard things that were said in these last two papers. It was a difficult time for hearing such things. Mr. Atkins' response to both papers, which came on August 5th, showed relatively little hearing of the sorts of points made, especially those in Paper V about the major lines of policy. He did inded pick up the matter of the need for an atmosphere of trust if the Maze or any prison were to be at all functional. On the course of determining policy his response was defensive, citing the aims of the independent commission led by Lord Diplock which had made recommendations on legal procedures to deal with terrorist activities in 1976. The Government, he said, had been trying to avoid two perils: loss of the integrity of the criminal justice system, and the risk of perverse verdicts through the intimidation of jurors by extremists from both parts of the community, not just the IRA. The decision to end the "special category" for insurgency-group prisoners, which had obtained from 1972 to 1976, had similarly been taken on the recommendation of an independent commission, this one led by Lord Gardiner, which had considered, in the context of civil liberties and human rights, measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland. The Gardiner commission had seen no justification for granting privileges to criminals convicted of serious crimes merely because they claimed a political motivation. The commision's feeling had been that such a system discriminated against other prisoners, often guilty of less serious crimes, who were subject to normal prison discipline, and therefore it decided that all prisoners had a right to be treated equally, irrespective of the nature of their offenses. In a democratic society, Mr. Atkins felt, terrorism could not be regarded as another form of politics, only as a criminal act.

He thought it sensible, too, to ensure that there were safeguards against abuse. These, he believed, existed, and had indeed been strengthened in the sense that, as a direct consequence of the Government's willingness to throw open the conditions of Northern Ireland's prisons to responsible persons and bodies, the prisoners had effective "guarantors."

Mr. Atkins was offended by the suggestion that Robert Sands and Joseph McDonnell, both dead by then on the hunger strike, who had been arrested and convicted for the possession of an unlicensed weapon, were differently treated than Loyalists would have been under the same circumstances. He rightly pointed out that their arrest had come after a bombing attack on a suburban furniture store, though he did not mention that their arrest had been on the unlicensed-weapon charge, not on a charge related to the bombing. He expressed disappointment at my suggesting that Loyalist terrorists would have been treated differently, and asserted that all offenders were treated alike both as regards prosecution and prison conditions.

I felt that Mr. Atkins had missed the point of this example of arrest procedure. It was not that there would have been any difference in the treatment of a Catholic/Nationalist and a Protestant/Loyalist if each were found with an unlicensed weapon. Rather it was that there is a difference in the society, such that a Protestant would consistently have a license for a weapon, whether used innocently or criminally, and a Catholic would not. Indeed, when back in January of that year Mr. Paisley had arranged his midnight rally of 500 vigilantes in the hills of Antrim, they had brandished not guns but what they said were legal licenses for guns, which they were prepared to use in opposition to Government policy and in intimidation of their Catholic neighbors. This was a matter of community perception, in the Catholic community but not in the Protestant. I felt it gave an index of perception that that matter should have been misread.

As for the sequence of points Mr. Atkins had made about various items of policy, as regards the prisons and court procedure, having been made independently and long ago by a variety of instances, I felt he had in reality only restated the central argument of my paper, namely that, for all the competent planning that various instances of British Government had put into different items of policy, the central tenets of that policy had been determined, unexamined, by events. I wrote back that it would be surprising if there were not differences, and very great ones, among the various levels of Government that treated the matter of Northern Ireland: Mr. Artkins' own office, its Civil Service, the Prime Minister and her Office,

the Army, the Police, the Intelligence community, various commissions, etc. I had been interested, in my paper, in having the central tenets of that policy examined, by those in most central responsibility, as a whole. I continue to hope that will be done.

* * *

On Paper VI, about the weighting of options, Mr. Atkins responded favorably to the contention that political progress was dependent on people from both sides of the community coming together and agreeing upon a way forward. This, he properly argued, had been the purpose of the activities of the previous year and a half: the Command Papers of 1979 and 1980 that had announced the series of conferences, the conferences themselves and the other talks and consultations that had gone on throughout 1980. He offered his recently announced Northern Ireland Council (since abandoned) as demonstration of the continuity of that policy, despite the hard things I had said in my paper about that being merely an attempt, so long as the hunger strike went on., to create a distraction in a side ring of the circus. He recognized, like myself, the shortcomings of Direct Rule, and sought the transfer of responsibilities back to locally-elected representatives, but on a basis that would be acceptable to both sides of the community in Northern Ireland.

At the same time, he objected srenuously to any suggestion that the people of Northern Ireland be encouraged to think of their future as not necessarily within the United Kingdom or as a part of a United Ireland, but that they should look at other options such as some form of independence or condominium. He stated it as Government's position that in no event should Northern Ireland or any part of it leave the United Kingdom without the consent of a majority of people in the Province. He regarded this as in fact no more or less than a statement of the principle of self-determination, a doctrine which has international acceptance. All the evidence, including the border poll held in 1973, the results of elections and opinion polls, pointed to the wish of a substantial majority of people in Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom. Independence in particular was regarded as an acceptable alternative only by a small minority in both parts of the community. In Government's view, an initiative which did not recognize those basic facts and principles would have little chance of success; inded the most likely result would be an increase in tension and violence.

This letter of Mr. Atkins' was written just as the bi-partisan consensus on Northern Ireland in British politics was breaking down. Leading figures of the new Social Democratic Party were urging new departures in policy on the basis that what had been tried manifestly did not work. The Labour Party was full of radical new suggestions on Northern Ireland, not only from the left but from all wings of the party. Ex-Prime Minister James Callaghan publicly espoused the option of an independent Northern Ireland and was seconded in this opinion by two successive leading articles in the *Sunday Times*. Conservative Party opinion was understandably more muted, but there were constant rumors of mutterings against established policy from Tory MPs. My own reaction to Mr. Atkins' stated position was more impatient than it should have been. I felt I had been speaking to the deaf, when in fact I had been writing to an unusually harried Northern Ireland Secretary who was bound, in the face of my analysis, to restate firmly the Government's position so long as it had not been definitively and publicly altered.

That other paper still remained outstanding at this time. I had committed myself to write a paper addressed to the Republican Movement, analyzing what I saw as their failure to define the basic priorities of their conflict, in the same way as Paper V had analyzed the ambivalence and unexamined contradictions of British policy. The form of my communication with the Republicans had always been different from that of my communication with the Northern Ireland Office, as it all happened first and more fundamentally in face-to-face conversation before I would do a written summation, while every communication with the Northern Irelnd Office was basically in writing.

I spent the entire month of July in Ireland, on a variety of tasks. These included accompanying my home Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, on his visit to Ireland to commemorate the tercentenary of the martyrdom of St. Oliver Plunkett, the 17th-century Archbishop of Armagh who had been executed by Government. I did a good deal of retreat-giving, especially for the Christian Brothers. I took such occasion as offered to carry on further my dialogue with the Republican leadership, and in fact brought them at once copies of the two papers, V and VI, that I had just given to Mr. Atkins. Chances to talk were limited by the preoccupation of the Republican leadership with their round of protest activities over the hunger strike. And then quite suddenly and unexpectedly, I found myself far more deeply involved in the process of seeking a settlement of the prison crisis.

INTERVENTION IN THE HUNGER STRIKE

After writing Paper V on the major lines of British policy, I felt I had quite shot my bolt on the prison issue, and had nothing more to say to the British Government on that subject unless they chose to respond in those terms. By the end of July I had another thought. It was that the prisoners and their supporters had in fact made several deliberately accomodating statements, and that Government had consistently interpreted these statements in the most restrictive possible sense. The statements would bear a much broader interpretation, and left a great deal of room for accomodation that had gone unexplored. I recognized the very absolute refusal of Government to negotiate in any way with the IRA or the protesting prisoners, did not really approve of it but accepted it as political fact.

What I proposed to do was to go to Government with an alternative interpretation of what the prisoners had been saying in their public statements. Surely I did not want to offer an interpretation that the prisoners or their IRA backers would then repudiate the next day, so I went first to the Republicans with my interpretation to see whether they would repudiate it or not. It was on the 1st of August that I went to their headquarters for this purpose. What happened was to lead me into extensive meetings and discussion with them and with the Northern Ireland Office that lasted well into September, constant telephone conversations, and an intensive correspondence.

I was to find that the Republicans not only accepted, and took steps to validate, the interpretation I made of their previous published statements, but that they had more to offer, efforts at accomodation that they wanted communicated to the Northern Irealnd Office. Hence my role went beyond the originally intended one of offering an interpretation and became that of a channel of communication, though never a negotiator. I was to find, also, that behind the common public image of British "intransigeance" were several very concrete and intractable points of difference that were genuine obstacles to a settlement of the crisis, and that responsible persons on either side were quite sincerely striving to overcome these obstacles, not to amplify them. I had to be educated in the real character of these obstacles, which were not obvious from the public statements which had been my only information before this time.

The Republicans, I found, truly meant what they said in renouncing the three things that, as they well understood, were politically and practically unacceptable to the British Government and prison authorities. 1. They were no longer seeking a status that could be recognized, either formally or covertly, as that of political prisoners. 2. They were not seeking any regime for themselves within the prison that would be different from that of other prisoners in Northern Ireland, but fully accepted the Government's declared principle that any changes in regime should be for all prisoners, a matter of prison reform, and not for themselves alone. 3. And finally they formally renounced any effort to establish a control of the prison that would be a rivel to the government of the prison by the prison authorities.

Establishing that the two sides really wanted a settlement, rather than the humiliation and defeat of the other, was central to my approach to the strike. It had been one of the main points of my interpretation of their public statements that this had been shown true of the Republicans, and after investigating it from every point of vantage in my conversations with them I was able to write to Mr. Atkins early in August:

> It was important to me to establish that they have not in fact raised the price for which they would end their protest, as I had made the supposition, and in fact had written this to you on several occasions, that they would raise it each time there was a new event in the sequence: when the first strike began after the breakdown over prison dress last October, when the resolution of the first strike broke down, when the new strike began in March, when Sands was elected MP, when he died, and at each subsequent death. What I find is that that supposition has always proved wrong, and that they have never actually raised new obstructions, but on the contrary have backed away from features of their protest that they came to understand as obstructive.

In earnest of this readiness to remove obstructions, the Republicans entrusted me with a number of particular messages for the Northern Ireland Office. It had, for instance, been the practice during earlier stages of the hunger strike, that of the previous October through December and the first months of the 1981 hunger strikes, that a prisoner who was seen by his fellows as at once representative of the hunger-striking prisoners and Prison Commander of the IRA, was present in the room at any meeting between hunger-striking prisoners and representatives of the NIO who came to explain Government's intentions with regard to prison regime. This person had originally been Robert Sands, whose activity had been critical to the settlement of the first strike in December. When Sands went on hunger strike himself, he forfeited his position as IRA Commandant in the prison, and was succeeded by Brendan McFarlane. The prison authorities had recently taken to excluding McFarlane from these meetings, though he had been present as a matter of course before.

I was satisfied that the Republican Movement's objections to this exclusion of Brendan McFarlane did not constitute a new demand on their part, as the exclusion itself was the new element. Nevertheless, they asked me to convey to the NIO that they would not insist on McFarlane's presence at such meetings in the prison, but would accept other existent means of communication with the hunger-striking prisoners. Further, they accepted the interpretation on the part of myself and colleagues that there had been a confusion of roles here inasmuch as the same person (first Sands, then McFarlane) had been both prisoner representative and IRA Commandant, with the result that the NIO representatives had been left in uncertainty, when dealing with this person, whether the context was communicating with the prisoners in the presence of a representative and counsel authorized by the prisoners themselves, or an effective negotiating process with a representative of the IRA as an organization. Hence the Republicans now accepted that, in their dealings with the NIO, they should maintain distinct task systems for different roles, so that such confusion of roles could not disrupt communication.

There was more detail than has place in such a summary as this of particular concessions and agreements, particularly on matters of prison work and free association, the two most central of the "five demands." More important, the Republicans proved receptive to the two suggestions that had been the substance of my earlier writings to them. One was the idea of their declaring an "amnesty" toward those who might otherwise be victims of their reprisals over the hunger strike. The other was the idea of an educational program inside the prison that would give some added content to the concept of "free association." This program was to include Irish language studies and the basic educational qualifications: O-level and A-level secondary education opportunities and, for those qualified, Open University courses. Republicans I talked with even pointed out a great difference between the "men of the forties" and "men of the fifties," their predecessors who had been interned or imprisoned in previous IRA campaigns. The "men of the forties" had had a grim and barren time in prison, and had come out embittered to rejoin the ranks of street fighters. But the "men of the fifties" had received extensive educational opportunities in prison, and had come out to go into businesses and professions for which their education qualified them.

Most important, the program I was proposing was to include a structured conference within the prison, in which a political program could be developed, in recognition of the argument I had been thrusting on the Republicans so constantly, that they had as yet nothing to offer to the Protestant/Loyalist population that that community wanted to hear. This was a central part of my own thinking: that the prison experience could be made a positive one for the prisoners and their organization if they used it to develop their own political program. It would also use the prison to bring the conflict itself to resolution, to the advantage of the whole society. There had to be provision that this program would not be open to manipulation by authority to their own advantage only, made into a way of domesticating the prisoners or blunting their political demands, but that also seemed possible through many stages of this discussion.

There was a grievous delay in the earlier part of August. I was to communicate what I had been

told by the Republicans to the Northern Ireland Office. I was not given the opportunity at first to present it in person to ranking officials, but only to recite it over the phone to intermediaries. As soon as they were informed that I had done so, the protesting prisoners at the Maze themselves smuggled a message out ot the prison, which was reported extensively in the media. In it, they stated a series of propositions regarding prison work, one of the most contentious areas of the "five demands," including agreement that there was no kind of work for maintenance within their cell blocks that they would refuse to do. And most significantly, they announced that they would refrain from any assault on warders in the prison. The intention of this smuggled message, I was assured by my Republican contacts over the phone, was to validate what I had just communicated to the NIO. The NIO's response, however, was to shut off communication with me, on the basis that the smuggled statement superceded what I had told them, and included less material by far. It took some days, during which there was another death on the hunger strike itself and a number of other deaths in the rioting outside, before this channel of communication could be reopened, this time with a full written statement of all that I had been told by the Republicans. We were back to the situation of all communication being in writing, but now I was at last allowed to meet with the officers responsible for prison administratin in the NIO.

There proved to be points in the Republicans' proposals that the Government could not reconcile with the IRA's renunciation of a rival structure for internal control of the prison.

The issues of prison dress, of visits, letters and parcels, and of remission of sentence lost through the protest itself, proved not to be the sticking points. The contentious points came under the headings of "free association" and "prison work," but were in fact much more precise than that.

"Free association" could mean many things, both real and symbolic. To the prisoners, it had come to mean that the locks on the individual cell doors should be opened at 8:30 each morning and left unlocked until 8:30 in the evening. That was concrete enough, but still symbol of a degree of freedom. Other locks would remain. The proposal I had been floating, to have a structured conference within the prison in which a future could be planned, was in one important aspect an effort to give a reality content to "free association."

There were precedents enough for a prison regime that would leave those locks open for that period of the day, both at the Crumlin Road prison in Belfast at an earlier period (the prison authorities had been unhappy with the arrangement then) and in the Port Laoise prison where the Republic of Ireland kept its IRA internees. The very successful prison regime at Port Laoise, which had put an end to much previous dispute there, was in this as in many other respects a model often invoked by the Northern Ireland Republican prisoners for the regime they sought. The prisoners at the Maze were in fact allowed to move and congregate with a great deal of freedom within their cell blocks, though with the proviso that a warder was to unlock and relock the cell door each time a prisoner entered or left the cell. And because the H-shaped cell blocks of the Maze were modern and far superior to the grim Victorian buildings of most British prisons, it would have been far easier to maintain such an open-cell-door regime in them than in the older prisons, including Crumlin Road. But for the warders, and for the prison administration, those locks on the cell doors had an important symbolic value as well, and the Government insisted that keeping them locked wa essential to the physical security of the prison.

I thought this was a quite soluble problem, and one in which I would have hoped the Government and prison authorities would have made the greater concessions, as the particular problems of physical security they were raising were more symbolic than real. But it would have required, first, an adequate motive to come to a solution of this particular point of contention and, second, an effort of imagination by each side to comprehend hoth the symbolic and real significance of this matter to the other.

The matter of prison work was more complex, and more of its real content was concealed, unrecognized even by the parties themselves. The prisoners objected to what they called "demeaning work," and gave as an example the making of mail bags. But this ostensibly humiliating task, it turned out, was not one practiced at the Maze or in any British prison, but merely an idiosyncracy of American jails that the prisoners had heard of. That objection, then, was symbol only.

It turned out that there was no particular actual task that the prisoners would refuse, under any of the three classifications of tasks that we eventually discussed: maintenance work (e.g., cleaning) within their cell blocks; productive work (manufacture, etc.); or training tasks that would be preparation for future careers. The term "demeaning work," that they used to describe what they expected from the prison authorities, sometimes called "penal work," meant instead *any work outside the confines of the cell block*, i.e., in the open workshops in which the prison authorities wanted them to work alongside other prisoners, not of their group or their ideological persuasion.

What was at issue here was basically trust. Inside their cell blocks, where the prisoners were segregated among prisoners all of their own paramilitary organization (or presumed to be so by the authorities), they were in a group they trusted. British opinion wanted to believe that the prisoners could be kept in thrall to these groups only by an atmosphere of constant intimidation, but the emotional facts of the case were otherwise: it was within the like-minded society of the cell block that these men felt relatively safe. Their expectation was that, if the authorities could once get them individually outside the cell block, it would only be to isolate them from their support group and leave them helpless and alone. Hence they were willing to do any sort of work actually likely to be demanded of them, but wanted the workshops set up in their own cell blocks, refusing to go to the mixed workshops outside. It was misleading to classify this demand by the prisoners as related primarily to "prison work." It was actually related to their "free association," with the understanding that the association they would accept was only with their own group, not with anyone else.

There was a problem of language behind this complaint, and the confusion it engendered. When the prison authorities spoke of "association," they meant a period of *time*, that part of the workday (from 5:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.) not given over to work, and the whole of non-work-days. When the prisoners spoke of "*free* association" they meant the condition of their social interaction. The authorities were looking at a period of time in which the prisoners could move about the cell blocks on their own business (though with a warder to unlock and relock the cell door every time they passed through it), while the prisoners were looking at the quality of their life among their associates. The authorities had their own phrase to describe this thing that the prisoners called "free association," but had not connected it with what the prisoners were talking about: it was "a decent element of choice and decency (= dignity) as human beings," which the prison administrators described as important to them in the quality of the lives of their prisoners. That was the context of the prisoners' talk of "free association," not something confined only to specific times of day.

But once there was talk of social interaction, the authorities envisioned at once a repeat of the situation of a few years earlier, in which a paramilitary command structure had carried the real authority within the prison. Mr. Alison (Minister of State responsible for security), writing relatively late in this discussion, indicated that he had thought his way through this whole issue, as I presented it, with great care, and concluded that more, rather than less, concern for the human decency and dignity of the prisoners was shown by treating them as individuals, and refusing to recognize them *only* as members of a group. I would think the issue less of an "either/or" matter than that: the person's need and desire to associate deserves respect as well. But the issue for the Government was that any form of social interaction within the IRA was a means for the paramilitary command structure to exert control, and so long as the prisoners insisted that they would work *only* within the close circle of association and refused

ever to leave this tight cocoon, the only explanations the prison authorities and the NIO could see were brainwash, intimidation, or conspiracy.

The Republicans, I felt, had not thought this matter through from the viewpoint of their opponents. That exercise of imagination, of course, is rare enough in any circumstances, and had been lacking in both parties to this dispute over many matters. I thought this an area that needed such an exercise of imagination from both, and that should eventually be resolved by compromise. Much as I had felt that the Northern Ireland Office should move most in a compromise about the locks on the cell doors, I thought the Republicans should move most in this matter of work outside the cell blocks, and in particular I thought that the education program and the structured conference within the prison would become, in a very satisfy8ng way, the basic content of the work program. But the compromises on either matter would have to be theirs, not mine, and a result of the exercise of imagination that I was trying to facilitate.

More important than, and fundamental to, any of these concrete points was the need to establish that minimum level of trust within the prison without which no prison anywhere can function. The situation was one of zero trust, and frustrated any effort to build positive new initiatives from either the prisoners' or the administration's side, despite clear recognition by both that such positive initiatives were vitally necessary. There was a tendency on the Government's part always to look at the concrete physical provisions of the prison, which of course do compare favorably with those of many other British prisons left from the last century, rather than at the state of distrust and low morale which was the more important issue.

The most negative element in the whole series of communications was the adamant refusal by either prisoners or the Government to see the other gain anything by the settlement. The absolute refusal to nghotiate or to be seen as negotiating was an index of this. There had been a time, earlier in the prison confrontation, when both prisoners and the Government had been seeking the defeat and humiliation of the other. That, in the language of conflict mediation, is the negative sum, by which, however much or little one side may gain, it has the satisfaction of rubbing the other's face in the mud. By this stage in the prison conflict, both the Republicans and the British had renounced that ambition, or at least professed so. There is such a thing, in conflict resolution as a positive sum. New positive elements can be brought in to transform the conflict situation so that in fact everyone gains, and a positive direction for the whole society results from the resolution of the conflict. Quite distinct elements were unde discussion that would have given the conflict such a resolution, and they remain possibilities still.

The Republican side had quite explicitly recognized that this was what they were seeking when they made two of their more important steps. One was to give their approval to the idea of the internal education program in the prison, with its element of the structured conference on the political future. The other was the statement, smuggled out of the prison by the protesting prisoners early in August, that they would, on their own initiative, refrain from any assault on warders in the prison. It was confirmed to me that that unilateral decision on their part was a first step toward the "amnesty" of all whose lives were put in peril by the whole process of the hunger strike that I had been recommending since the previous February, and that it was an earnest of more to come. On the day the prisoners' statement was first smuggled out, August 7, a response was made by Mr. Atkins, saying there was nothing new in the prisoners' offer. It had to be pointed out to him that two things in it were quite new: their statement that there was no kind of work in the area of internal maintenance in the cell blocks that they would refuse, and this pledge not to assault warders in the prison. There was never any response on Government's part to either of these two efforts at a positive initiative on the Republicans' part, the internal education program in the prison or this first earnest of an "amnesty" to break the cycle of violence.

For the duration of these conversations in August and September, both sides eventually and consistently held off any such positive overtures from the other. I have to credit the Republican side with the more serious effort in this area, since they made those two ventures early in the sequence of events, without receiving any response or even acknowledgment. On the Government's part, any suggestion that there was lack of will for such a positive sum solution, or that they had made no such overtures, was treated as a distasteful remark. Both sides consequently opted, by the end of the period I dealt with the matter, for a zero sum, an outcome in which neither would be humiliated but neither would gain, and the long struggle would be brought to a conclusion with no practical result whatever. This was a sterility option for both the Republicans and the British.

The hunger strike, as is known, did not end on these terms. I reached the position myself where I had said what I had to say to both, had done my interpretations, made the communications for which I was able to be a channel, worked through the defining of issues and obstacles, made my suggestions, and it was time to step aside. The time set long before for my eventual return to the United States arrived, and there seemed nothing more to be accomplished by hanging about. Positive proposals had been made which are still moot.

I had been reluctant to let any of this conversation happen under the public watch that had characterized and effectively sensationalized other attempts to resolve the prison crisis. What did end the hunger strike was a preempting of the issue by another party, the families of the hunger-strikers, who decided they would request medical intervention, an intravenous drip, for any of their brothers, sons or husbands who persisted with the hunger strike long enough to go into a coma. That ending was defeat and humiliation for the strikers, and has embittered the aftermath. There is no reason to be smug about it or to believe that their defeat was a victory for the Government or the society. The stalemate in Northern Ireland persists as a result.

Having spoken my piece to the participants and left them with it, I did finally write, in mid-September, the paper on the present state of the Republican Movement which had been due since I had criticized them publicly, in my May 30th article in *The Tablet*, for failing to define their true policy goals, even for themselves. That paper follows.

100

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NORTHERN IRELAND PAPER VII: Present State of the Republican Movement.

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
September, 1981

One previous paper in this series, my 'Respectful Appeal' of April, 1980, was addressed explicitly to the Republican Movement. In addition a letter I wrote to Daithi Ó Conaill on 10th February, 1981, was the equivalent of another paper in this series, and many conversations and discussion with leading members of the Movement have followed. Much has changed over this period as a result of the hunger strike phase of the prison protest, with the result that it seems right to do a new assessment of the situation of the Republican Movement now.

When, at the end of May, I wrote my article for The Tablet (of 30th May, 1981), 'Northern Ireland in Moral Focus,' one of the common responses I received, especially from among English Catholics who were basically friendly to the Irish aspiration for unity, though vehemently anti-IRA, was a query, practically a disbelief, that I could use the expression 'The Republican Movement' to refer to what they were accustomed to think of as 'The Provisional IRA.' I have used the term 'Republican Movement' in that way, for the Provisionals, simply because I believe in calling people what they choose to be called. But the most important single result of the hunger strike period, as I read it, is that the Provisionals (IRA and Sinn Fein) have authenticated their claim to that title, to be 'The Republican Movement.'

That statement will take some explication, which will follow in the next paragraphs. That the Provisionals have a real claim to be called 'The Republican Movement' is something I have long thought might be true, though I couldn't account it as verified until these last several months. I don't find that a welcome piece of verified data, as there is enough I object to both in the concrete activity of the IRA and in the vagueness of its purspose so that I find this claim on its part to be 'The Republican Movement' reason for unhappiness. I have seen the unhappiness with which various people heard the news that, for instance, the Patriotic Front was the authentic voice of Black aspirations as Rhodesia struggled to become Zimbabwe, that the PLO is the authentic voice of the Palestinians, that the Sandinistas were the authentic voice of Nicaragua's struggle against the Somosa dictatorship, among other examples. Each of those has been and is true. Now it is time for all, those to whom it is welcome news and those to whom it is not, to recognise that the Provisionals (IRA and Sinn Fein) have authenticated their claim to speak for 'The Republican Movement.'

That the thing for which they are spokesmen is so vague as to need rather over-meticulous definition is a measure of the Provisionals' failure as the emergent and now recognisable leadership

to discern and clarify issues. More of that below. They have authenticated their position as spokesmen in the Catholic community of Northern Ireland, as well as for a few Republican-minded Protestants and for a rather amorphous following in the Republic of Ireland to the South, for:

a) the sense of grievance at discrimination and indignities over many generations, aggravated by the security measures in the current long crisis; and

b) the age-old Republican aspiration, which will have to get more analytic attention later, as its definition is chameleon.

The claim of the Provisionals to be authenticated spokesmen for these two things has been demonstrated most publicly by the elections of Robert Sands and, after his death on the hunger strike, of Owen Carron as a surrogate for the hunger strikers, to be MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone, and of hunger striker Kieran Docherty and fellow protesting prisoner Kevin Agnew to be TDs in the Republic. That is the rather formal evidence, and hard to discount even though many interested parties have tried. But there is more evidence than that. It can be seen in the intensified consciousness of the old grievance that is palpable in every poor Catholic neighbourhood in the Northern State, and is directly referred, in people's consciousness, to the hunger strikers or even more directly to the Provisionals themselves. And there is a new level, in these same neighbourhoods, of outright rejection of the British State, referred again to the experience of the hunger strike, and for which the Provisionals are seen, even if in many cases reluctantly, as people's spokesmen. It has been part of the legend for a long time that the Catholic community in Northern Ireland rejected the British State in that Province. My own belief is that this has not been nearly so widespread a sentiment or so intense as the legend has had it, but that it has become far more widespread and intense as a result of the hunger strike experience, which has had a searing effect on this whole community.

Some others also have a claim to speak for the sense of grievance and the Republican sentiment in the Northern Catholic community. The INLA (and its rather evanescent political wing, the Irish Republican Socialist Party) has the flimsiest claim, urged by trying to outdo the Provisional IRA in violence, and it has not been much strengthened even though three of the ten dead hunger strikers have come from their disproportionately small ranks. The SDLP, more and more branded with 'Green Nationalism' despite its original efforts to avoid that designation, has seen its standing as political spokesman for the Catholic-Nationalist population slipping away as the hunger strike proceeded, though its leader, Mr. John Hume, has continuously gained in personal stature through his constructive work to bring a settlement of the prison crisis. Other claimants, such as the Workers' Party Republican Clubs, political heir to the old Official IRA, have been left in limbo while the hunger strike has monopolised attention in the Province, but are likely to reassert their position as originative thinkers in the Catholic community once the crisis is past. All the same, the Provisionals have now successfully asserted a claim to be the fundamental spokesman, as much or as little as any of us may like that.

They have been, in my own estimate, very poor spokesmen. I write this with full measure of that respect which I asserted for them in writing my paper of April, 1980, and which I believe they have experienced from me in my many interventions with them over the last couple of years. In the article I published in The Tablet of 30th May 1981. I argued that the Republicans, like the British, had defined the issue wrongly. By the hunger strikes, they have succeeded in defining the conflict as between themselves and the authority of Westminster, in a way that leaves all the Northern Irish politicians, Catholic as well as Protestant, outside, and that they have been winning hands down at that issue. But that in fact the issue is not between them and an outside oppressor. It is between them and their neighbours. Thus the stunning success they have had in the hunger strike, a massive political defeat of the British Government, brings them no nearer at all, in fact leaves them much farther away, from the building of a just society that will be such both for the Catholics and for their Protestant-Loyalist neighbours. And that is the crux of the issue.

Long since, when I first made the effort to find if the Provisionals and I had something in common to say to each other, I realised that they could not live with a real victory over their Protestant neighbours, that coming into power over a defeated and dispirited population of Protestants would be in itself the worst possible defeat for the whole idealism of their Republic. I find they have never drawn the consequences from this insight, though they do in fact have the insight itself. Their failure to do so, I believe, is a failure to live up to the responsibilities they have undertaken in embarking on a revolt, in becoming the real leadership (in the sense described in the first two pages) of a popular movement for the redress of genuine grievance. They are in fact fighting for the restoration of justice for their own ethnically Gaelic-Irish and incidentally Catholic community, which has suffered plenty of injustice, from varying parties, in varying forms and to varying extents, often conflated into one uniform picture of injustice despite evidence to the contrary but certainly a genuine and deeply felt and grievously experienced history of injustice. That the Provisionals have emerged, as clearly as I perceive it, as the authenticated spokesmen for that sense of injustice and movement for its restoration, despite the many obvious ways they have blotted their copybook over the years, must stand to their credit. But because they have failed so egregiously to attend to the rights in justice of the Protestant community, different rights for a different cultural group, and not those of a foreign settler-exploiter class (as they are often called) but of working people rooted for centuries in a land that is their home, rights just as sacred as those of the Catholic population for whose grievances the Provisionals speak, they seek to do an injustice proportionally just as great as the justice they seek for their own population group. In the logic of the situation, they seek a practical genocide (all the rhetoric for it is there: 'If they don't like it here, they can go elsewhere.'). In practice, they shrink back from that, don't want to initiate their prized Republic with a genocide, and so try to divert themselves and the watching world into feeling very sorry for them, their prisoners and their people. The whole force of this movement as a revolutionary quest for justice and a better society is blunted by this carry-on, and the stalemate of all these years -- of the last twelve, of the last sixty, of the last however many -- is the result.

I hear a good deal of talk now that the Provisionals, the Republican Movement, are no longer so naive as to be fighting purely and simply on a 'Brits out' line, that they have become more sophisticated in their outlook and now fight for a more comprehensive vision. I find this unconvincing. What I perceive is some recognition on their part that the simple 'Brits out' policy is deficient to the point of naivety, not that they have anything else to offer or have seriously thought through other levels of issue. There is talk particularly of their being Socialist, of their striving for a Socialist Republic for the whole of Ireland. Many of their rivals, Catholics with both some Republican sentiment and a strong Socialist commitment, see them, because of the limitations of their exclusively paramilitary experience, as incapable of fielding a genuinely democratic Socialist policy, fit only to mount a basically Fascist travesty of socialism. I think myself that the Provisionals are too facilely accused of Fascism, just as they themselves altogether too facilely accuse all sorts of groups among their opponents of Fascism (I will return to this below), and that they are not so incapable of democratic and participative activity as they are portrayed in that argument. I have seen them, during the course of the hunger strike episode, follow such actually participatory and consultative procedures that their supposedly hard-line and militaristic leadership was basically foiled of getting its way through the whole course of the experience. But of any genuine content to their Socialism, or any commitment to it that would stand as a serious rival or supplement to their 'Brits out' policy, I can find no trace. I see this as a grievous deficiency. It is a lack not only of Socialism or of a commitment to the just ordering of society under whatever label, but of policy of any sort.

There are people enough who will not want to hear or believe that the Provisionals are, in the sense we have been saying, authentic spokesmen for the Catholic community's sense of grievance and of that vaguely conceived sense of political aspiration called 'The Republican Movement.' There is a whole communications industry devoted to telling us all that the vast majority of the Catholic people repudiate and detest these, as the wicked men of violence, and of course it is true that the Catholic community, like their Protestant neighbours, has been a long time wishing the violence were over and objecting to it, act by act, especially when they have judged particular acts, and a great number of them, as atrocities. With the relatively low level of such acts, particularly involving civilians, that reaction is somewhat in the past now, though able to be revived whenever the Catholic community again perceives some action of the Provisionals as atrocity. But the deaths of hunger strikers have made the great difference of mobilising Catholic opinion for those seen as suffering, to the death, on behalf of justice for them. Perhaps this support was latent all along; more likely it is a new thing, or newly energised. We have heard from several people now the observation that the deaths of hunger strikers have had an effect on popular opinion analogous to that of the shooting of prisoners in 1916. In any case, however it has happened, I would see this as established fact now, that the Provisionals are (have become) the spokesmen of The Republican Movement, and have to be reckoned with as such.

I have already discussed at length, in paper V of this series, 'Major Lines of Policy' (June, 1981), the British Government's attraction to a 'defeat the IRA' policy, and its implications. The

Government, at least, knows this is a wrong policy, impossible of achievement and self-defeating, even though it has let itself be trapped into it over the whole year past through leaving its policy suppositions unexamined. It has yet to adopt a more positive policy.

Within the Northern Ireland community others, including practically all Protestants, want to hear nothing of the IRA as authentic spokesmen for anything other than their own murderous frenzy, as it is seen from the Protestant viewpoint. Protestants, and a great many Catholics as well, want to have nothing to do with them, and as evidence mounts that they are now speaking with the sort of authority this paper has been attributing to them, a common response has been (particularly after each of the two Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-elections) to denounce all those who have in any way lent them such authority to speak for them as wicked themselves and the supporters of murderous thugs.

The Unionist Party (fragmented as it is, on this matter it speaks with one voice) would have us believe that defeating the IRA is the solution to all Northern Ireland's problems, and it is in fact from them that the Government keeps getting reinfected with this concept, even though it knows better. The concept that the IRA is the problem, rather than that it is symptom of a basic dissatisfaction in the society, involves the acceptance that there is no real or serious problem other than the IRA's existence in the society, and this is wishful thinking. The Unionists would have us see one side only of these people, the deadly side that threatens destruction to the whole culutural thing that is the Protestants of Northern Ireland, effectively a genocide (at the least a cultural genocide). They would prefer that we not see the other side, that they stand for Catholic grievance and aspiration in a way that has always had authenticity and authority, and has it now, since the hunger strikes, to a far greater degree. It is self-deception not to recognise this plain fact about the society they live in, and cannot lead to their peace or their happiness, however much they may wish it could. It is not the case that these are mindless and motiveless attackers of their society, nor that, if the IRA were removed, the Unionists could go comfortably back to a status quo ante and have a society that worked. Hence it is no service to the Unionist people to leave them unchallenged in that supposition.

While that typical Unionist response is fairly crude, there is a much deeper reluctance on the part of Protestants who do take the Catholic grievance and aspirations seriously, as also on the part of Catholics like the best of the SDLP politicians, to believe that the Provisionals (IRA and Sinn Fein) could possibly be any sort of authentic spokesmen for that Catholic grievance and aspiration ('The Republican Movement') because of the sheer vacuity of what they have to say about policy or about any vision of the future. This is the fault of the Provisionals themselves, because they have not really got enough policy or vision to impress anyone. No one of any other political grouping, Catholic or Protestant, is even allowed (publicly at least) to talk with them, ostensibly because they are the wicked men of violence (those under attack are never going to talk to the 'men of violence' anywhere, in Algeria, in Aden, in Kenya, in Rhodesia as it was called, until, of course, in each case they have eventually decided that they would do so anyway), but in fact because all the other parties genuinely working to make some sense of the real situation they find themselves in have

made the embarrassing discovery that the Provisionals have not yet troubled to work out anything serious to say. This is a dreadful failure of leadership, that the IRA, with its actual and authentic position as spokesman for the Catholic grievance and aspiration, has neither addressed nor even properly defined the real situation in which it is fighting, nor has it given any leadership of this sort to the community that accepts them as its spokesman. It might seem difficult to parallel such irresponsibility in actual and authentic leadership, but in fact one need look no further than the roles of both British Government and Unionist Party in this same Northern Ireland debacle to find failures of responsibility in leadership just as glaring.

But others in Northern Ireland are addressing the real problems. How are they to take the IRA seriously? The answer is by recognising that their spokesman position is really authentic, however lacking in responsible policy and vision they may be, and however over-indulgent a Catholic community that allows them to exercise their spokesman role so irresponsibly. I have been saying and writing for some years now, for my own part, that any seeming solution to the Northern Ireland problem that left the Provisionals outside, as embittered scapegoats for all that had gone wrong, would be a bad solution, not only for them (who would be thrown aside by a community that had used them, after all their actual sufferings and idealism in their struggle), but for the whole society that would then have to continue contending with them as disillusioned outsiders. I have not been able fully to confirm their real authority as spokesmen in the Catholic community of the Province until this last year's episode of the hunger strike, though I had suspected it might be so. Now, having seen that authority as authentic, I would say even more strongly that they cannot be left out, or shut out or wiped out, and that while the main responsibility for coming up with policy and vision lies with them, all the others who are genuinely addressing the real problems of that society have the burden of trying to coax some responsible policy and vision out of them.

All that, I would say, is background only to a consideration of the present state of the Provisionals (IRA and Sinn Fein) after the long series of deaths on hunger strike, or as I will now unreservedly call you, The Republican Movement. And from this stage I should address this paper directly to you, in the same spirit of respectful appeal as my paper of April, 1980.

You have received now the 'dividends,' so to name them, of the hunger strikes. I happen to know, from having dealt with you over the hunger strike, that you did not in fact coldly calculate that ordeal of your fellows in terms of gaining those 'dividends.' It is a popular picture, reinforced by some deliberate propaganda, that the leaders of the IRA ordered their subordinates onto the death fast, even under threats to themselves and their relatives. What I actually witnessed, and am sure was no mere facade, was that the leadership genuinely opposed the hunger strike at all times, before it began or was resumed after the Christmas interval, even when, after the election of Bobby Sands as MP, the 'dividends' were at their height, and over the long aftermath period in which more and more deaths have added nothing but depression; that there was not merely calculation of effect but a real personal concern for the suffering and dying of colleagues; and that the wishes of the families and relatives of hunger strikers, even when opposed to

the wishes of their hunger-striking sons or husbands themselves, as when they requested medical intervention to save their lives after they had lost consciousness, were respected by the IRA leadership. You will surely understand that your enemies were losing badly in the political forum over this hunger strike issue, and so would predictably resort to propaganda use of anything they could grasp against you, however distorted. Having seen that the reality was other than that, I feel obliged to say so.

However, the 'dividends' are there, and you know it well. I would tend to sum them up under four headings:

1. You have regained the sympathy and support of your Catholic community in the North, which you have not had to anything like the same extent since the early days of the 1970s when you were seen as their defenders against pogrom-style attack by their neighbours. In Mao's terms, you have the water to swim in.

2. You have been receiving money from overseas on a scale you have never had it before, even in 1971 and 1972. Such a wave of international sympathy has been generated by the hunger strikes that this is likely to continue for much longer than it did in the early 1970s, after having previously dwindled to a mere trickle before the hunger strikes. I have noted your own clear perception that this whole Irish issue is one for Ireland, not for international opinion. Nevertheless, the money is important.

3. You have, in consequence, armaments on hand or easily to be acquired in quantities and of a kind that surpass what was seen in 1972, when the violence was at its previous peak.

4. Recruits have been coming to you, after the long dearth period of the later 1970s, in such numbers that you have been able, even required, to be very selective. Their training will not yet have been completed, and I recall the interval of nearly a year before the recruits who had come to you after the introduction of internment without trial in August of 1971 were actively deployed in guerrilla activity in mid-1972. I expect we are witnessing another such interval for training purposes now.

Out of all this, which is basically hypothesis on my part, you have the means in hand to mount a guerrilla campaign at the level of the 1972 fighting, perhaps much more than that, and to sustain it for the indefinite future. The last time you mounted such a campaign, in the early 1970s, you gradually lost your community support for the violence itself, the military campaign proper, by a long series of actions that were perceived in the Catholic community (and distinctly by outsiders such as myself) as atrocities. It might well follow that, as soon as the violence level rose again with the start of a new campaign, you would again wear out your community support, but then again you may have learned enough from your experience of the early 1970s to avoid the specific acts that the community would classify as atrocity, and so might sustain their support much longer.

Your enemies have to reckon with all this. I think you would be mistaken to suppose they will react by surrender or be intimidated by your new strength, but it must depress them enormously. You can't depend on it, either, that your enemies will respond intelligently, with better policy or clearer insight.

They may just as well respond with the same dull denseness as both they and you have had in the past, and in this last decade. When it comes to constructive exercise of the brain, you have no control of anyone's doing that except yourselves.

You must reckon with this new military power you have acquired, a windfall profit from the hunger strike, yourselves. Where will it get you? Everything here is defined in terms of the old 'Brits out' policy and fight, which has got you nowhere, has not even gotten the 'Brits' out, before. A new campaign of the same sort, on the larger scale of which you are now capable, will get you exactly where you are now, to the same stalemate. You will still be working off on the 'Brits' the resentments and frustrations for which you really have your neighbours (and the unimaginativeness of your own resistance) to thank. A decade from now, you may still be asking the same questions in the same situation as now, after all the steam has gone out of the renewed campaign you are now in a position to launch. You will have accomplished nothing other than to create misery for all, including especially your own people. You have need to break out of the circle. My perception is that in fact you know and are prepared to admit this, but that you have rather few ideas how to do it.

I have talked a lot with you of ways and of the need to initiate a programme of political and social thinking and planning, to meet the problems that have not been addressed at all or have been evaded, and of ways in which the areas of violent confrontation can be progressively confined. We have spoken, too, of the prison as microcosm of the whole conflict in your society, and of initiating a more positive programme there. My 'Respectful Appeal' paper of a year and a half ago, and my letter to Daithi Ó Conaill of last February, contain so much detail of that sort that, while it could be brought up to date with reference to the current situation as defined by the hunger strike ordeal, I would be largely repeating myself. The things I saw as positive ways of breaking out of the circle last February I would now see as all the more important in view of the situation outlined above, with its potential for a new campaign of the same sort as the old, much more intense and perhaps much longer, but going in no other direction the the outcome-less one before.

The forms of communication between you and your enemies has broken down to the point where there are no words any more, no articulate arguments to be made between you that are not mere incantations of old tired phrases, but only gestures of mutual revulsion, and all but the violent gestures have been progressively excluded. It is a kind of conflict state, terribly dehumanised, that can't be improved on by patching, by arguing out one point of detail or another, or one after another. It requires that new elements of a positive kind be inserted into it, to transform it. This, I find, you do know also, and it is a matter of finding the positive transforming elements that will serve.

My own experience of conflicts -- much the more usual kind -- that involve heavy portions of anxiety and ambivalence, is that there is no other effective transforming element than that each of the conflicting sides take up a degree of positive responsibility for the other, i.e., identify itself to some extent with the other's needs. That there is ambivalence all over this conflict I will take as a given, noting that your people are

unprepared even to admit, to themselves or others, that their quarrel is basically with their neighbours, and must keep trying to convince themselves that it is simply with 'the Brits;' and that the British and the Protestants are unwilling even to admit that there is a conflict in principle, but keep moaning about 'the violence, the violence,' without any willingness to speculate on what the violence might be about. A taking up of responsibility for one another is the thing needed here, immeasurably more important than any amount of analysis.

And curiously enough, there has been no lack of this taking up of responsibility for the other. The one most encouraging thing I have seen since the hunger strike posed itself as total obstacle to almost any other initiative in Northern Ireland was the Rev. Martin Smyth's intervention in late July, saying that Government should take steps to clarify what it was offering in the way of a prison regime, and not be overly concerned about questions of status, thus bringing the crisis to an end. His intervention did not reveal any great deal of insider's knowledge of where the issues in the hunger strike had got to by that time, but it did manifest a degree of good will and humane concern that should focus attention.

I hope your people understand what was happening there. It has happened before with other Northern Protestants/Unionists/ Loyalists, notably with some of them in the paramilitary groups, but it is particularly striking with Martin Smyth. True enough, he disclaimed, in subsequent statements, special personal concern for the hunger strikers themselves, explaining that his concern was for the effects of the hunger strike ordeal on the whole community, particularly his own Loyalist community, but he didn't go back at all on what he had said. He was taking up a degree of responsibility for the hunger strikers and other prisoners, by implication for the whole Republican/Nationalist community that is so much alienated from his State, and to whom he is on principle so much opposed. This was rather a surprise to me from Martin. As it happens, he is a man I have known and learned to respect very highly for a good many years now, however many things we might disagree on. I've known his concern for his own people was genuine, a dimension of his being a very good pastor in his own church, and that what he does is done with integrity. That he would make this new step is beyond what I had realised he was capable of. You will realise how sharply he will have to defend that statement before his own community.

This, as I see it, is what the UDA people, especially Andy Tyrie and Glen Barr and the circles about them who are involved in political initiatives have done. They may be wrong in the basic thrust of their political programme, though as you know I find it very attractive myself, or in any number of their more detailed conclusions. But I do credit them with having taken up a very substantial responsibility for the satisfactory future of the Catholic/Nationalist community, and that is of the essence.

When I have talked with your people in Belfast, I have found a great deal of reluctance (I classify it as ambivalence) to believe in this good will on the part of UDA men: not only reluctance to accept the kind of conclusions they were drawing but to credit them with any good faith. The term used to dismiss them was 'those Fascists,' and I was anxious to know what that meant. I have my

own definition of a Fascist, and it is a thing I will always oppose: the decision that political conformity, either to something new or to the continuation of a status quo, is to be imposed by force, rather than by any process of participation or consent. That definition went close to the bone, of course, because it applies to the Republican Movement as much as to anyone else: not, I would think, in the Republican Movement's attitude to the British, whom it regards as foreign occupier, but in its attitude towards the Northern Unionists, on whom it wants to impose conformity by force.

The man I spoke with on this occasion had three elements in his definition of the Fascism he attributed to the UDA. The first was my definition, which he couldn't throw out; the second was their accepting the idea that there should be a possessing class (with the jobs, and whatever other advantages) and a subject class (the Catholics, to be kept under the boot); and the third (more or less equivalent to my definition again) was accepting from the British military and repressive forces the idea that if you shot, beat, imprisoned or otherwise terrorised a few of the Catholic population you could keep them all in subjection.

I found I could answer him that, to my own experience, the UDA had been there, in the attitudes he described, had lived with this sort of Fascism, but were doing their best to put it behind them. My actual experience is that the UDA people escape one of the least attractive traits that is common to both the British and the Irish Catholics of Republican conviction, namely a self-righteousness that can always make a case for having been absolutely right. The UDA people's opening statement is quite consistently: 'We've done some terrible things,' with varying accounts of how they tried to meet threatening situations as they found them, or do the best they could, or have been used by others. My own reading is that they, or at least significant elements of them including their leadership, have made a major turning in the direction of taking up responsibility for the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican population. This is the same thing I note in Martin Smyth's statement on the prison crisis, and I find many elements of it too in UVF people, and in the Progressive Unionist political direction.

These various Protestants are not alone in taking a degree of responsibility for the opposing community. I have heard mutterings of it on the C atholic/Nationalist/Republican side of the fence, though at a less developed level. One very inchoate shape this takes is the observation, commonly made for several years now by people in the Belfast Catholic ghettoes, that when it comes to the often mentioned role of the British Army in shielding the Catholic neighbourhoods (which, you will note from my first paper in this series, I believe is the actual reason the British Army is still there, despite ambiguities and muddle and even though they may not in fact be needed for that purpose), they would rather put their trust in their Protestant neighbours than depend on such British protection. Some readiness to identify with Protestants as of the same society as themselves is indicated in that. A nother strand, more distinctly of taking responsibility for the good of the Protestants, and this time from within your own Movement, is in your recognition that you would not want to force or corral the Northern Protestants into the Republic of Ireland as it stands, as I noted in my 'Respectful Appeal' paper. That dissatisfaction with the Southern Republic as the destiny for

the Protestants as well as yourselves is of course open to several interpretations. There is the old formal position on the sole legitimacy of the Second Dail, which I know is all very sacred to you but is really very remote from the realities of the last sixty years. Then there is the ambition within your Movement, stated only when convenient and only by a particular fraction of you, to set up a Socialist Republic in the whole of Ireland. Many of your enemies, particularly those Catholics who most reject you, and those predominantly in the Republic, have visions of your setting up a Stalinist State of totalitarian repression every time they hear that. I find that a vapid misreading of your intentions, as I do also when I hear the same scare interpretations of the ambitions of the Republican Clubs. But as already stated above, I remain unconvinced because I don't see that you have any real Socialism to offer. The third interpretation, and one that I subscribe to myself, is that the Republic is effectively a confessional State, without place for a real cultural pluralism that would make it even tolerable as a home for the Northern Protestants. I tend to read an awareness of this into your Movement's reluctance to force the Protestants into such a Republic as now exists in the Southern State, but I don't hear you analysing it seriously. I do also hear much concern for not coercing the Protestants into an unwelcome unification with a Republic they abhor as a commonplace from ordinary Catholics in the ghettoes.

One other thing I would want to point out, not particularly as the taking up of a responsibility that crossed the community barrier but simply as an instance of nous, of serious and practical exercise of the brain and therefore a positive sign in the midst of so much intellectual desert, is the activity of Mr. Paisley over this year. I find I have been slow to read this correctly myself. Early in the year I was aware, as I wrote in my February letter to Daithi Ó Conaill, that Mr. Paisley had a solid issue in his objection to the Thatcher-Haughey joint studies as a way of taking the Northern Ireland issues away from the Northern Irish people, that he was right and ought to have the explicit support of your Movement. I could see also that, with his 'Carson Trail,' he was in danger of slipping over the precipice into farce. The hunger strike issue and all the consequent polarisation of the two communities spared him the need for such a nostalgia campaign. He has been able to reap all the votes he needed without continuing any such histrionics. But what I had not given sufficient attention, and what has been central to his activity all this year, is that he has been building himself an independent constituency and power base from which to negotiate with whoever has to be negotiated with in what he foresees to be a new situation. That so much intelligence is exerted in at least one quarter, even though by one of your most assiduous opponents, you may take as an encouraging sign. May more people do as much.

Among all these signs of responsibility in various quarters, I attach particular importance to the UDA's effort. It is special in that they have designed their policy to meet the basic Catholic objections to the State, and they have invested years of their time and energy in doing that with great care and consistency. They do it very warily, of course, with caution and anxiety about how their own people are going to react to this effort, and how you are. Their caution and anxiety, seen from your position, may well look like half-heartedness or even deception.

I would be interested in four elements of your response in the Republican Movement to this kind of activity in the Loyalist camp, not only to the UDA effort to which I attach such importance but to the whole spectrum of such activity.

First, there is the question of whether you find any real value in the concrete approaches these people are taking. I can see that all these efforts are things that have developed without any participation on your part, and that in itself is bound to make them less than appetising. None of them may be the right eventual approach, but then again, serious people have invested genuine sweat in conceiving them for that purpose, and your Movement owes them not just the back of the hand but an analytic response.

The second element is whether you find it in yourselves to credit them with good faith. The commonplace reaction, trying automatically to discredit them -- 'those Fascists' --, is obviously there, the first emotional response, and really a bit of childishness if it is left unanalysed, a cop-out in the face of the responsibility your Movement has undertaken for a determined struggle. You know very well what the equivalent (and surely also childish) response by the British Government to your Movement has meant. They are unwilling, for fundamentally just emotional and face-saving reasons, to see you other than as 'thugs and murderers,' and that is why ten of your hunger-strikers have died. I mentioned above the common trait your people share with the British, the habit of being absolutely and unquestionably right at all times, a habit that your Northern Ireland Protestant neighbours, at least the activists among them, have fortunately escaped. It is true for any of us that, if our purpose in life is the winning of arguments and the confounding of those who contradict us, we have finished learning and are never open to any new insights.

The third element is the most crucial one, a test for me of whether your Republican Movement will have anything to offer for the future of Ireland. This is whether your people are prepared, or ever will be prepared, to take a degree of responsibility for the Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists. This is of the essence, and what was meant in my May 30th article in The Tablet about the Republican Movement never having taken any adequate cognisance of the rights in justice of that community, of the necessity that their voice be heard, their participation secured, their justice guaranteed in whatever is to come out of the conflict. To recognise that your Movement could not afford a victory that would translate as a defeat for the Protestants was the first place where I found a meeting of minds with the Republican Movement. I don't find that the consequences of that recognition have ever been drawn or developed. Instead, in conversations with your people, I have always found them vacillating between making this recognition explicit and reverting to the anxiety that any action drawn from it would somehow be a surrender. I take that as a prime case of ambivalence.

The fourth element is what capacity the Republican Movement has to take up the responsibility and a dialogue with the Loyalist community or those groupings in it that are the cutting edge. Of the people I have met at various levels of the Movement, many have high intelligence, and high commitment is the commonplace of the Movement. Your training has been to think in the military cate-

gories and to win arguments like good debaters, and that involves you, even many of those most responsible for the leadership of the Movement, in reverting constantly to the worn track of old recitations. At issue here is the developed, trained capacity to exercise the brain in new directions, to be inventive in ways to humanise your conflict, and to build up, throughout the Movement and its wider popular following, that vision of the future that is so glaringly absent now. Practically everyone I have met in your Movement has suffered the limitations that come of never talking with anyone else other than under the conditions of a debate. You have all been too much indulged by one another, who listen without objection to the recitation of consecrated cant phrases as if it were argument. You don't meet enough people who will point out your lack of clothes.

I have made a lot of specific recommendations to the Republican Movement that are spelled out clearly enough in the two earlier papers referred to, the April, 1980 'Respectful Appeal' and the February, 1981 letter to Daithi Ó Conaill. In the many conversations we have had about them since I find we have often made what seemed to be long strides in coming to understanding on all the issues referred to in this paper, but they have always then become enmired in these two areas of blockage: the reversion to cant phrases and the anxiety that the sort of accommodation you actually recognise as necessary might after all be surrender.

It seems to me plainly true both that any solution to the Northern Ireland conundrum that leaves you out is a certain failure, and that you can in no way provide one by yourselves, but must participate in it with others, all the others. I have become used to finding you in a dependency position, always claiming that the initiative must come from others than yourselves, and therefore always waiting for others -- the British, the Loyalists -- to do something nice for you, to yield on some point or other. You have been the perennial petitioners, and since this has not induced those on whom you depend to grant your petitions, you have played the victim, feeling sorry for yourselves. The sorts of proposition I have been making to you are aimed to your breaking out of that dependency position. If positive elements, such as we have been discussing, come into the whole situation on your initiative, not dependent on anyone else's doing something first or on anyone else's response, then the initiative cannot be taken from you. This is not surrender, but action from strength, and I believe you are in the better position to take such action now that you so plainly deal from strength.

The choice is with you now, when you have it in your power to launch another devastating military campaign of the old sort that will get you to exactly the same stalemate as it has always brought before, only with more human blight than it has involved even in your past campaigns. It is desperately bad for your Movement itself, as well as for everyone else affected, that that should happen again, with the same discouraging results as before, only more so. No humane result can be had from this conflict without your contributing crucially to it. You have it in your power to bring about such a humane result.

EPILOGUE (1983)

The hunger strike ended on October 3rd, on terms that were felt as demeaning for the prisoners and their Republican backers. Relatives of the hunger strikers, largely on the urgings of their parish priests and priests serving the pastoral needs of the prison, adopted a consistent pattern of asking for medical intervention to save the lives of the strikers after they ahd lapsed into unconsciousness. The priests had simply conluded that the hunger strike had gone on too long and showed no prospect of resolution. The IRA declared its prisoners robbed of their means of protest, and ended the hunger strike on the grounds that they had no other option. It was, in my own assessment, a moment when the IRA did have another option. They could well have declared that they were now taking a different initiative, that they would allow no more deaths of prisoners and would now strike a more positive course.

They had been in a position to do that several times before, notably before the second round of hunger strikes began in March, at the time of Bobby Sands' election as MP, and at the time of his death. They were still in a position to do so in October of 1981 because of the enormous gains they had made through the hunger strike, which this desultory conclusion did not really alter.

In the subsequent period, they began a new campaign of armed force. It created great indignation, although the number of bombings and shootings did not exceed what they had maintained often before. It was more of the same, and created no prospect of a different result than the same had achieved before.

Another two years have passed since, and there is still no clear signal from the Republicans which way they are going: whether they will continue with the same unplotted course that has failed them so often in the past, or whether they can manage a truly political initiative to which it would be worth while for the Protestants to respond. Their activities have been poised between these two possibilities. They have emerged from the political wilderness to field candidates, with a success that has shocked their opponents, in public elections, but they have yet even to attempt to have anything to say to the Protestants. So far the political discourse stays on the familiar track of simple denial of the real problem. The British and the Protestants want to deny, despite the results of elections, that there is a real rejection of the State by the Catholic population: it is only a few "men of violence," they would have us believe, and if they were gone there would be no problem. The Republicans want to believe that the problem is "the Brits," and that if they were gone all Ireland would be happy and sound. For both, it is a denial that the problem is within the Northern Ireland community, and the denial makes it possible to do nothing about it.

The Republicans gained much during the hunger strikes. Popular support for their movement in the Catholic community, wavering before, was restored to a level they had not enjoyed since the "Bloody Sunday" episode of 1972, when British paratroopers had shot down civilians in the streets of Derry. This gave the Republicans the supporting population from which to mount a major new military campaign. It would be easy for them to lose that public sympathy again once they were to start such a campaign, but they might well have learned what things had most affronted puiblic sympathy during their campaigns of the 1970s, and how to avoid them. They appeared to have brought in money on a scale far beyond anything they had in the early '70s, and armaments on a scale and of a kind that they had not had before. And their new recruits appeared to be coming in such numbers that they had to be highly selective in receiving them.

In the earlier stage of the current "troubles," recruits who came into the IRA in 1970 were not trained and ready for major campaigning until well along in 1971, and it was not until 1972 that the really serious military activity took place. I can claim no competence to estimate whether it would take as long or less time for them to do the training work this time, to mount a campaign that would exceed 1972 and likely last considerably longer that the high-level fighting did then. But enough time has passed by now, without such a campaign, to suggest that their decision is something other. One hopes thay have not simply defaulted on any sort of decision.

There have been contradictory signs. The IRA lost a great deal of its new armaments in discoveries of arms caches in the immediate aftermath of the hunger strike, and they seem to have gone througjh a period of many betrayals. They had on their backs the still more intransigeant INLA, the Irish National Liberation Army, from which some of the hunger strikers had come, and with which the IRA was now officially allied. That meant constant pressure to take the most military and least political line, or forfeit the most hard-line public to the rival group.

Before 1981 was out, the IRA stepped over another threshhold of horror and crime in the murder of Member of Parliament the Rev. Roy Bradford. There had been purely sectarian murders by the IRA before, though relatively seldom as such murders stick in their throat. There had been the murder of Lord Mountbatten and members of his family, which was an attack on a symbol of the authority of the crown. There was the murder of the Strongs, father and son, figures in the judiciary, which like the Mountbatten murder had especially shocked public opinion: a vengeance murder directed at the system of justice under which the Republicans felt mistreated. MP Airey Neave had been murdered, but not by the IRA. It was the breakaway INLA that carried out that crime. The murder of Roy Bradford was a first for the IRA itself: the murder of a strong active politician for his politics alone. That is the kind of threshhold from which it is hard to retreat once it has been crossed, and another lurch into chaos and fascism for the IRA and those affected by their campaign. The political assassination is a gag on thought, war on the mind. But it has not been repeated. Have they stepped back from that threshhold?

There was a brief spate of bombing attacks on military bands and ceremonial Army units in London. This was an attack on symbols again, essentially a reinforcement of the denial that there is a real problem integral to the community of Northern Ireland, and an assertion that the problem is merely "the Brits." But that too was a flash in the pan, not repeated as the political assassination tactic had not been repeated. Had they made up their minds on any policy?

Protestants and the British concluded that the IRA had squandered such public sympathy as they had won during the hunger strike. They were stunned when local elections to choose a new Assembly for Northern Ireland showed a full third of the Catholic population voting for the Republican Movement's candidates. The Republicans had prudently refrained from running candidates in elections for a long time, knowing that people supported them as a military expression of their grievance, and as a vigilante defense against the ever-present threat of pogrom attacks from the Northern Protestants, but did not want them as politicians. The nomination of Bobby Sands to a British Parliamentary seat midway in his hunger strike had broken through that old restraint, and Bobby Sands' electoral triumph had been repeated, after his death, when his election agent, Owen Carron, won his vacant seat. Now the Republicans were able to sweep a third of the Catholic vote away from the traditional Social Democratic and Labour Party in elections that had none of the hunger strike drama about them.

The Republicans' options remain open. They can still take the kinds of initiative that have been suggested in these papers, or other positive initiatives that would put them in genuine dialogue with their neighbors, the other elements in Northern Irish society.

British options remain open as well. It was encouraging to see the low level of rhetoric with which the Northern Ireland Office greeted the end of the hunger strike. In this area, the new team of Mr. James Prior, as Northern Ireland Secretary, and Lord Gowrie as Minister of State has acted with commendable restraint and sensitivity. Real lines of policy are yet to become discernible nearly two years later. Britain has been distracted by adventures in the Falklands, and is back to paying small attention to Northern Ireland. The new Northern Ireland Office does have a fresh slate. In Dr. Garrett Fitzgerald's government in the Republic of Ireland it has partners who possess a perceptivity and respect for the needs of the entire Northern community, Protestants as well as Catholics, that is new in Irish government.

Throughout the summer of 1981, when Mr. Prior's advent in the Northern Ireland Office remained a rumor only, it was being said that he would take the job only if assured that there would not be the constant back-seat driving from the Prime Minister's office that had characterized the period of the prison crisis. Ultimate responsibility for policy on a matter so important to British Government does rest, of course, with the Prime Minister, but there is no conducting of day-to-day decision if every detail is second-guessed by a Prime Minister too much occupied by other responsibilities to be properly briefed. It will rest with Mrs. Thatcher to approve the kinds of major lines of policy that my Paper V discussed. The administration of Mr. Prior and Lord Gowrie shows every sign of competence to conduct such a policy.

They can be foiled by the IRA. If the Republican Movement's choice is for another all-out military campaign and hate show, British policy will be condemned to continued sterility, and the IRA's choice will have been for a new round of demonstratively macho impotence as well. The long stale-mate will go on. British policy has much to do with that choice on the part of the IRA. There is no lack of voices in Britain who would urge that Government push the IRA into such useless courses in the hope of ultimately discrediting and defeating them. It will take sensitivity on the part of the Northern Ireland Office to cultivate and encourage any new and more constructive opening from the Republican side. Britain cannot afford to deal in weakness, but will have reason to regret lost chances if it stamps out positive initiatives from its opponents.

And then there are the Protestants of Northern Ireland, whom the world largely ignores and dismisses as bigots and stubborn hard-liners. In 1981 they went through a year of culminating outrages after many years of outrage. All through the hunger strike the funerals of murdered Protestants were treated as of little account beside the drama of the prison. The Roy Bradford murder came as a crowning mark of the IRA's contempt for their legitimate political expression. They saw a young police officer murdered in the hospital where he was visiting his wife and new-born son. Their experience has been of isolation, more alienated from their Catholic neighbors than ever before in this generation, and with little confidence in British concern for their safety or their future. It is a hard time to expect constructive thought from them.

Nevertheless, the Protestants have responded with unexpected freedom from panic and strength of character to the whole experience of these last several years. The perception on their part, which was the starting point for the whole series of observations in this book, that their safety in the future could no longer depend on the protection of Britain, and the admirable calm with which they undertook to search for a new order, remains the most important political fact about Northern Ireland today. It is much to expect of them that they should, at this juncture, seek to construct a new society in consensus with Catholic neighbors from whom they have taken the beatings of the year 1981, but the signs, already noted, of an awakening of Protestant responsibility for the opposing Catholic community, its rights and its needs in any new ordering of their common society, are the most hopeful note to be found anywhere in the Northern Irish tragedy. This is a community that deserves the world's, and Britain's and Ireland's, respect and sensitive attention. There are springs of creativity in it that the rest of us,. and particularly the Republican Movement in Ireland, will long rely on.

A most serious pre-condition for constructive response to their desperate situation by the Northern Irish Protestants rests with the churches, and especially with the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. I will close this epilogue with a plug for the Appendices of this book, in particular for the article "Church Structure and Violence in Northern Ireland," reprinted here from *The Month* of August, 1977, as Appendix A. It is in the perception of Catholic Irish society as one of clerical domination that the Northern Protestant rejection of that society has its roots. That perception has its strong elements of stereotype. Irish Catholic society has moved and developed freedoms that the Protestants have not yet admitted into their stereotyped picture. And the spectacle of a church bent on preserving its institutional

privileges and using power as an instrument of its policy is not exclusive to the Catholic Church in Ireland. Other churches, even the most evangelical and anti-hierarchical bodies that share the personal-witness insights of the whole evangelical tradition, have been poisoned by the Irish experience and do use every bit of power they can set their hands on, even though they have far less actual power than the Catholic hierarchical system. The problem of the resort to institutional power is not in fact peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church or to all the churches in Ireland alone, but is a universal one. Nowhere else than in Ireland is it presently the root of such violence as there, and this places a burden of responsibility on the Church in Ireland that gives it scope to perform a service for the whole Church in meeting this problem. The Church in Ireland will have to have the support and understanding of the universal Church if it is to meet this responsibility. Neither is the problem peculiarly one of churches. It is a problem of institutions, and one in which the Church, as an institution of Christian witness, has a responsibility to provide a model of the humanization of institutions.

There is scope now, and a discernible readiness in the churches to take on this problem of the churches' institutional use of power in a creative way that could remove a lot of the inherited poison from Irish society. It has hung fire through the long turmoil of the prison crisis because of the participants' realization that the hunger strike held center stage and precluded any other serious initiative in Ireland so long as it continued. Now is the time for this initiative to get under way, and readiness for it on the part of Roman Catholic hierarchical authority is as hopeful a sign for the future of Ireland as is the Protestant adoption of a measure of responsibility for the rights and needs of the Catholic community. I stress the analysis given in the article reprinted here as Appendix A as it underlies whatever else I have written in this series of papers.

As I look now at the Irish situation, however tortured it has become especially through the long year of the hunger strikes, I find that the priorities begin to be seen in all the relevant parts of the society, and that is reason for measured hope.

APPENDIX I 117

The Month, August 1977

Church Structure and violence in Northern Ireland

RAYMOND G. HELMICK S.J.*

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS of fighting, the Catholic community's message about their grievance in Northern Ireland has come through clearly to world opinion. People elsewhere may not sympathise with them as much as they did in the period 1968-1972, but that is because they disapprove of all the bombing and shooting, or because Northern Ireland has become tiresome and depressing old news that they would rather not hear about, not because they have forgotten the tale of second-class citizenship of Catholics in the North, of discrimination in jobs and housing, and all the rest of the sorry story.

Not so many people, whether in Northern Ireland itself or elsewhere, have grasped what the Protestant grievance is. The Protestants still look, in the world's eyes, like primitive religious bigots, and of course have some articulate spokesmen who give colour to that appearance. They carry their bad reputation undeservedly, since in fact even the most serious militants of the Protestant paramilitary organisations will tell you they distrust the colourful troglodyte spokesmen precisely *because* they see them as religious bigots. These militants are the people most engaged in resisting Catholic Republicanism or any threat of Irish reunification, and religious bigotry is no part of their make-up, however prejudiced they may be against the actual Catholic population of the North or of Ireland as a whole.

Discrimination against the Catholics has been a fact. Many Protestants of the Province try to deny that even now and can point rightly to the very poor conditions in which their own people have lived: poor housing, low wages, heavy unemployment, a grey life. But it has been much worse for the Catholics and deliberately made so. Nor has the discrimination come only from the machinations of an upper class of Protestant land-owners and mill-owners. It has expressed the will and decision of the ordinary Protestant working-class community.

But it has not been done for no reason, or, what would be much the same, just out of bigotry. The code-word for what Northern Irish Protestants are afraid of is 'Rome Rule', which has a deceptively 17th-century sound to it. Their grievance is against something they see clearly in late 20th-century Ireland, a pattern of clerical domination of Irish Catholic life, both private and public, which frightens not only them but also Catholics from other parts of the world. This is not a question of religious doctrines or for that matter any directly religious concerns, but of a kind of clerical power which, in most countries, is no longer available to churches, Catholic or Protestant, and which the contemporary Church, Catholic or Protestant, in fact rejects as irrelevant to Christian faith and even a damaging encumbrance to it.

It is saying much to assert that such clerical power still exists in Ireland, much as it did, say, in nineteenth-century France before the loss to the Church of the proletariate and the scandal of the Dreyfus case. It is saying still more to claim that dread of this power, under the code-name 'Rome Rule', lies at the heart of Protestant resistance to a unified Catholic State in Ireland, hence at the very root of the violence there. This article will try to establish what it is that Protestants see, and how the dynamic works.

IT IS IMPORTANT to distinguish here between the appearance and the reality of this clerical domination. In Belfast there are perceptive Protestants, and not only among the academics or the professionally educated, who have measured and monitored this situation carefully, as have many Catholics too. There are far more people whose dread of Catholic clericalism is more a vague matter of folk-lore, unanalysed and para-rational, mixed up with a lot of stereotypes of a Catholic population they don't really meet or know: Catholics are dirty, lazy and have too many children, or that sort of thing. But the appearance is important, and the dread real.

They would see the system operating this way. In private life, the Catholic who falls out with his local priest is in serious trouble. It may be the unmarried mother, the couple whose marriage is rocky or irregular, the person of independent opinions, especially if those opinions are critical of the clergy or their power, the person whose interests (say, about property, or where a new petrol station is to be located) conflict in some way with clerical interests, or simply the person the local clergy do not like or disapprove of for whatever rational or

Ray Helmick is an American Jesuit who, for the past five years, has associated closely with both Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland.

irrational reasons. Such a person has no recourse, if the offence is serious enough, no future in the local community, and no choice then but simply to move away. A great part of one's energy must therefore be devoted to keeping one's nose clean in the eyes of the clergy and nothing worse can happen to anyone than to fall under their disapproval. Now in fact, even at this level of appearances, the Protestant who views all this in the most para-rational way does know that there are a lot of Catholics who no longer go to church, and that the lightning does not strike them, or not effectively. Still the threatening character of clerical power remains.

In public life, for a politician, an academic or a professional man, as the appearances go, nothing worse can happen than to have a falling out with a bishop, or worse still with The Bishops. This could mean the end of a career, no future in public life or in one's profession. In the political and public life of the Republic this means stagnation. Instances where the bishops have actually thundered or interfered are few and far between, but they seldom need to do so because every public person knows better than to risk it. Even things the bishops might not actually object to are never attempted because of the fear that they might.

In one sense, this applies not only to Catholic politicians and public men of North and South, but even to the Protestant public figures of the North. It is assumed that they will be prejudiced against Catholics and discriminate against them (so much assumed that even a quite generous-minded Protestant public figure will have his actions interpreted that way). The bishops, like other Catholics, will deplore and object to that, though with no expectation that their complaints will make any difference in the situation. But let a Protestant infringe on an issue that affects the bishops' power, something like schools or marriage legislation, and he does so at his peril.

We are dealing here with appearances still, the way the system looks to the ordinary Protestant viewing it from Shankhill Road or East Belfast. We have to measure this against the reality as well.

SURELY IN CITIES in the Republic, at least in Dublin, things are much more free than they were in rather recent memory. Take for example the typical case of the unmarried mother, whose outcast status used to give a scandalous example of heartlessness: nowadays, if she works for RTE or some comparable large organisation, she gets her medical care, three months leave, and her job is safe. There are even many caring organisations to help her through such trouble as she may encounter. Of course, one hears that this could not have happened ten years ago, and it is the far more generalised picture of ten years ago that still remains in the folk-memory, but there has been change. Middle-class Catholics, in an urban environment, have considerable protection within their own peer groups against the disapproval of the clergy, less than would be taken for granted in other countries, but an improvement over what went before. Political figures who have opposed or criticised the clerical system get re-elected now, even with increased majorities in some cases.

All this indicates an important shift away from the clerical domination of the past, and people, even ranking clerics, point to these signs with some pride, many of them of course with some alarm. What is most lacking is a sensitivity to what the picture of clerically dominated life means to Protestants. Suggestions of such domination are not closely related in popular consciousness to the roots of the violence in the North, and are generally regarded as something to be refuted by pointing to such straws in the wind as these, not a cause that the Catholics of Ireland should urgently pursue for the good of their Church and the reconciliation of their Northern neighbours.

Within the North itself, the actuality of clerical power is still distressingly close to what we have described as the appearance, and in the crucial area of Belfast itself so extreme as to seem a bad caricature of the worst the Protestants might think. The poor are entirely without recourse if their priests disapprove of them personally, the middle class too small and too closely identified with the clergy as their familiars to afford each other the mutual protection their peers in Dublin can. Public figures are wary of any move that could bring episcopal wrath upon them. But there is another aspect of public life that is particularly important and especially vulnerable to clerical interference.

This is the community activity, not at the level of the professionally educated but at the still more important level of community associations and initiatives. A most perceptive, important Protestant leader once asked the writer, as an index to the clerical hold over Catholic community initiatives, why the original organiser had been got out of the CCDC (Central Civil Defence Committee, the local neighbourhood defence organisation that was formed during the first communal clashes of 1969). The reason was clear enough: when there is an initiative taken by the lay Catholic community that does not originate from or come under the control of the clergy, the reaction is uniformly either to co-opt it or to ruin it. There have in fact been community initiatives from the Catholic working-class neighbourhoods that have not been either co-opted or ruined, but everyone in these neighbourhoods knows that this is the first and most important battle that any such community effort will have to face.

PEOPLE LIVING IN the Northern Irish Catholic or Protestant context will surely write enough in response to this analysis to show whether it is justified or not, and it seems better in this article not to go into names and personalities. That would be needlessly abrasive, and in fact it is the hypothesis of the writer that this situation, in general, is not a matter of personal malice but of structural fault in the pattern of Irish clericalism. It is far more important to see something of the effect these structures have in producing the violence that has so grieved the two communities of Northern Ireland and shocked the rest of the Christian world, as well as scandalising the non-Christian world with the spectacle of how little the Christians love one another. It is well first to have a more generalised, comparative view of how majority/minority conflicts work.

Most of the conflict analyses that come out of Northern Ireland, and of other conflict areas like Cyprus or the Middle East, from native sufferers or from the hoards of PhD candidates that batten on to each of these conflicts, concentrate directly on the actual clash between the majority and minority communities. This is a losing game. Seen simply as a conflict between two groups in the population, the clash is understood as a quasi-commercial transaction: I get so much, you get so much; I take what I can and you get only what I can't take. Viewed in this way, the conflict always appears practically insoluble, and in Northern Ireland as in the other similar conflicts between majority and minority groups there has been no shortage of those who conclude that there is simply no solution. Any gain for either side is a new grievance for the other and embitters the conflict further.

In fact, from an experience of quite a variety of such conflict situations, one can say that there are at least four general factors that should be looked for in any one of them:

1. There is the internal state of the majority group, critical in producing the unrest if the majority itself is in internal conflict or crisis of conscience. Where there is no such conflict in the majority, even the most offensive minority is quite safe from harm. But if there is such an internal conflict, the best behaved minority is in danger. This is to say that there is typically a scapegoat element in the treatment of minorities.

2. There is the internal grievance situation in the minority, which is what we have been talking about, for both Catholics and Protestants, so far in this article.

3. There is the actual confrontation between majority and minority, the most obvious of the factors, but in fact the least tractable to solution.

4. There is a framework. This may be such a thing as the legal system of the country, as in the American interracial situation, where the 1954 and subsequent decisions of the Supreme Court were a vital framework factor. In other cases, as in South Africa, the legal system may be entirely under the control of one side and hence no framework factor, but there will be other framework factors in its place.*

The factors that can best be worked on to find a way out of such a conflict are the first and fourth, the internal conflict of the majority and the framework. To concentrate the effect on the direct community clash itself, the third factor, is practically a guarantee of failure.

IN NORTHERN IRELAND, as many observers have pointed out, there is a *double minority* problem: the Protestants being a majority in the North but a minority in Ireland as a whole, and most conscious of this double role. The Catholics, while a minority in the North, are equally conscious of their majority status in the whole of Ireland. The grievances of each community, considered as a minority, we have already seen.

Seen and sensing themselves as a majority, the Protestants find their self-identity in their commitment to *democracy*. Religion, Protestantism as such, is not nearly so basic to the way they sense their basic character as a community. The democracy that is so important to them that their commitment to it determines their sense of who they are is of a traditional 17th-century Cromwellian kind. There is a bit of a smoke-screen in the way Protestants in Northern Ireland today try to define their democracy exclusively in terms of majority rule, for they are quite aware that an essential element in this Cromwellian democracy, to which they are most sincerely committed, is the defence of the rights of dissenting non-conformist minorities.

But the Protestants are unable to put this commitment, which is so dear to them, into practice with relation to the Catholic minority because of their fear of 'Rome Rule' in the sense defined in the earlier part of this article. In consequence, they have a bad conscience about this very commitment to democracy which is so strong in them as to amount, for them, to the framework of the whole situation. There is an ambivalence about it, a wish for the thing and a shrinking away from it, and ambivalence, so long as it is buried deep in the consciousness and never admitted to oneself, is here as elsewhere

* For this general analysis of the factors operating in majority/minority conflicts, I am indebted to my good friend and colleague Richard Hauser, but for the application of it to Northern Ireland which follows I am solely responsible myself.

120

a potent source of violence. If one must conceal one's ambivalence, especially from oneself, then one must attack whoever represents the doubt one feels but will not admit in oneself.

Here is the internal conflict, the crisis of conscience, in the Protestant community. Not being able to implement their truly basic conviction, they can only try to ignore the minority which presents them with this bad-conscience situation; if they cannot ignore it, suppress it; and if they cannot suppress it, destroy it. There is in this situation all the potential for a genocidal level of violence. It has not happened yet, but the extreme situation of a Beirut remains, as it has been all these last nine years, implicit in the conflict.

The Catholics, seen and sensing themselves as an All-Ireland majority, find their self-identity, the framework factor, in their Catholicism itself, which they understand not so much as an institutional structure as a life-commitment to certain Christian ideals and common values, including tolerance and love of neighbour. This is important even for those who are alienated from Church practice. There is still a sense of who 'we' are, people who share common values of a very elevated sort. The writer has consulted a great many people in Ireland as to whether this assertion is really true, and the most challenging criticism of the idea that Irish Catholics identify themselves in terms of their Catholicism was the question: what about their sense of Irish nationalism?

This national-identity sense has to be given its weight, but it seems not really to outweigh the sense of being a people with common values represented by Catholicism. The Catholics of the Southern Republic have been quite able to wish the unification of Ireland would be long away, and have much preferred peace in their twenty-six county State to any realisation of the ancient dream. And in the North itself, after decades of abstention from participating in the Northern Ireland State, the Catholics gave a phenomenally clear (though eventually disappointed) demonstration of their readiness to make the Northern State work in the Civil Rights movement of the mid-1960s. The policies of the present SDLP, for which Catholics by and large do keep voting, with its hopes for an eventual unification of Ireland based never on coercion but rather on participation in the organs of the Northern State and community reconciliation, are light-years apart from the old Nationalistic Party. But the sense of shared Christian values as constitutive of the Catholic community has remained constant.

The internal conflict of the Catholics, feeling themselves as a majority, is in their realisation of how the Protestants see them, as a clerically dominated society of an outmoded sort that has no real relation to Catholic faith, and their sense, whether out of perceptive analysis or a vague, para-rational awareness, that what the Protestants say of them is really true. The dynamics are strictly parallel to those that arise from the Protestant bad conscience. To reform their internal Church situation and its clerical power structure is hard. Failing that, they likewise have no resort but to ignore the (Protestant) minority that makes such an issue of this distortion of Catholic life, if they cannot ignore the minority, suppress it; and if they cannot suppress it, destroy it.

In the case of both communities, the dynamics of violence rises from the most decent element in them, and in both cases it has the as yet unfulfilled potential to go to the extremes of violence.

What we have said here amounts to asserting that the existing power-structure of Church life is eventually the crucial factor behind the situation of violence. The internal conflict of the Protestants and their failure to live up to their chosen ideal of democracy is also a factor that needs the greatest attention, but here the stumbling block is once again the internal power-structure of Church life. That the situation of clerically dominated life, by no means an essential of Catholic life, should be so critical a factor in the situation of violence must be of the greatest concern not only to the local but to the universal Church.

No personal ill-will is necessarily involved here. Church leaders are quite sincere in their frequent (and ecumenically common) condemnations of violence and appeals against it, and many individual churchmen go to heroic lengths in their search for a just reconciliation. They are truly representative of the sentiments of their less courageous colleagues. It is a structural problem which people in the leadership and membership of the Church either have not found the means of restructuring or have not actually recognised as playing the critical role it does. Various symptoms of this underlying problem, such as the separate schools or marriage legislation, are sometimes brought forward as if they were the problem itself, but it should be seen that they are symptoms only, and that resolving them would not in fact resolve the underlying problem.

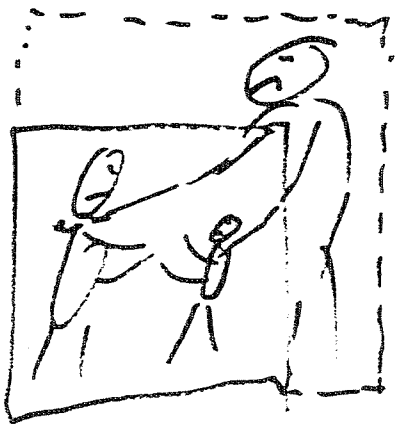
Having said all that, we must say in conclusion that this situation has only been the fuse that has set off the explosion of violence in Northern Ireland during the last nine years. The explosive itself has been a still deeper problem, namely the decay of the whole fabric of social life in Northern Ireland. Such a statement deserves fuller treatment than this, but that will have to wait for a subsequent article. In that decay, Northern Ireland is not much different from Britain, Europe, America or almost any part of the world one cares to cite. It differs only in having a fuse that has ignited the situation sooner than in other places. Rebuilding or replacing that social fabric is often necessary in itself and a task to which the Church should be dedicated.

The Four Factors:



1. Internal state of the Majority
2. Internal state of the Minority
3. Direct confrontation between them.
4. Framework.

Double Minority:



122

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NORTHERN IRELAND: PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMIC AND THE CHURCH DIMENSION

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. -- November, 1992

For the visit to Irelend of the Irish-American Partnership, I had it in mind to do a revision and updating of the attached fifteen-year old article from *The Month*, "Church Structure and Violence in Northern Ireland" (1977). Partly time constraints, partly the feeling that you would be better served by seeing the original led me to copy it as is, with these few prefatory remarks.

The article carries a heavy thesis on the way Catholic cultural patterns of clerical power in Ireland had caused alarm among Northern Ireland's Protestants, and that this was a very substantive element behind their reponse to Catholic Ireland: to the Republic and its aspiration for an eventual United Ireland and to the Catholic population of the North itself.

I had hesitated for some years before publishing this interpretation, which I had been asking people in both communities about all that time, because I feared it might do more harm than good to say these things. Particularly I wanted to know whether the Holy See shared this perception, whether officials there were worried about it, and whether they had any actual program going to deal with it. Consequently I went to them first to discuss the whole question, and published it only with their encouragement. At their suggestion, I went to some bishops in Ireland, too, to talk through the whole question before writing the final text, and actually incorporated many of their suggestions in the article as it eventually appeared.

The piece attracted a good deal of attention at the time, being extensively quoted and commented on in both Irish and British press, and seen by a good part of the Northern clergy. I have the impression that the Northern Catholic bishops have from the outset taken this thesis seriously and made it a matter of priority.

Meanwhile, things have changed in the intervening fifteen years. The Catholic Church in Ireland now takes a lot of sniper shots. The press and a lot of Irish public opinion delights in finding vulnerable spots in Church armor. A referendum on some relaxations of anti-abortion legislation lays its claims in Irish political attention alongside the November 25 election in the Republic, and an Irish export in the form of young Ms. Sinead O'Connor rips up pictures of the Pope on American TV. Television culture has replaced a lot of the rosary recital and other devotional practices of Irish family life, and many of the clergy have forebodings of the massive decline of Church influence in Irish life.

The Italians have a wonderful expression: "*Era migliore quando era peggior*," or "Things were better when they were worse," and many many feel that way now. Things are really better in this matter, though. Irish Catholic culture is not rebellious so much about faith as about authority, and that is a healthy development for the overcoming of the syndrome described in this article. What remains to be seen is how far the Protestant public can assimilate the changes that are happening in the Catholic community, and overcome stereotypes based on a stage of Catholic life in the country that is past.

As an appendage after the article from *The Month* I've included a couple of fairly simple-minded sketches to illustrate the Four-Factor analysis theory I use.

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The Context of Group Identifications and their Conflicts: A Four-Factor Theory of the Dynamic of Conflict

by Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.[1]

April, 1996
for International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights Conference
on Reconciliation between Populations
Vienna, September, 1996

In the conflicts among national- religious- and ethnic-identity groups that have so scarred our experience of the latter part of the 20th century, emerging from the termination of the Cold War as among the primary dangers of our contemporary world, we often see evidence of sinister manipulating forces. Most often, power-seeking political or military figures play cynically on the stereotypes, group anxieties and sense of historical grievance of the populations in question, so as to garner advantage for themselves from their clashes. This has properly become a matter of study in itself, of special interest to many in the Helsinki Human Rights Watch, who take pains to identify those who employ such wiles.[2]

While entirely endorsing that effort, I have, since the time of my initiation in peace-making intervention in such conflicts, quite deliberately taken another line. Study of stereotyping, of anxieties and many other elements that are the target of such manipulation consistently show me that they easily lend themselves to those abuses, but that the seeds and habits of stereotyping etc. do already exist in communities and traditions as ready tools for the manipulators. Even in the absence of conscious manipulation these can give rise to inter-communal suspicions, rejection and violence. Consequently I have made it my objective to get an understanding of the sources of the stereotypes, the anxiety etc., so as to put in the hands of the people who harbor these manipulable weaknesses the means of coming to terms with them, recognizing their own vulnerability to such manipulation and bringing it within their own more enlightened control, away from their manipulators.

That usually means leaving the issues of malice, the judging and the punishment of malice to others, though naturally none of us can simply prescind from them. But the tasks are different, and best pursued separately. Only at our peril will we neglect building the strength of communities to resist manipulation, and even those of us most motivated to fight injustice are as tempted as others to see our task as judging and punishing rather than building those strengths.

These guide-lines had already gained importance for me in working with the Black civil rights cause in the United States of the '50s and '60s, in working for the safety of the Rastafarian community in Jamaica at the time (1965-'67) of their worst victimization, in working with the war-resistance group in the United States during Vietnam, when I was less interested in the striking gesture of moral judgment than in promoting, among the defenders of the war, a self-understanding of their own pathology and the pits they were digging for themselves.

Bringing all of this to my own first mediating ventures in Northern Ireland, beginning in 1972, I quickly came to a recognition that those engaged in the direct violence on either side were not the psychopaths they were generally accounted to be by those who felt more righteous than they, but had in

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[1] Jesuit theologian, Professor of Conflict Resolution, Boston College, with experience as analyst and mediator in the Northern Ireland conflict since 1972, Kurdish conflicts in Northern Iraq and Turkey since 1973, East Timor since 1975, between Israelis and Palestinians since 1975, Lebanon since 1982, etc.

[2] As, characteristically, in *Slaughter Among Neighbors: The Political Origins of Communal Violence* (Human Rights Watch Books), New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1995

most cases joined the various militant groups out of good-faith commitment to the safety and interests of their own communities, and that the conflicting passions, grievances and fears of the communal groups had roots that one could deal with.

Attached, as document, to this paper is a 1977 article on the Northern Ireland conflict in which I first used, in published form, the **Four-Factor Theory** which has proven its utility to me in working with many other communal conflicts.[3] The theory, as analytic tool, really requires that it be used only in close actual observation of the psychological dynamic of a particular conflict, an effort to get within the skin of the participants and to understand their dilemmas as they themselves experience them. As with most other theory, we can do incalculable damage if we try to cram other people's horrors within the boxes of our preconceptions. Hence my preference to put it before you in the very concrete form of that article. The basis of the theory, though, in abstracted form, can be stated as follows.

> When, in a clash between majority and minority groups, the conflict is taken *in its own terms*, i.e., strictly as a confrontation between them, the process is much like a ruthless business deal: I get so much, you get so much; I get everything I can take from you, you get only what I cannot take from you.
>
> The result is that every change of status means a further embitterment of the conflict, not a reconciliation or healing. Before long, we regularly hear the conclusion, familiar to anyone who has followed a number of these conflicts: *there is no solution*.
>
> The more proper conclusion is that *some other factors than the direct confrontation* must be considered if there is to be reconciliation or healing. I habitually look for *three* such additional factors: the *internal state of the majority party*, the *internal state of the minority*, and a *framework*.
>
> A supposition here is that *scapegoating* is fundamental to the conflict. *This is not always true*. There are conflicts brought about simply because one side chooses deliberately to exploit the other and disregard its rights. That is a reason why this theory cannot be imposed arbitrarily on anyone's conflict, but its applicability needs to be tested. As a generalisation, however, it is always worth testing out the hypothesis that the minority suffers at the hands of the majority not because of anything it does itself but because the majority has need of a scapegoat.
>
> By this hypothesis, the most aggressive and bothersome minority is quite safe so long as the majority is contented within itself. When the majority has some trouble of conscience that involves a sense of *guilt*, a minority is in danger, and will be accused of all kinds of misdeeds, regardless of how harmless and inoffensive it may be in fact.[4] The attack is made because of the majority's bad conscience.

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[3]Raymond G. Helmick, S.J., "Church Structure and Violence in Northern Ireland," *The Month*, London, August 1977, pp. 273-276. Included with the article here is a November '92 page of later reflection on it along with a couple of sketches to clarify the theory.

[4]We all know instances, of course, in which a minority of persons holds the fate of larger numbers, or a whole community, in its power. It may even be typical, if we see the reins of power normally held by an elite even within a majority community. My terms "majority" and "minority" are terms of convenience. In a case like *apartheid* South Africa, where an actual minority dominated, we can speak of a "power majority" and "power minority."

1. The *internal state of the Majority*, therefore, is the first factor that needs to be examined. The sense of guilt, always an oppressive condition, calls for *punishment*, and the guilt-ridden have always known that it is more convenient to punish someone else than to take the punishment on oneself, hence the scapegoat.

2. The *internal state of the minority* plays a lesser, but still important role. Having studied this in a great number of conflicts, I have never yet been satisfied that I have an adequate sense of how that role is played out. Two distinct elements in it have long impressed me.

a. Minorities have a sense of *grievance*, whose content, and the resultant behavior, need to be understood -- again something that cannot be achieved simply by routine application of a theory, but has to be ascertained by attending closely to what is actually going on in the circumstances.

b. Minorities have a tendency to *play the role of victim*, to dramatize it. In many instances, this becomes of itself an *invitation to violence*.[5]

3. Among the factors to be examined, one can of course never leave out the *direct confrontation between the two sides*, taken in its own terms: the element noted first but which, as observed above, will produce no solution if it is the only thing we attend to. To underscore that, I give it only *third place* among the four factors.

4. And the final factor is the *framework*, the *context* in which the conflict takes place.

My late colleague Richard Hauser had spoken of four factors before me, and the theory as I present it now is rather much a joint effort between us. I tend to handle the minority state differently than he, but the principal difference between us is the framework. Richard had worked at the American civil rights cause for a period, providing training programs to people in the Southern Leadership Conference, and first developed the four-factor idea at that time. In that context, he saw that the whole American issue was played out in terms of *constitutional law*, especially of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, which rejected the old "separate but equal" concept of Black and White opportunities, and prohibited racial segregation in schools. Richard concluded that the law was always the framework, the context within which conflict took place.

This would not hold for me, when I looked at such a conflict as South Africa, where the law had been reduced to a wholly owned subsidiary of one side, and was used as a weapon in that side's armory, as it is in many other conflicts, Northern Ireland's among them. It cannot then be the context for the whole. Looking for an alternative framework, I eventually settled on *group identification*, the answer members of the group will give to the question, "Who are *we*?" That could be the identity principle for Americans, at least for the dominant group in the United States, for whom the concept of being "a nation of laws, not of men," for whom not a Sovereign but the written Constitution itself is the bond of unity within the nation, provides that answer to the question, "Who are we?" But it is not necessarily the same for others, who are likely to respond: "That is *your* law, not ours." The framework always belongs to the dominant group.

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[5]This victim element is the one that leaves me most puzzled and unsatisfied in my own theory. Padraig O'Malley, in his excellent study of the mentality of the 1981 hunger strikers in the Northern Ireland prison, *Biting at the Grave: The Irish Hunger Strikes and the Politics of Despair* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1990), raises this question more interestingly than anyone else I have read on it, but in my own estimation he too fails to draw satisfactory conclusions from it. I would like to understand its workings better.

This group identity concept of the framework proved distinctly helpful in the Northern Ireland case. The group identification was not obvious, and had to be culled out by intensive experience of the inner landscape of both communal groups, Protestant/Unionist and Catholic/Nationalist.

I came to a realisation that Protestantism as such, or the Union with Great Britain for that matter, was not the group identity principle for the Protestant/Unionist community. Instead it was a feeling that the group was the primary carrier of the concept of *democracy* -- never mind Greece, never mind Switzerland. Protestants in Northern Ireland, asked to define their democracy, would resort at once to the idea of *majority rule*, but in fact this was merely a blind. Majority rule was for them an instrument for suppressing their minority. But the real democracy principle that they had so deeply internalized, over many generations, that it was their communal answer to the question, "Who are we?", was that *the good society was one which upheld the rights of dissenting, non-conformist minorities.*

The concept had its roots in the Puritan revolution of the 17th century and the Cromwellian Commonwealth, where these terms had a more sharply technical meaning -- dissenters, non-conformist -- than since. It is even a pre-institutional concept of democracy, and from a period in which the word "democracy" itself would not have been chosen for it. It is not even the definition I would choose myself for democracy. (For me, "democracy" means a society in which every institution of government, or for that matter any other form of institutional power in the society, is held to *public accountability.* I am aware of how, even in those of our societies that account themselves most democratic, the public has little appetite for actually reading the accounts, and how well the elected officials in our democracies recognize that, once elected, their next task is to insulate themselves, to the greatest extent they are able, from public accountability. That is in fact the measure of accountability's importance. A society which is as protective of minority rights as the Ulster folk would have it is, in my view, the *free society*, likewise an ideal. When I have described this Irish Protestant ideal of the society that protexts the rights of dissenting non-conformist minorities to friends in Lebanon, they have responded immediately that that is their own most urgent need.[6])

The Protestants of Northern Ireland have not in fact lived up to this definition of their own identity. The true dissenting, non-conformist minority in their midst is of course the Catholics, whose rights they have flagrantly violated. There is a readily intelligible reason for that: their *anxiety* about this group, which they regard as *incapable of democracy* in the sense in which they have defined it. (Not far off the mark, as it is hard to see any sense in which the Catholic militants have given serious regard to the rights and needs of the Protestant community there.) But the Protestants are guilt-ridden over this failure to live their own self-concept. It is the tragedy of their situation that currently they live, under "Direct Rule," without the traditional institutions of elective democracy which they see as their gift to the world. Those who govern them are accountable only to Westminster, not in any serious way to the Northern Irish themselves. This awareness of failure in the terms most important to their own identity is the guilt that must be expiated by the punishment of a scapegoat.

A few observations about this drastic conclusion:

1. Why a scapegoat rather than themselves? It is because this defect is so dreadful that it is inadmissible. As such it is the object of *denial*, in the sense that psycholgists would use. For that reason, it opens up another entire field of inquiry that is a sub-set of this kind of analysis:

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[6]This paper makes little use of Lebanon in its examples. But since the interests of the Conference so prominently include the different national interpretations of shared history, It should include some reference to the classic book on this subject, than which I know no other as enlighteneing: Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Manision: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (University of California Press, 1988).

that of *ambivalence*.

In briefest terms, this is a condition that occurs when there is *cognitive dissonance* between those beliefs that the group members feel they must hold as *tests of communal loyalty* and their own experience. The admission of doubt on the loyalty tests is a matter of betrayal. Individuals deeply committed to the defense of their own group and its values can get to a point where the balance between the communal test beliefs – stereotypes, of course – and their own observation is 51%/49%, and the tension is so high that it likely results in violence. The first target of the violence will be those whose existence is a challenge to the group beliefs. They are to be attacked, removed, killed to end the challenge. Still more threatening, however, is anyone of one's own side who harbors and validates these forbidden doubts. These are the perceived traitors, and will be more readily objects of violence even than the enemy. There is yet a more frightful representative of prohibited doubt about the certainties of one's own identity group, and that is oneself, if the doubt is allowed to become mastering. I am sure I have seen what were represented to be heroic deaths in these contexts, persons placing themselves in the most extreme danger in demonstrative defense of their identity groups, which were actually suicides, to destroy the doubt in themselves.

2. The potential for violence in these situations is greatest where the internal discomfort of the majority group, what I have described as the "First Factor" in this form of analysis, coincides most rigorously with the "framework" identity principle, the "Fourth Factor." A group can be internally uncomfortable about relatively trivial things, and blame them on a minority scapegoat without feeling urged to do much damage. But when the subject of internal guilt is something so important as the very matter that defines the group's identity, then the offense and the consequent tension are at their most extreme, and the resulting violence will be the greatest.

3. The group identity which provides the "framework" for a conflict between two such groups as we have been describing is not common to the two groups. It is the identity of the *majority*, or of the dominant group. The minority group may very well not share it.

4. Observe, that this is not a matter of psychopathy, or of discreditable intention on the part of the majority group that launches the violence. The way a group defines its own identity is normally rather flattering to themselves. We will not define ourselves in terms of what we regard as our worst qualities. Instead the group's sensed identity will be the expression of its highest idealism. As such, it may in some cases be self-deception, a hyperbolic sense of the group's possibilities, a lure into irreality, though we should not too readily draw that conclusion. People are not really fools.

There is a clear psychological dynamic to a conflict that originates in the way decribed here: a dominant group scapegoating a minority as the result of a sense of guilt, which in turn arises from failure to meet the group's own idealized expectations of itself, the framework definition of its own identity. We could divide this into any arbitrary number of successive steps, but I am in the habit of summarizing it in three steps:

1. *Denial.* Simply declare that none of what one actually knows to be true is true in fact. This is conspicuously observable in the Northern Ireland case I have described. It has always been the habit of the Catholics to say that their problem is the British, and the solution the removal of the British. It has equally been the habit of the Protestants (and of the British) to say the problem is the IRA, and the solution the removal of the IRA. These are violent prop[ositions in either case. They are also ways of denying what everyone knows is the true problem, namely

that two communities of people are living in the same space and have not learned how that is done in mutual respect for one another. Denial excuses both sides from dealing with the known problem. The first instinct of the Unionist community is to deny that the Catholics really want the things they say they want. The trouble, in their mind, is all the fault of perverse "men of violence," who are unrepresentative of their own community and motivated only by malice.

2. The denial basically turns out to be untrue, as everyone actually knew beforehand. When it does not work, resort is had to the second step, *repression*. In the Northern Ireland case, this could be seen in the various forms of discrimination over all the years from 1920, restricting access to housing, employment and the vote as ways of demonstrating to the Catholic population that the country was not really theirs at all, encouraging their emigration, and reenforcing that message with a politically organized and motivated police.

3. If repression is also unsuccessful, the dynamic of the situation leads on to the outright removal or destruction of the offending people, a *genocide*. In Northern Ireland it never came to that, but pogroms, the burning out of the residents of whole neighborhoods, were frequent and the threat of more drastic rampages always present.

What is noteworthy is, again, that these increasing levels of violence and brutality arise not out of any fundamental baseness of character, but out of guilt over the failure of the most generous impulses of the community.

I have referred to the anxieties and resentments of the majority community, in Northern Ireland the Protestant/Unionists, and of course, in the terms of the theory, those should be characteristics of a minority. This is the key to a phenomenon, conspicuous in Ireland, which is very likely another quite common attribute of this genre of communal conflict, namely the *Double Minority*.

Once, in Israel, I drew, for a very peace-minded friend, the sketch that accompanies this paper, showing the four factors as the two figures, one larger, one smaller, contending with each other within a frame. The Israeli responded that he would show me what was wrong with that picture, and drew in the menacing figure outside the box, who represented the threat of the wider Arab world that hung over the conflict of Isaeli (the majority) and Palestinian (the minority). The sketch, as he redrew it, was just about as I was accustomed to do it myself to illustrate the Double Minority.

In Ireland, Protestants are a majority in the North, but a minority in Ireland as a whole. They are never allowed to forget that, and they show all the symptoms of minority grievance and anxiety, and the dangerous tendency to play the victim as well. The Catholics, too, minority within Northern Ireland, are very conscious of being majority in the island as a whole, and of holding an ultimate kind of power over the Protestant population. And just as both sides have their (minority) grievances and victim syndrome, so too the Catholics have their own (majority) framework, their own guilts, and their own psychological dynamic, going through a very similar progression of steps in the violence of the conflict.

For Catholics in Ireland, Irish Nationalism, in my observation, turns out not to be the determining element of group identity, despite all the revival of the old language, the Irish games and dances. They are not the answer to the "Who are we?" question. Instead it is Catholicism itself, but sensed in a very watered-down, generic fashion that we would more properly identify as generally Christian. People's sense of who they are is an amalgam of "generous," "tolerant," and a number of similar qualities that are summed up as "the Catholics," even though it would be difficult to distinguish this as "Catholic" from many other catalogues of traits. One thing they distinctly do not want to hear is that "Catholic" in their Irish setting means (or has meant in the recent past) priest-ridden, clerically

dominated. This is the subject of denial as strong as the Protestants' denial that they are in any way deficient in their living out of "democracy" in the sense they have internalized as their self-definition. There is a strong dose of the anti-clerical feeling that one would expect to go with this sort of domination, especially conspicuous in very recent years, but no admissions that would be damaging to self-esteem.

With this sense of their majority position in the whole of Ireland, complete with their own framework self-definition, they have consequently their own internal conflict and guilt syndrome, tied as closely to their own sense of identity as the Protestant's is to theirs. A very similar dynamic ensues:

1. *Denial.* There is a rhetoric denying the reality of Protestant/Unionist distinctiveness or grievance, or their right to preserve their own tradition. "Sure, they're all Irish anyway. They ought to start acting like it."

2. *Repression.* Like the Protestant denial of Catholic grievance, Catholic denial of Protestnt grievance is untrue and unsuccessful in stamping out the challenge. The repression stage, moderated use of force and coercion, can be seen in their case in the IRA's repeated terrorist campaigns of low-level violence.

3. *Genocide*: the urge, if not the act, to wipe out or remove the offending community. Just as it has never quite come to this from the Protestant side in Northern Ireland (though it has often threatened), from the Catholic side genocide is not really a practicable proposition. The Catholics, whether of the North or of the whole of Ireland, haven't the military strength or the equipment to carry out such a barbarity. But the rhetoric is there: "If they don't like it here, they should go back to Britain!" Proestants know it so well that they have their response ready: "This is Britain!"

I have spelled this through at some length to illustrate the use of an analytic tool that has its value not only in analysing but in mediating communal conflicts of a generic type. One can approach other conflicts with these tools -- provided only that the analysis really be empirical, and not a cramming of people's conflict into arbitrary theoretical categories.

The Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflict gains clarity from such analysis. In a paper I worked through several version from the late 1970s through the early 1980s, I saw the self-identifying framework of the world Jewish community and also the specifically Israeli community as predicated not on religion nor on particular political ideologies of left or right, but rather on being "the people of the holocaust." That communal self-concept involved a corollary, expressed as "never again!" But this corollary itself then diverged into two sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary versions: never again to us, never again to anyone.

The more generous version could be seen operating spontaneously in Jewish and specifically Israeli response to the genocide of Bosnians, which people saw in terms of repeating the holocaust events. A little less sharply, but visibly enough, the same response was evidenced when the Iraqi Kurds came under genocidal attack in 1991. But in Israel itself, or in the occupied Palestinian territories, when it comes to a question of another people finding themselves in a victim position in relation to themselves, the response is denial and deeply internalised guilt. It stands out conspicuously, as denial symptom, when we see how outraged people become if the treatment of Palestinians is ever compared to the holocaust, even when it is a matter of the most extreme fringe groups, a Baruch Goldstein, a Kach Party or other such advocates of the violent extirpation or removal -- the accepted euphemism is "transfer" – of the whole population.

And yet, this self-definition as "people of the holocaust" is no longer universal currency for Jews or Israelis. Perhaps it never was for Sephardic Jews, who had a different historical experience which they now highlight and cultivate. I have found that my own Jewish students of the last decade or so, when they read versions of my older papers on the subject, say that that is not their own self-definition, though it may be that of their elders. They are of a generation further removed from the holocaust. (Their elders are in many cases horrified at what they see in them as forgetfulness.) And when in recent years we visit the great Yad Vashem monument in Jerusalem, we find that the current generation of historical scholars among the custodians are increasingly sensitive to the negative influence that the victim mentality of the holocaust has had on Israeli consciousness and policy. In their presentation of the museum and the holocaust event, especially in tours for Israeli school children, they take pains to disinfect their history of this victim element. Nonetheless, it can be seen operative in countless ways in Israeli response to the Palestinians during these years of a "peace process."

Conflicts may be more evenly balanced, so that it becomes arbitrary to assign the roles of majority/minority, dominant/subject to the parties. At this point, the observation of framework/identity factors, of internal conflict and scapegoating may still prove validly useful analytic tools. And the situation may more directly resemble the Double Minority scenario described above for the Northern Irish, where each side has its (majority) internal stresses and guilts, its (minority) grievances and victim consciousness, and its own framework identity values.

Larger conflicts, too, lend themselves to this kind of analysis. The Cold War mentality, with its readiness on both sides to demonize and visit incalculable -- genocidal -- destruction on the other, rested on vigorously propagandised definitions of self-identity and, on both sides, horrible suspicions that the other side's indictment of their own inhumanity might have a basis in truth (guilt!). The Westerners were very sure that the whole Soviet and Communist system was a debasement of human rights and liberty, an intolerable tyranny, evil incarnate. And they tended to identify all the persons of the East Bloc as "the Commies," "the Reds." They could all be attacked, destroyed, obliterated without compunction. For the Easterners, the West (envisioned as "Capitalism" rather than as the "Democracy" that was the West's concept of itself) meant only exploitation, ruthless dehumanization, whether of its own workers and peons or of the peoples of the "Third World." Everyone knew just how hypocritical it was to count the dictators, torturers and exploiters of South Africa, the Philippines, Central America or others of the West's unsavory allies among the "Defenders of Democracy." However frustrating life under Communist rule might be, people knew that the Capitalist monster deserved no pity.

These pathologies were in fact well enough recognized that the two sides, in some of their saner moments, cultivated the policies of "peaceful coexistence" and cultural exchange. The numbers from either bloc who could actually come into humanizing contact with real persons of the other side was always small, but we all understood the importance of the effort.

On both sides, there was always a nagging suspicion that the worst the others said about themselves might also be true. And that guilt engendered denial syndromes with their own needs for scapegoats. At moments of crisis, when anxiety over the scale of destruction available to each side reached its peaks, this fueled the danger of preemptive strikes and was institutionalised in such policy responses as Mutually Assured Destruction.

It happens, of course, that some conflicts are nothing other than the cynical grasping of a more powerful group at the goods of another, whom they are able to rob. That seems to have been the rather normal character of the ruthless exploitation in several Latin Ameican countries, and especially in Central America over the decades of the Cold War. This was South Africa under *apartheid*, and there is no lack of other ready examples. In these cases, my Four-Factor theory offers little or nothing of use, and there is

no point in fussing over the moral scruples, denials and vulnerabilities of people who are merely ruthless. It is still better not to presume that moral analysis has nothing to offer until that is proven.

In the case of the Lebanon conflict, with which I have been heavily concerned since 1982, I found that the kaleidoscopic variety of factions -- everyone in minorities, everyone helpless before the scale of events -- made the sheer mathematics of trying to sort out the four factors for all those sides impracticable. The insights into scapegoating, guilt, denial etc., not as doctrines but as factors worth exploring, remained as valuable as ever.

With the Kurds of Iraq, who so nobly banded their resources together in the face of the *anfal* of the late '80s and the depradations of central government in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the last few years have seen KDP and PUK recurrently at war with each other. A residual feudalism inhabits the communal soul of the Barzani-oriented Kurdish Democratic Party, and is scoffed at as regressive by the more technocratic (so far as they are able to be, with their limited technological resources) and modern followers of Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Each has within it an abyss of remorse at its neglect of values, in the other, which are of cultural importance to the people as a whole. This would be a low-level friction if it were not for the desperate political-social-economic pressure under which people live.

We could extend this catalogue indefinitely. But the whole Four-Factor theory is of little interest if it can produce only analysis and no guidelines for acting to resolve these conflicts. It should be evident enough that it does that too, and in my own practice I have never been hesitant to make quite concrete mediator's proposals to conflicting sides. It is always an advantage that working with this theory, or this sort of tools, does not involve taking sides with one faction against another, much as it leaves freedom to identify the manipulative or malicious operatives. The most useful lesson for myself, in any such work, has been that offering friendship to one side in a conflict need not involve becoming the enemy of the other, that one can be the friend of both, working for their reconciliation, and that in fact once the third-party outsider has taken one side against the other his usefulness as mediator is gone.

Earlier I spoke of *ambivalence* and *denial* as essential elements in the psychological dynamic of the conflicts discussed here. They generate violence, and for that reason there is always danger in any kind of dealing with them. The steps subsequent to the denial in the typical dynamic I have described, repression and ultimately genocide, are simply protection for the denial itself, whether denial of one's own doubts or of the reality that is right before one's face, and the protection of that denial can be ferocious. (It is arbitrary, of course, to reduce this dynamic to just these three steps, as there can be many way-stations in between.)

As much as ambivalence and denial are the source of violence, however, recognition of the things one has been so anxious to deny is the most effective single healer of these conflicts. In consequence, bringing to the surface the things that cannot be admitted or discussed is the most important thing that the mediator or reconciler can do. The danger of simply inflaming the situation and unleashing worse or more violence has always, still, to be the measure of this work, and means have to be devised to release people from their denials and ambivalence, making the forbidden topic something that can be raised and discussed with ease, without provoking violence. The physician's Hypocratic principle is involved here: do no harm.

Any of this work involves working with groups, in many cases large communal groups, and it is the same work, essentially, as psychologists do in therapy sessions. My experience in discussing it with psychologists has been that they are usually very apprehensive about doing this with a group of such size that it can be called a public. They do their therapeutic work, whether with individuals or with smaller groups, *in a room*, in a setting where they have control. They are conscious enough of the volatility of

such therapeutical situations that they are reluctant to see them happen outside the area of maximum control. I know no substitute for it, however, and measure the dangers of challenging the denials and ambivalence of groups against the manifest danger of doing nothing. The priority then is for means that minimize that potential for violence.

None of these is more beneficial than creating opportunities for experiencing the others in their real humanity, and not as stereotypes. Limited opportunities for just a few individuals to meet each other in this way do not suffice. Difficult as it is, an identity group *as a whole* needs to experience the humanity of the group they scapegoated, that they fear or see as enemy, acknowledge them in their humanity and their rights, recognize them as different, and entitled to the integrity of their difference, but equal.

The cease-fires that blossomed so unexpectedly in Northern Ireland in 1994 were experiences of that sort. The process originated within the Nationalist/Republican community, as a recognition, many years in the making, that the Protestant/Unionist population, people they did not know other than as adversaries, were a community whose right to be themselves had to be respected, that consequently it was not only impracticable but a basic injustice to try to coerce them into a new relationship, and that a reconciliation with them had to be *won*, by gaining their trust. Some ambivalence and hesitation remained in this group decision, but the case was made with great care and effort by individuals who had earned the trust of the group and had, at great risk to themselves, reconsidered the whole position of Irish Republicanism and persuaded the actual (i.e., military) decision-makers to go along with their new understanding.

On the Protestant/Unionist side, that proposition was soon understood by those, the "Loyalists," who had themselves taken part in violent militant organisations. After some initial heart-searching, their cease-fire followed that of the Republicans by some six weeks, and they have remained faithful to it and its insights since, even under the extreme provocation of the IRA's terminating its own cease-fire. It was the main-line political Unionists, who had had no part in producing the cease-fires or the new opportunities, who were most hesitant; understandably enough, as they had no way of predicting how any process of communication with the opposite community would come out. In their apprehension about any sort of talk, they worked only for delay, creating any excuse they could imagine to postpone action. British government judged that they needed their delay, and consistently covered for them, giving them excuses not to confront the problem they most needed to confront.

Some combination of the frustrations this delay involved eventually threw the advantage back to the doubters on the Republican side, and they were able, ironically through the argument that it would be even more dangerous to risk division among themselves, to break the cease-fire last February. Now, as of time of writing, it is still uncertain whether they can be brought back to their cease-fire, on the basis of their initial recognition of the full rights of the other side. If that can be brought about, then the more difficult problem returns, of reassuring the Unionists that they can safely meet with Catholic Nationalists, explore with them for common interests and initiate the building of the institutions of a pluralist society.

The Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO gives even more striking an illustration of this moment of mutual recognition of peoples who had previously denied one another's legitimacy as peoples. It was the leadership groups who took that decision on both sides of course, they themselves with apprehension and some visible signs of reluctance, and it was from the start a question how far they could bring their publics along with them. There were people on either side who felt only suspicion of a process that granted this recognition without nailing down the final terms of a settlement in advance, and their skepticism has remained a volatile danger to the conclusion of an accord ever since. Those who most virulently opposed the peace, or concessions, or recognition of the humanity of the other side, understood quite well that they had to destroy their enemies' confidence in peace with themselves, and they have

attacked the process of reconciliation itself with the most extravagant violence within their reach. It is easy to measure the prospect of success in achieving a peace by the extent to which the wider public of either side sees the other as people capable of a peace, and understands the need for the other's basic requirements and aspirations, not only their own, to be met if the peace is to be genuine.

The case of what was Yugoslavia stands out as a final indicator of the centrality of this human recognition of entire identity groups by one another. These people lived successfully as neighbors to one another for several generations, but have suffered the searing scars of genocidal campaigns, conducted mainly be the Serbs but reciprocated by smaller atrocities of Croats and Muslims against Serbs and against one another, all fueled by a hatred and suspicion of each community toward the others whose artifical and manipulated origin we can discern.

The "ethnic cleansing" policy was particularly Serbian, and had to be reversed. That emerged as the principle question in the summer of 1995, when Croatia repossessed first West Slavonia and then the Krajina. Would they simply repeat the "ethnic cleansing" policy of the Serbs or would they reverse it? Had they made it possible again for the defeated Krajina Serbs, in whose name all the Croats of Krajina had earlier been driven out, to live at peace among their neighbors, as they had throughout a long history, the entire climate of the situation would have been changed. They did no such thing, but treated the Krajina Serbs practically as brutally as they had been treated themselves.

The next critical opportunity arose when the tide turned against the Bosnian Serbs and in favor of a coalition of Bosnian Muslims and Croats. Would they make it possible for Bosnian Serbs to return to their homes and live in peace? The outcome is still undetermined but decidedly bleak, complicated by the Croatian refusal to accord such human recognition even to the Muslims who are their theoretical partners in the federation, and the coercion of the Bosnian Serbs by their own renegade leadership to abandon and even burn their homes in territories handed over to federation control.

Yet another opportunity occurred as the fundamentally disappointing Dayton accord was being worked out. The Bosnian Serb leadership, however much still in control of their own turf, had too much disgraced themselves to be acceptable negotiators for their own people. It was left to President Milosevic, the theoretical outsider who had launched the chaos in the first place, to negotiate for them. The dream of a Greater Serbia was already lost. The best service Milosevic could have done for the Bosnian Serbs was to regain for them access to their ancestral homes by guaranteeing the same access to their Muslim and Croatian adversaries. Very little if anything was made of this opportunity. The only slim hopes for a lasting reconciliation in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Yugoslav region are in the unity of Sarajevo, the great cultural magnet of the whole region, with its mixed population (the Serbs now gone from the suburbs but still represented in the city proper), and the agreement stated in the Dayton accord, but without any machinery for its implementation, that people will be allowed to return to their homes.

The Dayton conference, and the IFOR mechanism for its implementation, are basically botched means for reconciling the parties to this conflict. Wider dimensions of the crisis than Bosnia itself were not included (the Serb population displaced from parts of Croatia, the Serbian plan to resettle those refugees in Kosovo, where they will in all probability unleash the next stage of the war with the Albanian population there). The terms were built on acceptance of "ethnic cleansing" as having done its work and set up neat enough barriers between people who had been neighbors. It was the acceptance of definitive non-reconciliation rather than the building of the mutual recognition of peoples.

Some of these applications may seem rather remote from the analytic premises of the Four Factor theory as spelled out in the earlier part of this paper. They are, however, the practical areas of endeavor into which that mode of analysis leads.

APPENDIX III

Extract from *A Social Option: Suggestions for an Overall Community Social Planning Approach to the Problems of Northern Ireland*, by Richard Hauser and Raymond Helmick. Published privately by the Centre for Human Rights and Responsibilities, London, March 1975.

Chapter: "Legal Issues and Internment," pp. 59-53.

When we wrote [Chapter: "Identity Crises Figuring in the Northern Ireland Problem," pp. 15-25 above] of the identity crises of the British in particular, we spoke of the acute embarrassment, shame and frustration of the British public that the Mother of Democracies had not found it possible to deal with the Irish crisis democratically. Internment -- or detention or whatever name one may choose to call the imprisonment without the process of law practiced in Northern Ireland -- sticks in everyone's craw, British as well as Irish, Protestant as well as Catholic, military as well as civilian, the outside world as well as those enmeshed in the conflict.

It is no good acting as if this were all just concern about the normal procedure of law and hoping that all will be well if, when the situation at last settles down, there is a general amnesty as always after a civil war. It is necessary to find distinctive treatment for those who attack military targets and those who attack "soft" civilian targets, indiscriminately killing civilians or targets chosen only on sectarian (or "tribal") grounds. People who fight military targets and in doing so risk their lives are in a different category from those who commit cowardly acts against harmless and helpless civilians.

Law enforcement in the insurgency situation of Northern Ireland is not a purely civil matter. Mch of the anguish over the internment problem is that both those on the receiving and those on the enforcing end have seen or at least treated it as if it were exceptional and unstasfactory civil law in a civil situation. In a civil situation, the community at large is basically on the side of the law, of "public order" which is an enabling factor for all the community's purposes. In the fundamental paternalistic situation where an elite is trying to impose its idea of "The Right" on the community, like it or not, and using the law as a weapon for its purpose, the law is a whore. But at its best, and the more so the more truly democratic the society is, the law can be a socially useful instrument for safeguarding people's rights (rather than "The Right") and providing the amount of order that sets people free to worry about more constructive things than whether they are going to be stabbed in their beds or shot when they go to answer the front door. In an insurgency situation, however, important segments of the community no longer identify the sources of their security and the minimum conditions for their civil life with "public order" and the forces that maintain it. Then protection of insurgents (read "support for the men of violence" or "harbouring of terrorists") is the subject of a true conflict of loyalities within persons or parts of the community, and as the police and army have found in Northern Ireland, evidence against insurgents is just not to be had from

witnesses within the community. This is even worse when disaffected parts of the community are appealed to by someone they do not trust to support his concept of "The Right." Appeals to support "the forces of law and order" to the neglect of these deeply felt conflicting loyalties are counterproductive, as even bishops have learned recently in Northern Ireland.

Given the *de facto* situation of insurgency, the purpose of law should be to subject the insurgency to the rules of war, and thus reduce its indiscriminate savagery. The law does not make an appropriate weapon of war. When it is used so, as a means to thwart or defeat the insurgent side, it is prostituted, becomes partisan, the upholding of one side's understanding of "The Right," and can no longer have the superior function of regulating or making more humane the manner of the conflict itself. The purpose of the rules of war is not vengeance but the lessening of the inherent savagery of war. It would be to everyone's advantage that the insurgency should be brought within this kind of regulation: the military forces, both insurgent and counter-insurgent, because their function and their honour could be established both for their own satisfaction and in the eyes of the community and their opponents; and for the non-military and non-paramilitary part of the community, with its internal conflict of real and deeply felt loyalties, it would be useful to be able to distinguish what measures of "public order" are even in their situation truly civil and unconnected with the insurgency; public "civil" authority can then set about the rebuilding of confidence if it regains its function of maintaining rights and public order and ceases any pretensions to be the sole proponent of "The Right."

It has been customary, as a matter of international practice, that the status of military forces engaged in warfare has been accorded only to the forces of recognised States. Insurgent and irregular forces have not been formally subjected to the rules of war applicable to international conflicts. They have been treated and combatted as civilian criminals, leaving them and the military forces arrayed against them in an anomalous situation, which has bedevilled not only Northern Ireland but Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Cyprus, Iraqi Kurdistan, Africa, Latin America, countless areas of the most serious conflicts we witness currently. There are modifications, of course, like the "Special Category" of prisoners in Northern Ireland who are then understood in popular imagination as in the still more invidious position of "political prisoners," or the kid-glove treatment of Palestinian hijackers, whom no government likes to handle because of the danger that others will stage new terror actions to get their release, but these have not changed the basic situation. Why should such forces not have a distinctive status designed to subject them and the forces opposing them to either the internationally agreed laws of war or some analogous adaptation of them to this specific situation, mutually recognised rules designed not to be weapons of war or vengeance but to restrict the savagery? This is one of the many areas in which the Northern Ireland conflict could provide pilot experience that would be useful to many other parts of the world.

By such laws as were applied at Nuremberg, to kill civilians in an unprovoked attack is a war crime, whether ordered by anyone else in authority or not., and just as criminal in the desk criminal who orders it as in the men who carry it out. In fact it is a psychopathic act, as sick and evil in the insurgents as if someone in recognised authority did it. Such people should be seen in the public eye, even of their ideological supporters, as the deranged and cancerous persons they are. If it could be shown that this kind of activity is as reprehensible as the things Nazi murderers are condemned for and the public imagination caught by it even among those sympathetic to the overall aim of insurgents, then the sanctions against such crime could be at least partially enforced within the insurgent forces themselves. It is important that doers and orderers be held equally responsible, put on the level of the desk murderers of Nazi times, and that the rules be the same for all sides, regulars and irregulars. Such recognition of war crimes should also be extended in its degree to the harassment and hurting of non-combatants.

This sort of activity, criminal even in war, is the pernicious factor most likely to carry over when peace is restored, and can become a recurring and spreading disease as acts of raw violence are met with tit for tat retaliation. Half a dozen or a dozen men can produce this terror of civilian murders, bound to raise counter-terror and reprisal in an escalating fury. It is aften taken quickly out of the hands of leaders, who if they want to stay on top may have to give way.

Certainly one of the steps in this escalating process is the death penalty itself, which is an act and sign of pure revenge without any humanity, only showing that the State is stronger and that "law and order" can be misused for such purposes, more to appease the public than to deal out justice or de-escalate the problem. It makes martyrs of people who have committed heinous crimes. It is a credit to the good sense of the British public and Parliament that after the hysteria that immediately followed the Birmingham bombings enough time was left to cool passions that might have brought about a restoration of this penalty. The real answer is to see that their own community pushes out the perpetrators of such crimes as a blot on the very cause to which they show loyalty, so that whatever happens no future community will trust them again or give them any task of social importance, that they will spend their lives haunted by their past deeds. This is the case now with ex-Nazi criminals, even those who have escaped the net or gained the security of statutes of limitation. They must still live in concealment of their identities or their past for shame of their crimes. Often, regrettably enough, this shame rubs off on their families and associates. But in such a situation as the Irish one, a person executed becomes a glorious martyr and the reason for his execution is soon forgotten. It would be immensely more healthy for society if, in the case of those who have been truly criminal in pursuit of their cause, their own public saw them as psychopathic outcasts, the family so unfortunate as to have such a member pitied. This would involve the unlearning of a stereotype by which the enemy is totally devillised and no action against him is seen as a crime. This whole concept is particularly important as it is often not possible, because of

the conflict of community loyalties, to catch or convict these war criminals legally, but everyone knows them anyway. Thus it is up to the community not to be tainted by keeping their company or giving them positions of trust that lie in its grant.

Apart then from these psychopaths, a small minority even among the small minority who are activists, known better as cancerous men to be controlled to the other members of their activist organisations and those in the know in their own communities than to anyone else, there remain the far greater number of those whom the government, with its internment policy, has rightly or wrongly decided were the ones to hold. Here we most strongly commend our distinction of whether what they are charged with is of a military or a civil nature. If the lattter, they should be held only a minimum time and then charged or released. If the former, so that for military rather than legitimate civil reasons it makes no sense to release them, then their status and treatment should take full account of their situation, contain compensation for denial of their civil rights and be maximally humane. It is not quite the same status as regular prisoners of war, such as the regular troops of an established nation captured in uniform and held under the laws of war, but there are analogies. We can see no justification for according the treatment of a criminal to anyone who has not been civilly convicted, with all due process, of a crime.

We would like to see two alternatives made available to them at choice. If they would agree, in the first alternative, to be held in custody and not to flee, the time spent in custody should be reckoned as training time, with facilities provided for professional improvement, a social and mental situation created of such a sort that the time of their imprisonment would not be a waste of their lives. This would require generous facilities for visiting, the maximum of home visits, possibilities to earn money for their own needs so that their families are not obliged to provide. The families should have free travel allowance to visit, and a system of trust inside should be transformed as soon as it can be done into a system of trust outside, which ought not to exclude full participation in their chosen political cause. We would expect such people not to return to society embittered and damaged, unable to do a job or find work.

A second alternative should be availbale to those who will not agree to this sort of custody, but are suspected of crimes or activity which, only by the nature of the insurgency situation, cannot be proven against them by the procedures of civil law. It is inhuman to keep them in Long Kesh conditions, and questionable whether it helps anyone or any cause. The argument against them is a military one rather than one of civil law, namely that they might be dangerous to civilians or the Army. If they are not willing to sign in under the first alternative outlined above on the first attempt, or if they have made no bones about their intention of running off (or have done so before), a better course than internment might be their expulsion from the Province. Just as suspects in bombing incidents can now be expelled from Great Britain to Northern Ireland or the Republic, Catholics might be expelled from the North to the Irish Republic, Protestants to Britain.

The receiving governments should undertake to see that they do not live near borders or ports, but in some place where their disappearance could be seen on time. Their families should be free to follow, and in view of the limitation being placed on their civil rights (for recognisably a military rather than a civil reason) adequate financial aid should be provided for the resettling. We see this as a more humane way to overcome the scandal of people being imprisoned without trial and made to live under sub-minimal conditions, with no fixed date of their release, in a situation of boredom, anxiety and hatred. With this alternative these people would have another chance for their life as a result of being through this experience. The investment of generous facilities for both these alternatives would pay off handsomely.

For those convicted of offenses, too, there should be a clear line drawn between those who have committed anti-military or non-bloody offenses and those who were out to kill innocent civilians, based on the idea that a brave man risks his own life for a cause, whereas the man who kills helpless civilians is a psychopathically acting coward. These latter should not be included for the benefits of the first alternative above or for political amnesty if that comes.

The insurgent groups should be recognised as the paramilitary units they actually are. This in no way shows approval of them by the government, but would help establish in their own and the public imagination that they are subject to the laws of honour and of war in the service of their cause. War is a deadly business but even so has rules which men of arms have accepted, a code which has not always stood up to pressure, but within the ranks the man who has violated it is treated with contempt and prosecuted by his own people. It is for this reason that there is a difference between a para-professional gang of indiscriminate murderers and a professional military unit, that there is control over one's own side. From the moment that there is that, they can become partners and representatives in a peace discussion. No one should sit down with the murderers of civilians, especially since it may mean that like some other sharks who have once eaten human flesh they may go on if not stopped by their own people in time, long after the civil war is over. This in turn may not only be dangerous for individuals but may provoke counteraction which may lead to renewed civil war. Such men are marauders not only against individuals but against peace itself. The mistake made by so many is to classify all the membership of the irregular or insurgent military units by this stereotype: this only makes it more difficult or even impossible to make the designation stick on those who really deserve it and against whom all of society really needs to be protected. The blanket categorisation of all insurgents with this stereotype is all the more reprehensible if it is done from an interested motive, as a weapon to ensure total victory over them and their cause, to gain their unconditional surrender.

One other category of men who must be considered are those who will be released from the sort of detention that has existed so far. Government has a clear responsibility

towards them, and should have a coherent program to help them for at least six months in their settling back, provide whatever assistance it can that employers should not fear to employ them, and that they have ample opportunities to retrain.

We have then altogether four categories:

1) those who go to prison because a case has been established. This has to be classified into military and civil offenses and the military sort further distinguished as to whether or not they are crimes against the laws of war.

2) those to be freed from such detention as has existed, and for whom the government has a responsibility to help in resettlement.

3) those who will sign in to accept a recognisably military custody under as humane conditions as can be devised, with training opportunities.

4) those who, having been offered and rejected the previous option, are sent abroad to Britain or the Irish Republic, again with help to resettle with their families. They may well prefer to settle further afield, and should in that case still have this financial assistance. Should they slip back into the Province, that should be reason for their imprisonment. Those who escape of the third category should also be subject to regular imprisonment on conviction.

People who come under category 3 should be eligible, once released and if they receive their own community's approval, for such community duties as local peace officers. People who have committed crimes against civilians should in no case be considered trustworthy, because their demonstrated psychopathy may come out again against their neighbours or against those whom they devilise. If not themselves psychopaths, they have shown the cowardice and social ignorance of making themselves the tools of psychopaths. The same "war crime" designation should be applied for killing wounded or unarmed soldiers, just as there would be for a regular soldier committing such crimes.

POSTSCRIPT: June, 1997. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

It was simply through noting that the transcript I had made of this chapter years ago for this collection had become rather illegible that I revisited it. The original piece was a joint work of Richard Hauser and myself, and I have often had occasion to remark in class on how that relation worked in this paper. Richard's method was to dictate a text at great length, often with much repetition, which in editing I tried to reduce. My own part in this particular piece was inclusion of critical comment on Richard's observations.

The issues of the paper have mostly been decided otherwise long ago. Its context was the Diplock Commission report, which recommended special courts, drastically short on due process, as the alternative to internment/detention without trial. Government did not heed our counter-suggestions. The long and violent prison crisis, culminating in the hunger strikes of 1980 and 1981, resulted. And when all that was done a prison regime on lines that reflected a practical prisoner-of-war status was in fact brought back, much as it had been in the days of "Special Category" status but in the modern "H-block" buildings rather than in the primitive "cages" of Long Kesh.

I look at the recommendations of this paper now, and come back to a criticism I had at the time, to which Richard had not agreed. His suggestions made an assumption that the prisoners would not have accepted, namely that it was reasonable for them to put aside their insurgency and accept government offers of a loose prison regime or exile. In my own experience, members of the insurgent groups of either side have believed it was the more honorable thing for them to continue their military insurgency unrelentingly. That left me a very skeptical participant in all the latter part of the paper.

The more interesting part of the paper, though, and my reason for including it in this collection even now, is the discussion of the nature of law in the earlier pages. As an Austrian Jewish holocaust survivor, Richard had had a repellant experience of the uses of law. The law tradition he grew up with in Europe was Roman Law, in its Code Napoleon *guise, in which the will of the sovereign is the ultimate test of law; and he had witnessed the extremes of Nazi abuse of that kind of law. Out of that had come his only contribution to this part of the chapter, the statement: "the law is a whore" (p. 1). Roman Law is open to such abuse, to being made the instrument of arbitrary power, a political means to discredit an adversary. But the statement shocked me to the roots of my American soul.*

American law concepts are different in many ways from their English Common Law roots, but have this much in common, that for either English or American tradition, authorities are subject and accountable to law. In American parlance, which has its applicability to English law, we have "government of laws, not of men." Law for us is the protection of our liberty and rights. Any use of it to compromise our rights is inherently corrupt. Hence the whole discussion of law in the chapter is my very American response to Richard's "the law is a whore." I believed, and still do, that this concept of the law as protection, and of the accountability of authority to the law, is the saving element for this Northern Irish crisis of confidence in public authority.

I offer an illustrative anecdote in lighter vein. Many years later, while travelling on Middle East business and stopping off in Rome, I was given a ride out to the airport by English Jesuit Father Bernard Hall, who had been the Provincial Superior for some of my years in London.

Coming to a red light at a major intersection -- it was early in the morning -- he looked one way, then the other way, saw no traffic and drove on through. Once again my delicate American soul went into shock, and I exclaimed: "Bernard! How could you?"

His response was a perceptive comment on law. We were not in England, he told me, nor in America. For Italians, the law is not the guardian of the rights and freedom of all that it is for us. Instead, in assenting to law, they see themselves as investing, and thus doing without, some part of their own liberty for the sake of the common good. Driving up to that intersection, with a Roman understanding of law, he looked this way, then that, saw no common good coming from either direction, and consequently no reason to sacrifice his freedom to the red light.

Not that there aren't Americans, or Britons, who go through red lights, but it is with a sense of law-breaking for us, a violation of what is our protection and the safeguard of our freedom, but has quite another meaning for someone with a Roman sense that personal freedom is diminished by the law, and should be reclaimed when there is no reason to do without it.

It is very un-British, and would be un-American, to use law in the way it has been used in Northern Ireland, where it became an instrument to "criminalise," i.e., define and punish as simply criminals, people who, other than by reason of the political situation, would never have come before courts or been exposed to the rigors of the law. This was basically our point in this paper, both Richard's and mine, that the use of the law as an instrument to define violent political insurgency as merely criminal was an abuse from the start (the Diplock start, just being determined at that time) and could only result in a further poisoning of the situation.

Appendix IV

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

Sketch Summary of Recent Northern Irish History
as seen from opposite sides of the community.

Ray Helmick, S.J.
August, 1998 Updating of 1997 text.

1920-1965: Partition.

Catholics, identifying with the independent Irish state, resent being caught in a province without that independence, which by design was not their state. Discrimination on voting, housing, employment expressed the Protestant exclusiveness of that state and poisoned their response to everything British. Refusal to participate politically in the institutions of the state. Periodic violent IRA rebellions seemed increasingly futile. The last of them, 1956-'63, no longer had significant popular support.

For Protestants, retaining their status within the United Kingdom was their one defense against absorption into a nationalism of Catholic Ireland which would put them into a similarly disadvantaged position. While they had resisted the "Home Rule" that would have given them minority status in an all-Ireland Parliament, they appreciated the Northern Stormont Parliament that they could control, saw the Catholic rejection as subversion and resented Catholic refusal to try to make the state work.

1965-1968: Civil Rights Campaign.

For Catholics, this was the effort to make the state work that the Protestants felt they had never made. Equality for Catholics, in the face of traditions of discrimination, appealed to many Protestants as well, especially the young students of Queen's University, Belfast, where the Welfare State provisions of the post-war Labour government had made it possible for Catholics as well as Protestants to study and a student solidarity had grown up between the two confessional groups.

Protestants of a more conservative bent saw all this merely as a deceptive face on another IRA campaign to force them into a United Ireland. At the farthest extreme, the UVF was formed in April-May 1966, the first Protestant paramilitary organization, appropriating the name of the 1912 "Ulster Volunteer Force." Ian Paisley, with his Free Presbyterian Church (linked rather to American Southern Baptists of the Bob Young/Carl McIntyre variety than to Presbyterianism), decried the "Romeward Path" of those Protestants who cooperated with the 1960s ecumenical movement. Gusty Spence and other UVF men were convicted, 14 Oct. '66, of sectarian murders in 1965.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) formed 29 Jan., '67. Marches against housing discrimination drew some Protestant as well as Catholic participation, regularly and violently opposed by counter-demonstrators mobilized by Paisley and his friend, Colonel Bunting. Police were seen as turning a blind eye to Protestant violence, or even participating in it, while tear-gassing and baton-charging civil rights marchers (notably on several much-publicized occasions in Derry). The age of TV news had arrived, and this had an effect, in Britain and Ireland, similar to what Vietnam was having on American television. The American Civil Rights era was in the air, and people sang the same songs, felt the same stirrings, had the same certainties as in the U.S.

1-4 Jan., 1969.

People's Democracy, a Queen's University student organization raised to the level of a political party, leads a march from Belfast to Derry. Bernadette Devlin, charismatic Catholic student, has become folk-hero of civil rights. The march, under attack all along its length, is savagely ambushed at Burntollet

Bridge, just before arriving in Derry, with police as well as Protestant zealots among attackers. This is one of several occasions when people began to declare the hope of civil rights for Catholics chimerical.

Protestants, prone to see only the old IRA agenda behind anything Catholics did or sought, took careful note of the traditional IRA towns and farms that gave shelter and protection to the marchers on their over-nights, scouted out and gave warning of heavier opposition along the way.

12 August, 1969: Apprentice Boys' Day in Derry.

As culmination of a tense summer, the Protestant marchers in the traditional Apprentice Boys' parade around the walls of Derry prevented from marching into the streets of the Catholic Bogside slum (where police had carried on a major communal assault not long before). Barricades set up, rocks and petrol bombs hurled through the night and through subsequent days. Residents declare this a "No-Go Area" for police. Police from all over the Province called up, along with the part-time auxiliary B-Special force. Catholics feel themselves under siege. Protestants see the events as insurrection, total break-down of law and order, death of a society. Eventually, in response to telephone requests from Derry, Belfast Catholics on the Falls Road launch protest demonstrations to draw off some of the police from Derry. Shankill Road Protestants, imagining this as a Catholic take-over of Belfast, respond by attacks on Catholic homes in the side streets linking the Shankill and the Falls. Cupar and Bombay Streets burned out. This is the real burial of any Catholic expectation of equal rights, or of any general Protestant reading of the civil rights campaign as other than IRA subversion.

To counter the riots, British Army units are deployed throughout the Province. They understand themselves as a peace-keeping force on the UN model in which British forces had participated in many countries. Catholics in the ghetto neighborhoods at first welcome them as such, with cups of tea brought out to them by residents. But they are "to assist the police" and uphold public order, i.e., defend the system as it is. Eventually that will mean the end of the honeymoon. The troops are still there (1997).

Prime Minister Harold Wilson's Labour Party government launches a political campaign to address Catholic grievances. James Callaghan, head of the Home Office, as responsible British cabinet member, visits Northern Ireland and promises redress. Voting system overhauled to end gerrymandering, RUC radically reformed and (for a brief period) disarmed (like British police). B Specials abolished, to be replaced by the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR), a part-time auxiliary unit of the British Army. From this time Protestants begin to feel abandoned and betrayed by British government.

A British election in June, 1970, brought the Conservatives to power, with Edward Heath as Prime Minister, and Reginald Maudling as Home Secretary. Maudling is remembered for little else with regard to Northern Ireland but his shout, when he boarded a plane home to London after a first visit to Northern Ireland: "Get me a double whiskey. Christ! What a bloody awful country!" Both Ian Paisley and Bernadette Devlin were elected to Parliament, Devlin as candidate for People's Democracy, which had hardly existed as a party since the Queens students had left for their summer vacation the previous year, but had support from the other Nationalist parties; Paisley for his newly founded Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), a first breakaway from the Official Unionist Party.

11 January, 1970. Split between "Official IRA" and "Provisional IRA."

The IRA, having decided in 1963 on a political rather than military course, had discarded its weapons and adopted a curiously unorthodox Marxist ideology. Many of its old cadres dropped out, having no sympathy for such politics. In the August, '69 riots, the IRA was caught out on the Falls Road with no weapons to defend the community against a pogrom-like attack. "IRA" began to be represented as

meaning "I Ran Away." In this atmosphere, a breakaway group of the old-style "physical force" IRA men seized control of IRA offices, both in Belfast and Dublin, and established what they called a "Provisional Army Council." Now there were two IRAs, the "Officials" (often called the "Stickies," because of the stick-on paper badges they gave out to their followers) impelled toward a renewed violent campaign in order to compete with the more bloody-minded "Provisionals," the two organizations mortal enemies to each other. For the "Provisionals," this was a time of recruitment and training, with incidents calculated to provoke repression and bring out opposition to British "brutality." First murders, of three British soldiers lured out on dates with Catholic girls, around Christmas 1969. Rioting around Easter Rising commemorations, March and April '70, in Derry, Armagh, Belfast. Clashes between Republican crowds and activists and British troops.

June-July 1970

Curfews in Catholic areas, within days of the election of the new Tory government, the Falls Road full of tear gas while its residents were confined indoors. Renewed demonstrations in Belfast and Derry. Bernadette Devlin, MP, arrested (26 June). The honeymoon between the Catholic population and the British Army is all over. Both IRAs gathering strength. Protestants, in alarm over the breakup of order, begin forming local defense associations which will eventually coalesce into the Ulster Defense Association (UDA). As violence escalates, police are rearmed, much more heavily than before. The Army goes on patrols along with them, and are seen by Protestants as "our Army," which means that attacks on the Army are attacks on their community.

9 August, 1971. Internment Day.

At insistent urging of the Stormont government (Brian Faulkner, Ulster Prime Minister), British government goes for the traditional solution, internment of IRA suspects without trial. Several hundred rounded up in the middle of the night. Vast rioting breaks out with the coming of day, and neighborhoods that had become integrated over the quiet years since 1963 separate out at once, with whole streets of burning houses left behind. From this time on, neighborhoods are abandoned by frightened residents of either community, and rapidly occupied by squatters brought in by each side's paramilitary organizations. The British government concludes that it has been led down a disastrously wrong path by the Unionists.

30 January, 1972. Bloody Sunday.

13 civilians shot dead by British paratroopers in Derry, following a banned civil rights march. Worldwide indignation. On following day, mobs in Dublin burn down the British Embassy. Irish Prime Minister (Lynch) declares February 2 a day of mourning. A Royal Commission under Lord Widgery exonerates the British units involved, declaring that they acted in self-defense.

24 March, 1972. Fall of Stormont.

Refusing British demands that he transfer responsibility for security to Westminster, Brian Faulkner resigns as Northern Irish Prime Minister. Britain suspends the Northern Ireland Parliament and government, putting all authority into the hands of a new cabinet ministry, the Northern Ireland Office, to which William Whitelaw is appointed as first Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. "Direct Rule," which can also be described as a Proconsulate. For Catholics, this is still the "foreign-ruled" British state, operating now by its Army and officials accountable only to Britain. For Protestants, the fall of Stormont means the disappearance of the whole central structure of the society they have been creating since the 1920s, taken from them by the "men of violence" of the IRA and by British betrayal. The threat, for them, comes from an insurgent Catholic community, while for the Catholics it is from a "foreign" state.

1972 is the peak year of violence in Northern Ireland, with 467 killings, far more than one a day, out of a total of 678 since 1969.

Whitelaw attempts at once to negotiate with the IRA. During a cease-fire in June, he has a group of its leaders over to London for talks, but the cease-fire breaks down in their absence. In response to a hunger strike by prisoners, objecting to their internment without trial and to their classification simply as criminals, he accords them "Special Category Status." Large numbers are now interned, some on prison ships in Belfast Lough, most in a rudimentary prison camp (Nissen Huts in barbed-wire enclosures called "cages"), each paramilitary organization, Catholic or Protestant, in its own cages, under the command of their own leadership. Prison breaks are a part of the culture. Sectarian murders, tit for tat, become commonplace. Bombs in public places, as in restaurants. On a July day, "Bloody Friday," the IRA sets off 21 bombs in a 20-minute time span in Belfast, killing eleven civilians and leaving the city dazed.

By this time, British government is regretting both its internment-without-trial policy and its decision to grant "Special Category" status to paramilitary prisoners. A Royal Commission under Lord Diplock recommends special courts, with a single judge, no jury and no cross-examination of witnesses, and rules of evidence that allow conviction for crime on the basis of a confession alone, as a way to transform these "political prisoners" into convicted criminals. Implementation of this "criminalization" policy over succeeding years will produce the prison crisis that culminates in the 1980-1981 hunger strikes, while the Diplock court system constitutes an open invitation to authority to obtain confessions by torture and other illegitimate means.

22 November, 1973. Darlington Conference.

After a British government White Paper recommends devolution of power to a Power-Sharing Executive, Brian Faulkner's Official Unionists, the Alliance Party (a small party, conservative but anti-sectarian, with both Protestant and Catholic membership) and SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party: the principal expression of non-violent Irish Nationalism) agree to participate. The Unionists, highly dispirited, are breaking up by this time. Besides Paisley's DUP, there are several other fractional parties, including William Craig's Vanguard Party, joined together, in opposition to Faulkner's concessions, as the United Ulster Unionist Council.

6-9 December, 1973. Sunningdale Conference.

Representatives of both British and Irish government meet with the parties agreed to a Power-Sharing Executive. Limited powers are conferred on this Executive as a devolved government in Northern Ireland. The agreement also includes establishing a Council of Ireland in which the two governments and the Northern Irish Executive can confer, within very limited bounds, on all-Irish problems. For much of the Protestant community, this whole development smells of coercion by a British government anxious to shunt them off into the United Ireland they are determined to resist. They see only further insult when, at the conclusion of Sunningdale, William Whitelaw is replaced, as Northern Ireland Secretary, by the far less influential Francis Pym. Northern Ireland seems to be defined as a nuisance that Britain has managed to put aside.

1974: Collapse of British policy.

The prison situation began developing along Diplock lines early in the year, after a mass break-out had led to the burning of much of the Long Kesh prison camp. Special Category Status was no longer granted. The prison was given the new name of The Maze, and construction of modern high-security prison buildings, the H-blocks, begun.

The Power-Sharing Executive, presiding over a new Stormont Assembly, was inaugurated in January 1974. Elections in Britain, February 28, bring about another transfer of power, to a Labour government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson, with Merlyn Rees, a Welshman with a high reputation for social fairness, as Northern Ireland Secretary. Labour would remain in power until 1979.

Protestant dissatisfaction with the situation leads to the formation of the Ulster Workers' Council, its leadership taking in many factions, including William Craig's Vanguard and Paisley's DUP, under the general leadership of Glen Barr within the UDA structure. The UWC calls a general strike in May, its road-blocks enforced by UDA units. The initial target is to have the Council of Ireland feature of the Sunningdale agreement abolished, but under the impact of the strike, the entire Sunningdale structure of Assembly and Power-Sharing Executive collapses. British policy is reduced to near despair, and the objective of bringing about a reconciliation of the Northern Irish communities is replaced by a simple determination to defeat the IRA. Wilson further alienates the Unionist community by describing them angrily on TV as "Welshers," relying on British support while doing nothing to ameliorate the situation. In July, a new government White Paper proposes elections to a Constitutional Assembly. Elections to this body will follow in May '75, but it proves a half-hearted effort that merely confirms the deadlock.

December 1974: Feakle.

The Protestant church leadership at this point mounted a major effort to talk directly with the IRA and come to an understanding that would bring peace. William Arlow, head of the Irish Council of Churches, brought the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Arthur Butler, the Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, A.J. Weir, Eric Gallagher, former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and several other significant Protestant church leaders to meet with the major IRA military leadership at an inconspicuous small hotel in Feakle, Co. Clare, December 20, 1974. They had notified Sir Frank Cooper, Permanent Secretary to the Northern Ireland Office in Stormont, of their intention, and had government backing for their effort. The meeting, very plain-spoken on all sides, was interrupted by a warning that Irish Special Branch police were on their way, and seemed to break up without result, but in fact produced an IRA cease-fire declared from December 22 through January 2, '75. Merlyn Rees appealed, December 31st, for an extension, saying that in the event of a "genuine and sustained cessation of violence" the British government "would not be found wanting in response." The IRA announced a two-week extension on New Year's Day, but on January 16, '75, announced that, for a variety of reasons including British non-response to a demand to withdraw troops to barracks, the cease-fire would end.

This serious Protestant initiative was met with a lot of recriminations against all sides and accusations of naiveté against the clergy. Merlyn Rees subsequently resigned as Northern Ireland Secretary. He was replaced (September '76) by Roy Mason, who took the tough-cop stance, dedicating himself entirely to suppressing the IRA. From this time, near-total stalemate affected all sides. The IRA concentrated its attention more and more exclusively on the conditions of prisoners. Protestant paramiltaries, as the level of violence fell, became preoccupied with protection rackets. As the more responsible leadership of both sides' militant groups went into the jails, violence became more random, under-prepared leadership carrying out summary executions on the basis of mere rumors or suspicion.

Definitions of the problem were reduced, on the Nationalist side, to saying that the problem was the British, the solution their expulsion; on the British and Protestant side, that the problem was the IRA, the solution their elimination. Both these explanations were manifestations of a denial syndrome, which excused all parties from dealing with what they all knew to be the real problem: lack of understanding, mutual respect and guarantee of each other's integrity by the two populations living in the same space. That stalemate would now basically characterize the next twenty years, the efforts to break through it, even in times of major crisis, desultory. Many died and suffered, but nothing changed.

THE LONG STAGNATION; 1975-1994.

April 5, 1976:

James Callaghan succeeds Harold Wilson as Prime Minister in Britain, remaining till May '79.

July 21, 1976:

Murder of British Ambassador to Ireland, Christopher Ewart-Biggs, by a land-mine under his passing car, at Sandymount, Co. Dublin.

August 10, 1976: Beginning of "Community of the Peace People."

Death of three children, struck by a car driven by Provisional IRA, under pursuit by British soldiers, leads to emotional protest in television interview by their aunt, Mairead Corrigan. This in turn leads Betty Williams to begin ringing doorbells to organize womens' protests. In a short time, a women's movement called the Peace People is mobilized, and organizes mass demonstrations against the violence in Catholic and Protestant areas alike. The two women were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace the following year, and had strong support from Norwegians, but their Northern Irish support gradually dwindled over several years and the movement failed to make the breakthrough it had seemed to promise.

The prison crisis develops gradually over this time. From the formal end of detention without trial and its concomitant Special Category Status in 1975, IRA prisoners begin refusing to wear prison uniforms, as sign that they do not accept the status of criminals. "Ordinary decent criminals" becomes a term to describe the few non-political prisoners. As several hundred prisoners are "on the blanket" (wearing blankets instead of the rejected uniforms) and denied ordinary privileges, the protest escalates eventually into "the dirty protest:" blanket prisoners unable to go to toilets smear their excrement on walls and ceilings of their cells, creating enormous sanitary and health problems. Eventually, doctors attending prisoners before and after the interrogations that produce their confessions for purposes of the Diplock courts begin to break their enforced silence about evidences of torture. Relations between prisoners and guards go to extremes of hostility, with many retaliatory murders of guards outside the prison. Parallel "blanket" and "dirty" protests develop in the women's prison in Armagh. Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason gives the impression of increasingly heavy-handed repression of all manner of Republican protest, with the result of exacerbating community unrest. By late 1980, with a Conservative government back in power, all this will result in hunger strikes, but in all the intervening time the prison situation is the major concern of Irish Nationalists, North and South of the border.

3 May, 1979: Tories return in Britain, under Margaret Thatcher.

A general election is brought about when Callaghan's Labour government loses a vote of confidence through the refusal of two disillusioned Northern Irish Catholic MPs, normally allies of Labour, to vote for the government. Mrs. Thatcher's chosen Northern Ireland Secretary, Airey Neave, the man who had groomed and prepared her to take over the party leadership, had been murdered by an IRA car-bomb as he drove out of the Houses of Parliament underground parking lot in March, for her an unforgettable offense. Instead, she appoints the meek Humphrey Atkins her Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, but always micromanages his endeavors over his shoulder. He will go through rather desultory efforts to organize conferences and meetings of the opposing Northern Irish factions until the hunger strikes totally occupy the stage, but will have to retire at their conclusion, in September '81.

August 27, 1979: Murder of Earl Mountbatten, Queen's cousin, and his family, as their boat is blown up at Carlingford Lough, Co. Sligo.

October 27-18 December, 1980: First Hunger Strike in Maze Prison.

The strike was precipitated when an effort to end the prison crisis by granting the demand to abolish prison uniforms (symbol of criminal status) was rendered inadequate by substituting "prison-issued civilian clothing" instead of allowing prisoners to wear their own clothing. Seven prisoners went on hunger strike together at the Maze October 27th, joined by three women at Armagh prison December 1st (they ended their strike December 19th). The strike was ended December 18th, when the youngest of the seven was, unexpectedly soon, at the point of death. Bobby Sands, the IRA's prison commandant, believed he had won an agreement on the issues of the strike, but British authorities took the view that the strike had been ended before that agreement was confirmed. Disillusionment over that would lead to the second and more drastic strike, in 1981.

December 8, 1980: Meeting in Dublin of Mrs. Thatcher and Irish Taoiseach Charles Haughey.

First such meeting of British and Irish Prime Ministers. They agree to establish an "Anglo-Irish Council" which will consider "the totality of relations within these islands." First step toward what would be the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement and subsequent cooperation between the two governments.

March 1-October 3, 1981: The Major Hunger Strike.

Bobby Sands, prison commandant, feeling betrayed over the supposed agreement he thought he had won in the first hunger strike, went on strike by himself March 1st. To enhance the effect of each hunger striker's starvation crisis, it was decided that one or two at a time would begin the strike at least a week's intervals.

The fortuitous death of the Independent Catholic MP for the Fermanagh-South Tyrone constituency occasioned a by-election, for which Sands, on strike and in prison, was nominated. Elected Sinn Fein MP on April 20th, he continued his hunger strike, dying May 5th. Nine other hunger strikers died, at intervals, between May 12th and August 10th. 64 other persons were killed in allied disturbances outside the prison over the time of the strike. It was brought to a close when Fr. Dennis Faul, part-time chaplain to the prison and constant critic of prison conditions, persuaded all the families of hunger strikers to authorize the use of intravenous feeding as soon as the strikers lost consciousness.

The strike raised the IRA to the greatest height of its national and international popularity, made Sinn Fein, for the first time since the 1920s, a credible contender in elections for local and parliamentary office (the latter as abstaining members), and, in its general political effect, confirmed in the popular consciousness the problem-evading sense that this was simply an outright battle between the IRA and the British, in which no other issues counted. Both sides were more entrenched in their denial concepts: Catholics that the problem was the British and nothing else, Protestants that the problem was the IRA and nothing else. Continued stalemate was the result.

Humphrey Atkins had to resign as Northern Ireland Secretary in September, to be succeeded by James Prior, who quickly conceded all the prisoners' demands for the internal regime of the prison as soon as the strike had been brought to a close.

More deaths, bombings in Northern Ireland and in Britain happened without really changing the situation. Complaints were made that security forces (British Army and RUC) had adopted a "shoot-to-kill" policy of summary execution as substitute for the easy but suspect convictions by Diplock Court rules. An official inquiry into these allegations by John Stalker, Deputy Chief Constable of Manchester, instituted in May 1984, was terminated in June '86 under circumstances that suggested a cover-up.

December 14, 1982:

Garrett FitzGerald becomes Taoiseach of the Fine Gael-Labour Party coaltion government in the Republic of Ireland, following Fianna Fáil's loss of the November 24th election.

May 30, 1983: New Ireland Forum meets for first time.

FitzGerald as Taoiseach, Haughey as Fianna Fáil opposition leader, Dick Spring of the (Irish) Labour Party as Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), and John Hume of the SDLP meet. Unionist parties of Northern Ireland are invited but do not attend. The Forum will eventually (May 2, 1984) produce a report suggesting discussion of three possible options for solution of the Northern Irish problem: a unitary Irish state, a federal/confederal state, or joint sovereignty by Britain and Ireland over the North. Mrs. Thatcher rejected all three out of hand as mere variants on the United Ireland opposed by the Unionists.

October 12, 1984:

Massive IRA bomb at the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the Conservative Party Conference there. Four killed. A direct attempt on the life of Prime Minister Thatcher and others in the government.

November 15, 1985: Anglo-Irish Agreement signed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Taoiseach Garrett FitzGerald at Hillsborough, County Down.

Passed by Irish Dáil November 21st, by British House of Commons November 27th. Registered with United Nations as a binding international treaty.

The treaty sets up an Intergovernmental Conference, in which the government of the Irish Republic will have a consultative voice on legislation and policy in Northern Ireland, in return for the Irish Republic's acknowledgment that there can be no constitutional change in Northern Ireland without the consent of a majority. This shared Anglo-Irish responsibility for Northern Ireland can be replaced by a devolved internal government only if the terms of an internal settlement win the recognition of both governments as fair. "The Conference" is to operate both at the level of joint meetings of Ministers and at the level of Irish civil servants' presence at Stormont.

The treaty represents a first attempt to re-focus attention on the relation of the two traditions in Northern Ireland as the principal problem to be solved. With John Hume's SDLP as the only Northern partner in the shaping of the treaty, it tries to force Unionist cooperation in a process of negotiation with "the constitutional Nationalists" (the SDLP as non-violent Nationalist party, and not the violent Republicans) by a carrot and stick approach. The Unionists are expected to oppose vehemently any authority for the Irish Republic, even consultative, over the North. The only escape granted them is to work for a devolved province government through negotiation with the Nationalists. The Unionist response is, instead, for a period of years, to refuse to meet at all even with British government officials, who are seen as having betrayed them.

This Unionist rejection of the Anglo-Irish Agreement fills the succeeding years, while a succession of further violent acts goes by without essentially changing anything. The SAS (Special Air Service: an elite undercover British unit) kills eight Provisional IRA men in an ambush at Loughall, Co. Armagh, May 8, '87. The IRA sets off a bomb during the Remembrance Day Procession at Enniskillen, November 8, '87, killing eleven civilians and injuring 63. The SAS kills three unarmed Provisional IRA members, one a woman, suspected of plotting a bombing, at Gibraltar, March 6th, '88. During their Belfast funeral, a UDA assassin machine-guns mourners in cemetery, killing a further three. At their

funeral some days later, an unmarked car with two plain-clothes British soldiers is found in the midst of the funeral procession. The soldiers are dragged out and torn to pieces in the street.

A general election in the Republic of Ireland, early in 1989, brings Charles Haughey back as Taoiseach of a Fianna Fáil government (to be replaced by Albert Reynolds in February 1992). Haughey, of the more Nationalist tradition in the Republic, disapproves of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, with its acknowledgment of the rights of the pro-British majority in the North, but acknowledges that he is bound by it as an international treaty.

Peter Brooke becomes Northern Ireland Secretary, in succession to Tom King, July 24th, 1989, and begins what will be the preliminary moves toward a genuine peace process for the North.

PRELIMINARIES TO A PEACE PROCESS: 1990-1994.

January 1, 1990:

A Northern Ireland Fair Employment Act becomes law. This is the last in a series of fair employment initiatives taken by British government, largely under pressure from some Irish Americans. Employment remains the most difficult of the three traditional areas of discrimination to address, long after complaints about inequality on voting and on housing have been met, because severe lack of any employment at all stands in the way of fair access to jobs. Passage of this act takes some of the bite out of the issue, which can yet only be resolved by bringing in more employment opportunities.

January, 1990:

Talks about talks initiated between the Northern Irish parties and the British and Irish governments. They move slowly. The Unionists' terms are that there should be no ministerial meetings of the Anglo-Irish Conference established by the Anglo-Irish Agreement so long as there are inter-party talks in Northern Ireland, or the prospect of them. Momentum first created by Peter Brooke increases when, in November 1990, John Major replaces Margaret Thatcher as British Prime Minister, and from the start gives the matter of Ireland a priority in his policy that no other Prime Minister since Gladstone had given it.

June, 1991 to November, 1992:

Actual Inter-Party Talks begin, involving "the constitutional parties" in Northern Ireland -- Ulster Unionist Party, Democratic Unionist Party (Paisley), Alliance and SDLP, with British and Irish government representatives. Some meetings are actually held in Dublin as well as in London and in Northern Ireland itself. They continue, on the basis that there should be no Anglo-Irish Conference meetings, until just before the Republic of Ireland elections in November '92, in which the Fianna Fáil/Labour government of Albert Reynolds was reelected. Peter Brooke, had, in the meantime, been replaced as Northern Ireland Secretary by Sir Patrick Mayhew. The Irish government felt that a formal meeting of the Conference was necessary before the voting day, and believed that an interruption in the Multi-Party Talks would be temporary only. It was not. The Unionists would not accept the breach, and the talks were finished.

Little of substance seemed to have been accomplished by the talks, and both the Unionist parties and Alliance were anxious to heap blame for this on John Hume, leader of the SDLP. Nevertheless, some age-old barriers to communication had been breached.

Hume-Adams Talks and Agreement.

An initial date for the talks between SDLP leader John Hume and Gerry Adams, who, after defeating SDLP leader Gerry Fitt for the West Belfast seat in the Westminster Parliament in 1983, had been elected President of Sinn Fein, is hard to assign. That Sinn Fein had accepted his leadership in place of the long-established Dublin leadership of Ruairi ó Bradaigh and Daithi ó Conail was acknowledgment that it had become a Northern movement with Northern objectives. When, at a Party Conference (Ard Fheis) in 1983, Adams led Sinn Fein to a decision that it would occupy any seat to which a member was elected in the Irish Dáil, breaking with the old abstentionist tradition which had refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Southern state, ó Bradaigh and ó Conail split from the movement and formed the splinter Republican Sinn Fein. Adams lost his Westminster seat (from which he had always been abstentionist) in the 1992 election to Dr. Joe Hendron of the SDLP, largely because some 3000 Loyalist voters in the district cast their ballots strategically for Hendron.

Hume and Adams had held unsuccessful talks in 1988. They resumed them some time early in the '90s, perhaps only after the 1992 election, Hume understanding well that he risked his own and his party's political future by legitimizing Adams and Sinn Fein. Agreement was eventually reached on terms that were never precisely published, but which tended clearly toward an IRA cease-fire and recognition of the legitimacy of the Unionist tradition in Northern Ireland. Hume was able to do what would have been impossible to Adams by himself, win from Taoiseach Albert Reynolds a willingness to entertain seriously peace-making overtures that came from Sinn Fein and the IRA. Reynolds himself was able to win the positive attention of John Major to these proposals. The air was a-buzz with all this in 1993, and it was heard in the context of the unimaginable Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO signed at the White House that September. And as was disclosed only later, British government officials actually held off-the-record discussions with Sinn Fein's official negotiator, Martin McGuinness, during all this time.

Further horrors followed. On October 23rd, the bombing by the IRA of a fish-and-chips shop on the Protestant Shankill Road in Belfast killed ten civilians, including two children. The bomber himself had died in the attack, and Gerry Adams was photographed carrying his coffin at the funeral. In an equally savage retaliatory attack, Loyalist machine-gunners cut down party-goers at a quiet country pub.

December 15, 1993: Downing Street Declaration.

A statement signed jointly by Prime Minister John Major and Taoiseach Albert Reynolds addressed the hopes generated by the Hume-Adams talks and agreement. It restated the traditional British guarantee that only a majority consent could change the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, but phrased it from the direction of asserting the right of self-determination for Northern Ireland rather from one that assumed the unacceptability of change. It promised participation by Sinn Fein in All-Party Talks ninety days after the establishment of a permanent IRA cease-fire.

The Downing Street Declaration was also an effort by British government to reclaim the initiative, which by this time had passed so definitively to the Nationalist SDLP and Sinn Fein. Unionists were by this time thoroughly alarmed by what they saw as a pan-Nationalist coalition, in which the Fianna Fáil government of the Republic, too, was aligned with Sinn Fein and the SDLP in a new quest for the United Ireland. Major understood the Unionists' need for some reassurance that the process had not gotten altogether out of Britain's sovereign hands.

For the IRA, the idea that they should settle, as petitioners, for such crumbs as were allotted to them from the imperial table was unwelcome, as was the 90-day waiting period to establish their good faith. (It was far in the future that they would be complaining that nothing happened after the 90 days.)

152

The demand that a cease-fire be permanent, too, was disquieting to many in the IRA, if only because it was so clear to them that splits had developed in the Republican movement at so many times when an effort to break away from violence had resulted in failure or disillusion. Adams himself began already to say that a cease-fire decision, if it came, would be complete and definitive, but that failure to achieve resolution of the conflict through it would ultimately lead to new groups rebelling in the future.

From 1994: Irish-American Intervention brings Clinton Administration into the picture.

A new group of Irish-Americans, more politically significant than those who had emerged before, had tried, during the 1992 presidential election campaign, to interest candidate William Clinton in the promotion of peace in Northern Ireland, breaking through the traditional American policy, always supported in the State Department, of treating Northern Ireland as purely an internal problem of Britain, America's ally, in which U.S. policy should never interfere. As The Republican Movement debated the Hume-Adams initiative and the Downing Street Declaration, this group believed that gaining U.S. encouragement and endorsement for Gerry Adams and his urgings would strengthen chances of the IRA's deciding on a cease-fire. They organized a conference in New York on Northern Ireland, to which all parties, including Sinn Fein, were invited, and appealed for a visa to be granted to Gerry Adams to attend. After intense struggle within the U.S. Administration, with vehement objection from British government and support from Irish government, Adams was granted a 48-hour visa to attend the New York conference February 1st and 2nd, 1994. A small, technical step for the American super-power, but one with enormous effect on so small a scene as Northern Ireland. From this point on, initially to the outrage of British government, the U.S. government was involved.

Waiting for the cease-fire was nerve-racking. John Hume and the SDLP were especially hurting from the impression that nothing had happened. Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis (Party Conference) at Letterkenny in Donegal on July 24th, at which the international press expected the announcement of a cease-fire, brought instead negative criticism by Adams of features of the Downing Street Declaration.

STALEMATE ENDED. MUTUAL CEASE-FIRES OPEN UP THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

August 31, 1994: IRA Cease-fire.

The phrasing would subsequently be matter for dispute. It read: "Recognizing the potential of the current situation and in order to enhance the democratic process and underline our definitive commitment to its success, the leadership of *Óglaigh na hÉireann* [the Irish Volunteers] have decided that as of midnight, Wednesday 31 August, there will be a complete cessation of military operations. All our units have been instructed accordingly."

Maintenance of unity -- no splits or breakaways -- was a paramount concern, and the leadership worried particularly about their hard-line Irish-American supporters. Joe Cahill, old revolutionary who was reputedly the founder of Noraid (the Northern Aid Association), was granted a U.S. visa to make a rapid visit to address that constituency and keep it in line.

October 13, 1994: Loyalist Cease-fire.

The Loyalists, after years of questioning the wisdom of the established Unionist parties, were ready for something new. Their political parties were ready to step up, PUP (Progressive Unionist Party) for the UVF, UDP (Ulster Democratic Party) for the UDA, and a Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) took authority for declaring the cease-fire, contingent on the IRA's maintaining its cease-fire.

The Loyalists had been questioning their own actions and the dead hand of the *status quo* for at least as long as internal questioning and turmoil of conscience had gone on among Republicans. It took them six weeks of reflection to assess what the IRA had done and work out their response, but it had been well prepared long before.

What the two groups of militants, Republican and Loyalist, had done compares best with what Israelis and the PLO had done the previous year, when after many decades of refusing to recognize one another's legitimacy as peoples, they had very publicly and solemnly done exactly that. The IRA's resolve would eventually be compromised, and they would at least partially renege on that recognition by resuming their bombing campaign. But just as in the Middle East, when the Netanyahu government of Israel was elected for the purpose, and understood its task, of repudiating that recognition granted in Oslo, it found the task of reversing it practically impossible, so the IRA's recognition of the Protestant-Unionist community as legitimate and carrying a full cargo of rights is really beyond rescinding. The Loyalists, even though they made their cease-fire contingent on the continuation of the IRA's cease-fire at the start, found, when the IRA broke its cease-fire, that the recognition they had granted as Loyalists was more important to them than they had realized, and against a great deal of anger and frustration within their ranks, they strove mightily to preserve their cease-fire, even when the IRA went out of its way deliberately to provoke them.

The people who have never made that recognition of the other community's legitimacy are the regular Unionists parties, both UUP and DUP. Their reaction instead has been one of panic in the face of the unknown. It has not been a wicked reaction, or duplicity. But they have found themselves invited into a process, a reconciliation offer, whose outcome they can neither predict nor control. Ultimately, they need to discover how to respond to it, but they have not yet done so. British government, having very responsibly fostered the process to that point, stood back now and supported every effort at delay and postponement that the Unionists requested. It was even the British government that first invented, and supplied to the Unionists, the principal delaying tactics: first a querying of the IRA's cease-fire declaration on the grounds that it did not include the word "permanent," then the issue of the prior "decommissioning" of arms. It was widely felt that John Major's government did this because it was so dependent on the few Unionist votes in Parliament to maintain its majority, but there is a weakness in that argument. The Unionists had really nowhere else to go and were unlikely to bring down a Conservative government. And John Major had ventured into the quicksands of the Irish question when he hadn't needed to, taking political risks out of conviction when he could easily have escaped them as many British Prime Ministers had all through the century.

There was some reason for British government, seeing the degree of panic among the Unionists, not simply to leave them naked. But the exercise of British imagination did fail signally from this time on, despite a Framework Document for the peace, agreed with the Irish government in February '95.

Popular euphoria, a flood of new business investment, tourism and other encouraging signs flourished immediately. Much of the Irish-American business community was involved in bringing about the developments, and read it very optimistically. Visits of Northern Irish political and other figures, both Republican and Unionist, who had never been in the U.S. before became commonplace, and they found an enthusiastic welcome, friendly to all of them, rather than the uniform green nationalism they had expected of Americans. Clinton Administration participation became much deeper, and won the British welcome it had not had initially, being credited with a major role in bringing about the desired cease-fires. But behind this euphoria, motion had really stopped. The expected All-Party Talks were no nearer than ever when the stipulated ninety days were up, and came no nearer over the rest of 1995. Instead there were efforts to undermine the credit of opponents, and delays predicated on the decommissioning demand.

July-August, 1995: The Marching Season.

In the prevailing atmosphere of anxiety among Unionists, their affairs got entangled in the emotions of the annual marches celebrating Protestant victories of the 17th century. The Orange Order and the Unionist Party had a long relation to each other and a largely overlapping membership. What, to the membership, was celebration of a freedom tradition, deliverance from a threatened tyranny, had come to be seen by most others as a triumphalist assertion, by the humiliation of their enemies, of their own ascendancy over a population of inferiors. Non-members of the Orange Order, even among Unionists, talked regularly of how to stop or muzzle the Orange, and that only added to the sense of beleaguerment among the Order's faithful. The Order was too important to its own public to be suppressed or stifled, but seemed to have great trouble knowing how to re-invent itself as a freedom tradition for all.

James Molyneaux was retiring as leader of the UUP. The choice of his successor would do much to determine whether the party would take any part in the peace process that so captivated the public's attention. As the time came for the choice, an early event of the marching season blew up to explosive proportions. In Portadown, Northern Co. Armagh, a march was traditionally held on the Sunday nearest August 1st, the marchers first attending service at the Drumcree Church on the outskirts of town and then proceeding to an Orange Hall in the center by way of Garvaghy Road. All this was close by "The Diamond," the site of a bloody confrontation between Catholic and Protestant rural gangs in 1795 that had been the origin of the Orange Order itself. The march was also billed as a commemoration of the Northern Irish soldiers who had died in the First World War Battle of the Marne. Garvaghy Road had become a solidly Catholic street, and this march had, over many years, been marked by so much violence and intimidation of the Catholic residents that, in the later years of "the trouble," the RUC had regularly blocked it and required the marchers to take an alternate route.

This time, the Orange lodges determined to force the issue and march through Garvaghy Road. They were urged to this by Rev. Ian Paisley (not a member of the Order), who appeared on the scene. He was joined by David Trimble, UUP Member of Parliament for the district. As the police, over successive days, resisted demands to let the march through the street, these two summoned up Orangemen from other parts of Northern Ireland. Police and various church leaders promoted negotiations between the residents and the marchers, until agreement was reached to allow a small number, 300, of the marchers to walk through, without drums or bands or signs of intimidation. But when the 300 went through, Paisley and Trimble led the march in a way that residents took as an offensive display of triumphalism.

A hard-core "Spirit of Drumcree" organization grew up within Orangeism, determined to oust Orange leaders who had not taken part (like the long-time Grand Master, Rev. Martin Smyth, MP). And David Trimble, until then hardly mentioned as a possible leader of the UUP, was elected by the party caucus to succeed James Molyneaux, on the basis of his performance at Drumcree. Grim prognostication for Unionist participation in a peace effort, this development produced grave discouragement among all those who were promoting it.

November 28, 1995: The Mitchell Commission.

By this time, the British government had become entrenched in a position, announced by Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew in Washington, that there had to be a prior IRA "decommissioning" of arms before Sinn Fein would be admitted to All-Party Talks. The condition was described as surrender by the IRA. Its most practical consequence was in South Armagh, where the traditional "Brits out" demand of Republicans had in fact been practical reality for years, the RUC altogether absent, the IRA in such control of the roads that a British Army encampment in the border town of Crossmaglen could only be visited or supplied by helicopter.

Disarmament, for South Armagh, meant Army and RUC back in Crossmaglen, unacceptable to them. IRA units in South Armagh, or in embattled East Tyrone, had no affinity for the political concerns of Sinn Fein leaders in Belfast or Derry. Their sights were fixed on simpler objectives, and they had the actual power to act on their own. Going beyond what was acceptable to them risked the dreaded split in Republican ranks. The "decommissioning" demand, therefore, produced genuine impasse, and it was suspected by Republicans that it had been proposed only in order to sabotage the prospect of talks.

George Mitchell of Maine had been Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate until the 1994 election, in which he had declined to run. President Clinton, challenged since his 1992 election to appoint a special political envoy to Northern Ireland -- a proposal always anathema to the British -- had, on the day of Mitchell's retirement from the Senate (December 1, '94) appointed him his economic envoy to the province, and in May '95 had hosted a White House conference on investment in Northern Ireland, under the direction of Mitchell and Commerce Secretary Ron Browne.

As the arms impasse now threatened to overturn any prospect of All-Party Talks, Mitchell was called upon, by Prime Minister Major and Taoiseach John Bruton, to head an international commission, along with Canadian General John de Chastelain and former Finnish Prime Minister Harri Holkeri, to report to the British and Irish governments with recommendations on the thorny issue. Only that preserved the now tottering prospect of peace long enough for President Clinton to make his anticipated visit to Northern Ireland, first ever for an American President. He left for London on the very day of the appointment of the commission, November 28. On his visits to Belfast and Derry, and then in Dublin, he was greeted ecstatically as a harbinger of peace, and his presence greatly encouraged popular demands and hopes for progress toward peace.

Report of Mitchell Commission: January 22, 1996.

The Commission made the expected recommendation of a "two-track" (later it would be called a "parallel") approach: call All-Party Talks immediately, to begin in February, without requiring any prior decommissioning, and then hold simultaneous negotiations on the political agenda and on the handing over of arms. ("Decommissioning" had always been a term to describe the handing over of arms to a neutral third party, rather than surrendering them to British forces or the police.) Along with that, there was a list of principles for the parties to treat one another with fairness and respect, what have since been known as "The Mitchell Principles."

The report was promptly accepted and endorsed by the Irish government and by most of the Northern Irish parties, including the Loyalist parties (PUP and UDP), whose paramilitary organizations were, like the IRA, called upon to decommission their armories. The British government did something more complicated. Appearing in Parliament, Mr. Major endorsed the Mitchell Principles and announced that, instead of an immediate convening of All-Party Talks, there would first be an election in Northern Ireland of members of a Forum. Such an election had long been a demand of the UUP, which wanted any parties who entered the All-Party Talks to do so with an electoral mandate. They questioned the electoral mandate of Sinn Fein, saying that Sinn Fein, having been elected to prosecute a rebellion, not to make the peace, needed a new mandate, and the Loyalist parties had as yet no electoral mandate at all.

The British presented this decision as acceptance of the Mitchell report. The Irish government, and the Nationalist parties, understood it as a rejection, and recriminations were vehement. Hardly noticed was the fact that Sinn Fein and The Republican Movement never announced any acceptance of the Mitchell Principles, and were effectively let off the hook by the terms of Britain's response. Agreement to decommission even a token quantity of arms, short of a resolution of all issues, has never been made by the IRA.

Irish Nationalists (government in the Republic and both Northern parties) all objected that elections were essentially divisive in Northern Ireland, where majoritarianism had always been basically a means of denying minority rights. To correct that, the British government provided that the elected Forum, where parties would be represented in proportion to the number of votes they won, would not be the setting for the All-Party Talks. Instead, each of the ten parties that got most votes in the election would be represented in the talks themselves, the first six with three delegates each, the other four with two each. The Forum would not be able to dictate agenda or refer questions to the All-Party Talks themselves, but the participants in the All-Party Talks were free to refer questions to the Forum for discussion. The talks would begin, after the election, on June 10, '96. Senator Mitchell was asked to preside, with the other two members of his Commission as alternates.

February 9, 1996: Canary Wharf bombing, suspension of the IRA cease-fire.

The cease-fire had lasted more than seventeen months before it ended with a massive bomb in the underground garage of an office building in London's dockhand, killing two hapless immigrant news-agents. Another bomb blew up early on a bus in the banking district, killing its carrier. Yet another blew up a mailbox in the theater district. Bombs in Britain served the IRA better than bombs in Belfast. They were far away, and they got more attention. Other bombs over the year were mostly designed not to do much damage but to keep reminding people the IRA was still there, like a bomb under a London bridge that could have taken the bridge down if it had gone off, but was set up so that only the detonator and not the main charge went off. Later in the year another enormous bomb devastated a shopping mall in the center of Manchester and injured many people, but with no deaths.

The bombing campaign meant that Sinn Fein was not admitted to the All-Party (i.e., almost-All-Party) Talks that began in June. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness went to the opening of the talks and were turned away. Their claim was that they should be admitted on the basis of their mandate, which was a full 15% of the total Province vote, the fourth largest vote (after UUP, SDLP and DUP), and not on the basis of the behavior of the IRA. But the other parties (including SDLP) responded that negotiating with gun in hand was unacceptable.

The Sinn Fein leaders were themselves undermined by the breaking of the cease-fire, which cut away their credibility. Both British and Irish governments cut off all communication with them, and it was clear to Adams that he could not apply for any more U.S. visas without inviting rebuff.

What the Loyalist paramilitaries would do was everyone's question. They held to their cease-fire. Vagrant individuals did carry out a series of violent actions over the year, and at times it seemed that their cease-fire was a façade only, but the political leadership and the CLMC hewed as close to maintaining the cease-fire as their fractious following would permit. Paisley repeatedly called for their expulsion from the All-Party Talks for breaking the Mitchell Principles, but they retained their seats.

Summer, 1996: Drumcree II.

When it seemed events could not get worse, the marching season again proved its capacity to provoke new violence. The hard-liners of the Orange constituency, with help from an angry Portadown breakaway faction of the UVF, made Drumcree 1996 even far worse than the previous year. The residents of Garvaghy Road proved intensely reluctant to negotiate, believing the agreed format of the last year's march had been mockingly flouted by Trimble and Paisley. In the absence of an agreement, the RUC set up barricades to prevent the march going down the road. Paisley and Trimble were back on the scene, summoning eventually tens of thousands of followers to camp out in the grounds of Drumcree Church and assault the police lines day by day.

A vagrant UVF miscreant, accused of multiple murders over the years, Billy Wright, urged on the mob. Drunken rage was the order of the day. Police officers on the line were regularly threatened with attack on their homes, their wives and children, whose names and whereabouts would be shouted out to the unruly crowd. One Catholic taxi driver, called out to a remote country address, was murdered in circumstances clearly related to the Drumcree agitation.

After many days of this, the RUC Chief Constable, Sir Hugh Annesley, drew the conclusion that he was putting lives at risk through not permitting the march, and reversed his decision, declaring that the marchers should be allowed through the Catholic street. The police, nearly all Protestant and in many cases Orangemen themselves, received this order with much more enthusiasm, and cleared away Catholic protesters, in their own street, with liberal use of batons and far more use of plastic bullets than they had used against the Protestant mob over the several days.

Drumcree comes earlier than July 12th, even when delayed this way. On the "Glorious Twelfth" itself, marchers were escorted to the assembly point for the major Belfast march down the Lower Ormeau Road, another traditional flashpoint of violence, with the same heavy police methods. Community relations had reached a point of greater bitterness than at any previous time during the troubles. World opinion was outraged at the feckless default of British authority in permitting this mayhem.

British government took the view that this was a police matter, and not political, that decisions had to be left in the hands of the police, as no politician could pronounce them. (This was the account given by Baroness Denton, a Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office, speaking to a group in Boston later in July.) There was, of course, a political decision made not to indict or prosecute those who fomented and organized these events, for criminal behavior fully as grievous as the bombing campaign of the IRA. But after Ormeau Road, steps had to be taken to contain the violence as far as possible for the rest of the marching season.

That meant mainly the Apprentice Boys Day in Derry, celebrated that year on August 10th, a Saturday, rather than the 12th. Over the many years of violence, parts of the ancient walls of Derry had been barricaded off to prevent the marchers coming to blows with residents of Catholic areas. These barriers had been taken down after the 1994 cease-fires, in the expectation that the marches could be more friendly. Over frenzied protest, they were put up again, and the marchers obliged to negotiate their route and the manner of their march with the Catholic residents of neighborhoods affected by the event. This was far from the usual experience of the Orange lodges and Black Preceptories, who had always been able to do as they pleased without seeking any consent from Catholic neighborhoods. It was done, but with grave resentment, and the marches back to home districts on the days after the Derry event were met with the same demand for negotiation, sometimes facing mass sitdown strikes in the streets and public squares they wanted to march through.

One of those much-thwarted marches, through Dunloy, a small village midway between Ballymoney and Ballymena, bred so much resentment that the aggrieved marchers began regularly to turn out every Saturday evening, with cudgels and marching bands, to prevent the 7:30 evening Mass at St. Mary's Church in the Harryville district of Ballymena. These demonstrations increased in violence all through the winter and into the summer of 1997. Various political figures, among them Paisley and Trimble, were urged to stand with the RUC protecting the church against these attacks, and refused. Robert Saulters, the newly elected Grand Master of the Orange Order, and some other prominent Orange Order figures, did come out to protest the assaults, to the fury of the marchers.

Toward the end of May '97, a group of these protesters in a pub attacked a police acquaintance of theirs, a Protestant like most of the RUC, whom they had identified as protecting the church against their

weekly assault, and kicked him to death in the street. On Saturday, June 7, '97, the mob finally broke through the police lines, broke windows in the church and hurled petrol bombs into its porch, though not until after the Mass-goers had safely returned home. After this, the Pastor called off the Saturday evening Mass for the rest of the summer, to leave the police free to control Orange marches as they occurred.

December, 1996: Bombing of Thiepval Barracks.

The IRA bombing campaign was finally brought back, from the relatively safe distance of Britain, to Northern Ireland late in the year. Several relatively minor attacks, most of them failures -- misfires of bombs, shootings that missed -- were followed by the spectacular penetration of the main British Army headquarters in Northern Ireland, the Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn, just outside Belfast. Two successive car bombs were exploded inside the base, causing several deaths and many injuries, the second bomb calculated to hit those who were carrying out rescue work from the first.

On the day of this bombing, the political leadership of the Loyalists was visiting UVF prisoners in the Maze Prison, hoping to persuade them to continue supporting their cease-fire policy. The Thiepval bombs went off just two miles distant from the prison, and their meaning was clear to the prisoners at once. The meeting decided to continue with their cease-fire all the same.

At Christmas time, IRA gunmen attempted to shoot an off-duty RUC detective, and two fellow policemen who accompanied him, in the maternity ward of a Belfast hospital as he was going to see his new-born child.

After several more unsuccessful shooting or bombing episodes, the IRA killed a British soldier, early in February '97, at a South Armagh Army check-point, using a long rifle that had been sought by authorities for several years, as he was inspecting a driver's license. Not long after, the British Army, in one of its rare South Armagh raids, using a whole flotilla of helicopters to mount a mass attack, captured the long rifle and arrested seven local men, one of whom they accused of the Canary Wharf bombing.

All this time, political figures and others, in Ireland and abroad, among them President Clinton and many other Americans, were constantly pleading with the IRA to reinstate its cease-fire and allow its own Sinn Fein representatives to take part in the All-Party Talks.

May-June, 1997: Elections in Britain and Ireland.

Three elections were held.

On May 2nd, the British General Election, for 659 seats in the House of Commons, gave the Labour Party 419 seats, a gain of 146, to the Conservative government's 165, a loss of 178. The Liberal Democrats won 46, a gain of 28. The Conservative defeat, after their 18 years of governing under Margaret Thatcher and John Major, was likened to 1832, the only time there had ever been a comparable shift, but even that was a result of the 1830 Reform Act's abolition of the "rotten boroughs," and not comparable to any normal election since.

Of the 18 Northern Ireland seats at Westminster, the UUP won 10, the same number as in the previous election, but one of their seats had gone to Robert McCartney and his United Kingdom Unionist Party, a newly founded far-Right creation (McCartney was sulking for having lost the UUP leadership election to Trimble), and one was taken away from Ian Paisley's DUP. The DUP in fact lost two seats, the other one (Mid Ulster, i.e., Dungannon and South Tyrone) to Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness.

McGuinness' seat was one of two won by Sinn Fein, which had had none since Gerry Adams' defeat in 1992. He regained his West Belfast seat, taking it from the SDLP's Joe Hendron. The SDLP retained its other 3 seats, including John Hume's in Derry.

The outcome was a triumph for Sinn Fein, regaining for Adams and McGuinness the credit they had lost through the failure of the cease-fire they advocated to produce a response and through the IRA's ending their cease-fire. The murder of a policeman a few days after the election looked at first like an IRA rebuff, an effort to cut their Sinn Fein MPs down to size, but was claimed eventually by the INLA.

The new Labour government was led by Tony Blair as Prime Minister, with Mo (for Marjorie) Mowlam as his Northern Ireland Secretary. The Blair government was under no impediments with regard to Northern Ireland, and moved quickly to assure Republicans that Sinn Fein would be granted rapid admission to the peace talks once there was a cease-fire. From the IRA came, in succeeding weeks, only an ominous silence.

David Trimble's UUP was freed from danger on its Right. Paisley's DUP, with the loss of half its seats, was no longer a serious threat to him. With Drumcree III looming, it seemed Trimble would not want trouble with the new Blair government, and would find reason to act with restraint. His party was not necessary to the Labour government, hence had none of the leverage it had had with Major's Conservatives, and was likely to take a more positive line.

On May 21st, the Northern Irish Local Council Elections produced a result comparable to the British General Election. Both Sinn Fein and what were called the "Fringe Loyalist" parties, PUP and UDP, gained significantly, Sinn Fein now up to 16% of the total Province vote, identical with SDLP. Ian Paisley's DUP was again significant loser, with fewer votes than Sinn Fein, and the UUP vote was considerably off. For the first time in its history, the Belfast City Council did not have a majority of Unionists (21 Unionist seats, a combination of UUP, DUP, PUP and UDP; 20 Nationalist seats, a combination of SDLP and Sinn Fein; 6 Alliance Party members held the balance, and elected an SDLP Lord Mayor.

The Republic of Ireland General Election, June 6th, brought a Fianna Fáil government back, under Bertie Ahern as Taoiseach, and an expectation that Irish government would now be more urgently Nationalist. This was good news to Northern Nationalists, likely very frightening to Unionists, who would see again, as in 1994, a united Nationalist Front ranged against them.

With so many good auguries for a renewal of the peace process, expectation was widespread that the IRA would reinstate its cease-fire and the stalled process would begin to move again. Instead, on June 13th, two masked IRA men ran up behind two RUC men on foot patrol in the crowded market center of Lurgan, just a few miles North of Portadown, and shot them in the head from behind, killing both instantly. Talks that had been initiated between the new Northern Ireland Office and Sinn Fein were suspended.

Drumcree III loomed, and was in fact another traumatic experience. The local residents believed they had assurances that the march would not be permitted, but at the last moment is was quite suddenly ushered through the street by police and army. This time, though, the follow-up was an agreement by the Orange Order to call off the four most contentious and dangerous further marches, on the July 12th Orange Day, including the one on the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast that had produced murders before. This accommodating gesture on the part of the Orange played its part in the reinstatement of its cease-fire by the IRA later in July. The way thus cleared, Sinn Fein delegates were admitted to the All-Party Talks.

1997-'98: The Road to Agreement, by Way of Multiple Booby-traps.

The extraordinary mediating skills of Senator George Mitchell now came into play, even as great courage and determination was demanded of both sides.

Unionists had to decide whether they would continue to take part in the talks with Sinn Fein present. UUP leader David Trimble took the risk, to the outrage of Paisley's DUP and Robert McCartney's UKUP. UUP delegates to the talks demonstratively refused to address Sinn Fein members directly, but were in fact negotiating, even though addressing all their remarks to the chair.

For Sinn Fein, now that they were in the negotiations in earnest, there still had to be authorization from the IRA. An IRA convention, comprising some two hundred members, held secretly at Gweedore in County Donegal, posed the question whether the process in which Sinn Fein was engaged was *constitutional* or not, the constitution at issue being that of 1916, and the question whether or not the peace process were leading to the all-Ireland Republic of the movement's dream. The convention's decision was, first, that the process was *not* constitutional, but secondly that those members of the IRA who were also members of Sinn Fein (many are not) were nevertheless *specially authorized* to pursue the process. Naturally enough there was serious dissidence over this decision, and numerous members quit the IRA. Many Sinn Fein members also quit following a party meeting shortly thereafter. Fear abounded that the IRA and Sinn Fein were splitting apart, and that a new faction, continuing the war, would make those who were working for the peace irrelevant. There were already two rival Republican groups in the wings: the Marxist INLA (Irish National Liberation Army), which had been about since 1974, affiliated with the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP), and the Continuity Army Council

Actions of The Republican Movement often need careful explication. Over a period beginning during the renewed bombing campaign, the IRA and Sinn Fein had increasingly advanced the position that they were separate organizations, neither responsible for the actions of the other. Most people took this as a transparent fiction, and it had failed to win Sinn Fein its entry into the All-Party Talks before the renewal of the IRA cease-fire. The substance of the distinction, though, was that the IRA, with a new Army Council headed by a traditional hard line leader, was allowing Sinn Fein to negotiate an agreement, but reserving its judgment on whether it would accept the agreement once it was made. When, in September, Sinn Fein announced formal acceptance of the Mitchell Principles as condition for its entry into the talks, an anonymous writer, speaking for the IRA, published a statement in *The Republican News* to the effect that the IRA had problems with certain aspects of the Mitchell Principles, but that this did not matter *because the IRA was not a party to the negotiations.* When, in early January, British government published a list of suggested "Heads of Agreement," which Republicans understood as back-tracking on previous commitments, "the IRA" sent a Fax to the BBC stating that "the peace process is now in crisis." At that point, it had to be observed that the IRA was actually behaving as a party to the negotiations.

The breakaway militant groups meanwhile organized new terrorist campaigns. On December 27th, the INLA managed to murder Billy Wright, founder of the LVF (Loyalist Volunteer Force, dissident breakaways from the UVF and now the organisers of the annual mayhem at Drumcree) inside the Maze Prison. Retaliation from the LVF took the form of an immediate attack on a Catholic dance club in Dungannon (East Tyrone, close enough to the LVF's home territory in North Armagh, in the area around Portadown and Lurgan). A "spray job" was clearly intended, machine-gunning of the dance floor, but a formerly IRA ex-prisoner security guard stopped the gunmen at the door, and was killed himself. A second raid on a pub in a Catholic area of North Belfast, also a "spray job" but again with only one death, was claimed for the LVF, but was obviously dissident UDA members, acting in sympathy with LVF and using their name. The INLA had succeeded in provoking the crazies into renewed war. the LVF was trying to provoke the IRA into breaking their cease-fire, but the IRA's discipline held.

The UDA, least stable of the paramilitary armies, now created a crisis with its own political representation, the Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) led by Gary McMichael. UDA prisoners in the Maze voted not to approve further UDP participation in the All-Party Talks. McMichael was unable, visiting them in the prison, to win back their approval. A visit to the UDA prisoners by a deputation of UUP leaders, MPs David Trimble, Geoffrey Donaldson, Ken Maginnis and John Taylor, was suspected of merely trying to seduce the prisoners away from McMichael's leadership. Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam, in an unprecedented action, then visited the prisoners inthe jail herself, and succeeded in winning their assent to the UDP's continued aprticipation in the talks. Screams of distress came from many quarters at this evidence of the influence of prisoners and paramilitaries on the process.

The talks proceeded on three "tracks": 1) a Northern Irish track aimed at agreement on internal governing arrangements for the Province; 2) a "North-South" track, concerned with arrangements between Northern Ireland and the Republic; and 3) an "East-West" track, involving relations between Britain and both parts of Ireland. The "crisis" announced by the IRA early in the year arose from the sense that the "Heads of Agreement" document weakened a commitment by the British Government to provide "Executive Powers" to cross-border bodies, as had been stated in the earlier "Framework for Peace" document, a Track Two matter. British and Irish governments and the SDLP all contended that the earlier commitments remained intact, and the "Heads of Agreement" merely an abbreviated form of the "Framework," but Republicans pointed to private meetings between David Trimble and Tony Blair, and suspected that a deal was being done behind the backs of the other Talks participants, a fundamental breach of the integrity of the process.

They consequently raised objections on the Track One matter of majority power in a new Northern Ireland Assembly and threatened to reject any form of devolved powers to a "Partition" body. This would leave no choices other than continuance of Direct Rule from Westminster or the United Ireland. Republicans were deeply suspicious, too, of a Track Three proposal in the "Heads of Agreement" document that would set up a consultative body representing an assortment of regional governments to meet at long intervals: the State governments of Britain and Ireland, plus the intended Northern Ireland Assembly and the not yet organized regional assemblies of Scotland and Wales. They feared this was a masked way of entrenching the partition of Ireland. Both sides in the negotiation thus seemed bound into entrenched positions that would paralyze the process.

The IRA now offended with a killing, incurring a two-weeks suspension of Sinn Fein. The murder victim was a notorious drug-dealer. Belfast had remained the largest city in Europe without a major drug problem so long as both IRA and Loyalist paramilitories consistently killed dealers to protect their neighborhoods, but the era of cease-fires had put that remedy out of their reach. The particular dealer was indiscrete enough to challenge the IRA directly.

Chairman Mitchell at this point, drawing on his long experience with apparent deadlocks as Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate, announced a deadline closer than the originally intended one in late May. Since the Irish constitution required some six weeks of process before enabling legislation for a referendum on an agreement, and since everyone was determined that the referendum and, in the event of both agreement and the referendum succeeding, a subsequently organized election for the new Assembly should take place *before the annual July marching season* and its sectarian excitements, Mitchell set the deadline as noontime of Good Friday, April 10th, before any Easter recess.

The parties still stuck publicly to their rigid position practically up to the last two weeks, but the deadline had set everyone's mind to the dire consequences of failure. Mitchell insisted to the concerned governments that no Easter recess be allowed, as he believed that would let all the urgency out of the process. Prime Minister Blair, taking over the lead from his Northern Ireland Secretary, went over to

Stormont and conferred non-stop with the various parties, urging solutions. The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, went up to Northern Ireland also, despite having to deal with his mother's death and funeral over these days. President Clinton in Washington was constantly on the phone to leaders of the parties, and as the negotiations went into all-night sessions, Clinton stayed up himself that the final night, on the phone.

By noontime the agreement was basically in place, but a further five and a half hours suspense hinged on disagreement within the UUP delegation. Geoffrey Donaldson, deputy head of the delegation, reluctant about the whole agreement, objected especially to two provisions: for the establishment of a Commission to reform the RUC, and for the early release of prisoners. In the event, after the long afternoon's delay, Donaldson refused to agree and left the delegation, after which David Trimble accepted the agreement. Ian Paisley, who had refused to take part in the final stages of the talks, tried to storm the gates of the Stormont compound with several hundred of his followers, who were driven back with tear gas by the police. Paisley himself was admitted to hold a press conference, but found himself heckled by Loyalists from the PUP and UDP parties, who accepted the agreement, and branded Paisley "dinosaur."

None of the parties actually signed the agreement except the two governments, British and Irish, who were thus committed to organizing separate referenda on it in the North and in the Republic, the first time since the parliamentary election of 1918 that a vote would held on the same question in both parts of Ireland. The parties submitted it to their memberships, the problematic situations being with the UUP and Sinn Fein.

Trimble won a hard-fought endorsement from the Executive Committee of the UUP on the next day after the agreement, despite rejection by six of the ten UUP Members of Parliament. Soon thereafter he got another victory with a Party Convention, but the internal opponents in the UUP eventually, if reluctantly, began appearing on rejectionist platforms with the DUP's Paisley and the UKUP's Robert McCartney.

Sinn Fein held a party conference (Ard Fheis) within the week, but postponed decision on the agreement. They were waiting, of course, for the IRA to pass the judgment they had so carefully deferred until the agreement should be in place. The Army Council gave notice that they did in fact accept the agreement, but now a small new cloud appeared on the horizon in the shape of a announcement that a "Real IRA," dissidents seemingly in league with the Thirty Two County Sovereignty Committee formed the previous year, was "in the field opposing the British Cabinet (sic)."

This set the stage for another Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, held in Dublin, which overwhelmingly endorsed the agreement. A number of dissidents were turned away at the door, and the meeting was addressed by six IRA prisoners, let out on leave by British and Irish governments to urge acceptance of the agreement on the participants. The Northern prisoners were Padraig Wilson, OC of the IRA prisoners at the Maze, and his deputy. Those from the Port Laoise jail in the Republic were the four "Balcombe Street Bombers," recently transferred from British prisons to the Republic for this very purpose. These were an especially notorious group of bombers from a campaign in London in the 1970s. The rapturous reception they got at the Ard Fheis was read, by Protestants in the North, as cheering for their decades-old bombing campaign. The "Yes" campaign by the UUP for acceptance of the agreement in the referendum in the North had not yet gained nearly as much momentum as the joint "No"campaign by Paisley, McCartney and the dissident UUP MPs. Reaction to the appearance and enthusiastic reception of the prisoners at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis appeared drastically to set back the "Yes" campaign and throw the advantage to Paisley, whose declared intention, if he won enough seats in the new Assembly, was to paralyze it by preventing any action on the required establishment of the cross-border bodies, without which the agreement would be void.

In the event, the referendum yielded 72% support for the agreement. That was nearly unanimous Catholic/Nationalist acceptance, and a very modest Protestant/Unionist majority, nowhere near the 70+% acceptance of the early UUP Executive and Party Conference votes. The next hurdle was the June 24th election for Assembly seats, barely on time before the excitements of the marching season would raise the sectarian temperature. In the new Assembly, the agreement called for *parallel majorities* on all major issues, not simply a majority in the Assembly but majorities of *both* Unionist and Nationalist members. The number, among the 108 seats, that could obstruct all action in the Assembly was a bit indefinite, as there would be a third block, neither Unionist nor Nationalist, between the two others, consisting of the Alliance Party, the Women's Coalition and any other non-affiliated party. (The women's coalition did eventually win a place in the Assembly, the NI Labour Party not, and to their consternation the UDP, party wing of the UDA, failed to meet the 3% threshhold, in a Proportional Representation system, needed for election to the Assembly.) A number of dissident Unionist seats able to declare anything the disliked a major matter, and then prevent the Unionist majority that would parallel a Nationalist majority, could set the Assembly at nought. The outcome was that Paisley's DUP and McCartney's UKUP between them got just short of the number needed to obstruct the Assembly in this way, and seemed fated to make a lot of negative noise and yet be ineffectual. The joker in the pack, though, was that some of the UUP members elected might themselves be "No" votes.

The last of the hurdles now remained, to get past the sectarian passions of the marching season. Drumcree IV now loomed, and the emotions it encapsulated this time were more about the agreement than about the march itself. A government-appointed Parades Commission was finally in place, having been promised for several years. It decided that the Drumcree march, set for Sunday, July 5th, should not be allowed to pass through the Catholic Garvaghy Road, for the reason that the local Orange Lodge refused to communicate with the Catholic Residents' Association to negotiate the modalities of the march. British Army as well as RUC set up massive steel barricades to hold the marchers back. Refused passage, they encamped on the fields around the Drumcree Church, their numbers growing day by day to some 50,000, with extremes of violence, including gunfire, against the police and army throughout every night.

The Drumcree march is traditionally held on the Sunday before the July 12th Orange Day. It commemorates not only the 1795 violence that was the actual origin the the Orange Order but also the deaths of Northern Irish soldiers in the 1916 Battle of the Marne, and proceeds from the Orange Hall in Partadown to a Sunday service in the outlying Drumcree Church, and back to Portadown by way of Garvaghy Road. Orange Day itself would be held this year on the 13th, since the 12th fell on Sunday. The Drumcree marchers planned that, on the 13th, marchers from every Orange March in Northern Ireland, to the number of at least 100,000, would converge on Drumcree and force their way down Garvaghy Road.

But in the pre-dawn hours of Saturday, July 11th, a petrol bomb thrown in the downstairs window of a house in Ballymoney, some fifty miles North, set a fire that took the lives of three young boys. This was no isolated instance. Fire-bombing of Catholic homes and other ways of intimidating Catholics out of their homes was a constant part of the Orange seasons each year. There had been some *140* such burnings out of homes this year around the Province. But the Ballymoney incident made world headlines and pricked the conscience of the Orange leadership itself. Rev. Billie Bingham, Presbyterian Minister and Chaplain of the North Armagh Chapter of the Orange Order, gave a sermon on the Sunday morning denouncing the killings and calling on the marchers to leave "the hill" (the fields around the Drumcree Church) and return to their homes. His courageous appeal made it possible for David Trimble and the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Eames, to echo him, and several other chaplains and leaders of the Orange Order did the same. The Drumcree protest petered out in ignominy, and the annual marching season crisis was past. Robert Saulters, Grand Master of the Orange Order, later gave his opinion that the time had come for the Orange to negotiate their marches with the communities.

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NORTHERN IRELAND: THE ESSENCE OF THE PROBLEM

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. -- November 1992

The Northern Irish conflict has gone on for an unconscionable length of time without any recognizable progress toward a solution. Other conflicts of a similar inter-communal sort may also frustrate our expectations, but there is a peculiar paralysis in the Northern Irish situation. Looing back at it after ten, after fifteen years, after longer, we have to ask ourselves what if anything has changed. People have been killed, bombs have gone off, but everything seems much as it was before, in sharp contrast to other conflicts that seem to move and change with kaleidoscopic abruptness. This stalemate needs some explanation, and I find it in the vague or even distorted definitions that people give of the basic problem behind the conflict.

Ask people in the Catholic/Nationalist community of Northern Ireland, or their supporters elsewhere, what the problem is, and the likeliest answer will be that it is the British. The solution is to get rid of the British -- that can be a violent proposition, or conceivably it can be a proposal to persuade the British to leave -- and then, so the formula goes, there will be no problem.

This is patently false, because if the British left there would still be a problem between the two communities living in Northern Ireland, and it would be untouched by the British departure. The British have seen themselves as a kind of safety valve, preventing the community problem of Northern Ireland from boiling over still more drastically. That is arguable, but even the IRA, arguing a "Brits out" policy, has traditionally recognized that too rapid a British withdrawal would produce an unacceptable crisis.

Ask the same question of the Northern Irish Protestants, or their supporters in Britain or elsewhere, and the likely answer is that the problem is the IRA, thesolution the destruction of the IRA -- necessarily a violent proposition -- and then there will be no problem.

This too is patently false, and for the same reason, that the real problem would remain just as it was before. The IRA is symptom of the community problem, not the problem itself. This is why, throughout the sorry history of this conflict, all effortstto destroy the IRA have resulted simply in the recruitment of new members into it. So long as the basic problem is not addressed, there will be an IRA to express it.

What we are seeing here is a classic case of denial. It is quite clear to all thepeople who define the problem in these ways that the problem is something else. But upholding the proposition that the problem is, according to preference, either the British or the IRA means that those who maintain it are excused from addressing the actual problem, which is that two communities of people, very similar to each other in fact but with a distinct and recognizable difference of culture, live in the same space but have not discovered or developed the ways of doing so with acceptance and respect for one another. This is the reason for the stagnation that marks the Northern Irish conflict. So long as the denials are in control of the public perceptions in both communities, people can die, neighborhoods and cities can be destroyed, but nothing has happened that makes any difference.

We should be clear about what is required to resolve that community problem. It is not a question simply of everyone being nice to each other. What a dull society, after all, that would make! Before there can be a genuinely pluralist society in Northern Ireland, institutions have to be developed, for

government and all other aspects of the society, that will embody and guarantee the mutual respect of the communities. Periodically peace movements grow up in the midst of the situation and its frustrations, trying to find short cuts to community reconciliation. The work of designing and building institutions is indispensable.

It is worth our while to look back over the experience of the years of conflict to see how this denial system has asserted itself, when and to what publics.

Early in the current phase of Ireland's centuries-old "trouble," when violence broke out in 1968 and 1969, public understanding of it was rather much in terms of a Civil Rights struggle, similar to the contemporaneous Civil Rights efforts in the Black community of the United States. A world public saw the tear-gassing, the clubbings and all the methods of both mob and police repression of the Civil Rights demonstrations and read it that way. This was true with a public in Catholic Ireland, North and South, with practically the whole British public, with Americans and many others. British government had been in the habit, ever since the 1920s, of referring any internal matters concerning Northern Ireland to the Stormont Parliament and government in Northern Ireland, and carefully averting its own gaze, but now that all this was happening on television the Labour government of the day found itself required to intervene. It did so by looking for ways of community reconciliation. Even the deployment of troops in the crisis of August 1969 was meant in this sense. I will argue elsewhere that errors of great consequence were made at that time, which I won't try to anticipate here, other than to note that the very presence of the Army in the streets eventually led to antagonism with the Catholic community and was the cause for the resurgence of the IRA.

The Catholic community itself had made a rather subtle readjustment of its goals at this time. The IRA itself had discovered, after an abortive paramilitary campaign to force a British withdrawal and the creation of a United Ireland, from 1957 to1963, that there was no longer community support for such an effort. The wholecommunity's then committed its energy to theachievement of civil rights, and by 1967 had organized the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, with much support even from some Protestant elements. The objective clearly was to bring about a society that could work to the advantage of both communities, even with the supposition that it would happen within the context of the United Kingdom, an assumption that the Catholic community had never made before and, since the massive rebuff to the Civil Rights campaign, may not be likely to make again.

It was within the Protestant/Unionist community that the denial proposition, as I would label it, had standing at that point. The presumption was that there could be no genuine complaints from the Catholics, that any trouble in their quarter had to be the work of the IRA -- even though, in fact, the IRA barely existed at the time -- and that consequently the proper response was outright repression. As tempers got hotter, as the British Army met increasing hostility from the Nationalist community, and the IRA grew in strength, the British too were brought around to that thesis for the weak moment in which they agreed to the internment without trial of IRA suspects in August of 1971. That poisoned relations so much a to lead to the Bloody Sunday Army shooting of civilians in February 1972. British government responded to this by suspending the Stormont Parliament and the Northern Ireland government that had led it into such perdition, recognizing that these were not the institutions that could give structure to a pluralist society. The newly established Northern Ireland Office then mounted the Sunningdale Conference and, by 1973, had brought into existence the Power-Sharing Executive, made up of the less intransigeant among the Unionists, the Alliance Party with its mix of conservative Protestant and Catholic business and professional people devoted to the peace, and the mostly Catholic Social Democratice and Labor Party (SDLP), a coalition that represented an actual majority in the Province, working to build the institutions of a pluralist society.

This much represented a measure of proud accomplishment for Britain. It all came to naught in the general strike organized by the Ulster Workers Council in February 1974, a protest aimed not at the Power-Sharing Executive as such, but at the reinstitution of the Council of Ireland, a body to represent both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, that had been another item of the Sunningdale

Agreement. The strike brought about the dissolution of the Executive, and for the British government it was cataclysm. All the best efforts of both British parties had been ruined. I sat in the gallery of the House of Commons for the second day of a two-day debate on the fall of the Executive, and have never otherwise seen such political despondency. From that time, although Britain continued to propose meetings and conferences, a constitutional Assembly and many forms of negotiation between the two communities of Northern Ireland and the many factions of the now-splintering Unionists, the efforts became progressively feebler and more half-hearted. British government dedicated itself instead to the defeat of the IRA, an enterprise that put it firmly in the service of the denial of the underlying community problem, at the side of the most paranoid of the Unionists.

The clearest sign of this new direction of British policy was the work, beginning directly in 1974, of the Diplock Commission, with its recommendations of special courts and judicial procedures designed to define all insurrectionist activity of IRA members or their various clones in parallel organizations as simply and univocally criminal. This endeavor, besides involving Britain in a deepening quagmire of dubious legal process, laid the groundwork for the prison protest that grew and intensified through the rest of the decade, until in 1980 and 1981 it climaxed in the hunger strikes in the prisons, resulting in the ten deaths by starvation inside the prison, far greater numbers of deaths in the strife outside, grave political embarrassment for Britain and British policy everywhere in the world, and the effective political empowerment of the IRA, which had never before been able to win over its sympathetic public to vote for it, or its political wing, Sinn Fein, in elections.

The most important effect of the 1981 hunger strikes was in entrenching the denial syndrome in public consciousness, defining the conflict, in the eyes of a Northern Irish, British and Irish and international public as simply a battle between the IRA and the British, in which no one else of either community really counted or had any effective role. Catholic opinion in the North had already, long since, accepted that the British were the problem, even those -- like the SDLP leadership -- who were most opposed to any use of violence or compulsion to bring about British withdrawal from the scene. Unionists too had insistently made it practically an article of faith that the IRA was their only problem, and that all claims of Catholic grievance were false. Once the outcome of the hunger strikes had confirmed these stereotype judgments, leaving them largely in possession in British public and governmental consciousness as well, the Northern Irish conflict was at total impasse, no motion away from the paralysis to be expected until that public definition of the problem could be changed.

When, in November 1985, the British and Irish governments signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, such a redefinition of the conflict was one of it principal aims. The Province had been governed, since the abolition of its Parliament in 1972, by a pro-consular authority, a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland accountable only to the central authority of government back in Westminster, not in any significant way to the resident population of Northern Ireland itself. Nationalists saw this as simple evidence of continuing British abuse of power, to be corrected by constitutional change. Unionists accepted it, grudgingly, as a minimally tolerable alternative to their coming under the authority of a United Ireland. In the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Irish government gave its assent to the British guarantee, first offered by the Attlee government of the 1940s, that there would be no constitutional change without the consent of a majority of the population of Northern Ireland. Britain gave its assent to a role, technically only consultative but in fact very substantial, in decision-making with regard to Northern Ireland. These concessions were calculated to be massively offensive to the two communities of the place, especially to the Unionists, who had been the more reluctant parties to any effort at negotiation. The only recourse provided, in the terms of the Agreement, was that the internal parties to the conflict come up with proposals for devolved government that could be accepted as fair, the judgment of fairness now no longer resting with the British government alone but with the British and Irish governments acting in consensus. The Agreement thus brought the weight of both governments to bear on the two communities of Northern Ireland to induce them to negotiate with each other the means of providing, institutionally, for the equitable share of both in the benefits of the society, in a word, for pluralism.

The plan, however carefully laid, had very limited effect, since the Unionists simply refused to play by those rules. Their strategy, until very recent times, has been actually to boycott government, refusing even to meet with the Northern Ireland Secretary and demanding, as their price for even that courtesy, the repeal of the Agreement. Some other objectives of the Anglo-Irish Agreement were fulfilled (there will be a broader analysis of the Agreement later), but this one remained utterly frustrated until the time, in 1991, that a series of particularly outrageous bombing incidents in London finally brought the issue of Northern Ireland at last to the table of the Prime Minister.

A wide variety of complaints are made of British policy and behavior in Northern Ireland, from the Catholic/Nationalist perspective that denies British right to the sovereignty of the Province in the first place, and from the Protestant/Unionist perspective, with its effort to deny the problem by identifying it merely as IRA mischief, which is gravely disappointed at the failure of Britain to suppress the IRA more savagely. Without trying here to judge any of those complaints, I would regard it as a fundamental fault of British policy that, for all these years, Britain has allowed this conflict to fester. Britain is, after all, like it or not, responsible for government in the place. It impresses me as irresponsible that, for such a prolonged period of agony, British government and a succession of British Prime Ministers have failed to give this problem the priority that would have led, with insistence, to a resolution. A parallel can be drawn to United States behavior over the Middle Eastern conflict, kept in being to a great extent by the Cold War suppositions of American policy, where now, after so many years of negligence, American diplomacy has, with insistence, brought all the conflicting parties to a table from which they are not allowed to escape, where the conflict must now be negotiated. British performance may, in fact, have very significantly improved in the present set of negotiations that are in progress among most of the major Northern Irish political parties -- Official Unionists, Democratic Unionists, Alliance and SDLP -- with the participation of British and Irish governments. It is difficult to know what is actually talked about in those negotiations, rightly so, as the participants need some confidentiality in order to deal with each other seriously (more of that elsewhere), but it is significant that the locale of the talks has been able to move about, in a way fraught with symbolism, from London to Belfast to Dublin and back again. These are straws in the wind, not yet any public vision of a resolution of the conflict. But they are hopeful precisely because they represent a focussing on the actual content of the problem, the need of these two communities to find the institutional means to live together in the same place with mutual respect and acceptance and an equitable access to the benefits of the society.

A reader may well complain, at this point, that this paper has spoken a lot about the need for reconciliation and pluralist institutions for the two communities of Northern Ireland without ever coming to grips with the claims on the communities' loyalty of, respectively, the United Kingdom or the United Ireland. Another paper in this series will take up both of these, and also the possibility of a distinct and separate status for Northern Ireland, but with the observation that a community does well to choose among such options on the basis of what they would do for the satisfaction of all the members of its society, rather than by a prior commitment that leaves the needs of the society unexamined until after the constitutional goal has been accomplished. My observation is that these party objectives of the two communities can be, and have been, invoked either for the purpose of affirming the need for pluralism and trying to achieve the means to provide it, or for the purpose of denying that need, by pointing either to the British presence or the activity of the IRA as the full definition of the problem.

The Catholic Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, for instance, in fact attempted to use the concept of the United Kingdom, normally the penchant of the Protestants, as a means to bring about the equitable sharing of power and the benefits of the society, to make the society work. All the various reform plans proposed by Britain over these years, both the ones predicated on defeating the IRA and suppressing their protest, and the ones aimed at producing agreement on the means of a pluralist society, have been built on the supposition that they would take place in the context of a continuing United Kingdom. And the intransigeant slogans of Unionist paranoia, "Not and inch," or "No Rome Rule Here," give evidence of how easily the United Kingdom concept can serve the purposes of denial.

Equally, Catholic/Nationalist insistence on the United Ireland as the only possible or acceptable formula for an acceptable future serves often as a way of denying the interests, needs and sentiments of the Unionist community, the importance or legitimacy of their culture or their entitlement to a say in the future of their own country. In many years of dialogue with the Republican Movement, I have consistently complained to them that, despite whatever claim they can make to be the genuine representatives of the sense of grievance in their community, they have failed of their responsibility to have anything to say to the Protestants, for whom they and their movement represent nothing but guns and bombs and destruction, a rejection of their very existence and integrity. But the United Ireland concept was also, as unquestioned assumption, at the heart of all three of the proposals made in 1984 by the Irish Forum, a body representing pretty much all the political parties of the Republic of Ireland plus the Northern SDLP, which were intended to provide options for a convincingly pluralist society that would be acceptable to the Northern Protestants.

On that basis, then, I conclude that the constitutional formulas and demands, United Kingdom, United Ireland and whatever other possibilities might present themselves, are instrumental, means to the resolution of the basic problem of pluralism for these diverse communities and not the principal objective in themselves.

The Northern Irish conflict has been, for all these years of the Province's suffering, a peculiarly isolated problem, one which the international community has always been able to ignore, because its outcome would not affect the interests of other parties or societies. Even for Britain itself, even for the Republic of Ireland, either side in the Northern Ireland conflict could win or lose without gain or loss to their own societies. For the rest of the world, what happened in Northern Ireland had no effect on the Cold War or any other international rivalries, and the nations of the world had a stake in keeping their hands off.

Now that the Cold War has ended, it can be seen that the communal problem of Northern Ireland, isolated as it is, reveals itself as the very model of the kind of conflict whose solution becomes the major priority of United States or any other country's foreign policy. This kind of communal intransigeance and need for the institutional props of pluralism and mutual dignity, complete with its syndrome of denial, is what we witness, in far more violent form, in what used to be Yugoslavia, threatening in various parts of what was the Soviet Union, and a matter of apprehension in various other parts of liberated Eastern Europe, and in countless areas of the Third World whose troubles, until recently, were automatically subsumed under the rivalries of the Cold War, turning their conflicts into proxy wars. These are the things we used to have wars about before we stifled all these conflicts under the weight of the 20th-century ideological struggles. Now that we have had done with those, these communal struggles are out on the table again, seen for what they are.

We are far better equipped than we used to be to deal with them. In the years since the second World War we have developed a new discipline of conflict resolution, with a growing and impressive menu of non-violent means of confronting such conflicts. The people of Northern Ireland, of both communities, deserve a crack at all the resources of this sort that can be brought to bear on their problem, after all these years of neglect. And if the policy-makers of other countries make their resources available to help resolve the Northern Irish problem, creating opportunity rather than further trouble, they too will gain experience that will be valuable to them in dealing with their other priorities.

122

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

Jan. 13, 1994

Mr. Gerry Adams
President of Sinn Fein

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

You may remember me from the several papers I wrote, addressed to the Republican Movement, back in 1980-'81, the conversations I had been having with many people over many years before that, and the mediation effort I attempted in the hunger strike during July, August and September of 1981. We have met only once, at the end of that period (with a member of the Army Council), September 7, '81.

I don't know just how intensely you may feel about the MacBride Principles campaign. You may have heard of me as a disbeliever and blasphemer in that regard. I just haven't regarded them as an apt instrument to achieve the purpose they profess. There is no hostility implied in that, as I expect you'll understand.

I will be in Belfast from the 31st of January through the first few days of February -- I think I'll need to leave on the Thursday, February 3rd. I am very anxious to see you, and have asked Joe Sheehy to deliver this letter to you requesting that. I'll get on the phone to him before I leave to see what has been arranged or can be arranged.

I have been much impressed with your talks and agreement with John Hume, of whom I have always thought highly, and more than ever for his holding those talks. Even though we in the public have not yet heard the actual content of the agreement, it still impresses me as the most important thing that has happened in Northern Ireland at least since the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, perhaps more important than that. If you recall the recurrent theme of the letters and conversations I had with IRA and Sinn Fein over the nine years I was over there and constantly occupied with this, I always complained that you had not seriously addressed the Protestants with the proposal of a future that they could live with. The agreement you formed with John Hume meets my objection, and is an enormous watershed. To me, it signifies that the Catholic community is now prepared and equipped to deal with the Protestants on that basis, even if the terms have yet to be spelled out. A substantial part of the Nationalist community, with Hume, have already been ready to move in that direction when the opportunity offered. Your agreement, I take it as certain, is fully authorised by the IRA, and you have the authority to speak for a determining part of the Catholic community and commit them to this policy.

I'm very conscious that the British government response, to date, has been inadequate. I don't look to them, as some of your statements have indicated, to commit themselves in advance to final positions that still have to be negotiated. But I understand their reluctant attitude toward your agreement with Hume as meaning that they are frightened of the very idea of the local communities siezing control of the agenda, and their statement, accepted by the Irish government even if with disappointment, is an effort to hold that agenda firmly in their own hands. I know they are not capable of delivering what they seek to promise. I find the Protestant community response, so far, very disappointing, but see you as having put them in the wrong, addressing a proposition to them that they can't indefinitely ignore. I see the

commitment of the Nationalist community to seeking the peace, as represented in your agreement, as a long-term gain, even if it takes more time to get adequate response from the other parties.

My own visit will be in the fact-finder category, and I am not without means of making representations in quarters that can be helpful to achieving the peace. I will have with me another man, a good friend, also on a fact-finder mission though from a different background and with a different purpose: Tom Tracy, a California businessman prepared to put up a plant in Belfast and wanting to do it in a way that is helpful to those who have been most deprived of job opportunities. I would like to bring him with me to a meeting with you.

Might I ask that you let Joe Sheehy know if you are able to meet us. I will be in touch with him before I leave Boston. With all best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

174

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 9, 1994

Mr. Gerry Adams
President of Sinn Fein

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

I would truly love to have seen you while I was in Belfast last week, but must say that it was far more satisfactory to see you get your U.S. entry visa and make your important visit to New York. Once you were back, and I only a short time there, I entirely understood that you needed more to get over your jet-lag and the exhaustion of having talked nearly forty eight hours straight on American television than to have a conversation with me. I was very glad of the good session I had with Tom Hartley and Aidan McAteer. It clarified -- there's that magic word -- a great deal for me, and I think they will likely have understood where I am coming from. I was very grateful for the courtesy they showed, and felt I should then write a follow-up letter to yourself.

Over my several days in Belfast I met a lot of Unionists and ordinary Protestant working folk who were really angry over your visit. Clearly there was a lot of posturing from many of the politicians, and the outraged British response was something they had asked for by their long policy of censorship. I understood the anger of such persons as Shankill people who felt you were getting a hearing always denied to them. (British officialdom can have a hearing, but that is something different.) They were for the most part people I'd known for the last twenty years and more, and I was moved to see them still struggling for basic development, maintaining the really kindly solidarity of their community. Their life is poor, even if not so devastating as that of West Belfast Catholics, and they find themselves oppressed by their world reputation as miserable bigots, a description in which they just do not recognize themselves. For all that, I thought, and told all these old friends, that it was an excellent thing that you got to New York. Not to have granted the visa would have put the U.S. government in the position of hampering a real peace opportunity, something it does often enough but never should. And if I understand your own role rightly, as basically a persuader toward the peace within the structure of the Republican Movement, not a determinor of policy who can make any decisions unauthorised by other leadership, I reckon that both the fact of your having made the trip and the quite impressive way you handled yourself on it will have strengthened your hand for that purpose. I congratulate you on the whole performance, and will be writing also to President Clinton (enclosing a copy of this letter) to commend him on his right decision as well.

Basically, what so much pleases me in the development you have brought about, along with John Hume, without whose help you would have had no way of getting through to the Irish and then the British governments, is that it means the Republican Movement is now seriously addressing the needs of the Protestants/Unionists. I've worked hard at understanding their situation and their fears over a long time. It's been one of my heaviest complaints about the IRA and Sinn Fein, through all the years I have followed this situation closely and often addressed you, that you hadn't shown any adequate regard for them or addressed any proposal to them that they could see as a liveable future for themselves. Tom Hartley and Aidan McAteer described this new attention to the Protestants as a developement that dates from 1989, and provieded me a number of party documents, down to the text of your New York conference address, which I am studying carefully. I take it that this decision, on your part, is so fundamental that it is more important than any element of the actual content of your agreement with John Hume (which most of us

haven't actually seen yet), and that once it opens the serious dialogue with the Loyalists, much more will develop.

I hear the kind of demands that are being made of you, namely: 1) that you (speaking for yourself, for Sinn Fein, perhaps for the IRA although most people understand that the organisation has to speak for itself) give a simple and outright endorsement to the Major/Reynolds 15th December Downing Street Declaration, and 2) that you give, as condition for admission to any kind of negotiation, a renunciation of violence. I see the flaws in each of those. The Downing Street Declaration is their statement, not yours. The Republican Movement needs to make its own statement, and one that will truly commend itself to all those with whom you are trying to establish the peace. And I recognise how really mischievous is the demand of those who require you, in condemning violence, to repudiate those for whom you are spokesman. I also look, myself, for the Republican Movement's, and the IRA's, renunciation of violence. After the events of these last months, including your agreement with Hume, the Downing Street Declaration and your New York visit, I suspect that the whole Republican Movement would be discredited in the eyes of a wide public, including likely much of your own following, if you did not now find your way through to that goal, which I think should be attainable now. But that's clearly the Republican Movement's decision, not one on which you can properly be called upon to alienate yourself from it. In fact it is clear that on these questions, just as on the question whether you should be given a deadline date, there are people in the two governments and among the Unionists who are trying to make possible the best outcome of what has been developing through your efforts, and others who are intent on setting out ultimatims intended to prevent your getting there.

I had several years experience (1985-88, and then much more 1990 down to the present) of working closely with the PLO leadership (in regular and cooperative communication with the U.S. and Israeli leadership), trying to get through to a similar renunciation of violence and the meeting of the three famous preconditions for dialogue. I understood how essential it was for Arafat, through some kind of communication, to know what would result from taking that step; saw how often he effectively made the statement and had no other response from the Israeli and U.S. governments that there was nothing new in what he said or that he hadn't said it right; found how, when he had broken through the barrier, he got only a dialogue with the U.S., a critically confined and non-substantive dialogue at that, and not with Israel, and then had even that blow up in his face in 1990; and then the still frightfully difficult task of getting to the Declaration of Principles of last September. So it is no mystery to me how difficult it is to accomplish these things. John Hume's role has been crucial up to now, and will doubtless continue to be. In looking for contact with you now, what I am doing is essentially to offer any help I might be for the same purpose, which I take to be your purpose, and I can promise that I will not neglect or refuse anything of which I am capable if you look for that help.

The British government, as I see it, has reacted to the initial breakthrough, your agreement with John Hume, with a certain amount of panic. I don't take that as a sign of wickedness. I appreciate the reasonableness of their feeling that they had to fend off the fears in the Protestant/Unionist community. Their Downing Street Declaration, I believe, is designed to recapture the initiative from you: genuinely a peace initiative on their part, as I am sure they understand your own initiative to be of that nature. But they are afraid themselves of seeing the agenda determined from your side.

Here again I draw on my experience with the Palestinians. It is no exact parallel, but instructive at least to me. I've been watching the disaffection that has been growing among the Palestinians over the last couple of years, the greater adherence to Hamas (as well as the less important secular rejectionists), the alienation even among PLO and Fatah adherents. What I see is that the Palestinians, as a people, had the experience, through the years of their *intifada*, of setting the agenda. Having been helpless victim-people before, they knew that from December 1987 everything that happened in Israeli policy, or in U.S.

policy with regard to the Middle East, was response to their initiative, even when it was purely negative response. The experience was exhilarating, and sustained them through some terrible suffering (much worse than yours, nothing like so bad as the Bosnians' or the Kurds'). From the time the Madrid (and Washington) negotiations got under way, the people at large, particularly the resident population in the occupied territories, found themselves reduced again to being people things happened to, with others who acted, apparently without effect, in their name, and no remaining handle on the agenda. What I write to Arafat now is of his need to involve people in participatory ways in the tasks that arise from the new situation since September 13: of building the institutions of a new national society in those places that come under their control, of expressing (in terms that have to be scrupulously non-violent and must contain no rejection of Israel or the Israelis) their rejection of occupation where it continues. Arafat has problems – genuinely so, as he must be sure the process does not run out of control – in yielding real participation in decision-making and in incorporating the young leadership of people he does not know: the ones who have been in the prisons and the professionals. That, as much as his negotiation with the Israelis (and their American shielders), defines the priorities of his task now.

As I say, the parallel is not at all exact, but instructive. Your movement, if I see it rightly, is understood by your public as representing it in such a way that your empowerment is their empowerment, your hand on the agenda their hand on the agenda. (I've always felt that this is complicated. Your public has tradtionally seen you as representing their grievance, and has gone elsewhere, as to the SDLP, for programmatic politics, and the IRA used to be content to leave it so. Only since 1981 has about a third of your public started to vote for you to do those programmatic things. I would see even the SDLP public as having serious attachment to you, even at times when they have been in great distress at actions of the IRA of which they did not approve.) That means that having serious input into the agenda is of critical importance to you now, and the British effort to recapture it from you is your most important challenge.

Reactive policy, which is how I would see any renewed violence campaign on the part of the IRA or any rejection of what the British and Irish governments are offering in the Downing Street Declaration, would, I believe, be entirely unproductive for your movement. What you need is a way to thrust the peace initiative itself, and as such, dramatically forward, and not simply an acquiescence in what the British offer. I don't know exactly what that new initiative on the Republican Movement's part should be, but I feel certain that you need to discover it and act on it, that everyone know you as serious for the peace.

As I listen to the discussion within the Republican Movement, so far as I can from the statements Tom Hartley and Aidan McAteer showed me and from my conversation with them, I still see great blockages to real communication with the Protestants/Unionists of a sort that would advance the peace. I mentioned above that I consider your movement's decision, at long last, seriously to address the Protestants, as more important than the actual content of what you are now saying to them. Hence I am not overly bothered by those blockages, but I should describe them as I see them.

You – the movement – seem to have come to the conclusion that the Protestants cannot be coerced into the United Ireland. That should mean that your objective includes the end of violence, and I hear you saying that clearly enough in your own statements in New York and in Belfast ("guns out of politics." "end of the IRA"). As I've dealt with people who constantly read every statement of yours down to the last comma, with the aim of course of finding the flaws, I've come to the conclusion that those of us who read them rather less actually understand them better, and that what you are saying is plainly that your objective is the end of violence and the building of a society in which you and your adversaries can live at peace. The Protestants have to be won to a society in which you can live amicably and productively together, and the Republican Movement has come to understand that. I've always contended, myself, even in writings I sent you in 1980 and 1981, that if you Republicans were to win, in the sense that you had

defeated the Protestants and reduced them to an embittered alienation, you would not be able to live with your achievement because of a democratic commitment that is, even if often compromised, inextricable from your movement.

That your aim is the United Ireland is obvious. It is not theirs, but remains the primary formula of nightmare for them. You yourselves are nightmare to them, because you carry the objective of the United Ireland. Conditions for dialogue aren't there so long as this gulf is as wide as that.

I hear the formulas: that the British presence is the cause of violence (though you have come away from the simple "Brits out" conception of policy); that you do not accept a Protestant/Unionist veto. Are the Protestants then to have a real voice on the question of a United Ireland? (Their answer to the proposition is ever so clearly no.) If your position is that this is to be decided by a vote, or by the will, of the whole population of Ireland, then you are saying that their voice will be ignored, since it is minority in those terms. I don't see that that can be any more just than that the Catholics/Nationalists, being a minority within the Northern state, should be without voice, coerced and embittered as you have been. I hear from you the language of self-determination too, and am glad to hear it. But as this central impasse remains, I am at a loss to determine its content.

I understand quite well how the British formulas, guaranteeing the choice of the majority within the North, have buttressed the Protestants against even having to listen to your aspirations or to pay any attention to the injustices done to you. I see no virtue in simply reversing that situation by a re-definition (all-Ireland) of the majority. As much as your community has always needed to have its rights upheld, not because it is a deprived minority within a fixed six-county boundary but because it is people with rights, regardless of their numbers, so does theirs. I think this is what you in the Republican Movement have come to understand, but I don't see that you yet have the formulas that can communicate to them something that they can see as a way of living with you.

You may already have seen, or recall from things I was writing to you years ago, my own position, namely that the Northern Ireland conflict has suffered from problems of denial, that both sides have knowingly misdefined the problem, and that in addressing themselves to false definitions of the problem they have excused themselves from dealing with the actual problem, and that this is the reason for the long stagnation of this conflict, in which people are constantly killed or hurt but nothing really happens. I enclose a more or less recent paper I wrote on this in November of 1992, and will summarise it simply here. Republicans define the problem as the British presence, and the solution as getting rid of it. That has to be false (not that the British presence doesn't aggravate and entrench the actual problem) because, if the British were gone, the problem of the relation of the two communities would be just what it was before. Protestants and the British say the problem is the IRA, and its solution the removal of the IRA. (Both of those, obviously, are violent propositions: either "Brits out" or "IRA out" means "Shoot them.") That is equally false, as the problem of the communities would remain after the wiping out of the IRA as well. The community problem is not one of being nice or "Christian." It is one of building the institutions of a pluralist society as much as it is one of building trust. The trust of course can only be that the other party will not attempt, or even have avenues, to coerce. Spirit and institutions (legal and other) are both important here.

Will there be a United Ireland? The British can't give it to you, though they have been pretty good at preventing it. Only the Protestants, along with you, can create it, by their acceptance, and that is not a matter of their being a majority in six counties or a minority in thirty two, but of their being the people whose consent -- self-determination, along with your own self-determination -- is a requisite for it to be anything other than a charade or a despotism. That consent will never be there until there is the trust I write of above, and assurance against any coercion.

What all this says to me is that, at the least, there has to be an interval, a period of trust before there will be a United Ireland worth the name. I won't take any position, in fact, about the United Ireland. It is not my business to choose it or reject it. That belongs to you, all the people of Ireland including those who now so clearly don't want it. I'll expand on that a bit. For a long time I've been hearing of the indifference of the people of the South to the United Ireland: holy dream for an indefinite future, not wanted now at the cost of any real trouble; something that the Republic (South) realizes it cannot, at least in present economic conditions, afford; in the words Conor Cruise O'Brien used some years back (in his *States of Ireland*), a rather unfocussed wish for a thirty two county Ireland, but a vehement rejection of a thirty two county Ulster. I've heard so much of that that I expect little impulse toward a United Ireland from Southern society, and I even hear very explicitly from Southern political figures that there has been a sea-change among the parties in the Republic, even in Fianna Fail, such that the United Ireland is not now the program, that they want to reassure the Northern Unionists that they have no hidden agendas, and that they are looking only for the development of understanding between the Republic and Northern society.

Tom Hartley gives me a corrective to that, in saying that there is a deeper stream of expectation in the whole Irish public -- obviously not among the Unionists -- that looks eventually for the United Ireland. I think I would not go along with him in seeing the politicians' statements as a sell-out, an accomodation of the British-dictated system. Instead I would see the politicians as not at all far from where their public is, but would read both in terms that acknowledge Tom's point.

How would it come about? Even with a British withdrawal -- I always distinguish between a British withdrawal of their troops and a British abandonment of the claim to sovereignty, but even with both -- it does not necessarily follow that the North is taken over by the South. There is still the option of a separate status, most probably under the monitorship of both Britain and the Republic to ensure what they would jointly regard as fairness. The constitutional status might eventually move from that to unification, whether loose or close, with the Republic, or the separate unit might stay that way. I have no personal stake in that one way or the other, but would want simply to see the two communities come to a relation that was mutually acceptable. Do Haiti and the Dominican Republic need to be one nation because they are on one island, or Spain and Portugal because they are one penisula, or all of Arabia or all the rest of the one Arab Nation right out to Morocco, or even just the lands around the desert: Arabia, Syria, Iraq? As things stand now, I don't see the Unionists asking for or accepting the United Ireland. No more do I see the Catholics being content with the United Kingdom status. They tried that during the Civil Rights campaign of the 1960s, and were so brutally repulsed that I don't expect them to look for satisfaction within the United Kingdom again. That inclines me to expect -- not to prescribe, which I have no right to do -- the separate status as the one that people will be able to agree on.

Within the Northern province, everything is about the relation of these two communities, not really much different from each other but both so conscious of their identities. That is the political dynamic out of which any pluralist society will grow. I see no comparable political dynamic in the Republic. Protestants are so few that they don't count politically there. To be Unionist is to be a crank. Hence there is no serious impulse toward the building of political pluralism in the Republic. What that says to me is that, if there is to be a United Ireland, which there may or may not be as its prospective citizens would choose, the direction of unification will not be that the Northern province joins itself to the Republic in the South, but instead that a reconciled and pluralist society, of mutual respect and equal dignity and opportunity, is built in the Northern territory, and that the South learn the ways of such a society from the North and join it. No coercion in that matter means that that would happen only by the choice of all concerned: not a matter of majorities, or of vetoes for minorities or the manipulating hand of outside powers, but of consent.

I see that as a way to propose reconciliation with the Protestants/Unionists in a way that does not give up the Nationalist aspirations but does not threaten the Unionists with coercion. It leaves all the details, to be agreed over the time of a natural development for non-coercive negotiation., and recognizes in the meantime the centrality of the problem these two communities have of finding out how to live in the same space.

As I listened to your friends, the one most chilling moment for me was when Tom Hartley mentioned the eventual hope for the socialist republic as replacement of both governments, North and South. He didn't put that, either, in terms of coercion, though as soon as I heard it I tossed him a whole string of questions to ensure, in my own mind, that he wasn't talking of coercion but of a democratic process. All sorts of people worry about the lot of you in the Republican Movement, that you will turn out to be red red Communists. That isn't the danger. The danger is of fascism, that grows out of just such a stew, really Right-wing rather than Left-wing, of nationalism and syndicalist socialism. That language said fascism in just that sense to me as soon as I heard it, and as it happened I came across the review of a new book, of which I knew since I follow the subject. I enclose a copy of the review (from *The New York Times*, Sunday Book Review section Feb. 6, '94, of Ze'ev Sternhell's *Birth of Fascist Ideology*), and I'll take the liberty of sending along a copy of the book as soon as I get my hands on it, as a caution.

My temptation is to try to get everything into this letter, as it is so long since I last had any contact with you. I am truly impressed by what you've accomplished, and confident of the sincerity and integrity of what you and your movement are doing in searching for peace. You have your hard men, and it shocks me always to see them believing they can get this sort of progress by more bombing, like the Shankill fish-and-chips -- not much unlike what the Serbs attempted last Sunday, shelling the market in Sarajevo. But that your movement has decided to address the Protestants seriously with a view to reconciliation is my supposition. I don't see much response yet from the Protestant side. It puzzles me, as I see you and John Hume working on the Catholic side, where a leader to do something comparable from the Protestant side will come from, and I am left wondering if there is in fact so little inclination, as yet, on that side to respond to you that there is no following for such a leader to appeal to. If it is that bad, you are going to have to build that capacity in your Protestant opposite numbers by the strength of your own appeal. That is the sort of thing I have some understanding of from my own experience with many different peoples in conflict. If I can help you in that direction, I will spare no effort.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

180

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 14, 1994

Hon. Dick Spring, T.D.
Tanaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Iveagh House, St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2, Ireland

Dear Mr. Spring,

Christ's Peace!

May I thank you first for the very friendly courtesy of your meeting Tom Tracy and myself in Tralee a couple of weeks back. We appreciated that we were interfering with your weekend after an especially hard time of work and travel, and that you had made a special effort to accomodate us.

I was truly well impressed by the course you are taking with relation to the Northern conflict, and did in fact carry your message, that there was no hidden agenda in the Irish government's approach, that there had been a sea-change in the thinking of all the Irish parties in their recognition of the Northern Unionists' position and realisation that nothing could justly be done by coercion, that the objective was understanding and the development of mutually respectful relations at all levels. I was all the more impressed by the seriousness and care with which you handled the breakthrough of the Hume-Adams agreement, and worked to preserve the options that were opening in your dealings with the British government in the Anglo-Irish Conference. You were a breath of fresh air to me, and I wanted to be sure you knew that.

In my time up in Belfast I toured more factories than I have any real understanding of, but had a lot of chance, too, to meet the people I most needed to see. There were fence-mending meetings with Fr. Des Wilson, an old and valued friend who has thought me a great apostate for blaspheming the holy MacBride Principles over the years, and even with Oliver Kearney. Tom and I had a good session with him and with the editors of the *Andersonstown News*. We must have seen everyone in the IDB, but also at what is, to my mind, the more important level of the locality-based community groups, like the Phoenix, Forthriver and Foundry trusts -- the latter a group that no one had told us about, which we had to go out and discover for ourselves. The Shankill people we saw, at the Forthriver office and at a dinner they gave us at Belfast Castle, nearly all turned out to be people I had worked with closely from twenty years back, with some good new discoveries such as McGimpsey, who I am sure will be increasingly important in the UUP. We discovered incidentally, with some disappointment, how little the IDB people know or understand about the localities they are supposed to serve, and got some sense of how much supplementary information we would need beyond what they were equipped to give us. We appreciated, through that sort of experience, how much more valuable a resource Cooperation North is, with the services of both Brendan O'Regan and George Quigley, and impressive organisers we met at other levels.

You just barely met Professor Ira Plotkin, who was with us and came by as we were finishing our meeting in Tralee. He is Academic Dean of the International Studies Program at Regis University, our Jesuit place out in Denver, Colorado, which is interested in setting up a program involving Northern Irish people, not only academics but business, government, workers, and other people who would benefit by a peace studies orientation, cooperating with other institutions in the U.S. and Ireland. I'm sure Tom O'Donnell must have filled you in on that, and I take it as a project worth some close attention and encouragement. We saw the University of Ulster people over that, besides discussing it with Tom, and

were especially impressed with Professor Wallace Ewart and his plans for the new University of Ulster campus projected at Springvale, which seemed a more important opportunity than Coleraine.

I had a good meeting with John Dunlop, last year's Presbyterian Moderator and one of the most constructive people I have met in Belfast at any time. We talked through the Adams initiative and New York visit, of which he was very apprehensive though I had a much more positive reaction. A person I had never met before who tremendously impressed me was Pat Dougan, the new manager of Mackey's. He comes across very forcibly and cogently, and ought to be one of the most valued spokesmen for a policy of community reconciliation and rebuilding of the society there. I know he has plenty to do rescuing Mackey's and isn't one to abide any nonsense when it comes to imposing on his time.

One person I had especially wanted to talk with, another old friend of more than twenty years standing, was Martin Smyth, with whom I had built so close a mutual understanding way back in 1972 that, though we disagree about a lot, we have always had to hear one another clearly. Martin was in Washington, where he met President and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore. The Unionist press fell down badly in publicising that meeting, so I don't know much what took place in it, but I will thank and congratulate President Clinton for having it. As I saw it, the British and Unionists mishandled the Adams visit to New York. I know how it bothered them, and I didn't expect them to go to what I still read as a pretty meaningless conference. There was obviously no way Paisley or anyone connected with him would go, and the UUP would have been outflanked by them if they had gone themselves. But that they had nothing but vitriol and defamation to offer only confirmed their negative public image in the States. I felt that Martin, for whom I have much affection, had done the most imaginatively useful thing any of them could have managed in the circumstances, and wished he had more credit and publicity for it.

I've talked with Tom Tracy since about the poor hearing the Unionists have here in the U.S., and that they, particularly those who are working seriously for reconciliation and a real future with the rest of their community, deserve better than that. I've heard of how Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith suggested helping them to get an American hearing, largely through the same National Committee on American Foreign Policy that invited the whole troupe to the Waldorf Astoria meeting. I was glad she did that, but would think that, practically, Bill Flynn has made himself a closed door for them. I would expect that that could be more reasonably accomplished by appealing to some of the reprobate old Republicans (in the American sense) in that organisation, such as Kissinger or Jeanne Kirkpatrick. Those aren't the sort of people I most normally speak to, though I wouldn't be averse to writing to them. I was suggesting, also, to Joe Hendron and Cecil Walker that their kind of approach, while it is true it should go to such American Republicans as they have contact with, ought also to go to some such Democrats as Congressmen Joe Moakley of Massachusetts and Lee Hamilton of Foreign Relations, both of them fair-minded people who are unlikely to know enough about Ireland to realise there are such people as Hendron and Walker. Cecil, though, much as I like and admire him,. doesn't at all answer my nagging question about where a Protestant leadership is to come from that can respond in kind to the breakthrough represented by the Hume-Adams agreement.

And then the other most important meeting that I didn't have was with Adams himself. I had written ahead to him and we had planned to meet if he did not get his visa. I'd thought it rather unlikely he would have had it, and when I saw you that Sunday was somewhat rooting for its refusal for the very personal reason that I didn't want to miss him. He'd left word with a secretary that he would like to have the meeting when he got back if I were still around, which I was, staying on a couple of days after Tom Tracy and the others had left. But when he got in, after talking his 48 hours continuously on American TV, he was in no shape to sit down to a meeting -- it was up in the air right to the Friday morning, when his people said they didn't want to wake him up for it, and I had already agreed with them not to push on it. So I saw Tom Hartley and young Aidan McAteer, a very useful meeting I thought, and subsequently

182

wrote to Adams, a letter I felt you ought to have, and which I will also be sending down in copy, to the White House. It's the sort of thing I'm always writing to the Arafats, Shamirs and Rabins, to Lebanese and Kurds and Turks, and I hope it may open some doors to more thinking. I enclose it here with the enclosures I sent him, my November '92 piece on the essence of the Northern problem and the book review I mention to him about the origins of fascism.

I plan to be in Ireland, if not earlier, for a peace studies meeting at Dromoland November 4th. I repeat how impressed I was by your own and the Irish government's responsible approach to all this, and will make it a habit to keep you informed of anything I am up to.

All best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 14, 1994

Mr. Thomas F. McClarty
Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. McClarty,

Christ's Peace!

As I've done before, I enclose for you a letter to President Clinton, to be sure it doesn't just get lost in the shuffle. It encloses letters I have just sent off to Mr. Gerry Adams and to Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring, who was kind enough to give me and others with whom I was travelling several hours of his time a couple of weeks ago, just before Adams made his trip to New York. I missed seeing Adams himself because of that visit, but after meeting two of his close associates I wrote to him as enclosed. with the attached enclosures.

There are further enclosures besides, about which I feel somewhat guilty for not having gotten them to you earlier. Soon after the September 13 signing of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles I wrote to Mr. Arafat, reckoning that I would get a copy to you as I have other times before. I waited to send it to you, because there was a letter to be written to Mr. Rabin, which I delayed longer, until November, while I waited for the situation I was addressing to become clearer. There are responses to both these letters, which I enclose here along with what I sent them. I should surely have gotten this material to you then, but yet another letter needed to go to Syrian President Hafez al-Asad, as I had promised in my letter to Mr. Rabin. That has yet to be written, as I was off on a visit to the Middle East in late Novermber and early December, before I could get at it. President Clinton's meeting with President Asad was announced by Secretary of State Christopher while I was actually in Damascus with our U.S. Interreligious Committee on Peace in the Middle East delegation of American Jews,Christians and Muslims, so I felt it would be an impertinence to write to President Asad before that. I'm slow about these things, and realise this correspondence should have been in Administration hands before this. I will get my Asad letter to you promptly when I write it.

With all best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G.Helmick, S.J.

184

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 14, 1994

President William Clinton,
The White House

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

Your granting of the 48-hour visa to Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams had all the British, Irish and Irish-Americans wide awake, and I expect you and your staff are still trying to assess the fall-out. As I was in Belfast at the time myself, I found that the opinions in the British and Irish press, and among friends I met onboth sides, were divided not only about whether that was a good idea or not but also as to what you were thinking yourself after the event. People figured out what you should be thinking according to what their own sympathies were. Some had you so disappointed at Adams' not making a general renunciation-of-violence statement on behalf of the IRA during his stay in New York that you were furious at the Kennedys and Moynihans and others who had advised you to grant the entry permission. Others contradicted that from so many angles that I have no idea what your final impression was. I wanted to write my own view that you had made a good decision over this.

Adams' visit had the incidental inconvenience for me that it prevented my having a meeting with him myself in Belfast. I met some of his lieutenants instead, a helpful meeting I thought, and afterwards wrote to Adams himself, whom I had met previously during a long nine-years effort I had made at mediation and conflict-resolution in Northern Ireland from 1972 to 1981, including a six-weeks' stint of mediating between the Northern Ireland Office and the IRA's Provisional Army Council during the 1981 hunger strike. I thought you should have a copy of this, along with the letter I have just sent to the Republic of Ireland's Foreign Minister, Mr. Dick Spring, also enclosing a copy of my Adams letter.

My own approval of your having granted the visa is based partly on the belief that the U.S., if it had refused the visa, would have been seen as frustrating the chances of a genuine peace effort. I take what was accomplished last year, in the Hume-Adams agreement, very seriously. One of the main complaints I have always made myself, as long as I've known the IRA, is that it has never seriously addressed the Northern Irish Protestants and their needs, or presented them with proposals for any kind of society they could live with. The essential meaning of the Hume-Adams accord, I believe, is that the IRA and its Sinn Fein spokesmen have at last come to recognize that that is the one most central thing they are responsible to do. They have not sorted out the internal contradictions in their policy that that implies, but the fundamental resolution, to come to real terms with the Protestants, is more important, to my mind, than the actual content of the agreement.

I could read, from a conversation with our Consul-General Martinez, that he had himself not recommended granting the visa. He can't say that plainly himself, of course, and is left in an embarrassing position with the many Unionists whose confidence he has cultivated by their belief that he did recommend it. He, of course, has studied every syllable of Adams' speeches and writings, and consequently came up with the conclusion that Adams offered nothing new in his conversation with him. With all respect for Martinez' close scrutiny, though, I truly believe that those of us who have scrutinized Adams' statements less may understand them better, as the basic purport is clear despite all the specific items that British authority and the Unionists look for and miss.

I think it important to understand just what Adams represents. Those who are so angered at his New York success are asking that he make declarations that are not his to make, and even, quite unreasonably, that he publicly repudiate those for whom he acts as spokesman. In my experience, it is another of the fundamental flaws of the IRA that they have never discovered the way to give genuine decision-making authority to their political leadership. The Sinn Fein politicans are always held to saying only what is authorised by their military authorities – not an unfamiliar problem for a lot of governments, and one with which our own or the British government too have always to struggle. That means that Adams, through an effort that will have lasted some years, has had to struggle for authorisation by the IRA to do anything of what he has done with John Hume over this last year, and that is a great deal of accomplishment. His role is restricted simply to being a persuader with relation to the IRA, and he has no decision-making power beyond what he can influence the paramilitary leadership to do. As a result of your having granted him his visa and opportunity to speak in New York, he is in a far stronger position vis-a-vis the IRA, to promote what I read as being a genuinely peace-promoting program. I believe he can be taken at his word when he says his aim is to take the gun out of Irish politics, and that he has been gaining the assent of the IRA to do that. If, after his New York appearance and all his courtship of our American media, the IRA were now not to follow through on the peace initiative, I think they would be seriously discredited, even with their own public. Many of their opponents think only in terms of how they can be discredited, as you could hear in the criticism that went on during Adams' stay, and they have no concept that the peace could actually be made with the people for whom he speaks. But as with the PLO, and the parties that have been working at the peace in South Africa, there won't be a peace if it isn't made with them. Your action has helped toward the peace that needs to be made there.

Adams, of course, was exhorting you to speak up for his people to the British government, and you naturally said no. Nonetheless, I am sure this will be one of the topics of your conversation with Mr. Major when he shows up in Washington, something he will bring up if you don't. Prime Minister Major has gone through a lot of fire over this himself, and is understandably on a tear about it. I note that the more hawkish Tory-Unionist voices are all urging deadlines and basically an ultimatum approach over the IRA's response to the Downing Street Declaration, which is simply one of the ways to work for a dsicrediting of the IRA rather than progress toward a peace that very likely alarms them. It is very much to John Major's credit that he has avoided doing that himself, despite all impatience and the pressures brought on him, and has instead responded to the urgings of John Hume (the real hero of this whole development) and the Irish government to give this initiative every chance to grow. I understand the Downing Street Declaration to be at least as much an effort to reclaim the setting of the agenda for the British government, after the Hume-Adams agreement had taken it from them, and I recognise how he must have felt this necessary in order to reassure the Northern Protestants, who have still not begun to imagine ways of responding. As you'll see in my letter to Adams, my recommendation to his people is that they need to make a new and further claim on the agenda, something they can't do by playing delaying games with the British government, or by withdrawing from the initiative they have already taken, but only by finding new and still more dramatic initiatives for the peace.

With all best wishes, and congratulations on what I see as a good and difficult decision on your part, I am yours,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

186

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

October 26, 1994

Mr. Gerry Adams
President of Sinn Fein

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

May I congratulate you first on the whole series of accomplishments since last February, when I last wrote to you, after having missed you that time in Belfast while you were in New York. The ceasefire, your more extensive American tour this last time, and now having made the Republican ceasefire so convincing that both British government and, even more important, the Protestant paramilitary outfits have been persuaded.

I had gotten the authorization from our Boston College President, Fr. Don Monan, to invite Joe Cahill to give a presentation at B.C. when he came over in the days directly after the ceasefire. I thought it would be a good occasion to provide him an audience other than simply the party faithful, one that would be enthusiastic for the ceasefire and hence not hostile, but would ask him the right questions to unpack what Sinn Fein thinking is now, how it has changed to bring it to this point, what it sees as the options for the future and where it sees things going. What I understand to be happening in the whole Republican Movement now is so much along the lines of conversations I had back in 1979, '80 and '81 with both Joe Cahill and Daithi O Conail that I looked forward very much to that sort of meeting. When I got in touch with Noraid, though, I found that Joe was returning to Dublin so quickly that we were unable to get that in. I would welcome it in the future and would set it up.

When you came, shortly afterward, on your own trip, I got together with Don Monan again to see about inviting you to speak on the B.C. campus. He and I concurred that, at that point, setting up an event on our campus would simply be duplication of what you would be doing over at the Harvard Kennedy School, and that it would be better to have you over to B.C. on a subsequent visit. I'd like to invite you for that, and we can arrange it when you know of travel plans. I think it would be a good public sign for you and for us that you should, in that way, meet people on a major Catholic campus. I asked Tom O'Neill III (Tip's son), head of the New England Circle (now Citizens Circle), who hosted you here in Boston, whether he would have liked to have you over to B.C. even on this last visit, and he said it would have been good even despite the duplication with your Harvard event. I hadn't been asked for that, though, and when I spoke with Don Monan it had therefore been a question of whether we should take the initiative ourselves, as I had done unsuccessfully with Joe Cahill. We would very much like to have you here.

And in fact, yesterday we had the group of six Protestant paramilitary spokesmen here at B.C. That had been set up quickly through Bill Flynn as soon as their ceasefire was announced. I thought it very positive that that bit of ice had been broken. The group of them -- David Adams, Gary McMichael, Joe English, Gusty Spence, David Ervine and Billie Hutchinson -- made a very positive impression. These are people who've never been on our American scene, new voices of those who were taken simply for psychopaths or bigots and who now present a much different picture. I didn't know any of them before this, but spent some time with them before and during a lunch. I had known an earlier generation well: Sammy Smyth, Andy Tyrie, big Ian Fraser, Glen Barr and many others -- Gusty Spence had been in jail

and unavailable all the time I was about, and I'd never met McMichael's father – and had learned a great deal of respect for them too. It was evident -- something I had known before -- that these people were far readier to do new things, explore new ground, and in particular to talk with yourselves in the Republican Movement than were the people in UUP and DUP. I even asked them about that in the public session at B.C., what they would want to talk to you about, and got interesting answers from all of them.

The main thing I wanted to say in this letter, though, is that I will be in Northern Ireland this next week, arriving Sunday, Oct. 30 (I'll have a ride up from Dublin to a hotel I'll be staying at in Ballymena) and leaving the following Saturday, Nov. 5. I would very much appreciate seeing you, and having the conversation we missed for such a good reason last February. I had a most helpful conversation that time with Tom Hartley and Aidan McAteer – you may remember that you had just arrived back in Belfast from New York but were so shattered with jet-lag and the experience of talking non-stop for 48 hours on American TV that your friends felt it was better to let you get some rest that morning. I would really like to go through, with yourself, the thinking that has produced the ceasefire, and get a sense of where things are going.

I will send this letter, as I did the one in February, by way of Geraldine McAteer at the Foundry Regeneration Trust. My instinct is that now I might be able simply to put a letter in the post to you and have it get to you, but I'm not sure how much interference there might still be with your mail. I'm also not sure how your office works since the car-bombing the day after the ceasefire, or whether phones are working and all that, so I will check in with her about this. In fact, I see a FAX number on her Foundry brochure, so I will send this to her that way directly. I feel that I need to talk to everyone over there again, now that things have changed so dramatically. I hope I may see you next week.

All best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

188

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 31, 1995

Mr. Gerry Adams
President of Sinn Fein
c/o Ms. Geraldine McAteer
Foundry Generation Trust
FAX 011-44-232 332786

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

This anniversary of the IRA cease-fire for which you worked so hard becomes as much an occasion for alarm at the slow progress as for congratulations on your great accomplishment of last year and the many steps of public recognition of the Republican Movement's peaceful intentions that you have brought about since.

I agree with the assessment I keep hearing from you, that the British government officials have been too slow in responding to the actions of peace, and by that fact are putting the peace at risk. For your edification, I enclose an Op-Ed piece I submitted to *The Boston Globe*, which they didn't print but which I'm sending along to several of the principals in the situation. My impression (it can't be more than that without my knowing the things governments don't tell people) is that none of the reasons the British have given for the delay -- lack of the word "permanent" in the original cease-fire statement, this decommissioning business, or any of the lesser excuese that have gone by over the year -- is the actual reason. Instead, the British are simply covering for the Unionists, who are not yet prepared to talk. I say that with recognition that this current British government has paid more careful attention to the Northern Irish problem than any other in the past. In this current question of the elimination of arms, I accept their argument that this needs to happen (and your people's argument also, that it needs to be reciprocal). But like yourself, I see this as something that would surely be done in the course of negotiations, and not something that should be made into an obstacle to the negotiations. That has to be so obvious to the British authorities themselves that it confirms me in the opinion that they are covering for the Unionists.

I'm not altogether out of sympathy with the Unionists. They have tried all along to defend what they have: there is obvious unfairness in that, but looked at from their perspective it is the defence of a tradition of great value to them and their right to be themselves. They have seen the violence stop without their having to do anything, and that leaves them legitimately enough with a question why they should do anything at all now. There is an answer to that, of course: they should want to have the peace, securely, and the fundamental Nationalist grievance has somehow to be met if that is to be a reality. But I recognize their quandary and don't grudge them the time to work it out.

All the same, I see it as very mistaken for the British to cover for them. The quandary, and the resulting embarrassment, belongs with the Unionists, and they should have to deal with it themselves. I've dealt with a lot of the Unionists over a long time, quite possibly more than you've been permitted to do yourself, and I've learned, what will be no surprise to you, that these are fundamentally decent people, for all the accumulated injustices of the position they have inherited. Among the people I've known well for many years is Rev. Martin Smith, who could turn out to be Molyneaux's successor and who in any case will continue to be an inportant voice among them. I have great respect for Martin, and think he may be the one who will see his way through this. I plan to write to him shortly, and will send you a copy of what

I write to him. It's possible too that Roy Maginnis is the one, or Cunningham. It would be more difficult for Roy Beggs, whose blinders are on a bit tighter, but being locked in a position that just doesn't do justice to the reality around you is in fact one of the ways of eventually being confronted with it. These are all people I expect to be seeing a bit later this year, and I'm acutely aware that none of them are ogres.

You're anxious for all-party talks, and I agree with you that for the British to delay them is to risk the peace. It's in no one's interest to let the opportunity that you (and John Hume!) had so laboriously created by last year slip past. No one will gain more by renewed fighting. You would all only have to struggle to get right back to where you got a year ago.

For all that, I have a somewhat different idea than what I hear from Sinn Fein of where the priorities are in the talking that needs to be done. Talks that include you and the two governments, British and Irish, have their importance, especially as acknowledgement that you are legitimately on the stage. But the talks between Unionist and Nationalist populations of Northern Ireland are far more important and necessary. Basically, the two sides have known each other only as adversaries. I gather from what I hear you saying that you realize the United Ireland question is not about to be settled over night, and I hear you quite clearly on the proposition that it remains your goal. I don't quarrel with that, although, as I've written to you before, I don't think it is for me, as an outsider, to take a position on it, for or against. But I don't see that it can even be raised until the Nationalists and Unionists know one another *as people in whom they can place confidence and trust*. The conversations that need to take place now are the ones, the very preliminary ones, that will build that after all these years of being adversaries.

You can't have the unity of Ireland without the consent of the Unionist population. Anything into which they are coerced is simply not the unity of Ireland. I hear you clearly, again, on the subject of your not accepting a Unionist veto. I think that means something different: that the *British* have no business enforcing a Unionist veto. But that any claim to be a single people to which the Unionists did not assent would be a sham is simply the truth. There's no getting away from that.

I would agree with you, again, that the automatic backing of the British for Unionist rejectionism or intransigeance has to be broken. To some extent it has been, and that has the Unionists terribly worried, though this behavior that I see as British cover-up for the Unionists' unreadiness to talk shows how much of it still remains. (I don't see that you in the Republican Movement have the parallel backing, automatic or otherwise, of the Irish government. They have already made all the concessions that leave the matter in your Northern hands, Nationalist and Unionist alike, and I approve that position myself.)

As I understand it, this is the essential meaning of the IRA's cease-fire: a realisation that an effort to produce the United Ireland by coercion, without the assent of the Unionists, doesn't meet the Nationalist community's own standard of justice; that that assent has to be won, and that consequently a continuation of the violence campaign only postpones even beginning the real process, because an attempt at coercion forfeits trust. That goes both ways, of course. The Unionists have tried to coerce you, and used the British as their enforcer.

It seems to me that a United Ireland is achievable, though not without an intermediate process. By that I don't mean, as Unionists would suspect, that the process be one of deceiving or cajoling them. No Irish unity worth thinking of will be achieved unless it is first built there in the North: a community of mutual acceptance and respect, in which people of the two traditions get equal treatment and opportunity, and are able to be entirely themselves, not forced to submit to the others' tradition. When that happens, if it does, there may or may not be a development by which the rest of Ireland joins you in that unity. I don't see any political dynamic that is leading that way in the Republic at present, and would expect it, if it ever come to be, to result from what you of both traditions create in the North (they in fact joining you, rather

190

than the North joining the South). As outsider, I don't take a position for or against that, though it would seem a natural enough development *provided* it is a matter of assent rather than any kind of coercion.

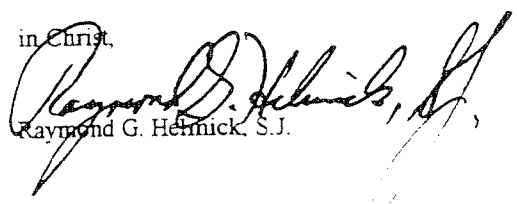
That leaves me quarreling at least with one possible appearance of what Sinn Fein and you yourself are looking for at present in the all-party talks, namely that the British government should force the Unionists, by *political* coercion, into what you have not been able to coerce them into by violent coercion. I really don't want to accuse you of that, and you may very well not mean that at all. But it is what the Unionists believe you mean, and it is one possible meaning that can be drawn from what is being said in the Republican Movement. To that extent, you have not made yourselves clearly understood, and it is a great obstacle to your ever obtaining your particular objective, whether we understand that in terms of the United Ireland or simply of a society that provides justice and commands assent for all its citizens, or any objective that can unite the peoples of your two traditions. I feel that you in the Republican Movement are, like the British, blind-siding your public if these issues are not clarified, and if your demands for political progress are only for the fulfillment of the United Ireland objective without attention to the necessary intermediate steps.

Given that understanding, I'm very alarmed at the fact that the Unionists still don't even want to talk to you, and might even refuse to join anything that would be billed as all-party talks. I see you and them as needing to make even preliminary acquaintance as anything other than adversaries, see their reluctance as very delinquent behavior (delinquent behavior, as I said before, of decent people), and look for the people who will open the discussion. That, I believe, is the most urgent thing needed for the eventual achievement of peace and justice.

While looking for decent individuals with the political imagination to realize that and commit themselves to it among the really ranking Unionists, I see the likeliest people to open the communication with you among the Loyalists. They too are people I have known, and respected for a bedrock honesty that underlies even the most brutal violence and prejudice they have exercised, for a long time. I've known more the generation of Sammy Smyth, Glen Barr and Andy Tyrie, and have had to get to know the current leadership only over the last year. But I see their clear recognition that they have to deal with you, and that things have to change fundamentally. They are as opposed as ever to your United Ireland, but know they have to get to understand and develop a genuine respect for you, and come to a settlement that can truly satisfy you both. In talking and writing to them over this last year, I'm always at pains to urge that they open the communication, as they know they must. I always put it to them that they should not be the spoilers, destroying the unity of the Unionist camp now in the time of their confusion, but instead be the ginger group, generating the new ideas that are such a scarce commodity among the regular party leadership and taking initiatives that will bring the rest of Unionism along with them.

I write all this, as you can see, with the greatest respect for you, your movement and your aspirations, though not as a partisan, unless as a partisan for the achievement of peace and justice both for you and your adversaries. As this important anniversary goes by in a context of so much alarm and unfulfilled expectations, I feel I owe it to you and all your folks to put my thinking in front of you. I'll be meeting Martin McGuiness, whom I last met in Donegal in 1973, at a breakfast here in Boston next week, and will give him a copy of this. And in November I will be in Northern Ireland, meeting all the people I've been mentioning in this letter. I hope I may see you then too. Best wishes,

in Christ,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 6, 1995

Rev. Martin Smyth, M.P.
117 Cragagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Twice last year, when I was over to Northern Ireland, I had hoped I might see you once again, writing ahead before my visit of February '94, and trying by phone when I was back again last November. By bad luck, I found you were away both times I was there. You were visiting Washington and President Clinton at the time of my February visit, and at Westminster the other time. I remember well the great kindness with which you hosted Jim Annelin and myself back in 1972, when you let us accompany you on all your rounds for several days, and the many contacts we had over the subsequent years that I lived in London, concerning myself much over Northern Ireland, down to 1981. You may recall our correspondence over the article I wrote for *The Month* back in August, '77, on "Church Structure and Violence in Northern Ireland." Quite a while later I found that John Dunlop had for years been quoting from that article,and I expect you've seen other things I've written since.

I will be in Northern Ireland again next week, in the party with Tom Tracy at Galgorm Manor in Ballymena, and I truly hope I will see you this time. Tom will be hosting a dinner we will have for a number of UUP people on Thursday evening, the 16th, which I hope you will make. If there were opportunity for a further meeting, I would be very glad of it.

My interest in Northern Ireland has remained very high all this time, and I've been happy to see what had been an impasse situation turn into what seem genuine prospects of peace and a reconciled community. It's been my contention for many years that the stagnation in the Northern Irish situation resulted from a denial syndrome, each side in the quarrel misdefining the problem, although both knew quite well what the core problem was. Republican-minded Catholics (North, South, Irish-American) would say the problem was the British, and the solution the removal of the British: i.e., that if the British "left," there would be no problem left. The Unionist-minded (British or Northern Irish) would say the problem was the IRA, and the solution the removal of the IRA: i.e., similarly, that without the IRA (seen therefore as a non-representative subversive movement) there would be no problem. Both of those, of course, were very violent propositions. But their assertion was a denial of what everyone knew was the underlying problem, namely that two groups of people, with different traditions, live in the same space and have not learned how to do that in full respect for one another and with insititutions that guarantee one another's integrity. The two definitions of the problem that I describe as denials are both clearly untrue, since if either or both of the proposed solutions were achieved -- removal of the British, removal of the IRA -- the basic problem would remain untouched, unchanged. Many of the traumatic events over the course of the quarter-century "troubles" had served only to confirm people in those denials, and therefore postpone any serious address to the core problem. The 1981 hunger strike, for instance, had, as its most central legacy, confirmed much of the public -- whether participants or observers; in both parts of Ireland, in Britain, Europe and America -- in seeing the whole conflict as simply between the IRA and the British, so that no one else need even be counted. That meant added years of not attending to the actual problem.

192

Now, with the cease-fires of last year, there is finally a chance for the two traditions in Northern Ireland, people whose awareness of one another, however well informed, has been basically as adversaries, to communicate with one another in a new way on which a community of understanding can be built. I've followed this closely, and had conversations with the participants far back in earlier stages of their thinking -- I know you are used to my practice of talking with everyone in such a situation as this, as I've done in many other conflicts. I'm convinced that I understand the meaning of the IRA's cease-fire as their recognition that they cannot deal with the Unionist tradition of Northern Ireland by coercion, and must initiate a non-coercive conversation with their Unionist neighbors.

I used to argue to them, as far back as the 70s and 80s, that it was out of character for them to try, by force, to coerce you. I found many inconsistencies in their campaign, but used to tell them that I thought they would be unable to live with success if they were ever, against all probability, to achieve it; that if they were to find themselves masters of a defeated, alienated Unionist population, it would go so counter to everything they believed about themselves that it would be unendurable to them. I found this kind of thinking present in many of the people I talked with as far back as 1980 and 1981, and believe that a few really courageous people have argued that kind of case to the rest of the IRA and Sinn Fein to such good effect that it is the basic reason for the developments we have seen in the most recent years.

Just now the communication seems to be held up by what appears to me more a temporary blip than a fundamental impasse. The formal all-party talks of which we hear so much are on hold while the matter of decommissioning of arms is contested. I have a rather different question about the all-party talks, namely what people are to talk about when they meet. The agenda, it seems to me, cannot be the great constitutional questions. No one, from any side, is ready for those. What is needed instead is for the communities of each tradition, and their leadership, to gain a first real knowledge of each other as other than adversaries, in fact as the neighbors they will always live with. Nothing else is open to discussion until that is done.

I don't really believe that the decommissioning question is really the question. I have no quarrel at all with the proposition that the guns and explosives must be taken out of the equation. Nor, I believe, do the people involved. I think it is a mistake that either side should have let this issue take on symbolic importance, as I believe it is one that will be resolved non-dramatically in the predictable course of things.

I met your new party leader, Mr. Trimble, for the first time last week here in Boston, was quite favorably impressed with him, and rather pressed him on two occasions, at a breakfast with one group and a lunch with another, on opening up communication with these groups. I look rather sympathetically at his proposals. He was anxious, first, that the opening of talks not be precipitous, especially, as it turned out, that Mr. Paisley's DUP not be left (sniping!) on the outside of talks with him and the UUP inside. That made sense to me, though I hoped it doesn't mean he leaves the DUP with an effective veto. I like his idea, also, of elections to an Assembly, to put the talks on a mandated basis, much as I understand the reservations some of the parties have about that. But all of that is about formal talks. It creates an interlude. The more important question to me is how he would use that interlude, constructively or just as a delay. I asked him first whether it was a priority for him and the UUP to establish contact with all these people who had now been over a year into a cease-fire, or whether it was a priority not to have any such contact and to delay the evil day as long as possible. That was at the breakfast. At the lunch I put the same question differently, saying it was anomalous that there should be no substantive communication among the major organized groups so long after the cease-fires, and asking what he and the UUP were doing or could do to elicit the most of good will that could be elicited from the Republican community. I realized that these were uncomfortable questions for him, and that he was anxious to maintain that some people, specifically any who were explicitly Sinn Fein, could not be talked to at all, and was trying to find his way around that to say who could be seen as kosher.

I, of course, was trying to indicate that these were people who had eventually to be approached, even, as I said, if it had first to be done very delicately and through mediators. This is one of the great principles eventually learned in Israeli negotiations, that one needs to speak to the enemy. This is especially so when the known enemy has made such enormous efforts, at great personal risk to themselves, to make this the agenda and to put the use of coercive force behind them.

I was disappointed to see that Mr. Trimble, in an interview with a local newspaper (our rag paper in Boston, the *Herald*), had classified Martin McGuinness as a person he could never speak to because Martin had personally used the gun against people. I can't vouch for the truth or falsehood of that. What I hear is that Martin was thought of as soldier on the line by those who saw this, rightly or wrongly, as a just war situation. What is more significant of him is that, for all his recent years, he has taken great personal risks, as has Adams, to bring the whole violence campaign to a halt and get the entire IRA to commit itself to ways of peace. One has to talk to him sooner or later, and a great deal of time has been lost already, thereby putting the accomplishment itself at risk.

The situation is new, and I was glad to see your own activity about the time I was over in Northern Ireland last year in November. The day I was leaving, you were to address an Orange rally in Belfast, and your preliminary language was of meeting the peace overtures with openness and welcome, something rather fewer people were doing at that time. It seems to me very necessary that Unionists do that now. I have much understanding for the reluctance with which many Unionists approach it, since you have gotten to the cease-fire without having to do anything other than you have always done – the change was in the Republicans' approach – and it is not possible now to foresee what will come of any initiative you take. It is possible to foresee, though, what will come of doing nothing. Any hopes or expectations of achieving reconciliation will be counted as disappointed, and things will drift back into the same conflict as before. Everyone will have to struggle for an indefinite future simply to reach again, if possible, what has already been achieved for the last year. I think it needs a Unionist breakthrough now, not to talk about any political agenda unacceptable to the Unionist community, but simply to seek mutual understanding between these two traditions and their peoples.

I don't at all advocate anyone's doing that in defiance of leadership, or dividing the Unionist community. In that I would see only destruction, and in fact have argued to the UDP and PUP people over the last year that they too, ought carefully to avoid dividing Unionism, even though I look to them to be the providers of a lot of new thinking within Unionism. Your Mr. Trimble is in charge now. Many people see him as having been chosen as the person most likely to say no to everyuthing. I don't find him that way, but instead find an original and seriously thinking man, intelligent and much different than the standard brand, surely deserving my full respect. The altogether new problematic is his problem now. He has to resolve it, and needs any help he can get in solving it.

With all this to talk about, I really look forward to the chance of seeing you next week. With all my prayers and best wishes, I am yours

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

194

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 10, 1995

Mr. Gerry Adams
President of Sinn Fein
51/55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011 44 1232 231723 — 1st of 5 pages

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

Several times now I've missed you on visits to Belfast. When I was there in February '94 you were on your first 48-hour visit to New York, and then wiped out with jet-lag once you got back. I saw Tom Hartley and Aidan McAteer that time instead. I'd been over with the Irish American Partnership in November '92, in a group that was supposed to include a number of U.S. Members of Congress. I had convinced them all that there was no way they could go back to the States and claim they had seen what they needed to see in Belfast if they had not spoken with you, even keeping a low profile about it. But that time the Northern Ireland Office had sent one of its Civil Service people along to Boston to tell me, over an otherwise cordial breakfast, that if anyone of our company saw you, the NIO would sever any kind of cooperation with the Partnership from that time on. That was enough to scare off the Partnership, and in fact all but one of the Congressmen then refused to make the trip. And when I was over in November last year, we simply didn't connect.

I will be in Northern Ireland again this coming week, November 13-17, and heard with a sinking feeling that you were expected over at Harvard University tomorrow, the 11th. I hope I am not about to miss you again. If you are in Belfast for any part of the time I am there, I would deeply appreciate a chance to meet you again, for the first time since the period I spent mediating in the hunger strike back in the summer of 1981. I will be staying at the Galgorm Manor outside Ballymena for the week, travelling with Tom Tracy of California. We will be meeting a great variety of people over dinners each evening for the week, and I will be driving in to Belfast each day for other meetings. I will phone your office when I arrive on Monday, hoping to set up an appointment.

In any case, I enclose with this FAX, as I promised you when I wrote last August 31, a copy of what I wrote to my old friend and sparring partner, Rev. Martin Smyth. When I saw Martin McGuinness here in Boston in September, I took it up with him, as I had in my last letter to you, that I thought the delays the British were creating over the decommissioning question should be circumvented by talking directly with the UDP and PUP Loyalists, who seem readier than most to talk with Sinn Fein, and even more by finding the ranking Unionist who will open the conversation. I pressed David Trimble on that when he was in Boston recently, without much success beyond making him uncomfortable at having to find his way around the proposition. I do think it is an uncomfortable thing for him to have to hold out about that, and that he will come to it. After all, the problem of how to respond to the IRA's cease-fire and its manifest seriousness is his now, and won't go away. Even if he was elected with the idea that he would be the most intransigeant spokesman the Unionists could find, he is something quite different than the standard-brand Unionist, not in the least a dodo, and very aware of things that are ineluctably on his plate. I rather liked him.

This does still seem to me the most urgent single thing, that direct communication be opened between Sinn Fein people and the Unionists themselves. Waiting for the British to set up the All-Party Talks gives them every opportunity to delay, and I've never believed that this decommissioning question is other than a cover for the fact that the British don't believe the Unionists will want to talk. Trimble himself then goes about telling us all that the decommissioning is a British question, in which the Unionists will not interfere. But they really have to talk.

I shall be writing to Martin McGuinness too, at this same address (I know no other for him), and hope to see him again while I am there. Best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

196

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 10, 1995

Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011 44 1232 231723

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

When you were in Boston in September we met both at the New England Circle breakfast and at the Irish American Partnership lunch, where we had a conversation at table, and I told you I would hope to see you when I was next over the Northern Ireland.

That will be this coming week. I arrive Monday, November 13, and will be about through Friday, the 17th, flying back to Boston on the Saturday. I will be with my friend Tom Tracy out at the Galgorm Manor near Ballymena, where Tom will be running dinner parties each evening for a great number of people from different political quarters. I will also be driving in to Belfast each day myself to meet other people. I hope I'm sending this note to you to the right address. I probably should be sending it to Derry, but I have no address for you there. If it would be easier to see you in Derry, I can just as easily drive over there whenever it would be most conveient for you. In any case, I will phone the Belfast Sinn Fein office when I arrive on Monday to see about that.

I am distressed, as no doubt you are, to see the all-party talks still stuck over this business of decommissioning. I feel the British have made a mistake in allowing this to acquire symbolic importance. I don't really quarrel with the need to get the guns and explosioves out of the situation, as I don't expect you do either, but to make it the prior condition for talking, to my mind, is just an excuse, invented by the British, to cover for the Unionists' unreadiness, as yet, to talk with you. I hope Sinn Fein won't compound the British error by making the issue one of symbolical importance for yourselves too. I'd prefer to see you deflating the symbolism that the British have attached to it.

As I told you when we met, my inclination would be to circumvent the delay by looking for direct communication with the Unionists, without waiting for the British to invite you to sit down with them. I've brought up the same proposal in writing to Gerry Adams last August, put it up to David Trimble when I met him under very similar circumstances to my meetings with you -- breakfast with the New England Circle, lunch with the Irish American Partnership -- a week or so ago, and I've written it also to Martin Smyth, an acquaintance whom I took great care to get to know as far back as 1972, with whom I maintained a friendship, despite many differences, ever since. (Gerry has a copy of that letter.) The people I expect to be the first to break the taboo and talk with you, though, are the Loyalists. You told me you and they had met already, at the Irish Embassy in Washington and another time in London, but that was a bit too unplanned and agenda-less for my liking. I'd like to see something that meant more distinct a commitment.

I will be seeing all these folks over the course of the week, much of the Unionist establishment on the Thursday evening, both Loyalist groups earlier in the week. This is the theme I will be working on with them, and I would like to hear your thoughts on it so I won't be singing inthe dark..

With best wishes, sincerely, as I have great confidence that your current efforts are very seriously for the peace and good of all your fellow citizens,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

198

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 20, 1995

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lake,

I have just returned from a week's visit to Northern Ireland, which gave me opportunity to meet with people from all over the political spectrum. This is familiar ground, since I have worked closely with people of every conviction there since 1972. I was with Mr. Tom Tracy's party this time, and take it you may be familiar, without my having to waste your time with superfluous detail, with the large dinner party discussions we held with significant political groupings each evening. The high-level Unionist party meetings were perhaps the most significant. I was able myself, during these days, to have extensive meetings with Sinn Fein -- Martin McGuinness (since Gerry Adams was out of town seeing you), Tom Hartley and their members of the Belfast City Council -- and the most ranking members of the Loyalist groups who were there while David Ervine and Gary McMichael were also in Washington with you.

So much simply for identification. I write this note hastily, hoping to get it to you before you travel there with President Clinton, as I think some of my observations and conclusions might be helpful to you. I will send you a more detailed report of my own findings later, but haven't time to write it up before your departure.

My strongest conclusion is that the hassle over decommissioning is not really the issue, but rather a way of creating delay. I wouldn't quarrel in the least with the importance of getting the guns and explosives out of that situation, and think it a thing that can be accomplished readily in the context of talk. But the reason for delay is actually that the Unionists are simply not ready to talk. British government is supporting them, with the feeling that they don't want talks with empty chairs around the table.

The Unionists have good reason for wanting delay, and would in fact be glad to see any sort of communication with Sinn Fein or other Republicans, even with SDLP, postponed indefinitely. The cease-fires were brought about by decision of the paramilitaries of both sides, basically through the joint work of Adams and Hume, and the Unionists had no role in producing them. They quite reasonably fear now that anything they do, or any talk they agree to, will have results they cannot predict. They are nervous as kittens, and of course they need to talk. For my part, I think it a mistake for British government to cover for them, as it is the Unionists' embarrassment, legitimate as it is, and they should carry it. But the issue of decommissioning functions basically in terms of that. It isn't the first excuse, and if a resolution should be found, there will be other excuses for delay.

I wanted to express that to you before you and President Clinton are there. You have your own close analyses, of course, but this one of mine is built on lots of expereience of this place and of other conflicts. If I can, I would like to help that you not be too much embroiled in what are truly side issues and miss the central action.

I've had invaluable opportunity to express this to leading Unionists over this last week, and found that it had a sympathetic hearing. We went by Chatham House rules, so I won't name people in this report, but you will be coming across them if you inquire for their reactions to that meeting.

As I put it to them, I don't see that the United Ireland they so much fear is on the table for discussion at this time. I would be more interested in a United Northern Ireland, which can only be had by breaking through the barriers to discussion among people who know each other only as adversaries. I had this discussion also with Martin McGuinness, asking what was the agenda of such talks as his party is seeking, on this same basis that the United Ireland is beyond discussing at this stage, and that the Unionists have to know that they can talk to Sinn Fein without being held hostage to that proposal. (I've long since been through this sort of discussion with Israeli and Palestinian leadership, and with Kurds, both Iraqi and Turkish, over the question of separatism.)

As I try to keep this letter brief, I want to include, with regard to the decommissioning quarrel, the matter of symbolism. British government, I believe, has fallen into a classical error of letting a matter that was raised as a delaying tactic acquire symbolic weight, letting their heels get dug in without plan and even against their own better judgment. They have by now so pressed Sinn Fein on the subject that they too, or rather the IRA following (sic!) that they have brought to the ceasefire with so much effort, are now loading the question with symbolic weight as well. The alternative proposals that Gary McMichael and David Ervine brought to you last week, with so much good will, are, in McGuinness' opinion, inadequate to satisfy the demands British government is making, and hence a dead end. I can't pretend to grasp the details of this imbroglio that you and they must be contending with each day, but of one thing I am quite sure: the priority in this matter should be to *deflate the symbolism*.

There is one other matter I want to include in this very sketchy letter. For three years now a really valuable proposal has been on the table, to establish a new campus of the University of Ulster on the Springvale site in Belfast. SDLP MP Joe Hendron and Unionist MP Cecil Walker have been strong advocates of this, and the University Vice Chancellor, Derrick Smith, and the Professor carrying the ball, Wallace Ewart, present impressive arguments that this peace-line campus would create opportunities of a quite different kind of life for the people of both communities living in the area. It is a kind of project that would transform life in the area without the specter of gentrification, but instead raise the sights and capacities of the much deprived people who live there. This is what the peace in Belfast would be made of. (You observe how blithely non-partisan I am about this. I think it has real merit.)

The three-year suspense over the proposal now appears to be a matter of authorities trying to drop it without having to meet any arguments about it, and the word is about that an announcement of its being dropped will come right after President Clinton has gone away again. I would urge you to pay some attention to it while you are there.

With best wishes, I hope the President's visit, with your help, will be the catalyst for peace that we and he are looking for.

Sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

200

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

November 27, 1995

Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sin Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011 44 1232 231723

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Here it is more than a week since you so generously took the time to meet me in Derry. I feel overdue in thanking you, and want to say again that I highly respect and honor what you and Gerry Adams are doing to uphold the peace effort that you so courageously initiated.

I promised that I would be writing to British authorities, and will in fact. This didn't seem the best time to do it, though, as they will be coming immediately under the pressure of the Clinton visit, and would not give much attention to anything I would write before it. Directly after that visit will be the right time, and I will let you have a copy of what I write to them then. In the meantime, I did write to Anthony Lake right away, as the person most directly involved in whatever Clinton does in or about Northern Ireland. He has no reason to know me, as I normally send things to the White House by way of the Chief of Staff, and most of what they see from me is about the Middle East or the Kurdish situation, so I gave him an introduction, as briefly as possible. That letter is included here for your convenience.

The point of that letter was to support the contention, which I'm sure Clinton's people hear from many others besides myself, that this decommissioning issue is merely a screen for the actual issue, which is that the Unionists, for reasons with which I actually have to sympathize, are unready to talk, much as they eventually must. And that the loading of this armaments issue with symbolic weight makes it far more destructive than any stalling tactic should ever be allowed to become. I pointed out, as I did to you, that this dangerous symbolism ought to be deflated.

I took up also the matter of the *agenda* for all-party talks, on which you and I didn't really come to a meeting of minds. During the week since I returned I met, for the first time, your Sinn Fein rep here in the States, Shannon Eaton, in a gathering of several people, and when I spoke of this topic, she immediately wanted to know why I should be looking for something Sinn Fein can do for the Unionists, asking the weaker to do something for the stronger party in the exchange. She had the right question, of course, and my answer was that it's because of your strength.

I do believe that. You've had the stronger moral position all along, the oppressed before oppressors. That's been obscured by the very fact of a violent campaign, and every advantage, including propaganda advantage, has been taken of that, but don't think the Unionists haven't known it. It's for that reason that they are more frightened of you now, as you come without violence, than they were during the IRA's actively violent campaign. We spoke last week of how inclined they are to search for and credit any excuse they can find to continue distrusting you. Granting the truth of that, I don't find that a reason to dismiss them. I want to know instead what their fear is about, behind the facade of all these artificial reasons for distrust, and look for ways to allay it so that there can be real discussion.

I hope you realize that, as I write, I am not looking for ways to take advantage of your difficulties to press you to actions in someone else's cause. When I met the Unionist leadership over dinner a week ago Thursday they had just been told by a valued friend of mine, who thought it the right way to gain their trust, that he was on their side against Sinn Fein efforts to bring them into a United Ireland. I started off by telling them that I would not take their side against anyone, but that I would take their side along with all those others, including you, their adversaries, who had suffered in this conflict. I'll say the same to you now.

I know very well what the Unionists and what the British ought to in consequence of the IRA's fifteen-month-old cease-fire, and am not averse to telling them. I note in today's American papers that David Trimble is asking President Clinton's intervention to persuade your people to make a move on the decommissioning and so make all-party talks possible. I remain very convinced that you need, in dealing with that, to debunk and deflate every element of symbolism invested in it, to look for and exploit every chance to demonstrate your intention to uphold the peace so far accomplished and prevent any return to guns and explosives, and not let your heels get dug in as theirs have. But I think, as I expect you already know, that it would be an error for you to accept that this is the true question. The real question is whether or not there shall be talks, quite simply. And for that I do think there are things you can do that would give you the initiative in these dealings (during and after the Clinton visit) and make it more possible for the Unionists to respond positively, as you want.

I did, in fact, have another opportunity to speak to a Unionist gathering, the evening of the same Friday when I had seen you, when we had a dinner largely for members of the Belfast City Council. The SDLP, already ticked off about our gatherings in some way that I don't yet understand, was just beginning its Ard Fheis that day, and in the absence of them and your Sinn Fein members it was basically a self-reinforcing meeting of Unionists, both UUP and DUP. Large prints of an aerial photograph of the London financial district after an IRA bombing a couple of years ago had been distributed to each of us at the start of the meal. When I spoke, I began by acknowledging the high value of what my friend Tom Tracy has done in gaining Unionists a voice and access to a public and to the power structure in the United States, an accomplishment that I know you recognize as positive. I went on to describe the gathering as one-sidedly Unionist, as one other speaker had already pointed out, and that because of the absence of their Sinn Fein City Council colleagues, whom I had visited a couple of days before. Tom, as I told them, had commented when I got back from that visit that he had been unable to invite those Council members, knew that he needed to find how to do it without losing all the rest, but didn't know how.

I waved the London picture at them, and said I understood that they associated those colleagues with this. That they had seen this in Belfast, Derry and elsewhere in the province, that they had seen the pictures of Sarajevo and elsewhere. That I had once been inclined to put up a picture of the bloated bodies in the ditch at Mylai in my office, but hadn't done so since I don't really go in for such pictures, but that there was a difference between the pictures of what is done to us and ours and those of what our own people have done to others. That their democratically elected Sinn Fein colleagues could match that picture, with the picture of their own office directly across from their City Hall, and other offices of theirs that had similarly been destroyed; that three of their number had been murdered for having been elected democratically to the City Council, a brother of another murdered by mistake for him, another's son murdered for the same reason, many of their homes burned or bombed. That even within their City Hall the cleaning staff would not clean the room they occupied as office. That these elected members were running, therefore, higher risks even than themselves to take part in a democratic process, and that that made it a priority to find ways of opening genuine communication with them.

Reaction to that was more somber than to what I had said the previous night to the inner core Unionist leadership, but it was actually received and accepted as needing their attention.

202

But this is really the issue, and basically their issue: to talk or not to talk. Much of what they say is, in my belief, excuse not to talk. That has been true of the famous absence of the word "permanent," and is at the root of this decommissioning issue that has subsequently been enmired in so much needless symbolism that has to be separately disentangled. As you have recognized yourself, there will be other delaying issues as these are resolved. I can see two of them already in the wings, and would beg you not to offer them as hostages to these people who are looking for further excuses. One is the series of Sinn Fein warnings that the cease-fire can fail if they don't agree to talk. They hear every one of those as threat, and their conditioning insulates them against hearing them any other way. The other is the punishment beatings.

Even our *New York Times* was beating the drums this last Saturday about that: basically two massively violent incidents there in Derry, one of which (actually dating from *before* the cease-fire, the date given in the article but it did not stand out very clearly) strongly suggested the use of punishment beating simply to silence a man who had offended someone with friends in the IRA: a directly political use of beatings, the unavoidable suspicion of which I spoke to you when we met. But more telling than the two incidents were the statistics: in the 14 months before the cease-fire, 63 such attacks by the IRA, and 82 by Loyalists forces, for a total of 145; in the 15 months since the cease-fire, 158 by the IRA, 86 by Loyalists, for a total of 244, all interpreted as an effort by the paramilitary, especially IRA, to enforce their authority in the neighborhoods, after the cease-fires, by intimidation. I've heard you on this subject, I've heard Alex Reid (who rather went over the top with only worst-case scenarios on it) and (last year) John Hume. I've heard the Loyalists too, and know that the issue should not be handled simplistically or used simply as a handle to discredit the people who initiated and maintain these cease-fires. They will be used that way all the same, of course, and I urge you: take that seriously and don't hand this issue gratuitously to those who are merely looking for reasons not to talk.

I asked you what was the agenda for all-party talks, and we got as far as acknowledging the requirement of Unionist consent to any constitutional change but not a veto: familiar territory that I heard also from Shannon Eaton and have read quite often. That's a very hard distinction to define. If there must be consent, and the Unionists don't give it, nothing happens. That's a veto any way I can understand it. I don't at all rule out the prospect of that consent being given, but it has to be *won*, and most probably has to be won for some intermediate questions before any of the constitutional questions can be raised. That's a confidence matter. I hear people disparaging the concept that all-party talks should be, to begin with, merely get-acquainted talks, but that's the truth: people on either side of this divide still know each other only as adversaries, and will not be able to deal confidently with one another, and hence *get to* the deeper constitutional issues, until that limitation has been overcome and they have gotten to the discovery and exploration of what they can really understand as common interests. That may sound as if it is saying that the constitutional issues can never be raised, but it isn't so: this is a way to get to these issues, not a way not to get to them. But when you get to them, it remains true: consent has to be won, and your negotiating partners are entitled not to give it until it is won, or if it is not won.

What I know is that the question of the United Ireland is simply not on the table at this stage. If you listen with the Unionists' ears to what they are hearing from you, it is that they are to be confronted immediately with this question, with no tolerance of denial (veto), and that after they answer negatively the whole issue goes back to the guns. You really need to let it be seen, in ways they can comprehend even through their negative stereotypes (meaning *vast* effort on your part to break through to them), that you are prepared to start at common interests, seeking them out and working imaginatively at them; that you remain as steadfast as you have been in your own aspiration for national unity, but accept that it has to be a unity in which they are a willing part and not coerced; that you know this is a process that is going to take time and go through stages; and that you understand that negotiating includes the possibility that you yourselves eventually agree to something other than what you are looking for now. That last point, of

course, includes the necessity of *your* consent, without which they are not entitled to walk off with the marbles. Any settlement that has not genuinely won that consent of the Nationalist community can't be accepted as permanent any more than one that hasn't the consent of the Unionist community.

I'm familiar with the fear that to wait is to give up, and I know that you have to deal with that not only in yourselves but in the public opinion and morale of the whole Nationalist community within which you act and are people's way of expressing themselves. That's true of the Unionists too. For neither of you is this a time to be put to humiliation, nor to an appalled feeling of standing at the brink of ruin. What you need, on either side, is to meet people with whom, however warily and gradually, you can come to terms of equality and mutual acceptance, building, by mutual consent, the institutions that will be the guarantee of one another's integrity. I've spoken periodically,. and put this to the Unionist leadership when I met them, of the United Ireland as something that is not ready for discussion yet between you and them, but of a united Northern Ireland as a more immediate and attainable goal. I sense that all of you in the Nationalist community hear that and think of it as being offered as *substitute* for the United Ireland. I'd see it as prior condition for a United Ireland, which in fact might or might not happen as you and they would, on better acquaintance, mutually consent, each consent really having to mean consent.

I'd take that further to the various elected assembly proposals that are floating about, including the way David Trimble has been proposing it. This is something I became familiar with last year, when I had it out with various SDLP people, and heard the complaints of both Unionists and Alliance people who felt that John Hume didn't really want to talk with them. The issue then was already this one of their wanting an elected assembly. (The Loyalists didn't want it, for the good reason that they saw it as divisive of Unionism if held then, and knew they should not do that.) I went through this orally with John Hume on one of his visits here, and have realized that I ought to have written it up thoroughly if I wanted him to think it through properly.

John Hume's problem with it was one that I heard in essence from yourself as well when we met in Derry: that an election within political boundaries marking out Northern Ireland was a way to lock in the division of Ireland. I'm sure the Unionists would like to have it work that way. I do hear all sorts of useful trimmings from David Trimble: proportional representation, in all committees as well as in the distribution of seats; brief limited duration; no legislative powers, simply a ("talking shop," exactly what's needed) negotiation forum; and a test of democratic mandate. He argues, of course, that Sinn Fein's mandate is for supporting the IRA's campaign, and that a new vote now would test your mandate for something different. That's true. The reading I get is that you would gain three percentage points over your normal 10 to 12 percent of the Northern Ireland total (my informants hedge on whether that would be three more than ten or three more than twelve), and the Unionists may not be prepared to believe that simply because they don't want to believe it. The Loyalists, as Trimble says, have never run for an electoral mandate, and it would be useful for them to do it now that they, very visibly, stand for something new happening whereas the UUP and DUP stand for the old formulas.

My response to the problem both you and John Hume raise, about locking in the division, would not be to refuse the democratic vote but rather to build in *provisional, provisional, provisional* at every point in the process. If you did that, you would be the manifest voice of reason in the whole procedure. You might find some of the Unionists frothing at the mouth, just at the spectacle of your appearing more reasonable than they. But I reckon you would find that more of them would see you as proposing things that they could respond to without feeling they were dropping into the abyss. That, I think, is your immediate objective.

So there is David Trimble asking President Clinton to make you give in on decomissioning so there can be talks, while you ask him to get them to talk without giving an agenda they can respond to.

The White House, meanwhile, says that Clinton will go over just "to celebrate the peace that has prevailed since the cease-fires," which is cute, in the way the Irish are supposed to be cute. The loudest sound I heard from the White House was that Clinton would not make this trip just to turn on the Christmas lights. Some frustration there. I foresee all of you arm-wrestling with Tony Lake while Clinton lights the Christmas tree. You won't prevail on the basis of Trimble saying "You must," while you say "We won't." In fact, if you let yourself be sucked into treating the decommissioning issue as if it were the question, you lose on the Clinton visit and you get nowhere with the Unionists after he's gone. I truly think the way you move forward, using the Clinton visit to mutual benefit and opening up something more lasting with the Unionists in the process, is to insist on dealing with the genuine questions and showing yourselves constructive on them in ways that both the Clinton Administration and the Unionists will understand. (I take it as a given that the British, at this point, despite having made some good moves a year and more ago, are hiding their heads. It's a good opportunity to ignore them and act as if you and the Unionists, between you, own the place, as indeed you do.)

I want to conclude with something purely theoretical, as I listen to the sounds of mounting frustration all around. This is something I learned, years ago, from my late friend Richard Hauser, and have developed and tested in my own way. We used to find, consistently, that people in such conflicted situations as this responded with apathy or with violence. We always wished there were some nobler responses around, but that was delusion. The apathy and violence responses were practically interchangeable, the apathy a frozen form of violence -- violence turned in upon oneself -- while the violence was always liable to reach a point of exhaustion and lapse into apathy. I learned to distrust the formula that people would tire of their conflict and that would be the solution, as an exhaustion response without achieving justice regularly breaks out into new and more extreme violence.

Finding these responses so unavoidable, we tried distinguishing degrees of both of them. The least degree of violence is indignation, a socially useful force without which no one is going to insist on any kind of justice. The correspondingly least degree of apathy is a combination of curiosity and doubt, which triggers genuine inquiry and problem-solving.

If you add to these the element of frustration, though, the indignation turns into hatred, the curiosity and doubt into cynicism. Either the violence or the apathy can go to many further degrees, and people may be ready to congratulate themselves if they have brought it back from some appalling extremity to a lesser degree. But there is no real reason for congratulations unless it has been pulled back all the way to the first degree, the interaction of indignation with curiosity and doubt, with the frustration purged out of it.

This is what I see now. It has been fifteen months, nothing is happening to follow up on the peace you have made, such as it is, and the frustration is mounting. In the most abstract terms, that frustration is the enemy, the thing that can betray you all if you don't manage to watch for it, purge it and use your just indignation and your ingenuity to find your way around it. My best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

3 05

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 16, 1995

Dear Father Helmick:

Thank you for sharing your perspectives on the Northern Ireland peace process. It is always helpful to receive first-hand information on the situation in Northern Ireland.

We are very pleased that the British and Irish governments have reached agreement on a way forward in the Northern Ireland peace process. Just prior to the President's trip to the United Kingdom and Ireland last month, the two governments issued a joint communiqué launching a twin-track peace initiative involving an international decommissioning commission chaired by Senator George Mitchell as well as preparatory talks leading to all-party negotiations. The British and Irish governments have targeted the end of February 1996 to begin the all-party talks. Senator Mitchell held his first formal meeting on arms decommissioning in Belfast on December 15.

We will continue to support the process that the two governments and the people of Northern Ireland have set in motion. It is our hope that the President's visit to these two countries has helped to further the Northern Ireland peace process.

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,

Anthony Lake
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Professor of Conflict Resolution
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206

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 9, 1996

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011-44-1232-231723

Dear Friends,

Christ's Peace!

It doesn't sound much like peace today. I'm sure the news of the London bomb is as unwelcome to you as it is to any of us.

I've written the enclosed Op-Ed piece for the local Boston paper, the *Globe*, and sent a copy of it off to Anthony Lake, with a little urging to what I expect him to know already, that all the parties need to be kept away from making this a game of recriminations, and that the U.S. Administration, himself and Clinton, along with Senator Mitchell, are the most credible people to urge that.

As it happens, I had just had the chance to go through all of this, a few days ago, with a ranking officer of the Northern Ireland Office planning division, and will be writing off to her as well. I expect that you will both be as anxious as I or any of us to prevent this bombing being the end of the peace effort. You certainly have more motive than practically anyone else to value what has been accomplished in this recent time, as it is so much your hard work that brought about the ceasefire and the prospect of a peaceful end of all this in the first place. I think it needn't go down the drain now, and shouldn't. I can remember, back in 1980, putting it as a question in one of the written memos I did for the Republican Movement back then, whether in ten, fifteen or twenty years anything would have changed, or whether the conflict would still be stuck in its stagnant path. You got it out of that, and if this day's bombing were to reverse your work, it could be another ten, fifteen or twenty years of stagnation before there was another chance to get to where you brought it sixteen and some months ago.

That really shouldn't happen if there is any chance to prevent it, and I'm sure the key is that this situation not be met by recriminations all round but by an effort to meet one another and one another's needs and expectations. The greatest danger is that the others demonize you, and make it impossible for you to be heard. That's why I've been on to Tony Lake, who has a better chance than anyone else to prevent that. It's important that you not do any demonizing too. People have been stupid and craven rather than simply malicious.

Best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 9, 1996

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lake,

I was very grateful for your kind reply after I had FAXed you a quick report of my Northern Ireland visit last November 20, before you were over there with President Clinton.

Now that we have the most undesirable possible development today, with the bomb in London, I wanted simply to urge what I expect will be your own priority as well: that this crisis be met not with recriminations but with an effort by all the parties to put the pieces back together again. I think it can't be blamed just on any one party, and that it will take some concerted effort not to have the parties engaged in delegitimizing each other in a way that would make it far less possible to rescue what can be rescued.

The Administration and its friends, you yourself as well as President Clinton and Senator Mitchell, are probably the only ones able to put that credibly to all the various parties, as you have very richly earned high respect from every one of them.

I enclose with this an Op-ed, to that effect, that I have just sent off to *The Boston Globe*, in the hope that they may be able to get it in directly. I'll be sending a copy of it, also, with some covering-letter urging, to Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness.

With best wishes,

sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

205

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

THE BROKEN CEASEFIRE

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

(Submitted for the Op-Ed page of The Boston Globe, *February 9, 1996.)*
(Title, as printed Feb. 13, '96, changed to "Who'll pick up the Pieces?")

Now that the bomb has gone off in London, and the IRA's ceasefire lies in tatters, what is the worst that can happen next? Or need it be that?

Clearly, the one thing that could prevent any remaining chance to restore the prospects of peace would be to stigmatize and de-legitimize those who first produced and could yet restore the peace process, preventing them from doing what they can to save it.

For the IRA, or whatever rival or breakaway group (if that is the case), to have broken the ceasefire deserves no excuse. It is consummately irresponsible, as much a disservice to their own Nationalist community, which has a vital stake in moving forward in this process, as it is to everyone else. We can expect that Unionist and British opinion will instinctively place the entire blame on them, and see the Sinn Fein spokesmen who initially brokered the ceasefire as discredited. If guided by malice and a desire to scuttle any possibility of reconciliation, it will even try to portray them as deceitful or hypocrites. Legitimately enough, doubters can question whether Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have sufficient authority with the IRA to intervene with them now. I have already heard, from British media commentators, the formula that the Sinn Fein leadership has to demonstrate its *separation* from the IRA to establish its good faith. That is a destructive way to frame their dilemma. If they must break their relation to the IRA as a condition of being heard, then no one can express whatever readiness the IRA may have to restore the ceasefire.

The Unionists and the British in fact share responsibility for the breakdown, and should now share in acting responsibly to overcome it.

Let's not get into recriminations over this. The moment is too serious for that, the opportunities, fragile from the start, too much at risk to be sacrificed so cheaply. We have to acknowledge that the Unionist parties have calculatedly delayed in responding to the ceasefire these seventeen months and more since its declaration. Their reasons ought not simply be written off as discreditable. They could not foresee where any response they might make would lead. They had had nothing to do with producing the ceasefire. That had been the work of John Hume and the Adams-McGuinness leadership over a much longer time than the public had known of it, and even the Irish and British governments' participation, at such high levels as represented by the Downing Street Declaration and subsequent major government initiatives, had happened because of Nationalist effort.

Understandable as Unionist hesitation may be, however, it has shown lack of imagination and of political courage that, in all this time, they have failed even to initiate or accept any real communication with these adversaries who have risked so much to speak to them in peace.

British government, too, has let this perishable but genuine opportunity slip past, by a similar failure of imagination and courage. The issues that have created the frustrating delays, decommissioning etc., have not been the issues. They have been delay for the sake of delay. Northern Ireland Secretary Mayhew has stated as much, when he has said that all-party talks are not feasible unless all parties will come. But by creating these delaying issues, Britain has let the Unionists off the hook that is properly their hook. If they have not wished to come to any sort of talks, they should have to bear the onus of that themselves, and not have Britain covering for them, relieving them of responsibility even to examine their own paralyzed inactivity. That Britain should do so means that there is no parity, that the proclaimed legitimacy of Nationalist political aspirations is not treated, by the British authority that has responsibility for the Province, like the equal legitimacy of the Unionist political position.

The British have made a judgment, too, that there was value in proceeding slowly, that it gave the parties time to acclimate themselves to the new situations produced by the peace, to build trust. Their judgment has been mistaken. Delays over decommissioning, and now over their unilateral demand for an election, have not created trust, but have done the opposite. I happen to see no such terrible inopportuneness in the proposal of an Assembly election as both SDLP and Sinn Fein have believed. But the *Diktat* character of the decision and the transparent use of the proposal rather for the sake of delay than for any intrinsic merit it may have, have corroded public trust to such an extent as to have occasioned this day's catastrophic and inexcusable breach of the ceasefire.

What should happen now? British and Unionist response should seek to regain what has been lost, not just get even, knowing that it has been lost by their timidity and misjudgment, the unacceptable inadequacy of their response to the last seventeen months' events, as well as by the despair of their IRA adversaries, who have still understood no better how to deal with the British and Unionists than to return to the futility of bombing. Sinn Fein has its own debt of failure to pay too. It has not, in the time of ceasefire, stated plainly the actual reason that had brought about the ceasefire in the first place: that the Republican movement had come to realize that they could not in justice try to coerce their Unionist neighbors into accepting their position, but must *win their consent,* as enshrined so clearly in the Mitchell report.

It will need all the parties backing off, and not seeking to delegitimize each other, to recover what can be recovered from this debacle. That should surely be the objective of the American Administration, which still has all its hard-won credibility with all parties.

210

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 11, 1996

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
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51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011-44-1232 231723

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

I wish you that ever so genuinely.

Things are much worse than I had realized when I wrote to you Friday night. I'm rather grateful that *The Boston Globe* didn't print the Op-Ed of which I sent you a copy. It might have been all right on the Saturday morning, and I was glad I'd sent copies of it to you and to Anthony Lake, as index of what I saw by that time, but by today it would already have been far behind events.

You must be full of analyses and second thoughts, doubtless much discouraged by the failure of hopes. I don't want to persecute you with paper, but I've been analysing carefully myself, and from such another perspective than much of what you'll have been hearing, that I felt I should put my thoughts before you.

The end of the ceasefire is unwelcome to me, as it is to everyone, including those who made the decision. Your statement in response to Mitchell, Martin, that there was no division in the IRA, had us wondering whether it was so or not, and when we heard of the bomb we even rather hoped that it might be a splinter group. That, of course, would have had its own destructiveness about it, perhaps even worse than what has actually happened. By now it is clear that the IRA leadership acted with unified authority in this decision. The most comfort I can take is in the opening words of their formal statement: "***It is with great reluctance*** that the leadership of Oglaigh na h Eireann announces...." I believe their reluctance. I hope, too, that the bomb may be a one-shot, and will not be followed up by further bombings or shootings that could let loose terrible new suffering in Ireland. I'm writing myself to friends among the Loyalist paramilitary groups, echoing Gusty Spence's plea that they not respond to the bombing with retribution. I'm so immersed, all the time, in Middle Eastern suffering that I'm especially grieved to hear of the poor Arab news-dealer so haplessly caught in this, along with others; his death a forgettable foot-note to it all.

Inevitably, you got all the demands, Gerry, that you condemn the deed, as you might have if it were a breakaway group. I commend your answer; that you will not indulge in selective condemnation, that the ceasefire was not built on any such thing and that you would not do it now. You need to be able to speak to, and authoritatively for, the Republican Movement, one of whose parts has decided on this, and could not do so if you set a wall of rejection between yourself and them, as your enemies understand quite well. The call for you to condemn them is a divide-and-conquer ploy, merely. It is your stupendously hard work of many years, in bringing about the ceasefire, that is destroyed by this event. I certainly can't doubt that both of you have been and remain among the best hopes and most committed workers for peace in all this contest.

The single fact about this that stands out most for me is that **the IRA didn't tell you.**

That's important, to my mind, because it is among the primary weaknesses of the movement, from its very beginnings, that it has never been able to come to terms with the authority of a civilian leadership. This is a problem for all governments, including British and American, Israeli, Turkish, and many others where military leadership either gives instruction to the civilian or refuses to submit to civilian instruction to one degree or another. I've been familiar with and worked with it in the case of such movements as the PLO, in its ambiguous relation to the PNC, the Kurdish KDP and PUK and their thus far failed relation to the Iraqi National Congress, ZANU and ZAPU in their time, and many others. Seeing how the Turkish generals have always been able to veto any more conciliatory approach of their government (Osal, Demirel, Ciller have each attempted it) toward the Kurds or the PKK, I've pointed out to our own William Jefferson Clinton the Turkish-style problem he has himself, where the U.S. military (in a new development for us) treats his instructions as suggestions which they may or may not accept.

The IRA has never, until you brought about this ceasefire, discovered how to allow civilian leadership to do anything other than by license of the Army Council. That's a devastating liability for anyone, including a liberation movement. You overcame it to a great extent when you persuaded the IRA, with a lot of help from the prestige granted you by the Clinton Administration's blessing, and before that by John Hume's work in winning you a hearing first from the Irish and then the British governments, to authorize a political peace effort that was, necessarily, under your direct jurisdiction rather than theirs. For the internal character and strength of the movement, that is what is lost by this breach of the ceasefire, of which they did not (and I suppose, as a practical matter, could not) tell you. It's a terribly serious loss, and attention should be given to repairing it.

I share entirely your frustration, and the IRA's, at the delaying tactics that have made such a shambles of the political initiative you took. As I wrote the other night, I don't think this is a time for recriminations, or that they offer anything useful. The responsibility is with the Unionists, who have been frightened of getting into any self-propelled initiative in the peace process you have launched. That has shown, as I put it before, lack of imagination and of political courage on their part. Their fear is sufficiently understandable that I would not put it down to anything so simple as malice. The peace, or at least the cessation of violence with an opportunity for peace, was something of such important value to their real interests that it diminishes them immeasurably, in the basic humanity of their community, not to have found a way to transcend their anxiety and respond to it. You experienced this as adament intransigeance. I, having a great affection for these people and respect for their traditions, which you very likely share, perceived it in terms of sheer disappointment.

They were helped, in this paralysis of will and imagination, by British government, which covered up for them by concocting one delaying tactic after another to excuse them from the fearful burden of talking to you. None of the pre-condition demands, whether the word "permanent," the decommissioning requirement or this more recent unilateral insistence on an election, has been, to my mind, the actual issue it has been presented to be, nor for that matter, has any one of them been without some actual merit. But their merits have not been the reason for presenting them. Each of them has in fact been delay for delay's sake.

I won't make the supposition of malice on the British side either. Prime Minister Major gave more serious priority and took more political risks to bring the Irish situation to resolution than any other Prime Minister I know of – you have to go back to Gladstone to find a like commitment – and need not have done that. Everything has been, on his part, the giving of hostages to fortune. I'll concede honesty

2/2

to what I see as his error -- no government, of course, is one person, or of one mind, but is a contentious cockpit of many competing persons, interests and prejudices.

Nevertheless, by taking away the onus of refusing the all-party talks from the Unionists, the British have made it unnecessary for the Unionists ever to face their own responsibility. They made a judgment, too, that delay had a value in its own right, that by moving slowly they were permitting people the time to digest developments in the peace process and adapt to the range of new possibilities it opened. From hearing them., I think they made that honestly too. Their judgment was bad. The discouragement that the delay caused was much more important than the things they were looking at, in fact drastically dangerous. That's what happened to your peace initiative.

The Unionists never had anything to do with it. They welcomed the breakdown, and used it as an occasion to suggest still more disruptive things, like refusing you, Gerry, any further visas to visit the United State. But the initiative itself was of your creation -- with help from John Hume, from the Irish *and British* governments, from the Clinton Administration and the many Irish-American and other advisers who enabled Clinton to be of help. It has always been a mystery to me when I have heard you seeming to credit the Downing Street Declaration or other actions of British and/or Irish government with central initiatives, when in fact it was your action., with John Hume, that was the reason anything else happened.

I fault you too, however, in ways that I have already explained to you in previous letters and conversations, again with understanding for why you have acted as you did. As I understand it (and I've worked hard at doing that), the reason for your ceasefire was a recognition by the Republican Movement, at your instigation, that your Protestant/ Unionist neighbors had to be treated with respect, that their consent had to be won to a new mutually acceptable status for both your peoples, that whatever injustices the Catholic/Nationalist people had been subjected to, the Protestants/Unionists could not simply be subjected to your purposes any more justly than you could to theirs.

The fault I find with you is that that has not been plainly enough stated, certainly not plainly enough for them to be persuaded that that is your judgment. If they had been, they would have talked with you. Any leadership that would have refused to do so would have been judged cynical and obstructive, and would have been swept aside by their own people. Interestingly, it is the Loyalists who have understood you best, and have most recognized that this is the meaning of your ceasefire. I've felt, from the time they first joined their ceasefire to yours, that they were the first people you should be talking to -- much more important than talking to the British -- and that, on the ground of your conversation with them, you should be looking for the Unionist leadership that would break ranks and talk directly with you, with due care not to cause division within Unionism.

I think I know why it has been so difficult for you to state plainly that that is the position of the Republican Movement. It means that coercion, an attempt to force the Unionists to consent to your program by violence, is not acceptable. And that in turn means that the IRA's coercion campaign of the twenty five years was all lost time, and all the deaths and suffering lost. That is hard to admit. I think it a necessary corollary of conclusions to which your thinking led the Republican Movement. I've always said plainly myself, in practically every letter or conversation with either of you, that I did not accept that the IRA had the Just War that, I know, has great importance for you, even though I recognize the subjective conviction by which people in the IRA have believed their war was just. My rejection of it has been for exactly this reason, as I've been writing and saying to people in the IRA ever since the 1970s.

What you have been saying instead has been ambiguous, and contained a distinction that I don't believe can be sustained, as again I have written to you before. You have all professed, genuinely I believe, full respect for the Protestant/Unionist people and their rights, and have used the language of seeking their consent, but have distinguished that languageof consent from a Unionist right to veto. An argument can be made for a large part of this: the Unionists have no right to veto the according of *your* rights, as in fact they have done, throughout the history of Northern Ireland, and with British support. But to say they have no right to veto a simple acceptance of your Republican program is to deny their right of consent. You can't have that, as a matter of justice. Consent from them is something you have to win, and it may be that you have to come, by mutual understanding and consent, to interim and/or compromise agreements. You've all recognized, if reluctantly, that the process would take time, but I don't believe you've seen why. This, by the way, is not for the British to do, but for you and your Unionist neighbors.

Where does all that leave us? I don't know all the steps that need to be taken to restore or reopen a peace process, as I'm sure you want to do, but I know some guidelines, based on the suppositions I've been laying out here.

I think you're entirely right not to get into condemnation of the IRA. This is within the Republican movement, and you act inside it, not outside. Inside, though, I think you need to be arguing firmly against what has been done, the bombing, the break of the ceasefire, and for the resumption of a civilian-run political effort. You've done this with success before. The IRA's action -- you know it, as I know it -- was wrong. I'm sure you've already told them so, and you know how to argue it. In particular, you need to argue against any further violent action. In my judgment, as I've explained, it simply isn't justified. Nor was the bombing they did on Friday. I think you actually share the premises on which I judge that. Your unvarnished view of it is for them, not for the outside.

I think you need the Loyalists. They have suffered exactly the same stone-wall as you have, and will understand your dilemma better than any others. From the beginning of their ceasefire, they have said it was contingent on the IRA's keeping to its ceasefire. I won't concede them any right to act with violence either, but in those stated terms the bets are off. Nevertheless, they have Gusty Spence's plea not to retaliate, and doubtless many other people's, and to the best of my knowledge have refrained from any retaliation so far. I think you should be talking to them. (It's hard to pick up news at this distance. I watched for everything I could these last two days, and once saw Billy English passing over the CNN screen, but at a time when I had muted the TV while I talked with someone on the phone, so I don't know what he said. I have a lot of trust in his good instinct.)

I hope the Clinton Administration won't break contact now. I'm sure you understand the constraints it will be under now that the bomb has gone off, but I expect there will be channels kept open. I will write again to Anthony Lake, as I did briefly Friday night, sending him a copy of this letter, and for what it is worth I will do my best to open channels with others too, especially Unionists and the British. I'm sure many others, some with better access, will do as much. But you surely understand that you are nowhere with almost any of the serious forces that can be of help to you until you can once again speak authoritatively of peace in the name of the Republican Movement. That is absolute priority.

There was a time, when I was engaged in mediating in the hunger strike situation, from late July into September of 1981, that I talked myself with members of the Army Council. I well remember, Gerry, meeting you (Sinn Fein, not Army Council!) on my fiftieth birthday, September 7, '81. It's the only time I've ever spoken directly with you, and you told me that you had telephoned the Northern Ireland Office the night before, after that long time I had gone back and forth between IRA and them, to say that I did not speak for the Republican Movement. That was quite true in my understanding too. I had been asked, at the start of my stint, to convey certain things the IRA wanted said to the Northern Ireland Office, but

basically I had gone along to the IRA with my own interpretation of what was going on, and had asked their view of it simply so that I would not, after giving that interpretation to the Northern Ireland Office itself, have them saying they didn't see it that way. From that time on I had talked *to* the IRA and *to* the Northern Ireland Office over that period, looking for options that could be mutually beneficial.

Just now, though, I want to say that, if it would be helpful, I would gladly talk with members of the Army Council, under any conditions and for as much time as they felt useful. I offer that rather than urge it. And I can give assurance that, over the nearly fifteen years since I last talked with members of the Council, no one at all has ever heard a name from me or any indication of who I spoke with. I do have the *sagart*'s capacity to keep my mouth shut.

With all best wishes, prayers and hopes for a recovery from this sad situation, I am yours

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

2.15

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 11, 1996

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Lake,

The attached letter to Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, I think, will be self-explanatory. I thought you should have a copy.

So far as you and the Clinton Administration, with your extraordinarily helpful record in the Northern Ireland situation, are concerned, I feel the main priority is that you not let the contact be broken between you and Gerry Adams, as he goes through this crisis of the IRA's renewed bombing -- what I hope will be one bomb and not a new bombing campaign.

I will be writing, and will send copies of this Adams letter, to the British government -- my most immediately useful contact for the moment, I think, is with Ms. Clare Krepsfield of the Northern Ireland Office Planning Bureau at Westminster, as I had a long and useful conversation with her last week -- and to some of the Unionist and Loyalist figures. I will send you along copies of what I write to them as well.

With best wishes,

sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

216

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 12, 1996

Ms. Clare Checksfield
Northern Ireland Office
Westminster
c/o Mr. Jim Poston
British Consulate-General, Boston
FAX 248-9578

Dear Ms. Checksfield,

Christ's Peace!

Thank you, first, for so graciously coming by for breakfast last week. It was a very helpful conversation for me. I phoned in to Jim Poston's office, thinking I might get a direct FAX number for you, but actually suggested myself that I might do better to FAX this over to Jim, so that he would know what the locals here in Boston were writing.

Since the bomb went off Friday I've been writing pretty heavily, first the Op-Ed piece for *The Boston Globe*, which doubtless you will get with this. I sent that by FAX to Tony Lake in Washington and to Adams and McGuinness, each with pretty obvious hortatory notes to underline the points that were aimed particularly at them. When the newspaper didn't print my piece Saturday morning, I felt it was more important that they at least had it, and was a bit relieved not to see it on Sunday, since I had still left a bit of a question mark over who had set off the bomb, IRA or some splinter or rival. Today I was told the piece would appear in the Tuesday paper, and removed that question mark. You'll find much of it familiar from our conversation last week.

Part of yesterday, at any rate, I spent writing a more thorough letter to Adams and McGuinness, of which I enclose a copy here. It has gone down to Tony Lake also. I mean to write also to some of the Loyalists, perhaps Billy English, though I haven't tracked down a FAX number for him yet. That's less urgent, though, since other voices will count more than mine in holding Loyalists' temper, than that I write to some of the UUP people I have talked with most closely. I think I'll settle on Roy Beggs and Martin Smyth, and ask that they share what I write, especially with the Cunninghams. I'd like to write to Ken Maginnis (the green wood!) and David Trimble, but my instinct is that they would be more closed to the sort of thinking I represent just now unless they were to hear it from colleagues. You'll have copies of what I write to them as well. I recall Jim Poston, when I first told him of my habit of letting people know what I was saying in other parts of such a conversation as this, being surprised, and saying that diplomats normally tried not to do that, but I do find it useful to keep my own part in the discussion as open as I can.

It is my assessment, as you know, that the central intransigeance that has kept everything stalled this last year and more is on the part of the Unionists. I have quite a lot of sympathy with the quandary the ceasefires presented them, and have talked with them most about how necessary it was for them to break through it. I have not appreciated it, as I told you, that British policy, as I see it, has given them license simply to evade their responsibility.

It's of British policy, of course, that I want to write to you. I gather that you report most directly to Michael Ancram, whom I haven't yet met. I've seen Sir Patrick Mayhew a fair number of times here in Boston, and hope you will greet him cordially for me.

A first matter of concern to me is what you are actually facing in the way of popular response among the Catholics/Nationalists of the North. I've been aware of a great head of frustration building up there about the lack of progress since the ceasefires, and an inclination to blame it on a Unionist refusal to respond in any way to the new situation created by the ceasefires, supported by delaying tactics from British government. I hear very little inclination to recognize positive things British government has done, in getting to the ceasefire situation, withdrawing troops, removing barricades, any of the things that you could list so readily. Instead, the perception I hear is that every new step has been met with British reluctance and a Unionist refusal even to recognize that there has been real change on the Republican side.

How that translates after the bomb is unclear to me. I've watched, in the scrappy bits we find in our U.S. news media, for the street interviews. So far I've come across few, and those showed mostly confusion about how to react: some apprehension about a new outbreak of violence affecting people themselves, of course. Irish-American attitudes have gotten more exposure here, possibly some sort of mirror-image of what people are thinking there. Some reporters have found the fat-heads who say there was good reason for the IRA to break a ceasefire that was producing no result -- I think of a CNN report the other night that drew mostly on New Yorkers. The reporter would have known, easily, where to find those people and could predict their response. Other interviews have been full of regret, hope that the ceasefire can be restored, the peace process go on, and great puzzlement on whether it is all over or not.

I expect it to take a few days before that popular attitude is even decided in the North. You have great trouble if, because of the frustration, it is in favor of the bombing. I don't suspect that people will want it to go on to any second action. That the IRA itself should be discredited and rejected by its popular base is also, I think, unlikely. And that any positive response to the bomb would undercut the effort of the Sinn Fein leadership that put together the ceasefire in the first place will not, I expect, be widely understood.

I take it as read that Adams and McGuinness, having devoted years of their lives to bringing the IRA to acceptance of the ceasefire, with all the basic political judgments that involved, can be relied on as promoters of the peace. They have taken vast risks of their own credit and even lives over those years, though that risk would not now, even in the crisis, come from their Republican following, for whom they remain heroes of the peace. (They are yet in great danger from angry Loyalist individuals, and would be immediate targets of any concerted Protestant paramilitary retribution move, if it should come to that.)

But there is virulent reluctance on the Unionist side to believe anything good of them, readiness to interpret anything they say or do in a negative sense, a spate of rumor and gossip to discredit them. I conclude that it would be terribly irresponsible if British government statements or attitudes were to feed that irrational response. I am very wary of declarations that Adams' and McGuinness' word has been proven false, or any statements that fail to recognize the difference between IRA and its decision-making on the one hand and their role on the other. They can be put at risk by such statements, or delegitimized in public in a way that makes them, the only ones who could bring about a definitive cessation of violence, unavailable. That would mean a return of very long duration to violence, likely worse than what it was before the ceasefire, until a new revisionist leadership could emerge, think its way through the conundrums, take all the risks these two have taken to bring the organization with them and get back to the point that was already reached in September '94, no better. Blame for such a development would likely stick to British government if such statements were the context.

I say that while, in fact, very angry at the IRA itself. They have learned nothing if they think a bombing, with death and injury of the innocent, terrorism in its strictest definition, will function as an argument in favor of their position. It is the work of these Sinn Fein revisionists that they have harmed.

218

In government statements, I hear that the peace process will go forward, but that IRA and Sinn Fein (no distinction recognized between them) will be no part of it, unless or until they, effectively, become good. That urge to distinguish the good and the evil among persons is, I believe, a pernicious part of the current exercise. We are dealing with the perceptions common in whole populations, and in the Northern Catholic perception -- a wider Irish perception as well, and in the newly influential American public the most common Irish-American but also broader perception too -- the whole history of Britain's role in Ireland and specifically many aspects of its stance in the years of "the troubles" and even in the present state of things are given the "evil" stamp in turn. Hence any appeal to classifications of good and evil comes across as simple self-righteousness. It will win arguments only for those who are already its partisans.

I see it also as self-deception to believe that a process that leaves the IRA and Sinn Fein out can be seen as a peace process. This precisely is the problem that robs Ireland (and Britain) of its peace: that a fundamental disenchantment with the way the society is governed expresses itself in a violent movement. It is not, by the way, that there is an IRA, but that there is an alienation in society that the IRA expresses. A very precious opportunity has been opened for a radical and peace-producing rethink, *within* the movement, by the revisionist leadership of Sinn Fein. The quest for a resolution of that alienation will not be turned to non-violent paths in any other way than that internal one. It's my own opinion that the opportunity, thus far, has been wasted by the (understandable) dithering of Unionists. What Britain has been responsible to do, in that situation, was to ease the way for the Unionists to put their feet in the waters of this troubling opportunity for peaceful process, but government has instead fed their paranoia and provided them artificial excuses to do nothing and not face any responsibility of their own for that inaction.

There is the question, always raised, of how far the IRA or "The Republican Movement" actually represents people, and the British and Unionist inclination has traditionally been to measure that by electoral results, in which Sinn Fein gets only very modest returns. I've never believed that is a valid measure. The IRA represents a feeling of grievance for its public, which sometimes grants it emotional license for violent expression of that grievance, sometimes steps back in revulsion against its excesses without ceasing to value it for the expression of grievance, and consistently sees it as a defensive bulwark against violent repression by the state and the hostile actions -- pogroms -- of a violence-prone Unionist public. The same public that sustains the IRA in that way has traditionally turned elsewhere to express its more positive and articulate political agenda, the SDLP being only the latest in a series of parties that fill that role. Not until the events of 1981 partially changed that situation, particularly the fortuitous election of Bobby Sands to Parliament while on hunger strike, did Sinn Fein need to be taken at all seriously in electoral terms. As it was, only about a third of the Nationalist electorate changed its habits then, the rest staying with the tradition of having one entity to express its grievance, another for the electoral role. But it remains true that the public for Republicanism and for the SDLP are basically one and the same. Lack of electoral support for Sinn Fein does not mean non-support for the feeling of grievance, or non-legitimation for its Republican expression.

Quite apart from the built-in Unionist majority, the realisation of this relation between Republican expression of grievance and the separate electoral preferance of this public is the reason they are so reluctant about elections in the form they are now being presented. They are being asked to make a choice where, in fact, they do not make a choice. Both sides of the fork are parts of their tradition, and they see the requirement that they make a choice as an unwelcome fragmentation of that already threatened tradition. The way out of this is to disinfect the grievance part of this equation of the acceptance of violence as its legitimate expression, create a genuine political way to address that part of the community's consciousness that has traditionally been addressed by violence, and so delegitimize the violence itself without delegitimizing its political objective.

That is exactly what the Sinn Fein revisionists have been doing, with a success that was marred only when it appeared that their political effort was being set altogether at nought by a simple refusal, by the Unionists, to deal at all in political terms. It was already a great problem for Sinn Fein and the SDLP that they had no convincing way to distinguish between their parties so long as their common objectives were to be pursued only by peaceful means. They had no need to oppose one another at that level, although they both realized the value to their common position, as representatives of a disenfranchised and basically disadvantaged community, of having both parties. That figures very largely in their reluctance to have an election which would put them in an undesired competition with each other. Once a peaceful and constitutional political situation would be achieved, and the violence element removed from the equation, the need for the two parties would likely fade, and they might be expected to merge.

I have to agree, for now, that an election, decreed against the clear wishes of that electorate, in present post-bombing circumstances would be inflammatory, as Mr. Bruton has said. That is because it is now presented as the good-and-evil contest that is such a useless diversionary issue. Neither the "good" nor the "evil" party accepts its label. There are other objections too, which have always been there and for which there are some cures being proposed, such as that an election has always thrown up the most intransigeant position among Unionists. I still don't see that those problems can't be dealt with, though a great part of the cure I would see is that talk among all the parties *precede* the elections and be the means by which their terms are established. That would mean that the most intransigeant positions are not the ones that would dominate the process. But to insist that, because of the bombing, elections are the only way forward now, is to inject that good-and-evil element into the heart of the procedure.

I won't try to draw all the conclusions from this. My impression is that these considerations are not the ones that British government is actively considering just now, but that instead ways of triumphing over the IRA are at the center of its attention. That feeds the trouble. The IRA is still seen as expression of a true grievance, however much people may detest the specific violence of its action, and the defender. The people who believe this have had the impression all along that Britain did not want to address the grievance or the need of their community for protection against known injustice, but preferred to goad the IRA into positions in which it could be destroyed, wiped out, and their grievance left without expression. All the delays of this period of the ceasefire have been read in that way: that Britain preferred the IRA violent so that it could be fought to the death. True or not, rational or not, that is the thinking you face. I don't believe it is being addressed.

I hope this isn't too convoluted. I do genuinely wish you well, and recognize the good will, particularly on the part of your Prime Minister Major, that the Republican movement finds it so difficult to credit. Trust does have to be built, as everyone keeps saying. That is true for the Unionists, that their trust needs to be won. It is true for the Nationalists/Republicans too. Their fat-heads have put them in the wrong, but it is still essential that their trust be won. I don't see that it is being done.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

220

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 17, 1996

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011-44-1232 231723

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

I'm somewhat reluctant to overdo writing and urgings to you, but understand that you are going through great stress in your effort to save the peace initiative. I read what little *The Boston Herald* printed of its interview with you in this morning's edition, Gerry, and agreed thoroughly that you need any help the Clinton Administration could give you in recovering what has been lost by the IRA's termination of its ceasefire. That has been my own urging, too, as you've seen.

When I wrote to Clare Checksfield last Monday, the letter you've also seen, I urged the British Government to hold off from good-and-evil responses to the situation, which cut so obviously both ways, and to be wary of a Northern Catholic response that might yet, because of frustration at the long sequence of delays in the peace process, be favorable to the IRA's action. By now, from all I see (very spotty from this distance), it seems the reaction has largely gone quite the other way. I'm relieved to see that. But as a practical consequence, which I hope is reflected in your own dealings with the people on the Army Council who made the decision to break the ceasefire, that means that they have lost rather than gained by their action, and have to reckon with that in their further decisions.

This is a matter of reality check. It was fairly predictable, though there was the stray possibility that the public reaction would be more provoked by the dilatory British and Unionist tactics than it would be by the return to violence. At a moral level, which I know is of importance to you as to me, the killing and injury done to innocent people was entirely inexcusable. The killing of hope, I suppose, by the government's delaying tactics and by this action of the IRA's, was roughly comparable, which excuses neither the one nor the other.

Agreeing, as I do, with your judgment that condemnation, especially if selective, is not a useful way to restore the prospect of peace at this time, I would emphasize simply that the IRA's decision, a bad one in my reading, has put them in the wrong even with their own public. It has undercut your authority as political representatives of Republicanism very deeply, and made their statement of ultimately peaceful and just intentions much less publicly credible than it was before. I hope they really understand this, and in writing to you I hope you will not be sweetening the cup for them, or easing the way for them to any delusions about the effect of their action. Rather than expect more responsiveness to their demands, however just those may be, they now have to calculate that they get less rather than more. That will doubtless be disappointing to them, and they may be very reluctant to admit, to themselves or others, that it is so. But to hold out for positive results from an action that can only produce negative results is simply to dig the hole deeper. We used to speak, during the the Vietnam war, of the U.S. and the Johnson Administration marching "on into the deep muddy." That is what the IRA is doing at present. A reality check is essential for them. It's their judgment I impugn here, not their motives.

May I offer again my own readiness to talk with them, discretely, without any sort of publicity or any revelation of who I might see, and to a time-table they would set themselves. I'm afraid that much of what they are hearing from others or saying among themselves will be colored entirely by emotional reaction for or against what they have done or wish to result from it. What would be more helpful to them, I think, would be cooler assessment of what results follow from what decisions and actions. Hence I am not anxious simply to moralize to them.

I have the highest admiration for the work you two have done, over these several years now, in thinking through your position without breaching the loyalty of your movement, and then carefully introducing a new kind of thinking to the responsible military commanders of the IRA. Consequently I have great confidence in your representing intelligibly to them such unwelcome ideas as I write here, and my offer to talk with them myself is only for so far as, in your judgment, it might help.

I will be sending a copy of this along to Tony Lake, but as it might simply encourage the British to hold out more stubbornly than they might otherwise, I will not send this one along to them. Best wishes. May your efforts for peace and for justice be successful,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

222

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 21, 1996

Mr. Anthony Lake
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500
FAX (202) 456-9300

Dear Mr. Lake,

I hope I don't intrude if I come up with more suggestion about the Irish situation.

A crisis everyone seems to anticipate now is that the man killed in the London bus bomb will be the bomb carrier, will be returned to Northern Ireland for burial, and that Gerry Adams will be on call to act as pall bearer and give a eulogy, something very hard for him to refuse, destructive if he does it.

Why not, as soon as the date of a funeral is clear, invite Adams urgently to the United States precisely then, and get him away from the funeral? It could be for a meeting with Senator Mitchell, or for some other reason.

One of the most positive developments recently has been the decision of the Loyalist paramilitaries not to let themselves be lured into a retaliatory campaign if they can avoid it. A very useful exercise, which could be made the occasion for such a summons to Adams at the time of the funeral, and with which the Loyalist parties might well go along, would be to have joint talks between Sinn Fein and the UDP and PUP leaders under Senator Mitchell's auspices, even the proximity talks of the Bruton proposal if that were all that could be accomplished.

Long ago I learned that, in such matters as these, bright ideas are not of much use if the parties don't really want to come to agreement. It seems to me that Adams, and I would expect McGuinness also, really do want a way to reinstate the ceasefire now if that can be reached, and that the Loyalists do too, all of them seeing the prospect as linked it to the opening of real all-party talks. My idea of inviting them to the U.S. doesn't seem to me as bright as it might be, in fact rather fragmentary. But what I would be sure of is that the foreseeable crisis of the funeral is something we should all be planning against in advance.

It has the peripheral advantage that it would bring Adams to the U.S. for a purpose more clearly contributing to the recovery of the peace prospects than all the hoopla of a St. Patrick's Day parade.

Sincerely,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 15, 1996

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX: 011-44-1232 231723 -- 1st of 8 pages

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

I'd be grateful if you would transmit the letter that follows this to the Army Council people.

It's a long time since I addressed them directly, back in the time of the 1981 hunger strike, when I was referred to them by the Dublin Sinn Fein and saw something of them over the following six weeks. Right now I know they are getting appeals for a reinstatement of the cease-fire from all sorts of people, but I figure they should have one from me in particular, because I both know and respect them.

I've been following the newsof the threat of a breakdown of the Loyalist cease-fire by the UVF, the bomb-scare -- no bomb -- at the Dublin airport, David Ervine's and Roy Magee's comments, and I feel the PUP people really need some encouragement now to hold to their cease-fire. So I will send a copy of this letter to the Army Council, with a cover letter for himself, to David, but more slowly, by regular mail, so that the Army Council people have some time to think about this argument for themselves. The time to the show-down date of June 10th keeps getting closer. I really take it more seriously that you should all be talking to the Loyalists and Unionists themselves than that you should be in the British-run June 10th talks, but I do take them seriously enough to time this enclosed letter by them.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

224

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 15, 1996

Members of the Army Council
Irish Republican Army

Dear Leaders of The Republican Movement

Christ's Peace!

Yes, this is another plea for the restoration of the cease-fire, of which you must see many. It is earnestly meant. I last dealt directly with you during the late summer of 1981, when for some six weeks I mediated, very quietly, between persons of the Army Council and officials of the Northern Ireland Office in the matter of the hunger strike. I feel I demonstrated then the respect I maintain for both your parties.

I understand the frustrations out of which you terminated the cease-fire last February, though I can't in any way approve your decision. I think you made a bad judgment that has put at risk a great humane accomplishment of your movement, which you owe to the extraordinary leadership of Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, and which offered, in my opinion, the only genuine prospect of your ever fulfilling the basic humane aspirations of your movement itself. Protestants I know, whom I also respect, will scoff at the very thought of your movement having humane aspirations, as they think you aspire only to Brits out and them subjected to your domination. I've never believed that is true, and don't now. Other people I respect believe that your action in breaking the cease-fire, complete with altogether unjustifiable killing of innocents in London, has already disqualified you and your movement as participants in any genuine search for your country's peace and future happiness. I think they are wrong too. The real movement for peace, in the face of the genuine grievances of people of all traditions in your country, came from within your movement and is summed up in the cease-fire that you have since suspended -- I said "terminated" before, and hope I have the right word now. It was not the work of British or Irish government. And without including your movement, there is no prospect of any genuine peace for you or your neighbors.

Niall O'Dowd, in a piece in his *Irish Voice* several weeks ago, summed up very realistically what you are in the way of losing if you alienate the good will and active participation of the U.S. Clinton Administration and scuttle the effective work that the Irish American community has done, after being for so many years ineffectual. I won't attempt to reargue what O'Dowd presented so clearly, simply say that I agree with his analysis. If you lose that backing for political movement in Ireland, you will not likely have it back again. That, in the language of the conflict managers, is *leverage*, and I have to say that, as a person involved in mediation in a great number of conflicts, I don't really approve of leverage. It is a form of manipulation, and can produce a wrong result, designed to meet the mediator's agenda rather than the true agenda of the parties who have to live with the outcome. The availability of American help, in a form that has in fact rightly earned the respect of the other parties to your conflict as well, is leverage for you in dealing with your adversaries, and the threat of losing it is equally leverage against you. O'Dowd is right. This is the actual truth of the matter, the real power situation, and you ought to give it your attention.

My own interest is more in the moral conclusion that you of the Republican Movement have drawn, and then partially drawn away from, that is the origin of your admirable peace proposal in these last years. I believe I do truly understand it and am in a position to help you in interpreting some of the things that are entailed in your own experience. That is why I presume to write this letter.

When David Trimble was here in Boston late last year, for rather a truculent visit, one of the things he said was: "Spare me your Middle Eastern analogies!" I had some sympathy for his impatience, as he faced people who asked him, simplistically and as a put-down: if the Arabs and Israelis can do it, why can't you? There is a really legitimate analogy, though, that is worth noting. What the Israelis and Palestinians did in the Oslo Declaration of Principles, signing it so dramatically on the White House lawn, was to *recognize one another's legitimacy as peoples*, a thing each had refused, at their most definitive institutional levels, to do before. There has been lots of dissatisfaction with that action since then from among both peoples. Palestinians have in many cases felt there was too little to the Oslo agreement, too many necessary things left out, and a fringe group of them still refuse that basic acknowledgement of the Israelis' legitimacy as a people and as a nation. Israelis since that time have, even at the level of government policy from the "good guys," often treated the Palestinians as without any rights that they really have to respect, and the extremist fringes of Israeli opinion likewise reject the basic recognition of the Palestinians' legitimacy as a people and their own government's actions in seeking peace with them. But the basic Oslo decision, of mutual recognition as legitimate peoples, resonates and remains the basis of whatever progress has been accomplished or is still in prospect.

You did the analogous thing yourselves. Your cease-fire came not simply from a sense of stalemate -- that the Brits couldn't defeat you and you couldn't defeat them -- but from a realisation that winning your cause, the United Ireland, in a way that was defeat for the other Irish tradition[1] would be no true victory, but that instead you had to win their consent to a satisfactory form of life with you, *because you recognized their dignity and legitimacy as people*.

I've been in this discussion with your movement for a long time. I wrote it in papers I submitted to your movement in 1980 and 1981, and in a 1980 letter to Daithi O Conail and Joe Cahill, which in turn reflected conversations going well back into the '70s, and it figured largely in the conversations I had with members of your Council in the context of the hunger strike: that your movement could never live with the outcome of having a defeated, alienated population of Protestants, who felt embittered at your triumph and deprived of the right to be themselves, on its hands; that any such victory would be merely ashes in your mouths. I knew even then, in 1981, how your Council regarded Gerry Adams as the pacifist of your movement, and accepted him proudly as such, knowing the seriousness of the reflection he was doing about the movement even then. (I didn't know, until after the cease-fire, how much Martin McGuinness was in this too.) I know the resonance that had within your movement then, and I've followed the many deliberations of the Sinn Fein conventions of the later 80s to see how this kind of thinking progressively penetrated the movement. I'm sure I'm right, that on Gerry's and Martin's urging, you got to your cease-fire not just because you couldn't win militarily but because you decided you had to treat the people of the other Irish tradition with real respect.

In giving you this interpretation, I can only appeal to your own experience, and ask if you recognize that experience in the interpretation I've given. I have confidence in you that I have it right, and it is the basis for my deepest respect for what you have done over this entire long time.

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[1]I'm being very fussy about the names I call people here. I've learned better than to call them "the Protestants," as opposed to "the Catholics," however much the two traditions are one or the other, since that isn't what it's about. The favored alternative is to call them "Unionists," and that fails to describe them also, since in my reading "Unionism" is simply a defense for them against what they *don't* want -- *subjection* to you in your United Ireland -- rather than a designation of what they do want, namely the right to be their true selves. "British" isn't a useful name for them either, even if they like it, since they are truly Irish people, though different from you, and "Britishness," like "Unionism," only describes their defense mechanism, not the thing about themselves that they are legitimately defending.

As it happens, I have been around this course before, in conversations I held with Yasser Arafat and members of his PLO Executive Committee during 1985 and '86, interpreting what I saw as their real experience since the time of Arafat's gaining the chairmanship of the PLO in 1968, and recognizing that it made possible their coming to true understanding with the Israelis. They accepted the interpretation at that time as truly representing their experience, and I have worked both with them and with the Israelis since that time, through the long and still unfinished process of bringing that understanding to fruition. I have worked in a similar relation with the Kurds of Northern Iraq, and more recently with the PKK Kurds in Turkey, and with practically all of the factions in the Lebanese civil war. I say this simply to argue that I am not simply whistling in the dark as I offer such an interpretation of your own experience. You will know whether it accords with that experience or not.

I drew an analogy between this basis, as I interpret it, of your action in declaring the cease-fire and the Oslo mutual recognition by Israelis and Palestinians of one another's legitimacy as peoples. You did it unilaterally, I am sure out of deep conviction even if some of you were hesitant about the practical consequences. You have had some drawing back since then, because of what you've seen as manipulative delaying tactics on the part of the Unionists and their British supporters, which have called into question their legitimacy in your eyes. This is an ambiguous thing. It is not their legitimacy as people who must be treated with respect that is thrown into question, but their good faith in responding to your initiative.

The fact is that the Unionists have not dealt with you and your community with anything like equal respectful recognition of your legitimacy. They've toyed with you, and tried to play your initiative for unfair advantage to themselves. I give this current British government high marks for treating the Irish situation more seriously, and giving it higher priority, than any other British government since Gladstone's. But they have, nevertheless, knowingly covered for the Unionists in this rather cynical game. The details interest me less – decommissioning, etc., the various ploys of the delay. I find it more important to keep my eyes on the main action.

That sounds very condemnatory of them. The truth, though, is that they genuinely don't trust you, or believe that you ever meant what the cease-fire said. That excuses a great deal on their part, and at least makes it intelligible as something other than simple perversity. You, in response to this, have reverted to a coercion policy, trying to force a different response by breaking the cease-fire. That is a breach of your much more serious prior decision and, in my judgment, sign of weak resolve on your part.

What's at stake here? What you've gone back on is not simply the renunciation of force that you made in the cease-fire, but *the resolve to seek the consent* of the people of the other tradition.

You've all (in this I include Adams and McGuinness and other Sinn Fein people along with you) been over this ground a great deal since the cease-fire, looking for a middle term between consent and veto: you grant the need for Unionist consent but don't concede them a veto. I've written several times to Adams and McGuinness that I don't believe any such middle ground exists. If the consent of the Unionists to something new is to be had, it has to be won and cannot simply be demanded. They won't consent until they trust you. As of now, they don't want your agenda of the United Ireland. Before you can even get to that agenda, you have first to be on speaking terms with them (as you are not now) and then to find what common interests you actually have with them (and there are many). This will take time. All the time that has been spent in the shooting war has been wasted time for this purpose, the one really useful purpose for your ends, all the deaths wasted deaths, and the time spent now in this curious non-cease-fire, with bombs in London that are apparently intended not to do anything, is also wasted time, destructive of your purpose.

When in fact you do get to the agenda of the constitutional status of Ireland (one Republic, a continued union of the North with Britain, two independent states in Ireland, a federation or confederation, between two elements of Ireland or between Ireland and Britain and/or Europe – there are many contending possibilities for what might come out of a real negotiation in which all were real negotiators, not one dictating and the others tugging their forelocks), then the outcome may be something other than the one you propose, for which you have so adamantly fought. What is required is that it satisfy the community you represent and satisfy the others also. You've never really talked with them about that, only issued ultimatims (and of course received theirs). You both have real interests, which must both be served. Your talk of there being a principle of consent but no veto is a nonsense: it means that they must accept your ultimatim and you will accept nothing else.

The people who have, in the meantime, really understood, internalized, accepted and remained true to the basic meaning of *your* cease-fire decision are the Loyalists, who took some weeks to follow your example, were distrustful enough of you to make their cease-fire contingent on your faithfulness to your own, but have nonetheless, despite grave provocation, remained faithful to their own cease-fire on precisely the grounds that are the real reason for yours: that you, representating the legitimate tradition in Ireland other than theirs, must be treated with a respect you have never experienced from them before. Their performance deserves enormous respect, especially from you. I know you have complaints about them, basically that they have not knuckled under to things you have been presenting as demand. They have been doing better than you. They are open to what you have to say. They are ready to join with you in the quest for common interests. They don't want the specific thing you most want, the United Ireland, but they readily acknowledge that you and they must find a new way of living in one space that is Ireland and must find one that suits both you and them, whether as one or two states. You've put them, though, in the terrible bind that their most violent and unreasonable people feel compelled to respond violently to your most unreasonable actions. You've put their best leadership, like your own, under the gun.

And that brings up the topic of who you should be talking to. The matter of your broken cease-fire and whether your Sinn Fein people are fit to talk to without a renewal of your cease-fire comes up in the context of the all-party talks to be convened by British and Irish governments: 10th of June. Those are important. I'm always exercised, though, by the tendency of your whole movement, Sinn Fein as well as yourselves, to think in terms of talking to the British, and of what the British have to do or ought to do. You seem to have little sense of the opportunities that are there to speak to your neighbors without the ministrations of the British.

I recognize the damage that Britain has been historically to Ireland, and that, at present, Britain gives its supporting cover to those, the traditional Unionists, who have badly incapacitated imaginations for envisioning the future. (There is a good measure of justification for that, of course, as those people would be reduced to a terribly dangerous despair if left without that cover, until such time as you will have won their confidence by some means that you have not yet provided them.)

But it is even more important for you to be talking directly to and with your neighbors of the other tradition than to be talking with the British. I've gotten used to saying that and being told that the British have all the reins of power, but I'm not convinced. Once you and your neighbors are together, the British will be without power to prevent your doing what you choose together to do. And while the traditional Unionists still remain so reluctant to have anything to do with you or to recognize, as I've said above, your legitimacy within Northern Irish society, the Loyalists and their parties are entirely ready for constructive exchange with you, and have made the great step that you so forthrightly initiated with more conviction than you have shown yourselves. You really owe those people, and your way into mutual understanding and the development of new possibilities with your neighbors is through them. It is not up to the British to introduce you.

This still has to do with your cease-fire, suspended while we all hold our breaths and wonder whether you will ever get back to walking through the door that these among your neighbors have held so invitingly open, even while you provoke their wild-men to go on a rampage of violence as you have done yourselves and ruin every hope that your own brilliant political leadership has created.

I need to address that topic. Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, with the help of others in Sinn Fein and doubtless with the help of some among yourselves on the Army Council, persuaded you to take an alternative course that has both total moral superiority over what you were doing in the violent campaign and realistic prospects of success, though at fairly long range, which your campaign of armed force never had nor ever will have. In accepting their recommendation, you gave them a level of authority that your civilian leadership has never had before. At the time you broke the cease-fire, you took that authority back and left them very naked.

It is one of the great weaknesses of the IRA that you have never before developed the capacity to invest real decision-making authority in your civilian political leadership. Sinn Fein politicians have always been mere spokesmen for decisions of the military leadership, unable to take any action without authorisation of the military.

That's no unique problem of yours, but one that all governments share to some degree: how to keep the military subject to civilian authority. Britain doesn't do terribly well at it. Other countries all have varying degrees of trouble with it. Even in the United States, which has been more successful about it in some parts of its history than many other countries, it is evident that our military, while they don't presume to give President Clinton instructions as the military of some other countries do, still takes such instructions as he gives them as suggestions that they are free to accept or reject.

But your movement has always been particularly badly off in this respect, and needs to learn the ways of investing real authority in political leadership. Without it there's no real political program, only the kind of smoke that passed for politics among you over those recent years when your people talked a glib socialism without really having any to offer. Gerry and Martin offered you some real constructive politics that addressed your actual needs, and your accepting it put your movement on a serious plane in international political life that gave you the first real opportunity to influence the course of Ireland's future that you had had in living memory. Right now, all that is in abeyance.

When I ask, as everyone does, why you broke the cease-fire, I'm, met with the whole gamut of complaints you were making about British and Unionist delay, bad faith, lack of seriousness in taking up the opportunity for lasting peace and real development that, in truth, you and your movement had created. I'm less and less convinced that those were the reasons. You wanted a fixed date for all-party talks, and of course you have that now and have not reinstated the cease-fire. To say that the fixed date (late enough, after the previous promises that the all-party talks would start ninety days after the initiation of the cease-fire, a period that already seemed needlessly long when that promise was made) is wrapped up in the unwelcome trimmings of the Forum election is no convincing excuse for the continued non-cease-fire. Both Sinn Fein and SDLP have figured out how to deal effectively with the nonsense features of the Forum, and it is no insuperable obstacle to anything. You can't expect to have everything your way. Your adversaries are sparring for their positions too.

I note that the other parties all took positions on the Mitchell principles. For the British government and the traditional Unionists this was easy and cheap, as they changed the agenda to one of elections in the very moment of accepting the principles, without yet, at that time, having committed themselves to the fixed date for all-party talks. The Irish government and the SDLP found the principles very welcome, and embraced them readily.

The Loyalist parties spent the publication day of the Mitchell Report sweating blood until about noon, at which time they announced their acceptance of the principles, knowing that commitment to them made a tremendous and difficult change in their own position and prospects, holding them to political means only in pursuing their agenda, and rejecting further use of violence. (When their crazies talk of bombs in Dublin now, in response to your bombs in London, they are talking reciprocal violence, as vengeance, not violence to promote their agenda. It is breach of faith all the same if they do it. And I read clearly what Roy Magee reports, that the instigation for any such renewal of Loyalist violence, if it comes, will have been from middle-class Unionist politicians who use the Loyalists as patsies while denying responsibility themselves.)

You never did accept the Mitchell principles, and were so fully let off tjhe hook by the British government's changing the agenda the way they did that few people have ever made an issue of it. My suspicion is that you broke the cease-fire because you refused to accept the Mitchell principles, not because of what the British or the Unionists were doing, and that you continue to refuse reinstatement of the cease-fire for that same reason. If my suspicion is correct, I think you are mistaken to persist in rejecting the Mitchell principles. The effective point of them is rejection of force as a future means to pursue your aims. Accepting that, as a matter of principle and firm commitment, and in those terms renewing the cease-fire, opens the door to a more effective and morally tenable course for your movement. It is forthright confirmation of the conviction with which you initiated the cease-fire and real prospect of peace in the first place. I don't believe you have anything to fear from it. If you do it now, and don't stand around on one foot worrying the decision until present opportunities are simply past beyond redeeming, you have the guarantee of continued support, not specifically for your agenda but for fairness in the whole process, from the American Administration, an advantage (for everyone, not just for yourselves) that will be lost, perhaps permanently, if you wait too long.

I used to be baffled by a strange feature of Irish politics in the Republic, that the party division was between supporters and opponents of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. It meant an unnatural situation of two conservative parties sharing the field between them, three conservative parties so far as you could take Labour seriously, and I was left wondering what the treaty of 1921, at this far remove, with the anti-treaty party taking practically the same stances as the pro-treaty party, had to do with anything.

Since the declaration of the cease-fire in 1994, I find that the issues of 1921 are right back at the center of the whole political discussion. They were not dead after all. Essentially, there are two of them:

1. *How are the two traditions in Ireland going to relate to one another?* Call them Catholic and Protestant, Republican and Unionist, Irish and British nationalism, whatever you please. *Are they going to try to engulf or destroy one another, or will they find some way to accomodate one another?* In 1921, surely, each tradition was prepared without compunction to wipe the other off the map, and for much of the bloody history since they both remained so. It needn't be that way. That's the main reason why 1921 was such a failure.

2. *If there is to be progress toward a country that can live with and govern itself, must that come all at once, in one basket, or will it be incremental, over an extended period?* Republicanism has traditionally demanded it all in one basket, has never gotten it that way, and has no prospect of ever getting it that way. This happens to be the same question that the Palestinians have faced for so long. They have insisted on the one basket, with the result that they kept losing everything they had, while the Israelis, accepting an incremental strategy, have kept gaining. Only when, with Oslo, the Palestinians finally came around to an incremental approach did they begin to get anything at all.

230

I hope I have not exhausted your patience with this letter. I see the reinstatement of your cease-fire as so important for the future of Ireland that I am very urgent in recommending it.

As any of you who is familiar with things I have said or written to The Republican Movement, in any of its parts, over the years will know very well, I have never been willing to concede that you have the just war that, I know, it is very important to you to have. I concede your grievances -- your community has been terribly treated, both by Britain and by the Unionists -- and the intransigeant refusal to deal politically and democratically that you have faced. I'm always inclined to argue, in any conflict situation, that there have to be other ways than violence to approach the problem, and that touches the criterion of the necessity of a war: a war that is unnecessary is always a crime. But my reason for refusing to grant the justice of your war has always been much more specific: everything I have heard from you has been about your grievance, your suffering, your entitlement, but I have never heard from you, before this recent initiative, any program that is any good to the Protestants. That has always meant that you were planning gross injustice to the Protestants, and I've tried to say that as loudly and plainly as I can whenever I have talked to any of you.

The new thinking, new course, new understanding of your own movement that Gerry and Martin have brought to you with so much risk to themselves and such titanic effort, and that has won you such respect and practical help from a world much wider than the narrow confines of Ireland, is a treasure of your own that you should not relinguish. It is altogether unconvincing to blame the suspension of the cease-fire on the failings of the others, real and mean as they are. To break with this initiative of your own is breach of faith with what is best in yourselves and your own movement. You've earned a good future for your people through your action in 1994. I hope you don't persist in betraying it and throw it away.

I'll transmit this through Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. I write it all with the most genuine respect for you and good expectations. I still think the major problem, which you will get to and successfully resolve, is to win the participation of the Unionists. With best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 16, 1996

Mr. David Ervine
24 Woodview Place
Belfast BT5 7PD
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear David,

Christ's Peace!

You may remember meeting me when you were at Boston College back in 1994, right after the Loyalist ceasefire, and again when I was in Belfast that November and came along to a press briefing you gave on your American tour that year. I looked for you when I was in Belfast again this last November, but you were in Washington at the time.

I just sent the enclosed appeal off to the IRA's Army Council, faxing it by way of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, and I wanted you to have a copy. The work you've done in keeping the Loyalist ceae-fire in place under terrific provocation is so admirable, I thought you should have any cooperation I could give you, and that this might be some marginal help.

I'd have written to you before, but hadn't an address. I asked Tom Tracy for it quite a while back, and of course he gave me a phone number instead -- he lives that way -- which in fact turned out to be the wrong one. I tried Roy Magee's number to get your address and got his tape, but then turned up a home number for you, which I hesitated to use, and got your address from your wife. I do follow anything I hear or can read about you, and you'll see from what I write to the Republicans how much I do value and respect your work.

My greetings to Billy Hutchinson, whom I've met the same times as I have you. I didn't hear until afterwards that he had come over to Boston College again last month after running the Marathon. He was interviewed by the local papers in Boston and had things to say that made a very strong, positive impression here. I'm sorry I didn't get to see him.

What I can say in praise of your people's principled stance on the cease-fire and to encourage you and them to stick with it is better said, I think, in what I wrote to the others. Don't hesitate to share that. I don't know where your party stands now in popular estimate compared to the old-line Unionists, but you are the people who really offer some new thinking and some hope.

My regards to Roy Magee, who'll wonder at finding my voice on his tape. Best wishes to you and your associates,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

232

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 18, 1996

Hon. Ken Maginnis, M.P.
Fermanagh and South Tyrone
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Ken,

Christ's Peace!

It was very good to see you at Tom Tracy's big event in San Francisco. I was very anxious to have the conversation with you that we finally did have on the Sunday afternoon, and I'm embarrassed to be thus long in getting to the letter I told you would follow it up. The delay is basically because I didn't want to write before thinking it through thoroughly and so coming up a nonsense.

The IRA's failure to reinstate their cease-fire still hangs over the whole prospect of any more peaceful future for Northern Ireland now, though there seems to be more likelihood now that they will restore it. I'm sure that, from your point of view, the question will be one of how far their new cease-fire, if we get to it, can be trusted. Any repetition of this reversion to bombing would be even more destructive of trust than the current one. People of your circle and people like me would all need strong reassurance that any new cease-fire declaration was not simply a bid for inclusion at the table without full commitment to renounce violence in the future.

As you know, I'm a skeptic on the matter of decommissioning. Handing in guns and explosives of which there is no inventory, verifiable or otherwise, and that are as easily replaced as the things the IRA uses is not what would convince me of their renunciation. I don't make that a basis for disbelieving any chance of their good faith. Instead I would look for different signs of a true change of *thinking* among them and commitment to a purely political and non-violent strategy.

I think they've already once accepted that kind of *metanoia* from their political thinkers, Adams and McGuinness, but with some apprehension from the start (how could they not have some?), and have then fallen away from confidence in it. I look for them to make a new and trustworthy commitment to the proposition that they must treat you of the Unionist tradition with respect, with no attempts at coercion, and the best sign of that, for me, would be a really convincing adoption of the Mitchell Principles.

I grant that, among their weapons, the Semtex is a special case, as something not easy to replace, and I get the shivers when I read of their escapades with the Russian Mafia, shopping in Moscow even before February 9th for nuclear materials, though that seems to have been a wild goose chase. What worries me more about those things is what it shows of mentality rather than the things themselves.

In any case, I've written recently to the Members of their Army Council, making the obvious plea for reinstatement of the cease-fire in what I hope is my own less than obvious way of arguing the case, and I enclose a copy of what I wrote them. I wouldn't be comfortable with writing such things to them were I not to share them with you and your friends.

There are things I'm anxious to say to yourselves of the Unionist side that are the complement to this. You've heard all this before from me. My expectation is that the IRA will do at least the minimum necessary to get to the table, and that the main question then will be what the Unionists do.

Ever since the 1994 cease-fires by the militants of both sides I've been aware of Unionist reluctance to get into a negotiation process that the party had not instigated. (Should I be speaking of "The party?" There is one party, of course. It's had its splits in recent decades and has generally gotten together again. Something like Paisley's DUP is simply megaphone for the most intransigent of the family. The main-stream is often so intimidated by him that it grants him veto power over its own actions, which makes him "the party" even though under separate administration. There are probably two Unionist parties within the UUP now, with David Trimble and his new boys talking a stiffer hard-line than the Molineux party but actually forced by circumstances to make more actual shifts toward a process involving the other parties in Northern Ireland than was done in many decades past.) I have a lot of sympathy for the dilemma in which Unionists find themselves. They didn't lose a war (or whatever that was), but now, having the tremendously enticing prospect of peaceful relations with their neighbors before them, they are asked to enter into government-sponsored talks in which the much anathematized United Ireland is the subject. Or is it?

I don't really rule out the United Ireland as an outcome, though I must say it appears very remote even as a possibility to me. When I got up at the Tom Tracy's Unionist dinner at Galgorm last November (you were there the following evening instead, with the Belfast City Council people, rather than on the night most of the Unionist Party people came) I spoke of a *United Northern Ireland* as much the more urgent and practicable goal. It's been my contention for a great number of years that the fundamental problem in Northern Ireland is neither the British presence, as Republicans would have it, not the IRA, as the British and the Unionists would have it. Instead it's the fact that two populations of different (but not very different) tradition live in the same space and have not learned how to live a real pluralism, in which each becomes the guarantor of the other's right to live in free exercise of the integrity of its tradition. If the institutions of a genuine pluralism of that sort were established, springing necessarily from a true change of outlook on both sides, that accepted the other as equal as equal, abandoning pretensions of moral or existential superiority, you would have the United Northern Ireland that I spoke of.

On the face of it that has nothing to do with the United Ireland of Republican dreams. In consequence, talking about it seems to them an evasion of the discussion they really want. (And of course, they are so used to wanting everything settled at one go that they fear any sort of interim arrangements as a total foreclosure of the future.)

There is another feature of my impression of Northern Ireland, from many years' experience, namely that the political dynamic of Northern Irish society is all about the relation of these two communities. Much of what has come out of that dynamic is negative reaction to one another, but the preoccupation is such that sooner or later – no point in making it any later than it must be – it will lead to reconciliation of these claims (which needn't really be in conflict at all so long as they are *within* the Northern society). When I look at the society of the Republic of Ireland, though,. the Southern state, I see no such dynamic. Protestants there (I give them that name not because it is their Protestantism that is the distinguishing mark but because they all happen to be Protestants except for Conor Cruise O'Brien) aren't a challenge in the state, and nothing political is happening because of them. To me that means that, if there is ever to be unity in Ireland, it will be first the unity of the North, the United Northern Ireland I addressed last November. The only way that would ever lead to motion toward an all-island United Ireland – and this might well just never happen – would be that the Republic, seeing the success of a United Northern Ireland (and a very vibrant and successful thing it would be) would want to join it, in mentality (the real pluralism!) as well as institutions. The practicable goal, then, and until it actually exists the only practicable one, is, as I said, that United Northern Ireland.

Would your Nationalist (SDLP) and Republican opposite numbers be willing to work for that? They would respond right away by bringing the British back into the equation, as a relative super-power

political force that so favored your side of everything that no balance of opportunity or rights could ever be attained. And there is truth in that which has been confirmed by the last two years' British cooperation in covering for Unionist reluctance to enter into the process at all. I'm frustrated by that, as you can see in my letter to the Army Council and in many other things I've said and written, but I understand it as very likely a necessary thing for the British to have done. Britishness, "Unionism" as such, has never seemed to me the core of your communal consciousness or identity, but rather a defense for what is really there at the core. (I've learned to respect and value it, even have great affection for it, but because the community of your tradition has so much trouble in specifying what the identity is I won't presume to lay down the definition. I've written and spoken of the role a passionate advocacy of democracy has in it, and of course of guilt feelings at the defects of that democracy commitment, but I won't try to go beyond that.) But right now, that defence is as important to you as ever, and any threat of its removal (British "betrayal") produces real and dangerous panic within the community, as British government well understands.

It seems to me that the process which is now in the building gives you the opportunity to work for that United Northern Ireland in a way that will engage your Nationalist and Republican opposite numbers without either threatening you with the loss of that precious inner core of you own identity or threatening tham with a foreclosure action. The very fact that you have the three strands in the proposed negotiation, one within Northern Ireland, one between the two parts of Ireland, and one between the two islands of Britain and Ireland, allows you to address these issues within the first strand without foreclosing the Republican issues from the other strands, but setting out priorities about what agenda can first be addressed.

These negotiations will not be a coercive process. It could be that, at some later stage, you would actually be negotiating some closer relation between the two parts of Ireland, even the United Ireland itself, but not because you were being forced to it, but because your apprehensions about it would have been put to rest. If they had not been, you would not find yourselves under any coercive pressure to get there. Attaining that true pluralist equality, mutual respect and support to the extent that each became the guarantor of the other, with your neighbors in Northern Ireland would doubtless go a long way toward quieting such apprehensions. This is a two-way street, though. Acheiving that status of equality, mutual respect etc. with you would just as much quiet the apprehension of the Nationalists and Republicans that they could never live in dignity if they were to remain beholden to you or Britain. Adversary relation between the two parts of Ireland, to the considerable extent that that is the relation, would of course be put to rest by that, and the formal unity of Ireland (within the European Union, let's not forget) might not be a colossal issue then for either side. The important issue then would be whether the society of the Republic felt itself seriously drawn to join in the pluralism which your Northern society would have attained. That's the only unity that would matter.

Coming to present realities, then, I really look for a break-away from anxieties and a more open approach, on the part of Unionists, to the impending negotiations. To establish successfully the kind of communication with Nationalists and Republicans, with SDLP and Sinn Fein, that will lead toward that prospect, at least, of a United Northern Ireland, you need not to be hiding behind the British government, but approaching these people as the neighbors within your own society that they really are. Here is the devil of the situation, that people in the leadership of your tradition don't regard either the Humes or, more so, the Adamses and McGuinnesses as their human equals, persons with whom to deal on equal footing. Even while they try to find the opening to talk a wider constitutional subject than you can afford to touch as yet, you have the forum within the first strand of the negotiation to raise the subjects of true and present mutual concern and interest within Northern Irish society.

I reproach the Republicans often with waiting for the British to introduce them and you, as if the British were really much more in charge of what happens in Northern Ireland than in fact they are. You

and the Republicans (and Nationalists) are truly neighbors, and needn't wait for that. It is the British government (with the Irish) that provides the covering arrangements for the negotiations about to open, but if there is a real conviction of human equality in this picture, it is up to you yourselves to take the initiative in opening contact.

I wrote, in my letter to the IRA Army Council, that I believed the central core of their cease-fire decision of 1994, on which they have been back-sliding so egregiously but which is still the dominating issue with them, is a recognition of the full legitimacy and equal human worth of your tradition and community with theirs, with the result that they reject efforts to deal with you through a coercion that fails to offer you due respect. And I compared it with the mutual recognition embodied in the Oslo agreement between Israelis and the PLO. The Unionists, I believe, have not granted a corresponding recognition and acceptance to them. I understand why. It is matter of fear and lack of trust, and I think I have not been behind the times in urging on them the need to do the things that will truly and legitimately elicit trust from you. What I'm urging now is that it is up to Unionists, individuals in key positions, to break through the barrier and open up the human contact with these people. I am not asking anyone for a breach with the solidarity of the Unionist community or party, but for an action of breaking barriers that will be solidly a service to the Unionist tradition itself.

Some of this direct human contact will happen in the negotiations themselves, if you don't persist in putting up obstacles to them. Two people I've known well for many years on the Israeli-Palestinian scene exemplify the different possibilities in that situation. Faisal Husseini, who was Head of Delegation in the Palestinian team for the Madrid Conference, describes to me how they made the deliberate choice for that conference to have relations of courtesy with the Israeli delegation but not to encourage personal cordiality. In the Oslo negotiation, I know best Uri Savir, who led the Israeli team, and they had the much different experience of allowing themselves to become very close personally to one another between the two delegations, with far better result. It seems to me this is an important priority for the negotiations about to take place over Northern Ireland, and that the initiative should come from yourselves, that you should not have to have the British pushing you toward it or protecting you from it.

I write, in the letter to the IRA Army Council that you have here, of my great respect for the Loyalist parties, not only because they have held so firmly to the basic resolve of their cease-fire but because they have made the fundamental change of heart and outlook that the Republican leadership made in declaring their own cease-fire. They have determined to treat the Nationalist population and cause with a respect to which they have not been accustomed. That does not mean that they accept the Nationalist or Republican thesis, but that they know things have to change in a way that reflects the new situation both for the others and for themselves. And the Loyalists have been more steadfast in that decision, under at least as great provocation, than have the Republicans.

These Loyalist groups and their political wings were already familiar to me from long contact years ago, but in resuming it after their cease-fire, I've been urging on the David Ervines and Gary McMichaels that they not set out to be rival parties to you of the UUP, but instead set themselves up to be the representatives of new thinking within Unionism, of which the UUP is the center. This is no time to be dividing Unionism. Just now they are running as separate parties to yours for the Forum, and I believe they deserve well of the electorate. I hope their separateness from the UUP will not be permanent. I'm sure they still bear a taint in your eyes from the activities of the militants whose political voice they have been. But these are people who have learned from their experience things of value to the whole of Northern Ireland, who deserve well of you all. I keep urging it on the Republicans that they should open contact with these Loyalists, as the people who best understand their mutual need to discover one another as persons and community and, without caving in on one another's agendas, look for the real common interests, of which there are so many.

There's another constant theme in what I've had to say to the Sinn Feinleadership, that they need, as reassurance to you, to work out what agenda they feel you are truly able to discuss ith them at this point, not as a way of forclosing future discussion, but as a way of coming to understanding with you, their neighbors, whom they have never known other than as adversaries. You too have common interests.

In writing all this, I'm aware that I'm dealing with the areas in which you have least trust or confidence, whether in the British, in the future, or most especially in your opposite numbers in the Nationalist or Republican communities. It's a moral decision I'm looking for, an overcoming of fear. These are your adversaries, and we all carry responsibility for our adversaries, as for the future. That's the meaning of the New Testament exhortation to love your enemies, to do good to those who hate you. Out of that comes reconciliation.

I'd appreciate it if you would share this letter and the one I sent to the Army Council with other good friends of mine among Unionists, such as Martin Smyth and Roy Beggs. Martin, I know, is much taken with thoughts such as these, and from his position as head of the Orange Order he is in the most difficult situation of almost anyone I can think of to act on them, though also with great opporunities. This year's marching season will carry great danger, I'm sure, and tremendous challenges for him. And Roy, in his always movingly honest way, has been visibly open to reflect on this kind of thought, outside his normal round of challenges, each time he's been confronted with it.

In writing to the Army Council, I said that I don't really approve of leverage on the part of mediators, that favorite tool of the conflict managerial types. I really don't want even to urge you to take positions that put you outside the confidence of your own followings. Leverage normally means that the "mediators" have some tool with which to compel people to knuckle under to their agendas, such as the withdrawal of vital economic aid or, in this Northern question, the withdrawal of high-level American poliical interest. I have nothing but argument to offer here, and ask you only to consider whether what I write makes sense.

My prayers and best wishes with you and all the people most precious to you, Ken,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 18, 1996

Mr. Jim Poston
HM Consul-General
British Consulate-General
600 Atlantic Avenue
Boston, MA 02210
FAX: 248-9578 — 1st of 6 pages

Dear Jim,

Christ's Peace!

The attached fairly completes my current writing jag on Northern Ireland, a letter to Ken Maginnis, which encloses a copy of what I wrote the other day to the IRA Army Council.

I'd had a good conversation with Ken when I went out to San Francisco in March to the American Fund for Ireland dinner at which Tom Tracy was the featured guest. It had seemed a good opportunity to talk directly with some Unionists when I went out there. A good number of them were over, and I had the chance to take each of them aside for solid conversations. Ken was among the most important of those, and I'd promised him a follow-up letter, which has been this long delayed. Curiously, back in February, when I first wrote to Adams and McGuinness after the Canary Wharf bombing and thought I should write to some Unionists then, I'd thought Ken was the least likely I could write to, and was more inclined to write to Martin Smyth. I've asked Ken to show this both to Martin and to Roy Beggs.

This will be going to Ken in the regular mail rather than by FAX, so he won't have received it quite yet.

I was glad to meet Michael Ancram. He does truly impress me as good news, very clear in his thinking, very open to the needs and priorities of the various parties, very determinedly optimistic without being unrealistic. I liked him and valued the chance to get so direct an impression of him. All the best,

in Christ

Ray Helmick, S.J.

238

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

May 18, 1996

Tom Tracy
FAX: (310) 699-6931 -- first of 6 pages

Dear Tom,

Christ's Peace!

I've written the letter to Ken Maginnis, and attach it here. There was a copy with it of what I'd written to the IRA Army Council, and as you see I've asked Ken to share it further with Martin Smyth and Roy Beggs -- and others. It's going in the mail, rather than by FAX, so he won't have it for another couple of days. You get to see it first.

I had a good meeting yesterday, Friday evening, with Michael Ancram. He makes the trip to Washington every three months or so, and normally gets right back on the plane for London when he's finished. This time he sent word to Jim Poston, giving him only a day's notice, that he'd fly back from Boston and be available to meet some people here before going out to the airport. Jim got together just a small group of us for an excellent meeting at the Somerset Club, and it was a very valuable conversation. I had sent Jim a copy of what I wrote to the Army Council, and Ancram had gotten a good look at it before the meeting. I found him really good news, very clear in his thinking, very open to the needs and priorities of the various parties, very determinedly optimistic without being unrealistic. As you can see, I liked him.

All the best,

in Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 10, 1996

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX: 011-44-1232 231723

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

These days, if you don't get Christ's peace, I don't know whose you're going to get.

These days of the Orange Walk are more dangerous than ever this year. The outstanding fact of them so far, though, is that it is violence between Protestants and police, not either of them and Catholics. Reporting is spotty here in the States. I've heard of the Michael McGoldrick murder and three others of Catholics before that that looked sectarian, and I get rumors that I can't yet substantiate of Catholics driven from their homes or fire-bombed; one mention, which seemed to ring false, of actual exchange of petrol bombs between Protestants and Catholics. I discounted that, because it seemed there would have been more uproar and reprisals if that had happened.

All the months since the IRA broke its cease-fire we have been admiring the discipline and commitment to the peace effort (initiated, of course, by yourselves) with which the Loyalists have kept their angry folks in check, not breaking their cease-fire in return. Now its your people who are under intense provocation. Reciprocal Catholic violence now would really blow the chance for peace sky high. I expect this is so obvious to you that you are saying this to the Army Council people already.

I would also expect that, on the Protestant side, it is not organized UDA or UVF people who are up to all this ruckus now, but less organized and undisciplined Orange types whom the Loyalists can't hold back. It's the UUP politicians instead, Trimble and his ilk -- shame on them -- who are inciting all this violence. Your people won't have any similar incitement from politicians, but it must still be hard to hold back their anger. That's a job for yourselves and the IRA leadership itself, and of course the critical thing is that there be no retaliation or violent action within the North (the thing the IRA has so carefully avoided since February) by the IRA itself. I hope everyone is aware of that and intent on keeping the hope of peace alive through this one-sidedly Protestant crisis.

It's my reading that the IRA has lost a lot of the confidence other people had placed in it during the cease-fire by its actions since Canary Wharf. If I'm right that people in the IRA also really want to find the way to meaningful talks, in a setting of peace, that will bring resolution of the conflict -- I don't doubt that of them -- then I believe they will gain great public credit for having exercised restraint and urged it on their people during this important time, credit comparable to what the Loyalists have won by their restraint since February. I hope you can keep that before them. Best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

240

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 17, 1996

Dear Father Helmick:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the letter you wrote last month to Ken Maginnis.

Since you wrote, the bombing in Manchester, the murder of Garda McCabe and the finding of the "bomb factory" in County Laois have seriously strained the peace process. The standoff in Portadown and the civil disturbance surrounding it also exacerbated tensions. Nevertheless, like the British and Irish Governments, we in the Administration remain committed to supporting the process. The talks that began in Belfast June 10 under the chairmanship of Senator Mitchell represent an historic opportunity that must not be wasted. We are continuing to work for the restoration of the IRA cease-fire, which will give those talks the best chance of success.

I appreciate hearing from you on Northern Ireland.

Sincerely,

Anthony Lake
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167-3802

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 1, 1996

Rev. W. Martin Smyth
117 Cragagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

What's happening to the peace over there? I know the IRA has done much to breach it, formally ending its cease-fire and doling out atrocities, in what seem to be intended as carefully measured doses, as if that were tolerable. I don't cease to tell them, in letters I communicate to them through Sinn Fein, that this is intolerable, that restoration of a truly credible cease-fire is not the setting of a "surrender" condition for negotiation but its presupposition, and that the negotiation they tried to institute through their cease-fire is altogether incompatible with shooting their way in. I'm anxious to talk, in fact, not simply with Sinn Fein people but with the Army Council people themselves, as I did fifteen years ago when I was mediating between them and the Northern Ireland Office in an effort to bring an end to the hunger strike. I will do that, if given the chance, not as an occasion to excoriate them, but as an effort to help them find a way out of the corner into which they have painted themselves.

But that isn't what I need to say to you, or what you need to hear. The marching season has been a disaster, as damaging to any prospects of peace as the IRA's new violence campaign or worse. I don't attempt to justify what the IRA has been doing when I say that. I think I can rely on your knowing that I do not write as the enemy, but as someone who respects the Protestant and Unionist spirit in Northern Ireland and even knows and acknowledges that Orange is something quite other than just a rejection of the Roman Catholic. All the same, I'm dismayed at the wanton destructiveness of what's been done.

Of yourself, I know how you have worked, at great cost to yourself, to make Orange a genuine instrument of reconciliation in recent years, and in fact I recognized that in you from the time I first got to know you in 1972. Your keeping aloof from the Drumcree business last year was courageous, and good for the Orange Order as well as, most significantly, for the whole of your society. The price you paid was counted out at the Ulster Hall meeting against you just the day before our meeting at that Tom Tracy dinner last November.

The ordinary ranks of Orangemen aren't fit subject for a scolding either. I know how important it is for people to celebrate Orange Day and its season as memorial of the winning of their liberties, religious and civil. I see nothing other than praiseworthy in that. That their celebrations and their marching should be in places associated with the events of their liberation is simply normal also. I accept without question that that was the sense of the speech you gave in Donegal early last month, of which I haven't seen a text, but which I hear mentioned as "incitement" to this year's Drumcree shambles.

You know as well as anyone how these marches are taken by the Irish Nationalist community, when there is insistence specifically on marching through their streets as sign that there are superiors and inferiors in citizenry, that there are those who are up and those who had better bow down. That has nothing to do with memorialising anyone's liberties, only with proclaiming subjection. It's unworthy of the Orange Order or of the freedom aspirations of Ireland's Protestant people. It exploits their anxieties and discredits even their most legitimate expression of their needs.

Exploitation is the key here. I blame the IRA for stoking those anxieties, particularly through their new bombing campaign. But there has long been a tradition of cynical exploitation of the Unionist community's anxieties, so as to turn the celebration of their liberties, which are symbolised in the Orange victories as legitimately as my own country's are by our Fourth of July celebration, into a glorification of the subjection of one class of citizens to another, a gross perversion of the values of your society.

You remember how I wrote, years ago (it was 1977), that the spectacle of clerical domination in Catholic Irish life had fueled the distrust felt by the whole Protestant community, for whom democratic freedom and the rights of the dissenting non-conformist minorities were such fundamental values. The rejection of "Rome Rule," I wrote then, was directed actually at this authoritarianism, which left the impression that Catholic Ireland was incapable of democratic life. That condition, I believe, has been true, and a basic underlying reason for the distrust running through Irish society, but has been, even for some years before I wrote that piece, progressively changing, to the extent that it is now nothing like a fundamental characteristic of the Nationalist culture. In fact I see that culture as wide open to your influencing it definitively in the direction of the freedoms your tradition so much values.

But as much as that has been the root of distrust by Irish Protestants, the perversion of the Orange tradition of liberty into a celebration of subjection has been just as much the root of Irish Nationalist (that rather than Roman Catholic) distrust, which has understood your own community as protecting insupportable supremacist claims with a shield unjustly provided by British government.

I try to be precise there about what the conflicting grievances are without taking sides between them, because I have great affection for each of your two traditions and commit myself to reconciliation and the good of both, rather than to either side's winning. There are obviously people of ill will scheming on each side for the other's defeat, as well as people on each side with so little personal discipline or character that they let themselves be childishly mastered by unbridled hatred and resentment. A win/lose outcome to this year's outrages will be the victory of their malice and immaturity, irreparable loss rather than victory for both of your communities, the one ground down and the one, whoever wins, that will be dishonored by its triumph.

The fact is that you are all now on the brink of an abyss, the same abyss into which Northern Ireland fell in 1969, and that the critical moment is just as predictably the Apprentice Boys' day in Derry. The fundamental problem, as I see it, is one of definition, a definition that requires to be made publicly intelligible and not ambivalent. What is your Orange and Unionist tradition about? Is it about supremacy and "Croppie lie down," or is it about the noble liberties that Protestant Irishmen won in the 17th century -- a long time to keep anything pure if its current realtiy is not constantly examined. If it is about lawful freedom, then the freedom of your Roman Catholic -- "Nationalist" -- fellow citizens has as much claim as your own, on pain of hypocrisy.

I'll say, and have consistently said to their faces, the same to Irish Nationalists, Sinn Fein and IRA Army Council, that their claim is tainted and discredited if it fails to include, explicitly, equal honor for your community's tradition and rights. I've told them, for as long as I've been speaking to them, that I do not believe their "war" is just, despite all the grievances they have suffered, because they have not offered such equal respect to your community and its claims.

But it is not right of either of your communities to say that you will not examine the beam in your own eye until the other does so first. Where is the integrity of either of your traditions if you will not acknowledge yourselves challenged by your own beliefs until the others examine themselves first? That is never answered by saying to an adversary: "But you're another." Each of us has to answer for himself, for good or ill.

I have heard you quoted, from a television interview which I have not seen, as saying, before Drumcree, that there were times when people are justified in defying the law. I know the argument, and won't quarrel with it. I am sure you are as reluctant ever to appeal to it as I am myself. (I often describe myself, from long self-knowledge, as "pathologically law-abiding.") A good text for it is the one from our American Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which I learned first from its being inscribed on a monument at the main entrance to Boston University, where he himself studied. I'll give it as it stands there:

"I SUBMIT THAT AN INDIVIDUAL
WHO BREAKS A LAW
THAT CONSCIENCE TELLS HIM
IS UNJUST,
AND WHO WILLINGLY ACCEPTS THE PENALTY OF IMPRISONMENT IN ORDER TO AROUSE
THE CONSCIENCE OF THE COMMUNITY OVER THE INJUSTICE,
IS IN REALITY EXPRESSING
THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR LAW."

The keys to this are the injustice of the law defied, and the readiness to accept the penalty. I think I've already dealt with the question of the justice of the law. That's the definition question. There is no justice in the assertion of supremacy or the subjection of a servile population, no justice in such a thing as the Drumcree march unless it were the assertion of hard-won freedom made accessible to the whole of the society, rather than a privilege of one part of the society to humiliate another.

However, the matter of penalty and the enforcement of law is even more of concern, because the crisis created, and the threat of a new abyss for the whole Northern Ireland society, rises directly from the new evidence Drumcree put before the Nationalist community of government's failure to provide equal protection of the law. That reinstates their entire argument challenging the legitimacy of the state, surely not the effect that any of you will have hoped for.

I've read with care and sympathy Sir Hugh Annesley's 14 July interview with Barry Cowan and have a sense for the dilemma faced by the police. The law was certainly defied to a point where he could properly regard his police as overwhelmed and unable, in the immediate circumstances, to preserve order. He often, in the interview, places the responsibility for this on the Portadown Orange Lodge (and the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition), wrongly I think, because the overwhelming of the police resulted from the diversion of other Orange marches until a crowd of tens of thousands -- he expected it to get to an eventual 60,000-70,000 -- many of whom were drunk and disorderly, backed by a bulldozer to break through his barricades and "a slurry tanker with the potential for JCBs to come." I can't fault him for judging that his police had to give way, temporarily, to that exhibition of lawlessness.

The police are judged by the Nationalists for the disparate enthusiasm with which they opposed Protestant marchers for the first several days and Catholic protesters of the marches later -- the twenty times as many plastic bullets fired, the death and serious injuries, etc. I understand, without condoning, that too. The police, for reasons Sir Hugh Annesley did not cause, are predominantly Protestant -- I hear 93% -- and will have been emotionally torn in their loyalties throughout the time they opposed the march. I take it they went quite out of the Chief Constable's control once the signal was reversed, and behaved in a way that has once again discredited them. That's tragic, and the responsibility is primarily with those who instigated the disorder.

Sir Hugh, again, puts equal blame with the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition (much reference to Brendan McKenna, with his IRA record) for not coming to a compromise. I discount that heavily, because these same residents last year agreed to a compromise which was then quite callously betrayed.

As Sir Hugh narrates, and as all the other reports have attested through the year, each side stuck to the agreed accomodation honestly and completely. But, as he says, "when that march got back into Portadown there were scenes of Messrs. Paisley and Trimble in circumstances which the Garvaghy Road and subsequently the Ormeau Road described as triumphalist and that had a significant and deep bearing on the failure of the Garvaghy Road residents to move an inch throughout this entire year." Their conduct was such as to render their word untrustworthy. How could anyone negotiate with them in the expectation of good faith?

I hear it argued by government that a lawlessness demonstration such as this had to be treated as an operational matter for the police, not as a political decision, and I understand that too. If politicians had decided what would be permitted and what not in this matter, they would not have been obeyed. All the same, this was not treated operationally, but politically.

When the IRA set off its bombs at Canary Wharf, in Manchester and elsewhere, it was rightly treated as a criminal matter, and that is a proper operational response. Law and order were defied, massive injustice done. The penalty has not been exacted yet, but it is due. The defiance of law at Drumcree was at least as criminal and destructive of the public order of the society, but for a purely political reason it is not treated as criminal. The perpetrators are not imprisoned or charged with their crime, and presumably won't be. I can't fault the community that, as a whole, is the victim of this offense for concluding that government itself has defaulted on its own primary function, that of preserving public order, and has instead approvingly allowed its police to be made the violent enforcers of public disorder. That argues *prima facie* against government's claim to legitimacy, thus raising up again the tired old complaints in their full virulence. Is that what Unionism wanted to accomplish? Government thus far has answered this kind of observation only with blustering denial. If government is in basic default, we are back to the condition Hobbes described, where there is no other resort than brute force such as we have been seeing from Republican and Unionist alike. And where then are the liberties that Orange professes to celebrate?

That is the abyss in its formal terms. In concrete, the abyss is in the ugly passions that will be released out of Derry on August 10th, which could put the province back to a repetition of 1969 and all its aftermath, perhaps without another chance for a 1994.

I don't know what exactly should be done to prevent Northern Ireland going into tailspin in that way. I'm sure it is ultimately a question of the definition of the Orange and Unionist heritage, that it should be a freedom for all citizens and not a supremacy heritage. It could then be something for the entire society to celebrate. I don't fool myself that that could be accomplished in the little time left, and of course I do hold the Nationalist community and the Republican Movement (as it likes to be called) just as responsible to define their liberty aspirations too in a way that is as fully inclusive of your rights and freedom.

You yourself, last year, held yourself apart from the very similar bad faith exhibition, Drumcree Mark I. I have to say, I find Mr. Trimble and Mr. Paisley tarnished goods because of their performance then, repeated and surpassed this year in Drumcree Mark II. I suspect it would be beyond the power of any one individual, however courageous, to have a positive effect by himself alone on the Apprentice Day celebration, that it should be carried off with some dignity and lawfulness, and on the self-understanding of Orange, that it be for democratic freedom throughout the society and not a supremacy creed. I do believe that, for your own souls' sake, the whole really decent and democratic leadership of Unionism needs to make a concerted effort to present it so, in public statements before, at and after this fateful Apprentice Boys march, defy those who would make it otherwise, and have the Derry march come off in a way that will be to the credit of the Unionist community and make it serve positively your whole society.

For this reason, I ask you not only to reflect on this yourself, but to put it before some other decent and reliable Unionists, people like Ken Maginnis, Roy Beggs, the Cunninghams and the other people whose loyalty to the community is unimpeachable and whom you will know much better than I. Personal careers and leadership are at stake, I know, in any effort of this sort, and the risks should not be on any one man alone. It is much too critical a time to evade the risks, and I have confidence in all of you I have named that you would not do so. What's needed is the planned and concerted determination to keep Northern Ireland from this abyss, and that takes not only courage, such as you showed last year, but an unflinching assessment of the situation, true and critical evaluation of your tradition and the ways it has been represented and at times abused, and a sensitively implemented program for the immediate crisis and for the future.

I've been all this time, since Drumcree, trying to formulate properly what I should write to you, and now I've left it this late. My good friend Jim Poston, Consul General here in Boston, offered to get it to you as quickly as possible, I having no FAX number for you in Belfast or Westminster, and not knowing where you are just now, so it will arrive by his good offices. I regard you, Martin, as among my most honored friends, and send you assurance of my prayers, for you and your people, as well as all best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

246

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 13, 1996

Rev. W. Martin Smyth
117 Cragagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND
FAX 011 44 1232 450837

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

How it was done isn't clear to me yet from the little scraps of news we get here, but you have come successfully through this dangerous weekend of the Apprentice Boys celebration without the threatened cataclysm. I credit all of you with somehow having acted in a responsible and most creatively Christian way, or that good result couldn't have been obtained. I hope I will find out who were the movers preventing catastrophe, and congratulate you even before knowing the details. It means that another opportunity exists to attain a lasting and satisfyingly just peace for all Northern Irish people.

I wrote to you last (August 1st), in a distress which I am sure reflected your own, about how necessary it was that the celebration of your liberties be so interpreted that it could be a celebration by all your people of both traditions. That's a central core of any possibility of reconciliation. I read just this morning of the Bellaghy aftermath of the Apprentice Boys day, the sit-down in the streets, the long night's negotiation and the brief march to the center of town and back to the church in the morning. What needs to happen at longer term is not grudging negotiated permission for such a march but instead a generous spirit from both sides so that the march will be understood as celebrating values cherished mutually, and coming from both sides of the community, with a Bob Overend and a Paul Smith walking side by side in mutual respect. If that is accomplished, marches will be no problem. If not, they will be the least of your problems.

Clearly, an IRA ceasefire is required for the new start of a reconciliation process, as I will again be writing to them immediately after I have sent this to you. The real hope for peace that emerged two years ago began with their ceasefire, and there will still be no such hope without a really reliable and permanent renunciation of violence as a means in this conflict. It can't now be said: renunciation only by them, as the marching season this year (as often before) has been such a violent assault on Nationalist community and homes and persons. The police and every means of public order have been overwhelmed by dangerous mobs, those assembled and led to reckless fury by main-line politicians who, to the disgrace of government, are not being held accountable by the state.

It is most noteworthy that the violence was not brought on by the leadership of the Loyalist groups from whom one would earlier have expected it, but by the principle leaders of UUP and DUP. the people from whom responsibility is expected as a matter of course. There is a consequence to that: that they can no longer act as if the bombing-campaign extremists of the IRA were the only villains who had to do public penance or be marked as the enemies of society and civility. Responsibility for this summer's dangers, as much as for the successful passage through them without total breakdown, is quite equally shared by persons from both sides. It's all the more unfortunate that it should be the chosen leaders of official Unionism who are its wildest extremists. Government, too, has shockingly defaulted at a critical time, though it too seems to have learned some lessons from the earlier debacle and has contributed to getting the society safely through this August crisis.

Last year, when a much milder crisis was past, everyone put it aside, made no adequate preparations for this year despite the fact that there was then optimism and strong enthusiasm for peace and reconciliation in both communities, wasted the opportunity for growth of understanding between the traditions that could have come by straightforward communication, strove only to place blame and put the opposite community in the wrong, finding excuses not to talk or treat the others with genuine respect, and so brought Northern Ireland to the brink of new abyss that it has suffered this year.

I do indeed see more of the responsibility for that failure on the Unionist side, and on the studied vacillation of government, even though I do understand, as I've often told you, the anxieties of Unionists, who had not produced the chance of peace, and had thus a lesser stake in it. It was, of course, the IRA, distinct in this from Sinn Fein, that broke the peace with its bombing campaign. They drew, from the deliberate delay and invention of excuses that they could see, a conclusion that the Unionists, supported by government, were playing with them and were not serious about seeking peace. If they had persisted in what they had begun so well, I have no doubt that they would have gotten to meaningful dialogue, even if very tardily. I read it as a shameful failure of nerve on their part, and a betrayal of those who had created the climate of opportunity in the first place.

I still see the United Northern Ireland as the reasonable and attainable goal. An all-island United Ireland is nowhere in sight, even as a threat to you. It is only if and when you in Northern Ireland have achieved a pluralist society of equal citizenship, the freedom and integrity of the opposite community a valued objective for the other, that the people of the rest of Ireland would have even the opportunity to consider whether they would accept your solution and join their society to yours on your terms of equality. That is remote, and if it were to happen, would then constitute no threat. No other way could it happen.

I often write to Israelis that if they choose to make their society forever merely a fortress against the Arab world they live in and the Palestinians living among them, they doom their state to eventual defeat and destruction, as it cannot be a permanent thing that they hold their present military superiority to the vastly greater numbers of Arabs. In your case, there is no parallel. If Protestant and Unionist Ulster chooses to denigrate and despise its Catholic and Nationalist population, treating them as inferiors to whom the society does not belong of right, finding ways to blame them for all the sins of either side of the society, it can doubtless do so indefinitely. But it will be living a life unworthy of itself, a betrayal of those principles of liberty on which it supposes itself to be built.

I hope you realise the love of your people with which I write these things. I am full of hope for you, and real joy, in the knowledge of how assiduously you've worked to avert these dangers that might have ruined you in these last days. I'm anxious to finish this letter and get down to writing an equivalent letter to the Republicans -- praise for the restraint with which the political leadership of both Nationalist parties kept their people calm enough to prevent worse harm through these terrible days, blame for the IRA breach of their ceasefire that so inflamed feelings throughout the province, and clarity on the point that a renewed and truly reliable ceasefire is indispensable if all is not yet to be lost.

My prayers are with you, and they are largely of thanksgiving that you have succeeded this far in avoiding threatened catastrophe. May you prosper, and may the rich Christian values of your Ulster Protestant tradition yet give birth to the society of mutual respect and care that its essential character so fully promises.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

248

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 13, 1996

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX: 011-44-1232 231723 -- 1st of 15 pages

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

This may seem a very strange time to be encouraged by events, but your getting through this last week without disaster really constitutes another chance, beyond what might have been expected, to succeed with the peace initiative you created.

I'm going to ask you again, as I did back in May, to put this letter before the Army Council people. I've read of your saying yourselves, both of you, that the "peace process" doesn't exist any more. It would be naive not to understand the force of that, but I've never quite believed that it was all finished. When you've said that, it's my sense that you said it in terms of what the other side was doing or refusing to do, the Unionists or the British government, and their refusal to respond to the opportunity you opened up is obvious. Very often I hear various people, Unionists and British government among them, *The New York Times* once again in an editorial this very morning, saying that you need to denounce the IRA and then everything will be rosy. I know how false that is, that if you did that you would not speak for The Republican Movement and that, in consequence, no one at all would be speaking for The Republican Movement's intention of peace. Everybody loses then!

What also has to be said, not by you but by the likes of me, is that the breaking of the ceasefire, however betrayed the IRA may have felt itself by all the delays, has been a central provocation of the rage that went through the Orange folk this summer, that so nearly did open up again the same abyss that your society fell into in 1969.

I hear you clearly when you say now, after the election into which you went so reluctantly but in which you won, fair and square, your mandate to negotiate the peace, that you ought to be admitted into the all-party talks on the basis of that mandate, and not be kept out pending the restoration of the ceasefire. The logic of it is, in one sense, unassailable, but the human side of it untenable. It was the ceasefire, into which you put your own lives, that made talks possible at all. I know that enemies do negotiate on the battlefield and all that, but this isn't that kind of situation. What you and your Unionist adversaries need is not a settlement -- no one is winning or has any prospect of winning in that war -- but a reconciliation, and that is possible only as you come to one another in peace.

I'm under no illusions about which side has refused to do that. They haven't responded to your offer. I think that you have skillfully covered all the exits and made it inevitable that they will respond to you in peace, but the ceasefire is the essential air in which that prospect can live. Without the ceasefire, The Republican Movement makes it impossible for them to do what you ask of them. That is what is meant when people say -- I say it myself but the line is not mine -- that the ceasefire is not condition but rather prerequisite to the peace. If the ceasefire is not restored now, you are going into the cataclysm -- repeat of 1969-1994 but worse -- that you so nearly suffered last week.

I've written twice recently to Martin Smyth. Before that I'd written to Ken Maginnis, just after the May letter that I asked you to forward to the Army Council, enclosing that time a copy of what I'd written to them. I think I should give you copies of those letters, which I include here. I've had the habit of sending adversaries copies of what I write to their opposite numbers, largely to keep myself honest and be sure I am not saying different things to different sides. But in this case it is because I don't see that you or the IRA, either part of The Republican Movement, have looked closely enough at what your adversaries really need in order to respond to the genuine offer of peace that you have made to them.

It appears to me that the frustration among you has been largely that the peace offer has not resulted in the prospect of a United Ireland at some foreseeable time. You and the IRA may not even be on the same page about that. I don't see that you are altogether unrealistic about it: you seem to see clearly that it would be the result of a process that would take some considerable time, but may have at least a relatively unrealistic sense of how much time that means, and not only how much time but what process. As of now, the United Ireland is still the last thing they are willing to hear.

When I talk to them, as I did at a dinner last November with a substantial part of the Unionist leadership (no Trimble: he didn't turn up that night), I habitually speak of a United Northern Ireland, and I think I should not hesitate to speak in those terms to you or to the Army Council. I'm sure people in The Republican Movement hear that sort of expression as meaning the denial of all hope for a United Ireland. I think it is a matter of realism, not of putting aside forever the prospect of a united country on that island but of seeing how unity could actually be accomplished.

The unity that is important in Ireland, I believe, is not a matter of geography, not until after it has first been one of society. You have two groups of people who have not accepted one another but tried to extinguish one another. That is no unity, and bringing either one of those communities into a state that is the expression only of the other will never bring about unity. You and the Protestants/Unionists have lived together in the one space, in an intimate hatred that could and ought be an intimate mutual respect. You are responsible for one another, for good and for ill.

Unity in mutual respect won't be built elsewhere than where you both are, in the North, and that is the reasonable objective: a society in which you both can live as you are entitled to by your very humanity. It is only when that is accomplished, there in the North, that there is even question of the rest of Ireland, where there are not enough or active enough Protestants for this to be an issue, making a decision -- their decision, not the North's decision -- whether or not they wish to accept for themselves the unity of society, with full respect and acceptance for the Protestant as well as the Nationalist tradition, that you and your Protestant neighbors will have achieved for yourselves.

The Protestants see the United Ireland as threat -- threat of inferiority and oppression, of course. This way it is not threat. It might or might not happen, and it is in fact less important a unity than the unity you can and ought to forge, in mutual respect and mutual protection of one another's rights and integrity, among yourselves, you two divergent traditions there in the North. I don't see that there is another way that anything you could seriously call unity in Ireland, in the North or in the whole, will ever be accomplished. I've believed, since the time I first met you, Gerry, in 1981, that that is the direction of the new understanding of Ireland that you were crafting and opening up to The Republican Movement all that time. I hope it is true and that its outlines become clearer to all of you.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

150

Walled city delivers message of hope at midnight

THE IRISH TIMES, Monday, August 12, 1996

NUALA O'FAOLAIN



I FIND it deeply moving that in the middle of last Saturday night, in the dark, on the inside perimeter of Derry's walls, a small group of Northern Irishmen met to perform actions unique to humanity. Eight or so men from the Bogside Residents Group accompanied 13 Apprentice Boys as the Boys touched the pillars of the four gates of the walled city of Derry, in memory of their besieged forebears.

A few policemen followed the group at a distance. Apart from the reporter from the *Sunday Tribune*, who is a local, there were no media people present. The *Tribune* reporter witnessed the event and the description was in that paper. The midnight encounter was not for show. The scene, as the men moved quickly from place to place, must have been like something from grand opera, even though these were ordinary young men in jeans.

What they were doing was symbolic. It had to be done and both sides had to be there. It was about those hungers within people that are not material and cannot be satisfied by food and money. It was about imagination and memory and the need for self-respect and respect from others without which people and communities can hardly live.

Whatever about the rest of us, the Bogsiders and the Apprentice Boys understand each other on that level. The Boys had to pay their respects to their tradition. Just as imperatively, the Bogsiders had to assert their civic standing in the present and their right to respect for their own history.

These men, slipping from place to place in the dark and reaching out to touch stone, attract little but derision from the outside world. It offends the indifference of the dominant culture of our times, but Northern Ireland keeps returning to the point that not by bread alone doth man live.

It will be a long time before the passions at the walls in the dark are reduced to theme-park harmlessness. On the other hand, one reason to be happy today, and to admire the communities and the community representatives involved in recent negotiations in Derry, is they did not pull the places they inhabit to destruction, either. Yet again, and in spite of Drumcree, the worst did not happen. (Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien's commentary on these matters is back with us, I am heartily glad to say. May he live for a 100 years, and may he be wrong about the North's slide into civil war in every one of them.)

NATIONALIST Derry's expertise in making self-righteous PR gestures — remember the canteens of cutlery the Derry City soccer team used to present to their opponents? — has often enough irritated. But behind the righteous front there is, it seems, something righteous — there is a profound debate if not about civic co-existence then about self-presentation — about themselves as citizenry. We in the south do not respect what an achievement it is to have arrived at a version of the long-term future in the name of which a pitched battle was resisted.

There was a chorus of voices in the southern media yesterday shrill with fury because Sinn Féin came out of last week's episode well. You can't help but feel they would have been delighted to see bodies litter the streets of Derry, as long as the bodies were Sinn Féin's fault.

But analysis will get nowhere if it doesn't admit there is good and bad in all contending ideologies in Northern Ireland, nationalism included. It is time to recognise, like it or not, that Sinn Féin, along with the SDLP, represents the people of the west bank of Derry and that the representatives chose not to escalate the parade situation into violence, and that having made the choice, because they really are representative, they could deliver on it.

Similarly, on the unionist side, a choice was made and it, too, must have been the popular choice. The issues involved in the Apprentice Boys parade past the Bogside were profound. The expectation of violence was there (and didn't A.J.P. Taylor say that one of the causes of the first World War was the expectation that there would be a war?). And yet there was no violence, other than routine teenage rioting.

MEDIA news coverage is about things that happen, not about things that don't happen. And it is about discrete events rather than ongoing processes. On Radio 1's *Saturday View* this weekend, an instructive stand-off developed between Emily O'Reilly, skilled newswoman that she is, looking for the big picture in Derry, while her panellists, local community workers, refused to discuss anything except the micro-truths of their own experience.

At their level, there is hope for the future of Northern Irish society. At the level of abstract description, there isn't much hope. In that way the hysterics of the anti-nationalist media in the south really are treasonous, as in the concept of the *trahison des clercs*.

They deliberately obliterate the ordinary, humane messages that come out of Northern Ireland. They have no interest in the fact that the majority of people in the North of every persuasion would rather not be at war than at war, and would rather go shopping for a fireside chair or take the kids out for a burger than fight with anybody.

A section of southern opinion — reflected in the media — imputes evil and twisted cunning to Northern nationalism at every turn. A section of southern opinion — not reflected in the media — attributes the same to unionism and loyalism. But one of the messages of this last week has been that apocalyptic generalisations are foolish.

There isn't going to be War with a capital W. But neither is there going to be Peace with a P. Nothing huge is going to happen overnight. Surely, a largely peaceful future is going to be constructed over time, with many reverses, by an accretion of tiny increments of peace.

We bystanders have an absolute responsibility to learn to recognise and respect the small things, and not go looking to the North to provide us with thrills. This morning, something like 100 cross-community groups will meet, as they do every Monday morning, and go off about their day's patient and complex work.

At the offices of Co-Operation North in Belfast, the staff will meet and talk about the weekend and gradually they'll move off to go about their work, unsung, unglamorous, uninteresting as it is to the media. They'll be doing what no one praises — promoting and endorsing cross-community and all-Ireland understanding, at best, and at worst, keeping understanding alive as an ideal. They are not saints working with savages.

The people of the North know what they are talking about and are capable, even when the most visceral insecurities are involved — as in the last few days in Derry — of drawing back to allow a mutual accommodation. As in Derry. Think of the absolute unlikelihood of Serb and Croat and Muslim meeting in the dark by mutual consent at the bridge in Mostar. Then think of Derry's walls. And hope.

From: The Reverend W. Martin Smyth, M.P.
(Belfast, South)

251



Reply to
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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA
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Ref: WMS/MJ

14 August 1996

Rev R G Helmick SJ
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill
Massachusetts
USA

Dear Raymond

With the pressures upon me I did not get round to responding to your letter dated 1 August.

I appreciate your interest and your concern, and understand the positive role that you actually adopted over the years.

I also seek to understand your point of view, and your views about the "Marching Season" as people like to call it. I am not prepared to accept your blanket condemnation. I appreciate, you are equally aware that you had not seen the speech which I gave in Donegal early last month. I wonder, myself, where it was published and what was taken out of the speech because in no way it could have been construed as "incitement" to this year's Drumcree shambles. The Drumcree shambles would never have happened if the Drumcree residents, so called, as McKenna does not live in Garvaghy Road, and Fr Eamonn Stack had not actually categorically said to those who had been speaking to them on behalf of David Trimble, "No way". A clear context.

I regret also that you have joined the bandwagon that has not been prepared to recognise the role that David Trimble sought to play through the whole period, not as the leader of Ulster Unionism but as the constituency representative. How we can magnify John Hume because he spoke to the IRA and pillory David Trimble who sought, even when there was a Loyalist truce on, to keep under control one person who appeared to have some influence in those quarters, I do not know.

We also wait to see what action will be taken against any who in any way are alleged to have broken the law, and getting behind the machinations of media personalities who very quickly send messages throughout the world without proper analysis. It has been fascinating to discover that leader articles and editorials in national newspapers have, for the first time, been sympathetic to the Unionist position in this context.

252

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

I reject the implication that Protestant and Unionist Ulster chooses to denigrate and despises the Catholic and Nationalist population. I think that you have joined John Hume and others who actually have used the picture of a Banner bearing the portrait of Queen Victoria and Indian Princes who allegedly were asking what was the secret of England's greatness and she pointed to the open Bible, as a message to the Nationalist population "You are the natives, we are the conquerors, you lie down". I think it is near time we began to think in an adult manner.

I am sorry to have spoken in such line, but I have got to the stage where having seen the weight of the judicial system in the Republic of Ireland allowing thugs to be engaged by the Sheriff from Cavan, acting in place of one in Donegal which is not filled at the moment, evicting a family by force from their home. It was not the case again of the native absentee landlords evicting the poor Irish, on this occasion it was very much a Protestant family being evicted when the Court seemed to have been weighed against them as details were not given to the Court, and yet the Court upheld the Bank.

Forgive me if I seem to have missed something through this whole business. We have done our best and will continue to do so, but the case of ordinary people has got to be represented as well and I refute the allegation of "walking through Catholic Streets".

Yours sincerely

W Martin Smyth MP

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 25, 1996

Rev. Martin Smyth, M.P.
117 Cregagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Thanks for your letter. Knowing indeed the pressures under which you worked all through this July and August, I much appreciated your responding to my very strenuous and, I'm sure, painful letters. It has always been important for me, so long as I've known you, and I think might be valuable for others in this turbulent time, that you and I have been able to treat one another with really utmost regard and, as you know, great liking too. We do agree on amazingly much, and when we disagree, even most seriously, I always know that I must strive to hear you, and am always glad to find that you remain open to hearing me, in spite of all the reasons not to, some stereotypical, other simply a radical difference of experience.

I think you would be mistaken to conclude that I had gone over to John Hume's assessment of the relation of the two traditions in Northern Ireland. I hold John in honor. I think he has done many highly positive things in politics, has kept faith with his vision of a peaceful resolution of the differences there, did an enormous service to everyone in Northern Ireland, at great risk to himself, when he assisted in bringing about the year and a half of a serious peace prospect, and has maintained his optimism and commitment to the good of the entire society through terribly discouraging times. But I think I see things about you, your Unionist community and Orange that he doesn't, and I don't think you ought fail to note that.

The difference is that I understand the ways in which Orange and Unionist stand for an authentic and responsibly conscientious freedom, which to me is as much a value as it is to you, and which I would regard as value to any human community that embraces it. In other words, I fundamentally commend it to the community of your Irish Nationalist adversaries. I've been all over this in the earlier letters I've written to you this month and don't want simply to repeat myself. I had to work -- I did it a long time ago -- to see those values behind the façade of domination signals that the Nationalist community sees so clearly and which you determinedly reject as implication.

We are in the field of perception here, and it seems to me that your history of trying to deal more constructively with this obvious perception on the part of the Nationalist community indicates that you are acutely aware of it. Denial doesn't help then, because the perception itself is beyond denying, and its very existence is the fundamental problem. Even if that perception is wrong it is still a first responsibility for everyone in Orange to reinterpret the celebration of their liberties rightly so that no such perception -- that it celebrates privilege rather than liberty, that it affirms a species of superiority and inferiority among people all of whom should be free citizens, that it constitutes a demand for submission -- can exist. To perceive it so is not childishness. It's deeply felt and embittering experience, as traumatic as anything Unionists experience from Nationalists. There is no higher socio-political priority than to deal directly with this, and it can't be wished away by rejecting the implication.

What I hear from many sides, after the summer's performance, is that the Orange has to be curbed, that the Unionist Party must scuttle its inter-dependence with the Orange Order, that Orange has proven that there can be no life of dignity in its presence for the Nationalist population -- I'm sure it's all far more familiar to you than to me. I'm sure too that all of this is wrong. Orange is far too important and fundamental to the people for whom it is a badge of their own identity. To try to suppress it is to wrong and despise them. And yet the perception has been driven in deeper than ever this summer, that Orange means suppression of others, contempt, degradation of another population as much entitled to the freedoms that Orange represents to its own people as they are themselves. It is no solution at all to barge recklessly ahead and say simply: to hell with the opposition.

Something dreadful has happened this summer that confirmed age-old nightmares for your Nationalist neighbors, and it happened in Orange hearts and was expressed in the rioting of Drumcree and the sheer pleasure of seeing others forcefully confined in their own homes, clubbed down and humiliated so that the march could go through. The solution has to be in those Orange hearts too, in a self-understanding that is true to the spark of freedom and generosity of spirit that everyone Orange intuits as the originative heroism of their tradition. It needs to be purged of everything that is degrading and the enemy of freedom to others and hence to itself.

I note your defense of David Trimble in the matter of Drumcree, that it is his constituency and hence his own ground. Surely I of all people can't fault him for seeking out and talking to Billy Wright, on the supposition that he was indeed trying to hold back the violence. On principle, I will always talk with anyone with whom I can hope for achieving that purpose, and have sought out both Loyalists and Republicans, even and especially in the times of their greatest violence, to that end, as I have PLO, the most violent of Israeli settlers, PKK and many others. But Trimble inconsistently held it up as principle that he would never talk to a McKenna because he was tainted with a record of violence. The suspicion is that Trimble sought out Billy Wright to bring about violence, and that suspicion has to exist because it was he (with Paisley) who assembled disorderly mobs of tens of thousands of people who had no relation to the place, with the result and for the purpose of overwhelming the police with threat of violence.

That the police, under such pressure and in order to prevent the loss of life that was so immanently threatened, reversed their position and actually forced the marches through, both in Portadown and, with less apparent justification, on the Ormeau Road (with its "five-nil" history), enraged the people who felt the basic function of the marches was to denigrate them. Having read the Chief Constable's statement, and accepting that the reversal was, on his part, a temporary bowing to superior force, only until he could regroup, I'm not inclined to put the blame on him. But a crime was committed there, complete with threatened and actual loss of life (the murdered taxi driver), a crime on the scale and with moral equivalence to the bombings of Canary Wharf or Manchester. Government has argued (I heard Lady Denton present this position) that the decision about the marches had to be operational, made by the police, and not a political one. But it was in fact entirely politicized when, in response to the criminality of this action, government decided, for political reasons only, not to hold the high and mighty perpetrators accountable.

I'm sure you've seen, as I have, Oliver Kearney's analysis of the political meaning of those events in the *Republican News*. (Copy attached. Tom Tracy pulled it off the Internet and FAXed it to me.) I have to admit the validity of a great part of what he writes. That government, in particular, defaulted in this matter on its primary function is a conclusion I draw myself, and I see that Garrett FitzGerald has also concurred in that. I'll quarrel with Oliver's conclusions where he sees atavistic religious bigotry -- very evidently a factor -- as the only element in the Orange performance. I don't believe that is true, and look to you to prove it otherwise. And I reject, as well his conclusion of what response this would justify.

Indeed, this is the point at which I have always refused to accept the Republican claim of the justice of their cause. The flaw is that they have given no adequate attention to your rights and the rights of your tradition. What the Drumcree events showed was a mirror image of that injustice, an assertion of the one side's rights without acceptance of its own responsibility for the freedom and dignity of the others. I wrote to Adams and McGuinness last week that what they need is not a compromise settlement but a reconciliation. I find it very admirable, on both sides, that negotiations were held and compromise agreements made over the Apprentice Boy marches, place by place. But that is not a way to live at longer term. It will be intolerable if it does not issue in the kind of reconciliation in which the other's tradition becomes something precious to each side, and the protection of the other's rights a matter of each side's pride. What was far more impressive, truly moving as sign of reverent acceptance of the other, was the ceremonious accompaniment, by members of the Bogside Residents Group, of your young Orangemen, in the middle of the night, to touch the pillars of four gates in the walls of Derry. (A copy of an *Irish Times* article by Nuala O'Faolain on that attached too.) Those young people will never forget how tenderly they attended one another in a time of grievous pain.

I don't feel I've written adequately to this occasion. I am most grateful to you for holding open our communication at this difficult time. I hope I will see you again soon, and send my best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

256

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 21, 1996

Dear Father Helmick:

Thank you for your recent letters. I appreciate the confidence you have shown in me by sharing the texts of your heartfelt letters to Reverend Smyth and to Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness.

For our part, we continue to urge restraint and tolerance to one and all in Northern Ireland. I hardly need add that we believe continued frank dialogue between the two communities there is of great importance. Your own dialogue with Reverend Smyth and others of his faith and of his party is a key element in the search for understanding and peace. Let us hope the desire for peace in Northern Ireland overcomes the few fanatics still dedicated to violence.

Thank you again for sharing the letters with me.

Sincerely,

Tony Lake

Anthony Lake
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

The Reference Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 3, 1997

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011-44-1232 231723 – 1st of 5 pages

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Once again, as I did in May last year, I'm sending this letter to you with the request that you forward it to the Army Council.

I find the current situation, especially the waiting people do for the British to have their election before anything else can happen, especially dangerous. And the way British government has used Sean O'Callaghan in an effort to discredit you, Gerry, is a very ominous sign of their having no intention of crediting peace moves from the Republican side.

The IRA, I feel, has held out altogether too long before reinstating a cease-fire which, to my mind, it was a major error to break in the first place. Just now they are waiting, apparently, for someone, for a new British government, to force, invite, lure or somehow get them to renew the cease-fire. That is to concede the initiative, which The Republican Movement held in 1994, to someone else. I would think they would want to grasp the initiative, a peace initiative, themselves. This is what I'm asking of them in this letter. It is a tremendous advantage to hold it, and I would think the best assurance of success in the effort for peace, which you did first initiate, that your movement should have it.

Best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

258

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 3, 1997

Members of the Army Council
The Irish Republican Army

Dear Leaders of The Republican Movement,

Christ's Peace!

I wrote directly to you once before, in May of last year, entrusting the letter, as I do now, to Gerry and Martin, to whom I've written more frequently. I trust that my interest in and close concern for your struggle, reaching back to 1972, is familiar to you.

Currently I find you, and with you all your following and the rest of Ireland, in a trough of merely desultory activity so far as any hope for peace or justice are concerned. It shouldn't be so. The objectives with which you undertook your campaign so many years ago, and with which you initiated the cease-fire that gave life to a prospect of peace in 1994, the objectives, hopes and anxieties of all your fellow Irish men and women should not be left to the dangers of an unfocussed play of events as they are now. I've asked you before, through Gerry and Martin and in my letter of last May 15th, for a restoration of your cease-fire. I've held off on this since late last summer, so as not to be simply a repetitious voice. But the menacing circumstances right now suggest to me that there may yet be something further to say.

One of the commonplace observations now is that nothing new can happen in the Northern Irish situation until after the British election. I think that's a bad judgment: that the British and their politics are not that important to what happens in Northern Ireland, but that an inflated importance is attributed to them by Irish people, including, oddly, yourselves.

I don't mean that to deny the historic power that Britain has held over Ireland, the importance of its continuing military and administrative presence, or the shelter that Britain still can and does provide for the immobility of the Unionists. You probably know the argument I have presented often to Gerry and Martin and many others, that finding a respectful and mutually supportive way of living in the same space for people of the two competing traditions in Northern Ireland has priority over constitutional questions, and is in fact a prior condition for any successful discussion of the constitutional questions. But I mean more than that when I question that you have any need to wait on the British election before anything serious can happen now.

You initiated something of central historic importance when you declared your cease-fire in 1994. I've always interpreted it as a decision that what would happen in Northern Ireland had to be decided in conjunction with the Protestant/Unionist community, not imposed on them by coercion; that a respect had to be paid to them and their rights that made coercion the wrong approach. That is something I had been arguing to people in your movement for so many years, with full awareness of the injustices done to Irish people through your history and down to the present, but a strong consciousness of the rights of people in this other tradition as well, that I might easily have jumped the gun, and interpreted your action in this way beyond the evidence, but I think my interpretation was right. I'm sure you realize, and realized then, that a United Ireland is not going to happen right away, and that any hope of it can only be the result of a reconciliation, an uncertain and perhaps relatively distant result, and cannot precede it. You put the priority, rightly I believe, on the reconciliation and the creation of a life of mutual dignity and equal opportunity. Because you did that, and for that reason only, there was real hope for reconciliation, which involved both peace and justice. You held the initiative, unmistakably, even though governments, both Irish and, primarily, British, had to try, by such means as the Downing Street Declaration, to reclaim some pretence of the initiative for themselves.

The people who best understood that were the Loyalists. They had been going through internal questioning processes for as long as you had, but still had to deliberate some six weeks before joining you in your cease-fire and your resolve to treat your adversaries with respect. Even though they first declared their cease-fire contingent on the continuation of yours, they have valued their new resolve more firmly than you have yourselves, and maintained it even after you backed down, and in the face of tremendous provocation. Your action and theirs, in each case the recognition and acceptance of the other's legitimacy, are comparable to what Israelis and the PLO did in the Oslo agreement a year before.

The Unionists have never done the like, never made a recognition or acceptance of the legitimacy of any part of the Nationalist community or tradition, in the North or in the Southern State. They met your first announcement, once they understood that it was an offer of equal terms and not in any way a surrender, with alarm rather than acceptance. They feared dealing with you more than they feared further violence from you, even though their public understood and hoped for the acceptance of your offer more than their leadership. What the leadership did, after some initial panic at the realization of what you were offering, was to search diligently for reasons not to believe you. And British government, after having responded more responsibly, until then, to the events you were creating in Ireland than had any British government since Gladstone's, now turned to covering for the Unionists, inventing artificial hurdles for you to jump until, after seventeen months of frustration, you suspended the cease-fire.

I think I've a fair idea of why you suspended the cease-fire. I have to come back to that later. More important is that you thereby handed back the initiative. Since ending the cease-fire, you no longer command the agenda, as you did for that interval of seventeen months, but react to it. Basically, that is why I quarrel with your judgment. Even at the time you ended the cease-fire, I believe you had a truly compelling argument to the Unionists, and to any elements in British government that supported their intransigeance, that would have forced them to take your respectful and generous offer seriously and respond to it in kind, as had the Loyalists. I feel you quit when the dynamic of the situation meant you had soon to be winning. Now the initiative has gone to the Unionists, who use your every attack as an argument that your offer was never worthy of trust in the first place, and to the Orange element who came back with such provocative rage last summer. It would have gone to the British government, in the same way as it has to the Unionists and the Orange, except that the government has wasted its chance of the initiative in a rather silly pretence that it can produce a settlement in Northern Ireland that doesn't include you. There is a very dangerous sign of bad intention on British government's part in these fabricated revelations by Sean O'Callaghan, which are intended to discredit Gerry Adams, the one voice through which your movement has been able to initiate a hope of peace, and therefore an indication that the present British government places no value on that effort.

I must sound very severe on both the Unionists and the British. In fact I have quite a lot of understanding for the anxiety of the Unionists, and believe you need to understand and address it. I have some sympathy too for the British government's feeling that it must not leave the Unionists, in their anxiety, naked to their enemies, even enemies bringing gifts, since that would only leave the Unionists striking out with blind violence from their panic, much as you saw in last summer's Orange marches. It could be worse. But I do find the attacks on Gerry Adams very underhanded. Their working through the likes of O'Callaghan, who gains so much by saying anything they ask of him, would be transparent if it came from anyone the world regarded as less respectable than this government.

My argument is this. If you wait on the British election before renewing the cease-fire, you leave the initiative still to Britain, which does not deserve it. I think you deceive yourselves if you believe you can have a process leading to peace, and justice, without a cease-fire. If you do not wait for the election, but reinstate the cease-fire, *unconditionally and permanently*, before it, you have the initiative again, and there is no way Unionists or British can escape recognizing it.

260

I stress that "unconditionally and permanently" because I think the danger, if you pay any attention to my argument at all, would be that you give too little.

I said I had to come back to my thinking that I've some fair idea why you ended the cease-fire. Other than to put it down to simple frustration, I'm less than sure that I understand the mechanism of the breakdown or of your current bombing and shooting campaign. I'll tell you what I see.

It's always been evident to me that your movement covers a broad ideological spectrum, unlike the Official IRA you broke away from, which had its rather quirky but absolute party line, or the INLA with its now dated automatic Marxism, or the more recent Republican Sinn Fein with its Holy Mantle of a Republicanism of an earlier day. Your movement includes people, especially in Belfast or Derry, with a commitment to economic justice, Socialist to varying degrees, others, more likely to turn up in Dublin, vaguely Fascist, and in between, especially when you get out into rural areas, people essentially without any politics other than "Brits out." Coming to the cease-fire in 1994 was not a matter of unanimous assent, but a preponderance of opinion that won the day. There was good reason for it, and quality political leadership from Gerry and Martin to make it feasible. You had the discipline to make it stick.

In that middle ideological area, where there is no real politcs, "Brits out" had already become accomplished fact in South Armagh for some fifteen years. IRA there has the ground, and a thriving smuggling business that it did not want hurt. They already had experience of mounting operations on their own authority for their own purposes, occasionally in defiance or deceit of the Army Council. They had no enthusiasm for the cease-fire, but were willing to let these city-boys have their try at it, convinced that it would never work. When government and the Unionists raised the threat of "decommissioning," they saw it as meaning British Army and RUC back in South Armagh, and so withdrew their assent to the cease-fire. That raised the spectre of a "split," broke the "preponderance of opinion" that had brought about the cease-fire in the first place, and they proceeded to engineer last year's bombing campaign in Britain. These things are well enough understood by Unionists and the British that the decommissioning issue may well have been calculated to bring about just that result.

So much for the initial breaking of the cease-fire. What's happening more recently is far more dangerous: dangerous last summer in the marching season; dangerous on the British side in this campaign to discredit Gerry Adams and prevent him from renewing the credibility of a Nationalist peace effort; and dangerous on your part in the series of bombings and shootings you've carried on since November.

It's hard to see motive in those. In character, they are bumbling attempts, not apparently up to the level of competence we are accustomed to in your campaigns: the gang that couldn't shoot straight. I can see three possible explanations and can't altogether choose among them.

One is that it is someone else. That would not be INLA. They would be that incompetent. They have never accepted the cease-fire or its thinking. But they are ideologically unacceptable either to you or to the wider Nationalist public, and you have been able, since the start of the cease-fire, to make them hold off. More likely it would be Des Long and his irredentists, fronted by Ruairi O Bradaigh and Republican Sinn Fein, with some ill-equipped and under-trained active service people in the Continuity IRA. You've had some defections, which would explain their use of your pass-words to claim these actions, and they have such an aura of the Old Religion that you would find it awkward to denounce them.

A second possibility is that you have lost disciplinary control of your own people, and local hot-shots are carrying out these actions on their own, both you and they too demoralized to call a halt. That would explain the lack of competence: shootings that don't come off, a roadside land-mine too small to knock anything off the road. And it would explain the callousness: the hospital children's ward.

The third possibility is that it is your campaign, calculated, as was very likely the campaign in Britain last year, to be mostly feints: attacks not intended to do real damage, just to indicate that you are still around, with an occasional spectacular – Canary Wharf, the Manchester mall, the Lisburn barracks – to show potential.

Any one of these three scenarios is dangerous, and could bring you back to the stalemate of the years 1969-94, with no way out short of another long process as tortuous as the one that led to the 1994 cease-fire. If it is the third, as most people seem to believe, the supposition is that you are trying to provoke the Loyalists into breaking their cease-fire, as if that would justify your breaking yours and win you a place in negotiations. That isn't the likely outcome. Rather it is that the whole game will be lost. Sooner or later, even if these attacks are feints, you will kill someone. Killing a couple of British soldiers in the barracks didn't bring a renewal of full Loyalist vengeance. If you kill a Northern Irish Protestant, an RUC man or some other, they may become uncontrollable. Tht can't serve any good purpose of yours.

If instead, as I suggest and really plead to you, you renew the cease-fire now, without waiting for the British election to go by, you regain the high ground you had in September '94. I give you credit that you occupied that high ground for good and honest purposes, and would again. Then, when the election was done, you would not be responding (positively or negatively) to the initiative of a new British government calling for a cease-fire, but would be the ones summoning Britain and, what is far more important, the Unionists to meet with you and design a just peace. On the basis of your treating them with the full respect due your fellow citizens, exactly the same as you demand from them, you are unassailable and they will have to respond. Their own public will not let them escape.

The alternative, I reckon, is very bleak. You will leave Gerry Adams high and dry, subject to any lies government chooses to tell about him, unable to muster the American government and public good will that has served you well in these last years. You'll be blamed by your own public for the lost chance.

For all the ways I disagree with judgments you have made, and have always felt up to the time of your cease-fire that you were calling for injustice to the Protestants as the remedy for the evident injustice to your own people, I give you my ready respect. You have shown yourselves capable of really bold and imaginative action to promote the best of your aspirations for a just peace. I pray that you may do it again.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

262

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 26, 1997

Mr. Sean O'Callaghan
c/o Tom Tracy
FAX (310) 699 6931

Dear Sean,

Christ's Peace!

I've just been listening to your radio interview, the Ray Suarez *Talk of the Nation* show on PBS. I'd heard you yesterday evening -- the evening repeat of the show you had done in the morning -- on Chrtistopher Lydon's *Connections* here in Boston, those two probably the most prestigious of the radio programs you did.

Tom, whom I'm relying on to get this to you as I haven't an address to write directly to you myself, knows my inclination to disbelieve in advance your stories about Gerry Adams in particular. When I wrote again, as I have before, early this month to the IRA Army Council, c/o Adams and McGuinness, arguing for renewal of the cease-fire, I brought up my disbelief in the most conspicuous two of your charges: the murder plot against Charles and Diana in 1984 -- right out of Tom Clancy's 1987 novel -- and the 1982 suggestion of Gerry Adams himself to murder John Hume -- a late blossom among the charges you've made. Obviously I have no direct knowledge of either, though those are strong reasons to doubt them. But my central problem about them is that your making these charges has the immediate effect of discrediting Gerry Adams' role in the peace initiative, and thereby the peace initiative itself. That is so obvious that I can't imagine otherwise than that it is the purpose.

Much the greater part of what you say about the conflict, its causes and the priorities for ending it is an analysis I agree with. I find you sounding themes I have been expressing in writing and in argument with people in and out of the Republican Movement for twenty years and more. For instance, that the fundamental problem is between the two communities of tradition in the North, with the British only an external prop, often enough a pernicious one, that the Unionists use as instrument for their defence. I'm agreed that this is no Algeria situation, with colonists who belong back where they came from, but that the Protestant/Unionist/British-feeling community -- hard to know what to call them once you start analyzing it -- are at home there, permanent, and in fact representatives of a freedom tradition that deserves respect, even if it's tainted by the way they have held to their freedom at the expense of oppressing others. There's a lot more that I find myself confirming in what you say, most especially, perhaps, the recognition that there is no way to go forward with the peace process, or to admit Sinn Fein into the forum, without a real cease-fire. I write and tell this to Adams and McGuinness and the Army Council people constantly, that it is pure delusion to believe it can be otherwise. But I'm writing to you to complain.

I've always argued to Republicans, with some large degree of recognition that their movement was looking for just redress of real ancient and present injustices, that they would never be able, in that spirit, to live with success: that if they were to win, and find themselves the masters of an alienated and deprived population of Unionists/Protestants, it would be intolerable to realize they had become oppressors in their turn. The weakness of the Republican Movement has always been its failure to recognize the dignity and rights of the Unionists, treat them with the respect due their humanity and the care required for people who will always be neighbor. Knowing how important it is to Republicans to believe they were fighting a just war, I've always refused to accept that they were, for that reason. I've an understanding of what happened with the declaration of the cease-fire: that there were reticences, there were reservations, there were people opposed to what had become a preponderance of opinion within the Republican community, but essentially it was a decision to treat the Protestants/Unionists with that respect.

Your argument is essentially that none of that is to be trusted, and that in particular Gerry Adams, who is initiator, deserves no trust. I'm not new to this. I saw much of Army Council people in 1981, during the hunger strike, when I did some mediating, and found that for them, even at that time, Gerry was their pacifist, already groping toward the same arguments that both you and I are articulating now, and that there were people in the Army Council who were quite proud of him for that reason. Gerry himself was hard to reach, for an outsider like me, at that time, and once I did meet him I discovered why I had, until then, only met lieutenants. I complained of it to him in writing afterward: that he had surrounded himself with acolytes, and never talked except with people who were echoes of himself. He's overcome that since. But what the Army Council people saw in him, the pacifist even then, was true.

He always argued the justification of the IRA's physical force campaign as response to injustice. Without denying the injustice, I never accepted that, for exactly the reason I've given, but I do understand why it has been done. A lot of people now want to use it as an argument against you that you did the murders and various other things you've confessed to, and I have to tell them I am less shocked than they. I doubt that you did these things out of cynicism, unreflected brutality, or without a sense of grievances to which it was a merited response. I wouldn't accept that argument, but I wouldn't judge that persons who made it did so hypocritically, though they may have, or may have come eventually to that. Did Gerry Adams back-slide on that effort his colleagues regarded as pacifism, or was he tempted by dirty short-cuts? How should I know? That's the substance of what you're saying. But he, and McGuinness, who was surely much more unambiguously an advocate and user of force, carried out a long campaign to persuade the effective leadership of the IRA to the cease-fire they came to in '94, with its rationale that was very hard for the IRA to swallow. (I find that it is the most difficult single ideological thing for the IRA to do, even now, to denounce the Des Long operation, that is still mouthing the crazy old true faith.) That Adams and McGuinness created what they did is far more important than anything else that may be true of them. Had their action, and the offer of respect they made to the Unionists at the time, had a due response, we would now be celebrating a peace process that was going from strength to strength.

I've known the Loyalist inner history pretty well too, back when it was Glen Barr, Sammy Smyth, big Ian Fraser, Andie Tyrie, the much more ambivalent John McMichaels and a great number of very reflective figures in the UVF (they so much more at odds with themselves that it is strange now to find the PUP people with so much more serious offerings than UDP). They had been at their questioning as long as the IRA, back into the earliest 70s, and still needed that last six weeks after the IRA cease-fire to reflect some more before coming to their own cease-fire. When they came to it, they made it contingent on the IRA's cease-fire continuing, but when the IRA broke theirs, the Loyalists found that their own was more important to them than that. Wht each did was comparable to what the Israelis and Palestinians did in signing the Oslo agreement. Each side recognized the other's legitimacy as a people, with very visible reluctance, with very little drawing of concrete conclusions, all of which would still be stubbornly contested, but the most essential element for making a peace was there in that mutual recognition, and has held up through Goldstein and the Hamas bombs and the election of Netanyahu and the toe-down over Hebron, any one of which seemed likely to have put it right off the rails.

The great diffference in the Northern Ireland case is that the Unionists never made that basic recognition of the Nationalist community's legitimacy, despite the fact that the Nationalists, both major parties of them, and the Loyalists had done so. I have some understanding for the Unionists' anxiety. They had had nothing whatever to do with bringing about the break, the new opportunity, and they had to fear that any response whatever that they made might lead to a loss of their entrenched privileges. It was the principal responsibility of everyone else -- Republicans, British, interested American and other outsiders -- to reassure them that they could safely enter a process that involved these people they had alays held at arm's length. It was their principal responsibility to find their way to it, and they failed. That's the principal thing that happened.

I've heard you argue, on both the radio programs, that inviting Sinn Fein to the table wold mean that no Unionists would come. (You put it that no one else would come, and that isn't quite the case. The SDLP has been urging it, and you could expect to find the Loyalist parties, the Women's Coalition and maybe some others there, but surely not the Unionists, of either UUP or DUP variety.) That, to my mind, is to lose focus. The Unionists' refusal is the issue, the thing that needs to be overcome (their need and everyone else's), not a thing to be taken for granted as needing no excuse. I accept that it is entirely inevitable now, with the IRA's cease-fire broken. But there was the seventeen-month period in which it was the obvious agenda, and resisted through all sorts of pretences. I won't accept that that calculated delay justified the IRA's breaking of the cease-fire, as I've told them often. I won't accept, either, that it was the only reason the IRA broke its cease-fire: much else was happening behind the scenes. But I would contend that, if the Unionists had responded in kind, with the same level of genuine good will that had been shown by the Republican Movement (with the rest of the Nationalists: SDLP) and the Loyalists, the cease-fire would not have been ended and we would now be hearing of advances toward the peace.

And where was the British government? They provided cover for the Unionists' delay, inventing reasons (the de-commissioning gambit was their invention rather than the Unionists') and excusing the Unionists from having to address the principal responsibility that the cease-fires set before them.

Again, I have to acknowledge some excuse for what was basically a disgraceful policy. It was right for the British government to conclude that it should not leave the Unionists feeling naked, without friends in their time of panic, as that would only have increased their anxiety. But it was still incumbent on British government to make it plain to the Unionists that the offer of respectful, non-coercive dialogue that had been made to them was the principal challenge to them, and that they had a responsibility to meet it. I credit the John Major government with having done more for the settlement of the ancient Irish grievance than any other since Gladstone up to the point of the cease-fire, but they have dreadfully flunked the course ever since.

Effectively, once they found the Unionists hesitant to get into a dialogue process, the British government decided to revert to what had most often (with a few periods of mild doubt) been their policy throughout the "troubles:" never to deal with the Republicans, but to defeat them and drive them from the field. The government has been pretending that it could settle Northern Ireland's problem in conjunction with the rest of the parties, without any reference to the Republican Movement. I take that as a fatuous position.

The most central element in that policy had to be to discredit Gerry Adams, and deny credence to him or anything he initiated. This isn't a question of whether there were ambivalences or reservations in the program to which Gerry so laboriously persuaded the IRA. Maybe so, maybe not. But it was a question whether even to permit the exploration of this possibility or, by preference, simply to reject any Republican role in the future. That was a perfidious choice.

And that is my quarrel with you. You've made yourself a patsy to that policy. I reject many things you've done in your life, while understanding the contexts in which you've done them. You joined the IRA in your teen-age and went on to murder in it -- I take it with a belief, gradually weakening, that it was a soldier's task. (I listened to your account of hearing, on the radio news, of the murder of a woman RUC officer, and hearing your senior IRA colleague's wish that she may have been pregnant.) You made another choice to become informer, doubtless with much moral trepidation and regret, but I'll credit you with honest struggle over your motives. But now, why are you out of prison? Why did you easily get a visa? Why are you being ushered to every microphone in the U.S.? What is the interest of the Murdoch *Times* in promoting your tour? It embarrasses me that my friend Tom is put up to funding your visit. He's being made a prop for a discreditable program for which there is plenty of money at hand.

I don't grudge you your freedom, but I think you have bought it at a shaming price. I find this not a creditable position for you. You are the front for a British policy choice which is one of the most dubious, insupportable that they have made: to reject, disrupt and sabotage the very possibility of reconciliation between the traditional enemies in Northern Ireland and try to substitute for it a chimerical solution that would simply disregard the needs of one communal side. I doubt that you have much choice about it, having once accepted that position. I don't believe your explanation that you've been let out of that long sentence because you volunteered your confession in the first place. That's not consistent with the way others, who have not offered such convenient fronting for a discreditable policy, have been treated. You are now subject to government blackmail. You are out on "good behavior." Its definition is that you not renege on this bargain. You are whisked across to the U.S., given the transparent cover of Mr. Murdoch acting for government and gullible funders of your "independent" tour because it suits this policy imperative of government. British government has, in fact, done many much better things than this about the Irish situation. The choice of theirs that you are propping up represents, on their part, a craven flight from their primary responsibility in the situation, to promote reconciliation of these two estranged and suffering communities. It is kiss of death for them both. It is not well done, by you or by the government.

Do you know, as I started this letter, I looked to write to you with all the understanding I could muster on your behalf, agreeing with most of your analysis though I thoroughly disagreed with what you are doing. As I draw conclusions now, I find them devastating. I wish you well, as I know that you have been hurt, at every stage of your sad career, as much as you have hurt anyone, and that many of the choices you have made have been honest ones reached through great stress. I know, too, that it would cost you exhorbitantly much if you were now to renounce what I see as a filthy deal made with a British government which in this is acting at its most unregenerate. If you did, you would not, by that action, bring about the peace you are now helping to sabotage, because there would still be the essentially required actions of the IRA, of the Unionists and of the British that we would all have to wait for. But you would have done what you could and removed an obstacle that is of your own making. I hope that doesn't just make you laugh. You've become a factor in the main action, something that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have been for some time, I suspect for the first time in your life.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

266

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

March 21, 1997

Cllr. Gary McMichael
Ulster Democratic Party
12A Bridge Street
Lisburn, BT28 1XY
NORTHERN IRELAND

FAX: c/o Rev. Roy Magee

Dear Gary,

Christ's Peace!

It's a while since I've seen you, here at Boston College and over there in Belfast, in fact since near the beginning of the cease-fires.

The situation since the murder, last week, of John Slane, has me especially worried about the INLA retaliation threats, which seems to be very directly against Billy Hutchinson.

People have been asking me to appeal in one direction or another for Billy's safety, and nothing could be more important or urgent to me. I know well enough that the people most able to warn off the INLA are the IRA. I'm aware that plenty of people are asking them to do that. I don't feel secure that that appeal by itself will be effective.

The reports all associate this killing with the UDA, and I notice that the UDA has not claimed it. My understanding of how things work internally isn't good enough to sense what that means, but my suspicion is that this may be an unauthorized action that is as much an embarrassment to the UDA as it is a horror to everyone else. That the victim is believed to have been murdered through a false identification makes it all the worse, like so many of the IRA murders of the past that have been followed by an "Oops, they explained."

I've had great admiration for the way both Loyalist paramilitary organizations have kept the peace these last years, despite grave provocation, and the colossal work you and others, as well as the CLMC, have done to keep it that way. You are the people who have taken the greatest risks for the peace, and deserve all our thanks. I know you have had to deal with people whose patience has run out, and I'm told that dissident individuals have broken away and may be forming up a third Loyalist paramilitary force that would not hold to the cease-fire. I've been familiar with the internal questioning that has gone on inside the UDA as far back as the time of Sammy Smyth, Glen Barr, Andy Tyrie and others, and have respected and valued their moral integrity, as I did your father's.

My thought is that a possible way to calm the present situation, and stop the INLA from its retaliation threat, would be for the UDA itself to turn in the murderers to the RUC. I don't know my way around this well enough to feel really confident in this suggestion, but I put it before you for your better informed consideration.

If this were done, it would reflect great credit on the UDA for its commitment to maintaining the ceae-fire and promoting the peace. It would also reflect great credit on the RUC, which would be a good result for the peace: UDA support for rule of law. Going to the RUC would be much better, in fact, than if the UDA were to discipline or punish these murderers itself, as that would be seen as new proof of the UDA still having a violently lawless character.

I realize very well that this may not be a feasible suggestion. I'm familiar with the response in the Nationalist and Republican communities to the concept of the informer, and while I don't understand that part of it as well on the Loyalist side I know it is important there too. It's conceivable that this murder of John Slane does actually represent a decision of the UDA, though that is not my belief. If so, then just write this suggestion off as uninformed. My expectation is that the murder is a renegade action, could even be someone's revenge for the arrest of Billy Wright, and will have outraged the leadership of the UDA as much as it does the rest of us. I really don't suggest this to challenge anyone or to put anyone in an untenable position, but on the chance that it may actually be a thing that can be done.

My admiration for your dedicated work to promote the peace, and best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 21, 1997

Rev. Brian Kenneway
The Manse
1 Lurgan Road
Crumlin BT29 1QA

Dear Brian,

Christ's Peace!

I've wanted to write to you since hearing of the difficult and most constructive decision made by various lodges of the Orange Order on the July 12th marches. I think your people made most responsible choices, painful as they must have been to a great number of your members, and I want to commend you on a very Christian action. You've contributed in an incomparably solid way to the peace.

I expect many of your members must be very ambivalent about this new IRA cease-fire, wondering how adequate it is. I welcome it very much myself. It's my impression that the IRA leadership took such care before declaring themselves again for a cease-fire that it will be genuinely durable, and means a decision on their part to negotiate, and not to try to coerce. I think I understand Unionist misgivings very well, but hope a real communication will now be set up that will lead to reconciliation of your two traditions.

I'm very glad we met, and very grateful for the time you gave me, the very open and friendly conversation we had, the literature and your very generously coming in to Belfast the following Sunday to meet the others in our Boston Theological Institute group. They were very appreciative of that also, and only wished that it had been possible to have a fuller meeting with you. Coming from a very wide spectrum of the Christian traditions we have in the U.S. (and a few other places, like Zimbabwe), they especially responded to the very open way you and others approached them.

I've written to my friend Tom Tracy, and recommended that he invite you to gatherings he brings together occasionally in or about Northern Ireland. I'm convinced that your Orange outlook has to be well represented and respected in any such meetings. I'm anxious to find ways for you to get over to the U.S., also, and meet people who will be open to your community's needs. I look forward to seeing you again.

With all best wishes,

in ~~Christ~~,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 22, 1997

Rev. Martyn Smyth, M.P.
117 Cregagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

I've wanted to write a thank-you for your coming out so generously to Millisle to talk to my graduate student group from the Boston Theological Institute. That was a very good thing. These students, coming from the whole range of Christian traditions as we have them represented in our consortium of theology schools, got a very good comprehensive view of Northern Ireland over the course of their time there, and I was determined tht they should have a real view of Unionists. You provided them that, with a chance to meet you informally, a good talk and chance for questions. That you did it on a bank holiday evening, coming all the way out there, makes it all the more splendid on your part.

I thought the Orange Order showed its real responsibility and Christianity this summer. The decision not to have the marches through places like Lower Ormeau etc. must have been very painful, but it was tremendously constructive, a deference to the neighbor, even intransigeant neighbor, that was the making of peace. Even where it produced internal tensions, I think it is a part of the Order's orienting itself to the protection of all the fredoms, including the freedom of your opposites. I have much greater hope for Northern Ireland because of that.

And now the cease-fire. I'm glad to see it, and have argued it to the IRA all this time, as, I believe, have the Sinn Fein leaders. I hear Robert Saulters, who has been a pillar of good sense and responsibility, at great cost to himself, as new head of the Order, calling it a poisoned chalice, and I know why he sees it so. Ken Maginnis, too, points out, in statements I've seen, that the word "permanent" still doesn't appear in the announcement. I think I know why that is so, too, and it is not that the IRA's leaders plan on a return to violence if the ourcome of negotiations doesn't please them, but simply that they are reinstating the cease-fire as it was in 1994, precisely.

I have a more hopeful view of this cease-fire, and I've tried to assess it very realistically. You've heard me say, and seen me write, that the meaning of the 1994 cease-fire was recognition, by the whole Nationalist community and Repulican movement, of the legitimacy of the Protestant and Unionist community, and their rights. It was an ambivalent recognition on the part of some in the leadership, a "preponderance of opinion," as I've called it, which they couldn't resist. That preponderance of opinion meant really solid recognition by the bulk of the community that the Unionists were not to be coerced: that that was injustice. The Loyalists responded in kind, with a reciprocal recognition. You suspect them of being red, red Communists, I know; I don't share that, and welcome their response of recognition for recognition, the acceptance of the other community reciprocal for the receiving of recognition. That's something very new, much like the mutual recognition given the previous year, 1993, by Israelis and PLO Palestinians -- i.e., *the* Palestinians -- of one another's legitimacy as peoples, recognition offered publicly and solemnly, after all the years they had both refused to concede it. Even now, when it is the central function of the Netanyahu government to withdraw that recognition, it turns out to be practically impossible for him to do.

That recognition was not reciprocated by Unionists, for reasons that, again, I quite understand. I don't hold that as a moral judgment against Unionists, but as a misfortune. You've heard me urge that people programmatically overcome that distrust and deliberately engage the other side in dialogue. I held it more against government than against doubting Northern Irish people that no steps were taken to promote that kind of choice for dialogue while it was offered, but instead reasons sought and found to keep away from it. There were specific things that brought about the breaking of the cease-fire, power jockeyings among elements of the IRA leadership, all important to understand. But the over-riding thing, that those who really just didn't want talk and mutual recognition with the Unionists could sieze upon as argument for their position, was that there was no response: that an offer of recognition and of dialogue for peade was made, and not so much rejected (as in the late 1960s) as avoided. Opportunity lost.

With the new cease-fire, I see that David Trimble has announced his intention to bring the UUP into the talks, and I respect him for that. That Paisley and McCartney will stay out doesn't matte much now: after their performance in the elections, they aren't really needed, although theri solidarity would be an advantage to real Unionists as you engage the Nationalist community in dialogue. I don't think that decommissioning is the real issue that deserves attention here. It has acquired symbol importance for both sides, and both really need to deflate that symbolism. Noone is really talking about removing the IRA's physical capacity to reopen a violence campaign, which they, or angry substitutes/replacements for them, could do readily even after a full disarmament, if such a thing could even be monitored. The demand is rather that they make, symbolically, a recognition that it is they who have been wrong, the "men of violence," all along, and neither side is willing as yet to recognize its own responsibility for what has gone wrong in Northern Irish society, much as the Serbs or the Croats don't want to admit that they ever did anything wrong.

But what is necessary, I believe, is not to chew over those bones, but to get to the point, in both communities, of recognizing and accepting one another's full humanity, rights and needs, knowing one another as persons and a people, as the neighbours you live with. That is what is going to guarantee disarmament and the end to communally organized and accepted violence. A few crazed or intransigeant individuals, if there should be such left then, can be dealt with, but a community that feels itself despised and dishonoured, not. If the present situation, in talks or in avoidance of talks, is construed in a purely adversarial manner, that recognition and trust will not be built. Talking common needs, common fears, common sufferings, common desires will build it. What I'm saying is that treating the talk process as "poisoned chalice" will perpetuate enmity, whereas use of the opportunity to talk can bring a kind of mutual recognition that will actually create the peace. That is the opportunity that was squandered before, and ought not be squandered again.

I haven't yet met Robert Saulters. We haven't yet become persons we know to each other, though I greatly respect the way he has dealt with this overwhelmingly difficult situation this summer. I want to get to know him, but would appreciate it if you, who know me and, I hope, know that I am truly saying what I believe here, would put this before him. I wish you pace, with every opportunity to be fully yourselves in peace,

in Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

December 5, 1997

Rev. Martin Smyth, M.P.
117 Cregagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Christmas approaching, I realize how long it is since I wrote you last, and want to wish you and all the people who are so important to you all the blessings of peace that we celebrate in the coming of Christ. All of you, who are Protestant and Catholic both, will be in my prayers, as you always are. I'm hoping I might see you over the season, when we will be having our Christmas break between terms.

I'm impressed by the progress of the talks process, though there are things lacking still. I've harped, all this year, on the absence from the process, or non-engagement in it, of critically important parts of the Republican movement, with all those fine lines to be drawn between its military and political leaderships, particularly the absence of East Tyrone and South Armagh elements. I've been working full-out all that time to communicate with the most recalcitrant of them, and urge the necessity of their taking part if the peace is really to be made. We had the great blow-up of that Gweedore meeting recently, and it turns out that things are not so drastic as they first seemed. I find now that the military leadership has passed from East Tyrone, mainly because of the illness of the principal figure rather than rejection of the process, to South Armagh, the region in which the IRA is hardest to convince of the virtue of seeking peace, and that in fact their leadership has cooperated significantly in promoting the effort. I take that as meaning that Adams and McGuinness, whose authority as advocates of the peace effort seemed so much under challenge from dissident elements of the IRA, have done their work well. The appearance of Pat McNamee, hard-line South Armagh figure and an elected Sinn Fein Councillor from there, on the Decommissioning Committee, is the most encouraging evidence I've seen of meaningful engagement from that quarter.

I do indeed value every move of outreach across such barriers, even the ambiguous ones (as I'm sure one of McNamee's purposes on that committee is to take care that his group's interests are not infringed upon). I was very aware of the friendly overture you made at that Botanic Park rally of 1994, and of the suspicion with which it was received by the Ormeau Road spokesmen. Their suspicion was the old and long received element, your outreach the new and significant initiative, which they weren't yet equipped to recognize. That doesn't at all surprise me, though I know how disappointing it is to have such an initiative rebuffed. I'm making such initiatives all the time, you know, in many different situations -- to Israelis and Palestinians, to every kind of faction in Lebanon, to Kurds of both enemy factions (both my friends) in Northern Iraq, to the PKK Kurds in Turkey and to Turkish government, to my own American government figures, to whom I am always appealing on behalf of all these people, and who do listen carefully, but put up all the obstacles they can think of -- and have gotten used to most of them being rebuffed. It's the eventual acceptance of a peace-making initiative that counts, not the fifty or a hundred refusals that precede it.

I was left very puzzled last summer, when you so kindly came out to my students at Millisle, by a strictly theological point you made, that reconciliation, in New Testament terms, was only to be sought between God and ourselves, whereas between human antagonists the best that could be sought was conciliation. I spoke of this with Bishop Gordon McMullan at one point, and we heard something very similar said by David McIlvine, which left me thinking this must be a more widely received conception.

I'm not really sure what distinction was being made by either of you, and don't want to get stuck in semantics over a prefix. But I always take it as one of the most basic Christian instructions that we be reconciled with one another as well as with God, and that the one reflects the other. "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matt. 5, 23-24.) "Forgive us our debts (trespasses), as we also have forgiven our debtors (as we forgive those who trespass against us).... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you." (Matt. 6, 12.14.) "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matt. 7, 1-3.) It's particularly in Matthew, here in the sermon on the mount and elsewhere, but sometimes even stronger in Luke (e.g., 6, 27-38). In John, there is the foot washing, in the setting of the Last Supper, where the Synoptics put the institution of the Eucharist, the foot-washing expressing for John the heart of the eucharistic action itself: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." (John 13, 14-15.) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13, 34-35.) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." John 15,12.) This goes on and on, through other parts of the New Testament as well as the Gospels, and I don't need to give you Scripture lessons. But I just can't reconcile all this with a sharp break between the reconciliation of God and man and a cut-off before reconciliation between man and man. It seems very fundamental and important to me, and I wonder what is being said.

I put it all in the context of complaints -- basically from Sinn Fein people, not, I notice, from SDLP -- that UUP representatives simply will not address them, even in the context of the talks. I hear this in Ken Maginnis' regular assertion that he will not talk with murderers, though Reg Empey, when he was in Boston, put it differently: that UUP people would address those from Sinn Fein within the formal sessions, but not in social conversation outside them. I've seen something similar in Palestinian assertions: the negotiators who went to Oslo valued the fact that they had socialized with their Israeli counterparts and built up an appreciation of one another's humanity, whereas the Madrid Conference representatives, Haidar Abdel Shafi and others whom I also much respected, had pointedly refrained from addressing their own Israeli counterparts outside the formal sessions.

Recently I read a complaint by Niall O'Dowd, the Irish-American editor of *The Irish Voice* and one of those who had most to do with the American urgings for an IRA cease-fire. He pointed out that the 1995 Framework Document had pledged the two governments, British and Irish, in the event that the All-Party Talks didn't get anywhere because of any party's intransigeance, that they would then proceed to make new arrangements between themselves. O'Dowd's complaint was that Mo Mowlam, on her American trip, would not re-assert that. He felt that the UUP were in the talks basically because of that pledge, for fear that otherwise new arrangements would be made by the two governments over which Unionists had no say, but that now, once in the talks, Unionists doubted that the governments would do it, and hence felt no need to produce anything other than objections to procedure.

I had the chance to discuss this the other day with Dick Spring, the former Irish Foreign Minister, and found that he reacted very much as I did, that any effort, politically or otherwise, to coerce or pressurize any of your parties would bring about no trustworthy agreement, and that only new insight and appreciation of one another by the parties would serve. We both remembered how the carrot-and-stick policy, visible in the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, had first been adumbrated when Mrs. Thatcher visited Charlie Haughey in Dublin in December 1980, and they had opined that, if the Northern Irish parties would not come to agreements, the two governments would make the agreements for them.

I wrote to Ken Maginnis last August, congratulating him that he had then just held a Television debate with Martin McGuinness. Ken too had been tremendously helpful to me in setting up that student visit, and I've always had great regard for him. I told him this:

> I know how apprehensive you all are over this new cease-fire, and the distrust there is for becoming involved in direct discussion. I don't expect to see this cease-fire broken. The Republicans were so wary of reinstating it themselves, and looked the horse so carefully in the mouth, that I take it they are very serious in embarking on it again. It would represent terrible failure for them if it fell apart again, or if they let it do so.
>
> But most of all I believe, given the evident lack of trust between your Unionist selves and them, that trust has to be built by actually encountering each others as persons. You can't be sure of them now, in the sense of their not having some agenda unacceptable to you, nor can they be sure of you, in the sense that they have to be afraid that you will simply evade the need ever to acknowledge them as real persons with rights or respond to any overture they can make to you. I've always been convinced, since the issue arose, that decommissioning of weapons was no road to that, or guarantee of it. You have no inventory of their weapons holdings to verify their disarmament, and what they use is so easily replaceable, if the relation were to break down again, that you couldn't put any reliance on decommissioning, if you had it.
>
> The only thing you can put reliance on is the people themselves, and they have to be reconciled to living fully respectfully with you, as you with them, before you cease to be a real danger to one another. They are always going to be there, and there is no substitute for coming to terms with them. However little you trust them, and however real a danger they are to you, you will never change that without talking to them. So I was glad to hear you talking with Martin McGuinness, even in a shout. I'm sure you have to start that way before the volume can come down. It's a good beginning.

When you last wrote, Martin (August 13), the one thing on which you felt hurt in my letter was the matter of non-recognition, a supposition you found in what I had written that "the bulk of people in Northern Ireland from the Protestant tradition have not recognized others as individuals and as people." I don't know about the bulk of people. When it comes to decision of the leaders and policy, it is hard to read the history otherwise, at least as it is presented to us who didn't experience it ourselves. But true or not, it is really the perception among your Catholic neighbors that they were treated as second class citizens, and that perception is a present fact in itself. It is the most basic thing that needs to be addressed from you to them, and even with the clear conviction on your own part that it is not true, it can't be addressed without acknowledging at least, as something undeniable, that that is their perception.

I've learned a lot about the piety and faith, the genuine commitment to personal freedom and conscience, the openness to one another and to God's will of the Protestant people of Northern Ireland, and seen great generosity of spirit among many of them, yourself notable among them, in the context of the troubles and the more recent hopes for peace. I'm very aware, too, of the alarm they feel that Irish nationalists are about to take their heritage and all those values from them, and how much more acute that anxiety is now than it has ever been before. I still think every word of what I wrote to Ken is true.

And so I'm hoping that, in the intensive meetings among party leaders that will be going on between now and Christmas, there will be some more direct contact between the opposing sides than has been true so far. There is a danger that people on the Catholic side of this may be disillusioned, and draw the conclusion: well. it didn't work. We tried to address them and they wouldn't respond. That, in large part, was what happened when the IRA broke its cease-fire in February '96.

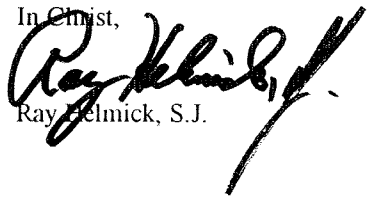
274

I think, at that time, they broke the hearts of most of the Catholic people, who didn't want that cease-fire broken, and believed that with more persistence the refusal to respond could be overcome. But they all felt -- matter of perception, whether it was true or not -- that that was the case, and many of them consequently even refused to condemn the IRA's action. That Protestants were equally heart-sick was not part of their perception, for the reason, basically, that there was still so little real human communication between them.

God help us all, Martin. I value it enormously that you and I can write and speak to one another with the freedom we do, and with a trusting confidence born of long practice. I am constantly at pains not to let myself offend you, even while equally at pains not to let any necessary thing go unsaid.

This Christmas is a very important time, time of grace as always, critical time in the confidence-building process of the talks now going on in Northern Ireland. People on both sides of that divide have put themselves at great risk by taking daring steps already to bridge the gulf between them. I pray that God will help them through this time to see his great love approaching them, even if fearfully, from one another, even from those most conditioned to enmity one to another.

In Christ,



Ray Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

December 6, 1997

Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Advice Centre
64b Racecourse Road
Shantallow
Derry BT48 8DS
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

It was good to have you here in Boston again. I reminded you, when I saw you, that there are people over there I am anxious to see, especially in East Tyrone and South Armagh, and you asked that I hold off a bit while things settle down some. I do hope I may have the chance soon.

Actually, I am much encouraged to see what is happening now. I've worried all through this last year about what seemed non-engagement, by people in those areas, in the process of peace-making. They seem now to have engaged in some very positive ways, whatever reservations they may have about where this is coming out. I take that to mean that you, Gerry Adams and others are working very effectively at building the prospect of peace. I congratulate you on it. If this can happen without my butting my nose in, all the better, though I have been at it intensively enough now that I would like to help, if anything I can do is help.

I felt rather directly addressed by what you had to say at that lunch meeting in Boston, about the responsibility of the British for the historic harm done in Ireland and for building a settlement. You fairly set out that day to embarrass the several ranking Brits in the room, and I thought that appropriate enough. It must be a rare occasion when you would have Consul General and staff, the Northern Ireland liaison man from the British Embassy in Washington and several others in front of you among a good assembly of really interested Irish-Americans. You've heard and read me, often enough, talking about the internal problem between the two communities as the basic problem, and you were anxious not to let that be the definition.

I know the problem with the British, that they always discriminated, and I know the problem *for* the Northern Protestants, that they've felt the need to be protected from something, and the British have been their ace in the hole. My feeling, when I heard you that day, was that what you were saying was exactly what needed to be said to the British, and what I habitually say is what most needs to be said to your folks: that the Northern Protestants do need protection, just as the Catholics do, and that you both need to be one another's guarantee.

I'm always hung up about what names to call people in Ireland. "Catholic" and "Protestant" aren't right, because religion has been so misused as loyalty test that it itself isn't about religion there. "Nationalist" is fine, but "Unionist" isn't, because thinking themselves British is only extrinsic protection for the Protestants. What they are, as distinct from "the (Catholic) Irish" is something they haven't successfully defined, though it has a character that I know deserves my respect.

When I asked you a question during that lunch meeting, it was about the report, as we had it then from the *Independent*, of dissent at the Gweedore meeting, and the conclusion that this peace process was "unconstitutional," in terms of Republican constitutionalism, what I would understand as realisation of the one United Irish Republic of the 1916 declaration.

Your answer pointed rightly to the Mitchell Principles as focus of the question at that meeting, the "problems with some aspects of the Mitchell Principles" (to use the language of the *An Phoblacht* article) that some members had. I tend to frame it in terms of the Republican constitutionality of the current peace process itself, as leading to an internal settlement, what some people fear would "copper-fasten" partition and the U.K. status of the North. I think it can be fairly argued that the process is constitutional in those terms, and deserving of Republican support. That is really what I would like to discuss with people in those areas of East Tyrone and South Armagh.

It seems to me that everyone in the Republican Movement understands that this process is not going to produce the United Ireland next year, and that is what the constitutionality question is about.

For the last three years I've been fascinated by what I've called "the questions of 1921." It was always intriguing to me that Irish politics was divided between parties for and against the 1921 treaty, especially since the De Valera Fianna Fail Party, once it came into Dail politics, lived effectively by the "stepping stone" policy of Michael Collins. I used to wonder what that division had to do with anything in contemporay Irish life. But with the 1994 cease-fire, I realized that all at once the central questions of Irish political life were right back to the two main questions of 1921:

1. How the two traditions of Ireland are to relate to each other. I don't mean by that the two sides of a border, but the two traditions themselves. The 1921 answers were, from both sides, to overcome the other, with the possible exception of a few people like Collins himself, who saw that these two had to find a way to accomodate each other. (This is where the British role, of supporting the partition, was a complicating factor, throwing the weight of superior power unfairly on one side, much as American power is thrown exclusively on the side of the Israelis against the Palestinians today, in a question that really has to be settled by accomodation between Israelis and Palestinians. I'd argue that it was still an extraneous factor, that it must yet be prevented from prejudicing the outcome, but that its elimination would be prelude to a solution, not the solution itself.)

2. Whatever the ultimate solution was to be, whether it had to be accomplished altogether, in one stroke, or whether it could be a cumulative process, to be built up additively. This is what the Civil War was fought about in Ireland, the "stepping stone." I hope that doesn't have to be repeated.

In those terms, it seems to me to be recognized all around that a United Ireland will not be produced by coercing the Protestants. It isn't going to happen at all without a reconciliation of the two traditions within the North, and the building up of an institutional structure that guarantees the integrity of both and gives the adherents of both full equality. Whether a United Ireland will follow on that, most likely only after a period of years, I couldn't predict with any certainty. But it won't happen any other way. And for that reason, I would argue that building up a pluralist society in the North is the only really constitutional choice, in Republican terms, with any prospect of eventually leading to a United Ireland.

What would actually happen if an agreed settlement is reached in these talks, and put to the two referendums that are projected in the two parts of Ireland? I noticed Gerry Adams' stroke, when he met British Prime Minister Blair at Stormont, in welcoming him (in the name of the Irish) to Ireland, and expressing the hope that his would be the last British government to claim sovereignty over any part of Ireland. I would be surprised if an agreement reached in the current process included a British agreement to renounce sovereighty over the North, despite what Bertie Ahern said this week. Instead, I figure that a "devolved" administration could be constructed, agreed by both traditions and approved by British and Irish governments, with its own legislature and executive and pretty full internal powers to be exercised in

accountability to all the people who live in the North. Both British and Irish governments would then make it their business to keep hands off. They'd be watching, but always anxious not to interfere. The impingement of British government authority on people's lives would become, over a number of years, more and more rare an experience. What comes out of Track 2, the relation of the two parts of Ireland, would be an important factor. Less progress seems to be made on that track than anything else, and it could be that much of that had to be further "stepping stones" to be put in place over some time, but it isn't beyond doing. Remoteness of British control, even with the formality of British sovereignty, and constant contact with the rest of Ireland would mean that people became increasingly used to each other across thevarious divisions. All this will be happening in the context of relations with Europe, which will develop in parallel in the two parts of Ireland, and become far more important than the relation of either part to Britain, to the point that the link with Britain might become no longer important enough even to the Unionists to maintain.

In that setting, division, partition in Ireland would become more and more a phantom. Setting up formal unity, in federal or whatever form, could come but would not necessarily.

It's been my contention for a long time that there is a political dynamic in the North by which everything that happens has to do with the relation of these two communities, and while much of what has happened between them has been negative, it should eventually work toward their reconciliation. That isn't true in the South, where the Protestant tradition hasn't enough importance to make it basically what political life is about. I know that, in Republican terms, the unification of Ireland is not seen as the North joining the Southern state, but rather a new Ireland that would supplant and surpass both. I would see it, instead, in these terms: that if, in the North, a society were created that was satisfying to people of both traditions, there would then be the option, for people in the South, to join themselves to that society, if it seemed important enough and worthwhile to them. The South would be joining a transformed North rather than vice versa. Put another way, if there is to be a United Ireland, it has to built first in the North, and will be a unity of people before it can be one of territory.

That's my outlook, that means this course is the one, and the only one, with even a probability of getting to a United Ireland, and is therefore constitutional in Republican terms. How high a probability? Pretty high, I would think. Whereas a United Ireland that was the result of coercion, and trauma for the Protestants, would be just a time-bomb.

I'm very admiring of what you and Gerry and your colleagues are accomplishing. I truly expect your success now, and the peace will be due to your persistence on a terribly hard course. With all best wishes,

in Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

From: The Reverend W. Martin Smyth, M.P.
(Belfast, South)

127



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Ref: WMS/MJ

15 December 1997

Rev Ray Helmick SJ
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Dear Ray

May the true joy of Christmas be yours as we share the memory of the first Advent, even though it possibly was not on 25 December.

I am not sure how our times will cross over the period. I have to go to the Sudan dealing with some of the issues there and may not be in Belfast at the time you would be here, particularly with some of the other appointments I have already made to deal with issues including meeting at least one American who is doing some research on the situation.

Dealing first of all with your puzzlement. As I understand it, reconciliation means being one. I use the context, actually, of the Trade Union business of conciliation for whether we are prepared to recognise it or not, there are people with different interests and different positions as an employer and an employee. Working together they can be of mutual benefit to one another, but that does not necessarily mean that the worker has got to accept the lowest wages that the boss is prepared to offer and on the other hand the boss should not be treating the worker simply like a slave. Conciliation is where they come together to find a degree of mutual understanding that will be of help.

In that context, the Republicans, Nationalists, are looking for equality of identity with their aspiration to a United Ireland. The Unionists are prepared to treat all citizens as equal but are not prepared to surrender the reality of being part of the United Kingdom just to have an aspiration to be part of the United Kingdom. It is in that context that we seek to come together and live together in a conciliatory way without Unionists denying the rights to a Nationalist aspiration, and without Nationalists denying reality to the Unionists' national identity.

I hope that I have made it, in the context of the letter, as simple as I can.. If true reconciliation as I understand it were to take place, then it does mean that either Nationalists become United Kingdom people or Unionists become Irish Nationalists, even for that matter Irish Republicans.

If you find it difficult to reconcile this concept with love then I am not sure that I can help you, because as an individual I hold no animosity to anyone. I certainly have my misgivings about the actions of certain people and I believe even loving people, loving ones enemies, does not mean that they can set aside the law of the land, or for that matter the law of God, and not face the consequences. Therein lies not perfect love, but absolute anarchy.

While you quote, understandably, Matthew 7, 1-3, do you deny the other side of judgement that we have got to judge righteous judgements, and every day in life we have got to make decisions which are judgements on the rightness or wrongness of certain situations in which we find ourselves. We certainly have got to always bear in mind to judge with the judgement of charity and not always absolute certainty, and that's something that one seeks to do.

When we actually come to the Ephesians passage, we discover that people who have been reconciled to God must be reconciled one to the other. Perhaps that is a greater difficulty when people do not even accept the God that we believe in, and in that context I would suggest that my own involvement with people from a Roman Catholic background, and going further out, those who are from a Jewish, Moslem, Hindu or a Buddist background, shows that one can actually work with people and seek to understand their situation and seek to help them, without necessarily accepting their dogmas.

Perhaps your own participation within the Society of Jesuits would help you to understand that likewise because one of your colleagues, Paul Simons, was on Radio Ulster no later than Sunday last, in which he said that he lived by the rule although at times that caused him problems. That was dealing with the concept of President McAleese taking communion in the Anglican Church, or should I say Episcopal Church in that context.

On the local situation with which you began, I would like to think that your estimation is correct. I certainly believe that on the one hand there are elements within Republicanism who are not happy with what is going on and they reflect, if I might say so, the position that both Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have taken up when they keep harping on the fact that Nationalists were not consulted in the division of the country. I am afraid that anybody who knows anything of history would know that they were involved in that. They were not happy with it any more than Unionists were happy with it, but it was accepted in 1921 and ratified in 1925. Tragically De Valera broke it clearly with a unilateral change of constitution in 1935/37, which has led us through these last number of years into the morass of murder and mayhem.

There is always the possibility that if Gerry Adams goes down the road that he is travelling, he may end at the same decision as Michael Collins. One hopes not, but one is trying to analyse the thinking that is going on. It would appear to me, and to others, that some of the perceived splits in the IRA/Sinn Fein are actually to keep pressure on the one hand upon the British, and on the other hand to present a picture of Adams and McGuinness in control. I perhaps have no difficulty in seeing them in control because some of the things that have happened could not have happened without their permission.

Are you aware, for example, that they have been having week-end training seminars in Belfast under the auspices of Sinn Fein to have estate control, where committees are to be set up throughout the Province with at least one former prisoner on the committee? These of course then can be presented as bona fide residents groups. We have seen how that has worked out on the Ormeau Road where people who were prepared to work together for a common good have been squeezed out, and the groups with which they are identified absorbed but their names retained under the so-called Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group, LORAG. As a result, interestingly enough when one realises the small area that the Ormeau Road section represents, it is amazing to realise that from the community representatives on the newly formed South Belfast Partnership, five out of seven are from LORAG.

Concerning the talks that are going on at the moment, it would appear to me while the Unionists have gone in against the wishes of many within the Party because the Governments have surrendered the basic concept of decommissioning and have not yet advanced their scheme of decommissioning to keep in line with what is going on in the discussions, that on the one hand our representatives deal through the chair in the discussions and on the other hand they still get from the Sinn Fein, understandably in one sense, the same broad generalisations and claims without any attempt to move forward. Again one understands this, but it would appear at times that greater understanding is given to what is perceived to be a minority position rather than to a majority.

I think that you have touched on a real issue when you refer to Niall O'Dowd's complaint. There is no doubt about it that having pushed the Unionist participation out prior to the 1995 Frameworks Documents the Irish, working on behalf of Sinn Fein and SDLP, managed to put their position clearly forward whereas the British negotiators were completely hoodwinked, and as a result language was used capable of misinterpretation, as has happened time and time again, and the harsh reality is that the triple lock has been there throughout and Niall O'Dowd is wrong when he would say that the two Governments are in a position to force ahead. The pattern was consent between the Parties, consent and referendum, and then it would have to go to the Parliaments to devise the schemes of implementation.

Niall O'Dowd presents himself as a very broad minded person. I have met him and I have done an interview with him, but he comes to it with his clear Nationalist agenda and of course there is no acceptance of the fact that Unionists were there to argue their case, to hold their corner in a very difficult position, and we have had to join with representatives of two paramilitary bodies, for without them there could be no consent in so far as the DUP and the UK Unionists have absented themselves from the talks because they believe they have been conned by the Government. That of course might be the position that Niall O'Dowd is working on, that the Governments have conned the Unionists. Time alone will tell.

When you talk about the perception of how Roman Catholic neighbours have been treated as second class citizens, have you ever considered what has gone on in countries where the Church of Rome held predominent sway, where even members of their own flock have been mistreated as second class citizens? It does seem to me what has happened in Northern Ireland, allowing for the failures of the past and I have no doubt about that within the South of Ireland in particular, but as a Presbyterian who knew what our forebearers had to struggle with which led of course to the early exodus to the United States in the days of the colonies, and of course to Canada and Australia; the so called Irish migration coming much later, is that various attempts have been made but significantly the second class citizenship has been indelibly pushed into the psyche of members of the Roman Catholic community by their mentors.

I regret so say that because over the years both as a family, and as a member of various groups, we have had fine relationships with the Roman Catholics. I am not now talking about the upper class so-called who can cushion themselves in any community, I am talking of ordinary people who have worked together and who have played together, and it has been one of those aspects that sometimes we have not really understood. It is because of that false perception which has gained credibility abroad, that many Protestant people are now so disgusted that they are beginning to react violently themselves. It is an aspect that I fear is being missed, but now is beginning to be revisited upon us.

I responded frankly to you as I believe you are wanting us to do in so far as I think the hurt that is felt on the part of many people with whom I work, both within the Protestant community and without, and their desire to see a better place here for all of us, needs to be equally understood and I know that you will be addressing it with those that you approached from the other part of our community.

Yours sincerely

W Martin Smyth MP

282

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

January 24, 1998

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
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Belfast 12

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Since my visit over to the North last May-June, I've been in the habit of writing to you, Martin, especially after seeing you in Boston recently. Given the current state of things since the "Heads of Agreement" statement by the two governments and the IRA's message of last week to the BBC, I thought it better to write to both of you.

When you were in Boston, Martin, I reminded you that I have been wanting to meet IRA people in South Armagh or wherever it seems best to them, and you asked that I hold on a bit until things settled down more.

I was very much reassured, then, by your telling me, in answer to my question from the floor, during the lunch, about doubts among Republicans concerning the constitutionality of the process, or of adherence to the Mitchell Principles, that the movement was solid for the cease-fire and for proceeding with the talks, however dangerous it might be that some small number had left in disagreement. I listened again just last night, on a videotape of that meeting, to the response you gave to my question, and was impressed with your formula that Sinn Fein needed, once some measure of agreement is reached in the talks, to bring as many people in the movement as possible with you. I was glad I listened to it all again, as your answer was richer than I had remembered.

A point that both of you have stressed often is that Sinn Fein is doing the negotiating, in fact on the basis of its electoral mandate, and the IRA is not a party to the negotiations. The IRA made the same point in its letter to the *Republican News*, in September, that spoke of the IRA's problems with some aspects of the Mitchell Principles. All sorts of people, including myself, were alarmed at that time to find the IRA entering even so moderately stated a dissent from the public acceptance of the Mitchell Principles that you had made, Gerry, just a couple of days earlier, but the non-participation of IRA was asserted in that letter. The FAX sent by the IRA to the BBC earlier this week is a different matter in this respect. It is always a matter of concern when the IRA chooses to state a position independently of Sinn Fein. With this statement, the IRA has now made itself an actual party to the negotiation, though without giving an address, other than public statements, through which any other party to the negotiation can respond.

As you will recognize, I have all along contended that it is right for the IRA itself to be a direct party to the negotiation, so I don't take any alarm at that aspect of it. I do want to be sure everyone does notice that this has happened, and that is basically why I write this letter. I think there should be discourse between the IRA and others in the process, particularly the British but also, when it becomes possible, the Unionists, and that without derogation from your own political role.

You may well have heard that I was in Belfast earlier this month, going into the Maze Prison day by day to speak with people there. Among others (other organizations), I spoke with Sean Lynch, former OC, and Paddy O'Dowd, who gave me the same reassurance as you, Martin, about the solidity of the IRA

in support of cease-fire and negotiation process, including the South Armagh and East Tyrone brigades.

Lest there be any puzzlement about what I was doing there, I was in the prison, as I had been with my group of graduate theology students last May, on the suggestion of Breidge Gadd and the Probation Office, and by invitation of the prisoners. It was that very busy week in the prison when all the politicians were in and out. I met the UUP delegation, several of whom I knew well, at the gate the day I first arrived (Tuesday, January 6), cooled my heels the first couple of days because of other traffic in and out of the H-Blocks, but got to see IRA prisoners Thursday, the 8th, UVF (some of whom I had seen myself on the day in May when others of my group were with the IRA prisoners) and INLA prisoners on the Friday. The IRA prisoners had at first asked that I spend a full day with a group of them drawn from their three H-Blocks, but the media presence in the prison the day I saw them, and the need for the OC and his staff to meet on the question of inviting Mo Mowlam to visit them the following day, reduced my visit with them to that smaller scope. I'm sure Sean and Paddy can give you an account of our conversation that will be more useful to you than one from me.

My meeting with INLA prisoners, ten of them whose names I don't have, was unexpected to me. When the Probation people mentioned it to them as a possibility, they asked that I come, and evidently don't have that many people who do come and talk to them or their organization. They also, when I made a reference to difference of opinion between Republicans in Mid Ulster and elsewhere, discounted it just as you do as a present danger to the talks process, and felt as you do that a lot of this is media-generated. I do accept that, though I remain apprehensive at the thought that, come the end of the process, they reserve judgment on the outcome, much as De Valera did on Michael Collins' work in the 1921 treaty.

(My UVF meeting, very instructive to me last time, in May, when I got a lot of insight into the real commitment of these prisoners to a process of dialogue and respect for the Nationalist community, was rather side-tracked this time by individuals who were anxious to get deep into a religious exchange, from their Free Presbyterian position, with the visiting Jesuit. I worried for a while whether this topic was something that would reduce the rest to desperation, but found they came right in and took part in the Free Presbyterian conversation, even those who don't share any of that religious system. So I thought it important to go along with it and try to show the respect I have for them and their convictions, very different in emphasis from my own. I had met, and had a useful conversation, with their chaplain, David McIlvene, last May, even interviewed him myself for that video to which you also gave an interview, Gerry, and so I had a good entree to that session with the UVF prisoners.)

My visit was rather rushed. It had been suggested last May that I be back to the prison at that time, and brought up several times later. But then nothing more happened until after the New Year, when I phoned to see whether there were still any possibility of it. With all that was going on in and around the prison, I thought that the right time, and that to have waited longer would have been wrong. So it wasn't decided (agreement of prisoners, of NIO, of Probation staff) until mid-day of the day I actually left. It would have pleased me much to have gotten down to South Armagh, to Dundalk or wherever people might prefer, and I would have driven down to see them if there were a chance. I even asked Tony Catny to look into it, as I was expecting to see him for a further video interview for that same film. He wanted to know who I had spoken or written to beforehand about this, and will likely have asked Gerry ó hEára about it, but my trip turned out to be too short, and I was never able to get back to Tony Catny by phone -- since I was ocupied in the jail, someone else had even to ask the questions for the video interview.

However, I do expect to be back again in the first week of March, which is when we have our term break at Boston College. I'll be free to leave here the evening of February 26th, a Thursday, and needn't return until Monday, March 9, to be on time for Tuesday classes on the 10th. That trip, not yet altogether fixed, is in response to requests from prisoners of various groups that I get back.

It would please me very much if there were opportuinity to take that drive down to South Armagh or wherever at that time. I surely don't want to force myself on anyone, but I think it could be helpful. The IRA, I believe, has given fully credible evidence of good faith and responsible action throughout this cease-fire and in its respect for the dialogue process. I agree with them and with you that something very negative has happened with this new "Heads of Agreement" paper, in its weakening of commitments that were made in the Framework document about the executive powers of North-South bodies. I expect you will have seen Padraig O'Malley's assessment, which I would share. If I understand rightly, your and the IRA's objection is specifically to that weakening, not to the prospect of a Northern assembly, which is inevitable if there is not an immediate United Ireland, as clearly there will not be. In that case, the Nationalists can't be left naked, with no All-Ireland executive authority and no sign that there is a dynamic leading to further development rather than a closing of the process. The Unionists, too, can't be left feeling they have been sold down the river. The British, having gone as far as they did, should not now back off from previous commitments.

I have the impression that there is a misreading within the Republican Movement of part of what is going on, namely a belief that the Unionists/Loyalists have gained a backing-down by the British by their violence of the Christmas period, and that that was their motive. I would think it very bad direction from the British dicision-makers if they did consent to such pay-offs for violence now. I think the motives have been different: that the LVF murders have been an effort, not to extract political concessions from the British, but to break the IRA out of its cease-fire and so bring the process crashing down. Their Dungannon attack was meant to have a high death-toll right in the Mid-Ulster region where the IRA is most reserved about the process. I expect more such efforts there, but have confidence that the IRA will hold its resolve in spite of them -- it has already demonstrated that.

The INLA's intent in killing Billy Wright, I believe, was to get the LVF to go crazy and run about killing Catholics, with exactly the same calculation. The LVF people then got UFF characters in Belfast to carry out the Clifton attack, also meant to have a high death toll, to demonstrate that they had appeal to fringe elements in the North Belfast UDA. The INLA, seeeing this and recognizing that the UDA was the least disciplined group and most shaky in its adherence to the peace process, carried out the Guiney murder to get the UFF to go crazy and kill some Catholics, with the intention of getting Gary McMichael's UDP thrown out of the talks and in that way bringing them to a standstill. I do believe that the UUP leadership, the day I saw them at Long Kesh, were out to lure the UDA prisoners away from Gary McMichael, but that they weren't successful.

I owe some letters to the IRSP leadership, to thank the INLA prisoners for the courtesy of their conversation with me, and I will carry on as frank a discussion with them as you have seen me do with the IRA. These prisoners' invitation to come back is one of the strongest that urges me to make my planned visit in March, and I owe them a courteous hearing and uninhibited response. I did not see either UDA or LVF prisoners on my visit this month, but both said they were interested in a meeting once the current crisis period is past.

In wanting to talk with IRA now, not just those most in support of your work in negotiation but the people who wrote to *An Phoblacht* and the BBC, I have a fair idea of what I accomplish with some others, like Arafat or Shamir, Mugabe, Ocalan or various East Timorese, not to enveigle or manipulate, even to argue, but to hear, to explore options and open up some that people might not otherwise see. I think that they, especially after having now genuinely entered into the negotiation through their FAX to the BBC, deserve to be heard in their own voices. I know the importance of the process being carried on within the mandated circle of the All-Party Talks, not in private understandings. I know also the facts, that where there is real power that is able to bring about success or failure in the process, that has to be recognized, and an accomodation found for it within the process.

So I ask your help, and think I am not offering something either useless or intrusive. I will in fact plan on being available over that period early in March, unless the prison prospect should fall apart altogether, and hope you and your friends will make this possible. You have my prayers and best wishes in carrying on the valiant and important work you are doing yourselves.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

256

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 16, 1998

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NORTHERN IRELAND

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Dear Martin and Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

Excuse me, please, for the eccentricity of writing to the two of you together. I have been following the business of the two killings in Belfast last week, attributed by Ronnie Flanagan to the IRA (DAAD), and the threat of Sinn Féin's being expelled from the talks this day -- as of the last news I hear, that question isn't yet finally decided. I write to you, Martin, as Chief Negotiator, and to you, Gerry, because you're there and Martin is in Dublin.

I won't presume that those two killings were done by either IRA or DAAD, nor get back into the contested relation between Sinn Féin and IRA. But I do understand that the issue here is not about political or sectarian violence, but about drug trade. I've seen a lot about Brendan Campbell and his depredations. I don't know much about Dougan, but I read references to him as being involved in the drug business too, and infer that, true or not, narcotics, rather than his UDA membership, is the context. I see the IRA neither admitting nor denying those killings, and while I hear Sinn Féin's position, that you didn't do it, have adhered to the Mitchell Principles, have your electoral mandate as reason to be in the talks and do not represent the IRA, I don't expect that to get you anywhere.

What more I know is that drugs, on their current scale, are a new problem in Northern Ireland, and almost as new in the Republic. When I was regularly in Ireland, through 1981, the drug problem in Dublin was only about kids sniffing glue. Now it's a conflagration, wrecking whole communities, and altogether out of Gardai control. The drug dealers arrived in force after the cease-fires in the North, having been kept away by the IRA until then, rather more effectively than by the UDA in the Protestant areas. (I've known of both UDA and INLA figures who've been dirtied with this business on occasion.) Since 1994, the drug dealers have presumed on the cease-fires to protect them from that kind of discipline. DAAD and some Protestant paramilitary strikes against them were winked at during the first cease-fire, but since the summer-'97 cease-fire people like Campbell have actually taunted the IRA with their inviolability and sometimes even threatened them. From what I understand, community people in Andersonstown, Ardoyne or Ballymurphy now ask themselves which is worse, being subjected to the drug dealers or seeing the cease-fires break down, and often conclude that stopping the drug dealers is more important, and call on the IRA to do it.

That's colossal pressure on the IRA. I accept that the IRA has been really determined to hold to its cease-fire and let Sinn Féin do the work of negotiation. For all the strains I've seen and worried about over the last year, I was really persuaded of that by what I was told in January, particularly by both IRA and INLA prisoners whom I met in Long Kesh.

So much for the dilemma: how both to deal with the drugs and stay in the negotiations.

It's clear that, in Catholic neighborhoods, you can't call on the RUC to stop the drugs. Even if the community could call them in, you have the example of the Gardai's ineffectiveness on this problem (ineffectiveness of police in plenty of other countries as well, like here in the USA) and the suspicion that some Loyalist paramilitaries who are known to police may be in on the drug dealing. For the IRA to act against the drug dealers, means of discipline are very few. They have no jails, and if they kill the dealers it will be regarded as breach of the cease-fire. You need a level of community organisation, distinct from the IRA, strong enough to deal effectively with the problem. Republicans can encourage community forces to that, but need to be separate from them, and not encourage them to go outside the law.

I had a lot of experience myself, since 1972, of neighborhood community associations in Belfast, groups that at first were very tentative but that gained strength as they organised and had some successes, and that formed umbrella organisations across the community division lines for when they had to deal with matters of common interest. I've largely lost track of them now, and have the impression that they've generally been replaced by local community development offices. I would think that there would be local experience available in the neighborhoods from which they could be revived now to deal with this drug problem.

What could they do? Basically they could organise community watch groups to identify the dealers and turn them in to an appropriate authority that could stop them. I've seen this done or attempted in American cities, and know that it is too dangerous for individuals to come up against these people themselves. There has to be a reference authority to which the information can be brought. In the US, we hope it will be the police, and we try to organize community monitoring of the police themselves to see that they aren't dirty. You haven't the luxury of calling directly on the RUC, and have to think further.

I know very well the Republican position that the RUC are an unacceptable police force that has to be replaced. I know a number of very decent people in the RUC, and hope that situation can eventually be healed, by the RUC (under that or another name) earning the confidence of the Catholic community. That's then, not now, and you need a way of dealing with this now.

As far back as 1980 I wrote a paper, which you probably have on file somewhere, about the need for community policing, as a way of getting the Army out of everyone's life and dealing with this very problem of the unacceptability of the RUC. I proposed community policing then for a misdemeanor level of offense, as distinguished from criminal. The drug dealing is bigger, criminal stuff, but a community police could be organised to deal specifically with it, with recognized powers of arrest and the support of an authority that could mete out punishments, something within the scope of public law that would effectively put the drug dealers out of the business.

That higher authority, because of the special circumstances of your community afte the conflict, has to be something other than appeal to the RUC. I think you go to the Mitchell Commission and the parties to the talks for that, looking for the support of the two governments, both of which, I believe, you are now able to regard as trustworthy to act on such a question as this. A special authority to deal with this one matter could be established without its undermining the position or self-esteem of the RUC -- it's in your interest to have it so.

This is a problem for the Protestant community as much as it is for yours, and if you were to ask help at the Mitchell and governmental levels to take an approach like this, beginning from a local community level properly buffered from the political interests of IRA or Sinn Féin, you would need to have participation of local Protestant community associations as well. I'd go right to Gusty Spence for that, as a person conscious of how much of common interest his people have to work through with yours. I have great respect for Gary McMichael, and feel sure he would be as anxious as you to keep drugs out,

288

but he has to work to UDA, and its my impression that they have some people involved in this. Gusty, by his community standing, gives you a buffer between himself and UVF/PUP, important as he is to them, and guarantees you the cooperation of David Ervine and Billy Hutchinson. He also brings plenty of energy and the help of ex-prisoners who have really learned the score and merited respect. With that, you would be in a position to approach Mitchell and the governments and get a decisive say for your two communities on who would constitute this new special authority, choosing people who had your trust.

There is nothing you need more, in your pursuit of communal reconciliation, than that you reverse the tendency for each community to define its interests in terms exclusive of the other, in paranoid fashion. You and the Loyalists have all sorts of common interests, but haven't found the handle for cooperating on them as yet. This could be it.

This could even go one more rung up, since the drugs are already even a greater problem in the Republic than anywhere in the North. This special authority could operate in both parts of Ireland. This is too important a matter to risk having sabotaged over the separate question of cross-border executive authority, but it is an obvious case for strong cooperative action. The Republic having so spectacularly failed to deal with its own drug problem, from the time in 1980 when the heroin was first being handed out practically free in Ballymun, it could use some help from cooperating with an effective community-based approach in the North.

I think I'm proposing something of real value here, a way of drawing something positive out of a major crisis. Two interests of your community have collided: the interest in the peace and the interest in stopping the drug trade. You need a way of separating them and separating the treatment of them that takes account of the special circumstances such as the unacceptability in your community of the RUC. I do understand the IRA's statement, as it avoids actually denying these two killings, that the cease-fire is intact. That is aying that their action, whatever it was, has no political dimension to it. In the immediate crisis of Sinn Féin's likely being thrown out of the talks, I expect that the most effective thing you could have to present is a really coherent plan for separating these two matterws, the peace and the drugs, and proposing a credible way of meeting the drug problem that everyone would recognize as fully lawful. Much as you in Sinn Féin feel convinced of justification for what you are doing, you need to regain the confidence of the other parties. I think this would help toward that also.

I've been struggling with this question myself all week, since I first heard of the Campbell killing. It's a crisis I saw building up for the last several months, but saw no way to deal with. I apologize for not coming up with this earlier, before it became so critical, but this approach occurred to me only today. For that reason, there are many details to be filled in. I hope it may be useful to you. Best wishes, that this business may not produce a crippling delay in the whole peace process, at which I know you have worked so honestly.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 16, 1998

Rev. Martin Smyth, M.P.
117 Cregagh Road
Belfast BT6 0LA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Martin,

Christ's Peace!

You made my Christmas much the more joyful with your splendid letter. I truly appreciate your engaging my own reconciliation letter with that tremendous seriousness. My inclination was to write back immediately, but I thought I should really give you a break and not keep the letters bouncing back and forth across the ocean that fast.

We are quite at one, I believe, over the proposition that the thing to which we're all called in our Christian profession need not involve agreement. Your formula -- "to come together...without Unionists denying the rights to a Nationalist aspiration, and without Nationalists denying reality to the Unionists' identity" -- is one on which I fully agree. Doing that and, to use the rest of your concise and wonderfully clear formula, "to live together in a conciliatory way," is exactly the outcome I would hope for from the process that has been going on since the various cease-fires.

When you make of that, the retention of different and opposing agendas, a distinction between conciliation and reconciliation, I do of course understand the language used. As you'll readily realize, I'm using the words differently, and that of course is about something that doesn't matter. When I talk reconciliation, it is about following those Gospel categories we are both so solicitous about, and since neither of us is about to be spiritual police, we doubtless agree that this is something for us to commend and witness to in our own lives, not something that we can set out as a demand on people.

I'd be uneasy about letting the reconciliation/conciliation distinction rationalize anything less than a full human acceptance of persons or communities, and you know I have a lot of problem with the way Unionists, as a community, still keep in reserve such acceptance of the Roman Catholic/Nationalist community as such. I hear you distinctly as you say you don't want it to be so.

My perception of what I actually see is, as I've written and said before, that such an acceptance was given by the Republican Movement, as the genuine meaning of their 1994 cease-fire decision, having been advocated from within Sinn Fein for many years before and at that point adopted as policy by the military leadership of the IRA: that, without accepting as their own the Unionism of your community, they accepted that the Unionist community were the neighbors whom they must treat with respect rather than any kind of coercion, and that any change in their relation to the Unionist people could happen only with their consent, which had to be won rather than demanded.

Clearly there was dissidence within the group over that. There was a centrally decided effort to renege on it when the IRA broke its cease-fire, and there are both people who have broken away into splinter groups over it and others who reserve judgment but have stayed within the structures of the movement. But the effort to renege was really impossible, because their own public has made that basic underlying recognition its own, and it's really difficult to reverse once given.

The Loyalists made a reciprocal recognition of the Catholic/Nationalist community shortly after that, as the substance of their own cease-fire decision. That has had the same kind of problems too, both

with breakaway splinters and remaining dissidents, but they and their parties have been centrally important to opening up the possibilities of community *rapprochement* (I'm looking for a word to use here instead of either conciliation or reconciliation), no more accepting of the United Ireland than any Unionists but convinced that they must come to terms with the really existing Nationalist community.

I don't want to deny the enormous problems and ambiguities about all this. With my prison visiting to various groups, both Republican and Loyalist, mainstream and rejectionist fringe, I am obviously engaged with that. (I will be back again there, in fact, in early March.) We've seen the UDP withdrawn from the talks over the UFF murders, and even as I sit writing this letter (Monday, Feb. 16, at noon here, therefore 5:00 P.M. there) I hear on the CNN news that a decision about expelling Sinn Fein from the talks may not be concluded today but is very likely. I've a lot of sense of how the deliberate provocations were given both to LVF and UFF by the INLA, and also the drug-trade aspects of the two apparent IRA murders last week. The sort of conclusion I draw from those things is that I or someone should talk with those who are really the trouble, and that in fact it is really trouble if no one is speaking with them on behalf of the peace. It's no part of my inclination to conclude that they are beyond the pale and that I should refuse to speak to them.

I was really grateful, when I was there early in January, to someone, really a strong representative of law and order, who brought me up sharp the evening before my meeting with INLA prisoners in the Maze. My reading of their activity had been so negative that I was on the point of a simply adversarial exchange with them. My law-and-order admonitor very helpfully brought me back to a readiness to hear and discuss with them that made it a far more constructive meeting, without in fact making me any less wary of their positions, only more open to them as persons.

But on the part of the Unionists -- the party Unionists, whether UUP or, at greater distances of extremity, DUP or UKUP -- I don't see that the initial act of recognition of the opposite community as people they must deal with on the basis of common humanity has been made. Returning to the conciliation/reconciliation distinction, I don't believe such an act of recognition and acceptance need imply any acceptance of their Republican or Nationalist agenda, only a recognition that these are equally people who must be able to live with full dignity in this society. There is opportunity now to engage them in humanly open discussion of common interests, of the genuine and admirable character of each of the two communities, and of how they can become one another's guarantors in a society designed for the satisfaction of both. The Nationalists/Republicans are instead still treated by Unionists (a people and individual persons I deeply respect and for whom I have great affection) as people to be kept at bay, dealing with them avoided whenever possible and at whatever levels possible. And that, in my estimate, is even a more serious obstacle to peace, and to what I am calling reconciliation and you concliliation, than any of the mayhem, provoked or calculated, that is carried out by these militants.

I know I have to qualify that judgment with regard to UUP, that the party and its leadership have made significant steps toward that recognition and quest for understanding and peace, without yet arriving at it, and that there are deep wells of honesty among them (as I'm sure there must be with Paisley and McCartney and their people, who remain far more rejectionist).

I don't want to get into an argument/counterargument session with you, Martin, on every point you raise in your letter. I am more impressed with the generosity of your taking them all up. I expect we would find ourselves very close in our assessments of most of the episodes you bring up, and where we did not it would likely be for lack of some information on each of our parts that was known to the other. What truly impresses me is your readiness to encounter each of these troublesome areas on the basis of transparently clear Christian commitment, and at the same time your honest resolve not to let yourself into a situation of betrayal toward your own Protestant-Unionist community, that is so dear to you. That is

what has made you the admirable and constructive Grand Master of the Orange Order all these years, giving stimulus to the open-minded and very Christian look at new priorities that I have been noting in the Order over these recent years, despite the haunting sense of insecurity that must have dogged its members over that time. I'm sure you are fully aware yourself of having learned things over the time you were Grand Master that you had not known before, of having grown in the office. I thank God for your presence there, and believe the Order should do so too.

What I did want to take up was the observation, toward the end of your letter, of the abuse even of its own people that my "Church of Rome" has perpetrated over the years, against which Presbyterians and others, in Ireland and elsewhere, have pitted themselves. I do in fact understand that, and appreciate the Christian conviction with which your people have stood up to it. I've had to work through a process of discernment for my own positioning myself, a Jesuit priest, within that context, and can only do so on the basis of trying to witness to Christian faith, within rather than against, having been born within the one rather than another tradition and trying to live that faith where I find myself.

That is the main reason I write to you this time, and I wanted to include a few pieces of my own writing that may make it more intelligible.

One is a paper I use in my classes at Boston College, the *Changeable/Unchangeable* piece, which gives my own understanding of what has happened in the experience of the various Christian churches (at least of the Western ones, as it hasn't anything to say of the Orthodox).

Another is the record of my own rather feeble intervention in another conflict evenly more contorted with inter-religious rivalries than that in Northern Ireland, the Balkan conflict. I had felt simple unresponsiveness, in a matter for which they carried vast responsibility, from the hierarchical authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. The answers I had in 1995 from my old friend Cardinal Pio Laghi, as voting member of the Vatican Secretariate of State, and from my Jesuit Genral Superior, Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach, had been encouraging, but I was devastated by the lack of any response from Cardinal Sodano, the Secretary of State himself, or of any public address of appeal to the Croatian Catholic hierarchy, clergy and people by the Pope. I am actually much more encouraged now by two things. The response I had from Father Jim Harvey, *Assessore* of the Secretariate of State (in fact, more recently -- last week -- promoted to be "Prefect of the Apostolic Palace," the man who will manage the gate to pass on who gets to see the Pope and will be present at all his meetings), is in fact equivalently a direct answer from the Pope, sign that he takes this situation as his business. And another man I talked with last week, Kemal Kurspahic, the really heroic Muslim newspaper editor from Sarajevo who kept his fully independent paper publishing all through the years of siege, assured me that he and his people found the Pope and the generality of the bishops and clergy of the Croatian Catholic Church truly helpful in their time of need, despite the outrageously racist positions of a few priests and nuns.

The third item is a sermon I gave just yesterday afternoon at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul here in Boston -- you wouldn't have had that except that I've been so long about writing this letter. You must have known this before, but I think these three items will show you something of what I do know about the dirtier doings of my own very humanly limited church, and how I contrive to live with them.

All my affection, Martin, and best wishes

in Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

292

From: The Reverend W. Martin Smyth, M.P.
(Belfast, South)

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Ref: WMS/MJ

27 March 1998

Rev R Helmick SJ
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill
MASSACHUSETTS
USA

Dear Ray

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Thank you for your further letter, and enclosures, dated 16 February. I appreciate the concerns you have expressed and the generousity of spirit you have manifested.

I understand that you were brought up sharp by your law and order admonitor to help you to at least approach the meeting with the INLA prisoners in the Maze in a different light. Perhaps this is something that we will have to learn as we deal with some of our loyalist prisoners, as we just abominate and abhor their actions. This was seen most recently in the brutal murder of a prisoner there, covered up in the first instance by the smokescreen of the Northern Ireland Office who actually briefed journalists that it was suicide. What is suicide - self-inflicted torture.

However, I believe that you are equally guilty in generalising on the part of Unionists where you do not see that the initial act of recognition of the opposite community as people they must deal with on the basis of common humanity has been made. Quite frankly the bulk of us do, but the tragedy of the last 30 years has seen many having to question their friendships because they have seen neighbours who were on very good terms actually being party to the mutilation of the same neighbours, and it has caused a deep suspicion throughout the whole community.

I think you will understand with the pressures upon one's time at the moment that it has not been possible to go into all the details because as you quite rightly say you don't want to have an ongoing debate on specific issues.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Although you have spent a long time sharing and being open-minded, there does seem to be a clear misunderstanding of the Unionist community and particularly the role of the Republican movement, for there has been no sense coming across that Sinn Fein/IRA are prepared to accept the Unionism of Unionist people. In fact they go perilously close to the line of Garrett Fitzgerald where he was prepared to accept our Protestantism if we forgoe our Unionism, and as David Trimble said at the weekend, the very Britishness of Unionism is something that Republicanism in Ireland has never actually faced up to.

I trust that as things move forward to this moment it may be on the agenda in their consideration for that is the principle of consent, that if people want to be British they have as much entitlement to be so as those who want to be Irish.

I leave for Australia on a family call this week-end but I pray that the glorious news of resurrection may transform our whole communities, both in the United States and in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

W Martin Smyth MP

294

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 12, 1998

Chief of Staff
and Members of the Army Council
The Irish Republican Army

Dear Leaders of The Republican Movement,

Christ's Peace!

The time has come now, with an agreement formed among the leaders of the various parties, Sinn Féin among them, to form a judgment on whether The Republican Movement as such will accept and support it.

With the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis scheduled for next week end, it impresses me that your opinions will have ultimately greater importance than those whose position is in Sinn Féin itself. Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and their team will have acted with sure sensitivy to Sinn Féin party concerns. Hence I expect they will get agreement in the Ard Fheis, even if with difficulty. More popular Catholic and Republican opinion, I expect, will strongly favor the agreement, for many good and adequate reasons, but also in part out of a less admirable war-weariness and relief at the prospect of peace.

On the Unionist side, I see more popular disenchantment, a feeling that they are the losers, and consequently greater reluctance to endorse what their party leadership has done. I still expect David Trimble to defeat any effort to derail him in their party conference, and to fight his way through to an endorsement from his public when it comes to a referendum.

The IRA's judgment remains the critically important one, make-or-break for prospects of peace or war. I've been a critic over the last year, in ways that you must have been aware of though I found it hard to reach you, of the sharp separation of task between IRA and Sinn Féin, and argued that you should in fact have been party to the negotiations over the future of Ireland. I even felt, and indicated, that when you sent your FAX to the BBC last January, saying that the peace process was in crisis because of the Heads of Agreement document, that through it you had actually become party to the negotiation. That argument is now past. You are responsible now for the soul of The Republican Movement, required to pass the judgment on this agreement that you have reserved for yourselves, and to do so on the Republican basis of constitutionality, as when you discussed it at the leadership meeting in Gweedore last year.

Recognizing, as I do, the great importance of South Armagh leadership in the IRA, and the important influence it has on the leadership in EastTyrone, where circumstances are in fact very different, I have come to respect and admire the firmness with which both South Armagh and the core leadership of the IRA have maintained their commitment to the cease-fire, and supported Sinn Féin's activity in negotiating for agreement, in difficult circumstances and under great provocation.

I had not at first anticipated that you would be so strong on this. I understand better, for having learned that, the wisdom of the movement in putting central responsibility for IRA decision-making at this time precisely with you. You have seriously contributed to the possibilities of peaceful agreement. That doesn't make your task of judgment now any easier. I am convinced that your decision in the matter will determine the outcome, not only for your own district but for The Republican Movement as a whole. I don't at all question the honesty with which you will pass that judgment, in the name of all those who have struggled for Republican goals, and conscious that you must be able to see positive accomplishment and not surrender of your ideals in what you decide. This is why I write specifically to you now, hoping that you will share this letter with others to the extent that you find it constructive and helpful.

Constitutionality, as The Republican Movement understands it, is the issue. I've heard a great deal, especially as I discussed these matters with Republican prisoners in the Maze/Long Kesh in January and March of this year, about whether agreeing to this settlement would "copper-fasten" (the consistently chosen expression) the partition of Ireland, or whether such a settlement would contain a dynamic that could lead further. I've offered my thoughts on the subject to the prisoners I've met, and trust that you will have heard their estimate of what they're worth. In summarizing them here, I don't mean to intrude on your responsibility to judge the matter.

For myself, it used to be a puzzle that Irish politics, in the South, was dominated by two parties, both rigorously conservative, one for and one against the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, at a time when the treaty itself had no operative role in the policies of either party. Ever since the IRA cease-fire of August 31, '94 (and in fact the Loyalist cease-fire of the following October) it has been my conviction that the questions of 1921 have returned to become the center of Irish politics.

There are two of these 1921 questions.

The first was how the two concepts of Ireland, labeled for convenience, if not accuracy, Nationalist (Republican) and Unionist[1] (Loyalist) were to relate to each other. That isn't about a border, but about two groups of people. The 1921 answer, from both sides, was that they would overcome and submerge the other, with only rare individuals who saw the need of an accomodation so they could live as one society together. The result of that mutual obduracy was to entrench partition in a way that was altogether frozen and intractable for seventy years, despite desperate efforts, military and other, to move away from it.

The cease-fires since 1994 have meant, from both sides, Republican and Loyalist, a different answer to that question: acknowledgment from each that a new society could only be built on recognition of the other's legitimacy and the winning of the other's consent, so that each had to become the protector and guarantor of the other's right to be different.[2] If people are true to that decision, it means there can't be a repeat of 1921 in this matter.

The other 1921 question, equally important, is whether whatever is to happen in the future must happen all at once, or whether it is an additive process. Michael Collins came back calling the treaty he had agreed a "stepping stone." Others rejected that assessment, and the civil war was the result.

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[1]Do please excuse me the pretentiousness of a footnote in a letter. But I can't really accept that Britishness, or loyalty to the Union with Britain, is the real center of identity for the Protestant people of the North. They know the British don't see them as British. They are deeply loyal to something in themselves that they understand is different than you, and I can only admire them for their loyalty to that. "British" is only an instrument for the defence of that something, which they haven't succeeded in defining, with the result that they have a terrible identity problem.

[2]If one footnote, indulge me with another. I see this as parallel to what Israelis and Palestinians did in the Oslo agreement of 1993, each formally and publicly recognising the other's legitimacy as a people after many decades in which each had been unable to do that. Today's problem in the Middle East is that the new government of Netanyahu has set as its main objective to withdraw that recognition from the Palestinians. The best news is that he has found it extremely difficult to withdraw that recognition, once given, very much as the breaking of the IRA's cease-fire in 1996, while a statement about British failure to follow through on commitments made, was unable to destroy the recognition of the legitimacy of the other community. The Unionists, as distinct from the Loyalists, have never made that recognition of the legitimacy of the Catholic Nationalist and Republican community, though in fact they may be at least on the way to doing that in last Friday's agreement.

I think De Valera made a bad judgment at that time. His side (your side) lost the military decision, and Irish life has been tortured by this division ever since. When he eventually found his way back into the political life of the Free State, he effectively acknowleged that Collins' treaty was what there was to work with, but he never found a viable way (on the adversarial basis to which he still held) to make progress from Collins' "stepping stone."

I see another Middle East parallel here. Israelis, and the Zionist Movement from which they sprung, always took what was offered and looked to gain more later. Palestinians, until very recently, always held that any interim agreement would be a final decision ("copper-fastened" was not a part of their vocabulary, but the meaning was the same), and insisted that nothing less than everything at once could ever be acceptable. We can all see who were the winners and who the losers. That conflict was always kept on strict adversarial lines until the 1993 Oslo Accord, when it was seen how much more could be gained (by both sides!) from an effort at reconciliation and mutual accomodation. That example also shows how renewed violence could shatter hopes: murder Rabin, set off a few bombs, and the willingness to reconcile and accomodate could be stifled, at least temporarily.

Here is the central question now for Republican leadership. Will last Friday's agreement meet your test of constitutionality? It's not the United Ireland you have striven for. You are committed to Republican doctrine, as we could see at Gweedore, but you have also made some very pragmatic decisions on whether a good deal could be made, in the face of a long history of failure, for your people. So an alternative formulation can be made of the question -- is it a good deal? -- but that has a far less honorable feel than the "is it constitutional?" formula. What I am suggesting here is a third formulation: has this agreement a better or worse chance than any other option of leading to your constitutional goal? My supposition is Collins' "stepping stone" supposition of 1921.

I don't know whether this agreement will ever lead to a United Ireland. It is not my business to be advocate of a United Ireland, though it seems to me a reasonable enough and entirely legitimate aspiration. I've always argued to Republicans, as you probably know, that I could not see the aspiration for a United Ireland as reason to justify depriving the Protestants/Unionists of the right to their own distinct identity, which I've learned to respect as I respect yours.

So far I haven't even seen a full text of Friday's agreement. I expect to have one tomorrow (Monday the 13th). I've seen a lot of excerpts and know good things and disappointing things about it. I know it represents the best skill of George Mitchell in finding a formula these adversaries could agree on, and the best efforts of Tony Blair, who is in my book honest in this, a British Prime Minister better disposed to a just and reconciling resolution of this matter than any before him or likely to succeed him. I've a fair idea of the disappointments you see in the agreement, and of the political constraints under which the Unionist leadership operates in trying to win assent from their own public to what was agreed last Friday. I don't believe that renegotiating this phase of the reconciling process is any promising course now. I also don't believe this is an end to the process, but rather that it is a phase.

What I feel sure of is that there is not another route to the United Ireland except a reconciliation *in the North*. That is where the problem is. Only when there is an Irish society in which people of distinct traditions can be mutually supportive of one another's differences can there be a United Ireland. Attempts by either side to coerce the other into conformity and uniformity, whether by force or by politics, will produce only a false pretence of unity, whether in the North or in the whole of Ireland. For as long as I have realised this, it has meant to me that the problem has to be solved in the North before it can be solved in the whole of Ireland, and that the rest of Ireland can only join itself to a reconciled society there in the North, rather than -- *vice versa* -- that the North be forced, without the consent of the Protestant/ Unionist people, into an appearance of union with the rest.

Whenever I talk this, I know I am wrestling with a basic element of Republican conviction, namely that it is the British, not the Protestants, who are the problem. I hear Martin McGuinness regularly raise the issue that the British are responsible for the original aggression and damage to the whole of Irish society, and are responsible to repair the damage. Charlie Haughey once argued that back to me also, when I presented to him very much what I've written above. I know the truth of that very well, and don't dispute it.

I still believe that the fundamental problem is of two groups of people, of different traditions, who have not learned how to live in the same space. The Unionists learned long ago to use the British power position in Ireland to stack the deck in their favor, and the British, to their shame, have always done it, before and after the 1920 partition. Right now I see a favorable opportunity to right that damage. With American help that has been indispensable, a British government, I believe, is prepared *not* to stack the deck against you. They are not prepared, either, to leave the Protestants subject to coercion, yours or theirs. I don't worry that Blair talks a lot with Trimble. Without that nothing would happen.

I know very well the argument that the Unionists have the right to consent, but not to veto. When Republicans first began to use that formula, in 1994, I thought it was a distinction without content. I have learned since, from watching Unionist behavior, that there is substance to it. They have wanted simply to refuse to talk, to filibuster their way out of this challenge to their supremacy claims, and in the time of John Major's government they were supported in that effort by the British. That isn't happening any more. The Blair government, with the American involvement and the skillful commitment of George Mitchell, have brought the Unionists now into real movement. Their consent to the unity you are looking for is still far away, but I see what has happened now as genuinely a stepping stone toward a reconciled society, one that, in my conviction, has to grow in the North, where the difference is, before it can be widened to include the whole of Ireland.

I see no other "stepping stone." Rejecting this one will mean there will be no United Ireland, but the partition, in minds and hearts as well as geography, will be made permanent, whatever further paroxysms the people of Ireland go through.

In my visits to the Maze/Long Kesh, I have had several meetings with UVF prisoners as well as Republicans (both your people and INLA). One conversation sticks in my mind, with UVF prisoners, last month. These were not the more secular UVF, who have been at the heart of the Loyalist cease-fire and PUP efforts (and who feel you need to go through the kinds of reflection that they have been experiencing over these last years: I ask them, whenever I hear that, whether they don't realise the profound process of reflection that Republicans too have been going through, that has produced the present chance of peace). The day I had this conversation, the leadership H-Block of UVF was undergoing a search, so I saw only the more religiously inclined in their other H-Block, several of them people of Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church. (We had had to go through a lot of process, in an earlier meeting, about their shock at finding themselves talking with a Jesuit.) Their Free Presbyterian chaplain, whom I've gotten to know, aims at a "non-political" version of their faith, and of course what that means is political, but non-prejudicial.

What so astonished me in their perception was this. They understood how they themselves, and your Republican militants also, had identified themselves intensely with the needs and safety of one community, had done things that often horrified themselves, had taken great risks, even of their own lives, had seen their companions die or suffer terrible injury and jail, for a cause to which they, and you also, were deeply committed. Now they saw how they had to identify themselves with a wider community, one that included you, and in your difference from themselves; that they had to work at creating a society that was guarantee of your integrity as well as theirs, and be the protectors of your right to be what you are, as you had to become, if you are to win their trust, the protectors of their right to be what they are.

298

Knowing that is out there makes me very hopeful that real reconciliation is possible in your Irish society -- granted that the central Unionist leadership and parts of their public have not come nearly as far as the supposedly extremist Loyalists in the prison, but that even they are taking steps now that they had not expected to take. I've been in intense discussion with Unionists, including their political leadership, for many years now, and have argued this kind of case with them just as vigorously as I do now with you.

It has become very clear to me how much you in the IRA leadership, and in such places as South Armagh where these questions are at their most acute, have opened yourselves to the process of seeking the peace and a just reconciliation with your Protestant/Unionist neighbors. I admire that, and know how important your conclusions in these next days and weeks will be to the outcome of the effort.

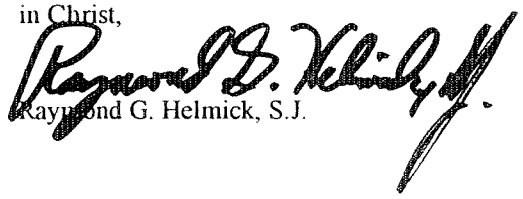
I have been hearing of defections, and of the growth of the Continuity IRA and the new Thirty Two County Sovereignty group. I'm told, with good authority, those those who leave you or Sinn Féin are not necessarily going to either of the other groups, but may be simply stepping away from what they cannot give their explicit consent. I sympathize with that dilemma. In presenting this "stepping-stone" understanding of the situation to you, I hope it is something that you can not only accept as a legitimate reading of where Republican constitutionality lies, but can represent it to them also. I'm sure you realise they would like your jobs.

One other typical conversation I have heard from Loyalists, one often enough repeated so that it stands for many conversations, I would leave with you. Frequently I've met people deeply identified with Loyalist community and aspirations who have said they understood the aspiration for the United Ireland, and had expected, before the "troubles" began, that that was the direction history would lead them. Their concern had been that, when this happened, their identity would not be smothered. But the experience of the many years of violence had turned them away from that expectation, and so embittered them toward the Catholic and Republican community that they had resisted any such outcome, some of them very forcefully.

I just hope that, as you make the decisions on how you and the Republican Movement as a whole will respond to what is on the table now, you take such people as these into consideration, and choose what will win them, not what will further alienate them and make the unity of Ireland more remote than ever.

With the deepest respect,

in Christ,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

June 8, 1998

Mr. Michael and Mrs. Bernadette Sands McKevitt
Beech Park
Blackrock
Co. Louth, IRELAND

Dear Mr. and Mrs. McKevitt, Bernadette and Michael,

Christ's Peace!

At the risk of intruding on you, may I introduce myself and say that I would very much appreciate an opportunity to meet you during a visit I will make to Ireland next week, June 17-23.

I'm a Jesuit priest from Boston, teaching now at Boston College in the theology department, mainly conflict resolution courses about places I've worked, ranging from Ireland and various parts of the Middle East to the Balkans and parts of Africa. For a great number of years, since 1972, I've been a regular visitor to Ireland, principally to the North, actually living in London and spending a week to two weeks of every month in Belfast for the first nine years of that time, getting to know people and their situation in most parts of the society, including the Republican Movement. I've talked and written enough to them over all those years that you may have come across some things of mine.

During and before the 1980-1981 hunger strikes, Bernadette, I intervened several times. First of all, I had been pushing for a resolution of the prison crisis, for a couple of years before, on the basis of the British granting the clothing and other demands, not admittedly as political status but as prison reform for all prisoners, including the ODCs. I was as shocked as any of the prisoners when the Thatcher government granted it only to pull it back to something unacceptable. Then, when the British were after all the Catholic theologians and bishops, British or Irish, to condemn the hunger strikers as suicides, I published an article in *The Month* (copy enclosed) that fairly stopped that phase of the anti-strike campaign. Finally, from the end of July through the early parts of September, I mediated directly between Army Council and the Northern Ireland Office, looking for a positive-sum resolution of the strike issues, something that eluded me as it had many others.

I think that puts me in a position to understand much of what you have experienced, and your commitment to the things that Bobby lived and died for. I'm not a partisan of the Republican Movement or the United Ireland, as reasonable an outcome as that seems to me. I'm a foreigner to Ireland, and have no right to decide such things. I've a lot of experience of Irish Protestants too, both Unionist and Loyalist. I talk and argue as much with them as with Republicans, and won't be part of anything I would see as betrayal of them. I understand myself as partisan of the peace, but not of a sell-out.

That's the perspective from which I've followed, as closely as I can, your Thirty Two County Sovereignty Committee. I can fully respect your sense of betrayal in what is happening now and the position taken by Sinn Fein and the IRA. I read it differently, and don't believe it is betrayal. In my own visiting the North over this last year, I've been many times in Long Kesh, discussing all this with prisoners of various organisations (IRA, INLA and UVF: the UDA and LVF have several times considered but never quite agreed to invite me in). I've been a long time trying to reestablish direct contact with Army Council and have written a lot to them. That they are apparently ready to meet me on this June 17-23 visit seems a sign that they no longer feel threatened by my positions. I see major figures of Republicanism arguing, at the Ard Fheis and elsewhere, that your Bobby would have approved this agreement, I'm sure to your chagrin. I didn't know Bobby and couldn't presume to say that. I would like to talk with you, not of Bobby and his sacrifice but of the current situation and the options it holds.

300

I don't want to make this letter longer than it need be, and what I believe about this matter is very much what I wrote a while back to people on the Army Council, so I will enclose a copy of that. I'd a job tracking down an address for you, and when I got it there was a phone number too (0353 422 7286, given as a work number), so I will presume to call you before I leave Boston (on the 16th, Tuesday) or when I get over to Dublin the following day. I am on a schedule that occupies my evenings rather than the days for the time I am there this visit, so I could get to you practically any day that is convenient to you, from Wednesday the 17th through Tuesday the 23rd. (I'll be flying back to Boston on the 24th.) I am so late writing to you only because, after I had looked quite a while for your address, it came only while I was off on a visit to the Balkan countries these last few weeks.

I would really like to see you both. I talk a lot with many people, from North and South, and have asked several times, of people who ought to know something of you, who does talk with you. I have the impression that, while you make yourselves available for press statements now and then, the people who ought to be talking with you are not. I hear you clearly saying that, for all your feeling of betrayal in the agreement process, you do not want to see Ireland break down into the violence it has known again, but do understand that if legitimate aspirations are denied the violence will return, from whatever quarter. I know that's true. I respect your conviction and commitment even though, as you can see, I don't share your judgment of what is happening at present. You must have been struck by the all but unanimous Catholic vote in the North, in favour of the referendum proposal. Rejection of it was basically in the South, and that, as I would see it, is not where effective opposition can come from.

My best wishes to you,

in Christ,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

301

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 1, 1998

Mr. Gerry Adams
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

I've read your appeal, in the *Irish Voice*, tthat we Irish Americans not now swing around to asking you to accomodate the Orange march on Garvaghy Road. I get the point, and understand, I think as well as any of us outsiders, the calculated humiliation this march has been to the Catholic residents and, for that matter, to their wider community. I'm going to attempt it all the same, because I think this confrontation threatens the more important accomodation you've made, so laboriously, in the whole Northern community.

You are much to be congratulated over what you've accomplished. By that I don't mean just the agreement, the referendum and the Assembly election, but what has been your life's work, certainly since I first met you in 1981 and well before that: bringing about the prospect of a reconciled community in the North and, as you surely hope for it still, in the whole of Ireland. You'll have had lots of congratulations from many sides -- the ones that are missing are of course the most important. I'm late at it, having done my writing to the Army Council at the time of the agreement. I congratulate you on bringing this process through the Republican Movement itself as well, and won't otherwise belabor the point. What you've done, with help from many others, is stupendous.

I'm glad to see that the Parades Commission decided for the Garvaghy Road residents and not for the march. The provocation has been flagrant, and it's right that the commission decided so. The RUC commanders of the last few years, both Hugh Annesley and Ronnie Flanagan, have apparently drawn the same conclusion each of the recent years, if one accepts their accounts (I do), sought to prevent the marches and concluded that they could not do so without great risk of life. I argued pointedly to Northern Irish Office ministers in 1996, when they claimed they could not make a political decision on this and had to leave it to the police (pass the buck to the police, as I read it), that they were hypocritical, because the Tory government had made a purely political decision not to hold the Orange and Unionist leadership accountable for their criminal behavior. I'm very conscious that David Trimble, whom you now rightly congratulate on what he is doing for the peace, was elected leader of the UUC precisely because he so misbehaved over this march.

Now you've a lot at stake in your relation with a much transformed David Trimble. You've more at stake in a wider Unionist community that has voted, however narrowly and tremulously, for the things you and they have accomplished together. If this parade is the occasion of massive hate, and the threat of major violence even if it should be successfully contained, it could overturn what you've won thus far. In the matter of the marches, you hold the upper hand now. What you don't need is an Orange constituency that feels it has been whipped.

It's time for magnanimity. If you, at this point, with the Commission decision behind you, reach out to the Orange and make it clear that you and your community don't want to see them humiliated either, you come off as the hero peacemaker. Given the accomodation the Orange made last year over the other four most contentious parades, you can probably put this annual menace behind you permanently.

302

That much is about reasons why I think you should be looking for a way to accomodate the Orange. I've seen a lot of them now, some of my conversation with them known to you, and recognize that they are not a monolithic like-minded mass, any more than any of the rest of us. I've been giving thought to how you could come to an understanding with the best of them if you are so disposed.

It's clear to me that the Orange leadership -- who? -- is making, in one matter, a most unreasonable demand on the Garvaghy Road residents, that they should cave in without discussion, because the Orange team refuses to speak to the spokesmen the residents have chosen. That puts it at the level of public judgments on who are the wicked and the just, and makes it an unacceptable"surrender."

What can be done in that case is to find another channel. You have all sorts of reason to want David Trimble to talk to you. An issue is made of his refusal to talk to his constituents on the Garvaghy Road. I think he is not the right channel now, as it would cost him too much of his own tenous political credibility if he talked *before* this issue is settled. You can't afford yourself to lose him as a partner in the peace. If you manage to settle this amicably and become, on this issue as on others, hero peacemaker, that will likely be the very reason that Trimble will be able to talk to you from that point onwards.

Your alternative, I think, is Brian Kenneway, Presbyterian minister, Convener of the Education Committee of the Orange Order,and a very genuine peace-seeker -- I feel I can vouch for him as for few other people. You probably know plenty about him already. I would think that by your contacting him yourself you could come to an arrangement. I trust you will realize that you should not do it in a way that simply weakenes Brian's own position with his Orange fellows, but rather a way that makes him hero of the peace too. Please don't string him along with having to consult Breandan, who has to consult residents, etc., and leave Brian holding the ball.

The basic way of doing it, I think, is to say that you are pleased with the Parades Commission decision, because of the grief it has always caused the residents to feel they were being deliberately humiliated by the Orange parade. But that now you don't want to see them humiliated either, and want to find the way for a restrained and non-triumphalist parade to go through the street.

I can see several possible scenarios for that, and wouldn't want to prescribe one rather than another, for fear it would be the one that is out of reach of the participants. I would think that Billie Bingham is the one who ought to talk with Breandan Mac Connaith, and that perhaps Brian Kennaway could make it clear to him that Breandan would be forthcoming, but that may be politically beyond Billie Bingham's means. For Breandan, it may be more than he could do to make a conciliatroy decision on this. Your go-ahead might make the difference for him, or it might even call for an IRA clearance. I would expect that could be had, if it were the thing needed, as the IRA has so clearly worked for the peace settlement that its leaders aren't going to want it thrown away over this. Brian Kennaway might be ready to communicate publicly with you, or that might be the thing that would only weaken his capacity to do anything at all. If it were a statement, on the "we don't want to see you (the Orange) humiliated" lines, from you and Breandan Mac Cionnaith, then Breandan too would be hero peacemaker, and recognized as such by the Unionists as well. It should be possible to broker that first, behind the scenes, so that you knew it would get a positive Orange response. If it could not, the least it would do would be to give you the high ground and leave them, even to their own public, the unreasonable ones who would not budge. But one-upmanship shouldn't be the outcome. You should be able to get a genuine show of statesmanship on both your part and theirs. The stakes are very high, and no petty victories should stand in the way of the great accomplishment of the peace.

As I've talked with the Orange over many years -- particularly with Martin Smyth -- I've felt that their cause should be recognized as an expression of human freedom. The 1795 origins are pretty grubby,

but it is tied back to 1690, and whatever one may think of 1690 being a sectarian issue between Protestant and Catholic, they have always understood it as a stand against real oppression. None of us Catholics should have any quarrel with that. Primacy of our responsibility to conscience is clear enough in our Catholic setting now that we should be grateful to them for asserting it sooner. It's obvious that, because all these issues have been played out for sectarian advantage and made into instruments of political manipulation, the Orange assertion has been used to express an exclusive freedom of Protestants over against their Catholic neighbors. That perverts but doesn't destroy the validity of their primary impulse, assertion of freedom. My contention is that they need to re-invent themselves as advocates for a freedom that includes you. Brian Kenneway understands that.

I simply presuppose that you are looking for a way to solve this, rather than a way to score points over opponents with it. My best wishes are with you, and I hope these suggestion help.

In Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

Brian Kenneway, in case you don't already have this right at your fingertips, lives in Crumlin,

Rev. Brian Kenneway
The Manse
1 Lurgan Road
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phone 01849 422 430
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304

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 7, 1998

Mr. Gerry Adams
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12
FAX 011-44-1232 231723

Dear Gerry,

Christ's Peace!

I always hestitate to overdo writing to you, and I just wrote you other day, hoping you would look for accomodation on Drumcree. I've never met your Breandan Mac Cionnaith, but what I hear of him is so encouraging that I am confident he too is a skilled and dedicated peace-maker. My assumption is that you and he are in fact workng to resolve this menacing business peacefully.

What I see as I watch the news on it is that the Orange marchers at Drumcree are getting away with things they should not get away with in their presentation of their case to the public. A central issue that is not being dealt with in the coverage is Orange unwillingness to talk with representatives of the resident community. I suggested to you, in writing the other day, that there was no legitimacy in making judgments on who were the wicked (their opponents) and who were the just (themselves, of course). They have gotten away with saying they refuse to speak with Breandan because of his IRA record, whereas Breandan himself has said that they were offered practically every other resident of the street as alternative persons they could speak with. That deserves emphasis that the reporters are not giving it.

It has been the supposition of most of those who are looking for peaceful resolution of these issues that agreement can be reached if representatives from both sides will negotiate them. I would like to see serious stress put on the question: which side is refusing to talk?

This morning I heard Rev. Pickering, the Rector of Drumcree Church, interviewed. He was able simply to say how "sad" he was that all these peace-loving people who had just established their new assembly should be stopped by barbed wire, and that he relied only on God to remove this obstacle to peace. The BBC reporter never challenged him on the rights of the residents, or his own or the Orange leadership's willingness to talk with them in order to reach an agreement. That should be the pricinpal question in any such interview, and it seems not beyond your powers to press that on the interviewers.

That's not the worst. Several of the most ranking Drumcree Orange leaders, and many others of their followers, make statements on how it is preferable to have the fight and no resolution, to see the whole public polity burned down so that a new start can be made. That extremism can't be characteristic of the Protestants or even the Orange as a whole. Parallel to what I see as a necessary effort to resolve this matter in meetings between yourselves and the most responsive of them, I would think there should be a concerted effort to drive a solid wedge between those extremists and the Orange Order as a whole.

Enough unsolicited advice. Best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 14, 1998

Rev. William Bingham
c/o Rev. Brian Kenneway

Dear Rev. Bingham,

Christ's Peace!

We met, at the lunch Tom Tracy held for a group of UUP people, last month, and I promised you I would intercede with various Republican figures I know, asking for accomodation over the Drumcree march, as in fact I did. I knew that day that I was speaking to an honest man, but you exceeded all my expectations when you gave that valiant sermon on Sunday, standing in your sash in the pulpit and calling on all that was most decent in the Orange tradition.

I heard it almost immediately, as Tom Tracy phoned me and played the recording of it off the Internet, as it had been broadcast by the BBC. It was you who made it possible, then, for others such as David Trimble and Robin Eames to say as much. I was so moved, in fact, that I tried to phone you with my thanks and congratulations, but after perhaps twenty five tries recognized that your phone, and also Brian Kenneway's, were going to be busy all the rest of that day, and that you would be otherwise occupied on the Monday.

What you did was one of the most courageous things I have yet seen in Northern Ireland. It may not be a frequent part of your experience to find that you have been individually held up as a model of Christian life in a sermon in a Catholic church, but I spoke of you so yesterday, at a weekday afternoon Mass for a couple of hundred people in the Irish Catholic enclave of West Roxbury. They understood well the bravery and Christian integrity of what you had done.

Afterwards, I saw the heckling you got, when you spoke after the Orange march in Pomeroy, by "Spirit of Drumcree" leader Mr. Patton, and the fisticuffs that followed when other Orangemen objected to that show of division. I'm sure you will face many further recriminations from people for whom Orange has become a badge of anger and hatred. It has long been my own perception that there is a genuine Christian spirit of freedom at the heart of the Orange Order's heritage, and that it is precious to Northern Irish Protestants for that, and not merely as the assertion of supremacy and the humiliation of history's losers, as your country's Catholics have seen it. I've had a long correspondence on that subject, even in recent years, with Rev. Martin Smyth, whom I've known and counted as a valued friend since 1972, and who has likely felt himself at times under siege from that correspondence. It was heart-rending to hear you distinguish between what was genuinely and Christianly Orange and what you would have no part of. You've made yourself a standard-bearer of all that is best in the Orange tradition.

With all best wishes to one whom I honor as a brother,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

306

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

August 16, 1998

Mr. Michael and Mrs. Bernadette Sands McKevitt
Beech Park
Blackrock
Co. Louth, IRELAND

Dear Bernadette and Michael,

Christ's Peace!

I regretted missing you when I was over to Ireland in June. The car I had hired in Dublin to get up to Dundalk that day had a bum clutch, which gave up on me by the time I got close to the airport, and I had to phone and call off the meeting. I do hope to meet you another time I am over there.

Today, all the world is shocked again at yesterday's Omagh bomb, and the assumption made that "the Real IRA," identified in warning calls, taken to be associated with you, Michael and, through a link with the Thirty Two County Sovereignty Committee, with you, Bernadette, was responsible. I won't presume that is so, but I think you are people to whom I should give my thoughts on the subject, if only because you share the rejection of the peace agreement that, I do assume, was the motive for the attack.

The widespread assumption, too, is that the warning about a bomb by the Court House was a way to lure people directly to where the bomb actually was. My experience of seeing car bombs leads me to discount that, and assume that it was a miscommunication of some accidental sort. I've known often enough of drivers of bomb cars putting them in the wrong place, if only because people, likely young fellows, get nervous driving around with a bomb in the car. It's never been enough, though, to say the explanation is "Oops!" Once anyone starts planting car bombs -- Banbridge, wih no deaths but thirty five injuries -- this is going to happen, even though it's never been on such a scale in the North before. I've been working closely with the Balkan situation and Kosovo lately, and with Iraqi and Turkish Kurds. That does give anyone a sense of scale, but this is truly an outrage.

The opprobrium for this bombing sticks to you, whether or not it was actually your doing. I hear you clearly, Bernadette, when you say the Thirty Two County Sovereignty Committee has no military wing -- the IRSP used to say that too for a long time. I'm not aware of your urging, in so many words, at any time that the hatred and killing should go on, in the way Paisley and the LVF people did so flagrantly before this year's Drumcree and the burning of the three young boys. But the effect on your movement is likely to be very similar to what that did to the Orange. Most of the Orange, in fact, took that very much to heart, even people who were nowhere near as brave as Billie Bingham. I hope that sort of reflection is going on among those of you who reject the peace developments.

Things are truly different now than they were before. I think you're aware, from things I've said and written to Republicans over the years, that I could never agree that the IRA campaign was truly a "Just War," though I understood the grievance pretty well and understood also that many people were in the movement, committing their lives to it, in good-faith belief that it was a just war. The reason I could never accept that was that Republicans had not recognized even the real existence of the other Irish tradition, Unionist/Loyalist, conceded its legitimacy or sought any real understanding of these other people. I always saw that as, precisely, injustice; doubtless a lesser injustice than what they were doing to Catholics, but injustice nonetheless. That is exactly what Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and their colleagues have brought into *real* Republican thinking, what the IRA and Sinn Fein have accepted as the truth and the map of their real responsibilities, the basis of the cease-fires of 1994 and 1997, and of the process that has gone on, with genuine Republican Movement authority, since then.

You've seen their actions as betrayal of Republican principles. I don't believe they have betrayed them at all. I'll say this as one who is not ideologically committed to the goal of a United Ireland myself. It seems to me a reasonable enough thing to happen, but only if the people affected by it agree and have guarantee of their rights. The people in Sinn Fein and the IRA, unlike myself, are as committed as ever to the goal of a United Republic. What has changed is that they have resolved that this can only happen through winning the consent of their neighbors, not by coercion. I know they've had all the misgivings about "consent" meaning a Unionist veto, and I recognize the legitimacy of that misgiving when it comes to Unionists simply saying: we won't even talk. But real Republicans have recognized that they themselves have to deal with Unionists as real people who have rights like themselves, and that the accomplishment of the Republican ideal can't be brought about otherwise.

But the situation has changed now too. The Republican Movement, the real one, has gone through this very painful process of reflection and new resolve -- not to abandon Republican principle but to follow it *with justice*, justice for the others too and not just for themselves. That legitimates them as never before. They and all the other parties have gone through a full, formal process of negotiation, arriving at an agreement that achieved, in the parallel referenda North and South that meant all of Ireland voting simultaneously on the same question, the near unanimous consent of the Catholic/Nationalist population in the North and close enough to that in the South. None of that precludes a political expression of dissent from the agreement, but it means that a military or violent campaign mounted against it now has no representative character and consequently no legitimacy whatever.

That the Protestant/Unionist population of the North is still divided so close to evenly over the agreement is only because they don't trust you, the Republicans or the Catholic/Nationalists, not to do precisely what was done yesterday in Omagh, a murderous onslaught on innocents -- even if we have to hear again: "Oops! they explained" -- for purposes of creating mass panic and subverting the commitment people have genuinely arrived at, through an agonizing process, to settle the old conflict justly and in peace.

There is drastic mortal retrenchment in this bombing too. The IRA stopped using car bombs sometime in the late '80s, for the reason that they had learned that car bombs go wrong and kill innocent people. We heard in recent months, whether truly or not, of a pooling of resources among this "Real IRA," the Continuity people and the INLA. Maybe that was never true. But the INLA has now pulled out, and is trying to negotiate a cease-fire of its own. Only they, of those three groups, has any real, even though marginal, following in the North. The only base, a slim one at that, for Continuity and the "Real IRA" is in the South, among people who simply have not had the experience of what has happened to Catholics and Protestants alike in the North. To carry out real military operations you have to have people in place. Without that, "the Real IRA" has few options. The car bomb can be driven in from the South by someone who has no stake in the life of the Northerners, left there while he walks away. For "the Real IRA" to return to that, to the soft, innocent target, all these years after the true IRA learned better is just one further evidence of moral debacle.

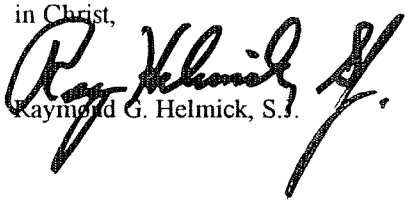
There is a sub-text to all this, which the real Republican Movement has now learned after many years of having its head in the sand: namely that such an action as that bombing, or any renewal or continuation of the misbegotten war, is the surest way to *prevent* any possibility of there ever being a United Ireland. The whole thing is intrinsically betrayal of its own purpose. Nothing is acomplished toward genuinely Republican development in Ireland. There won't be a United Ireland that the Protestant community doesn't want. Even if the apparent forms of one were put in place, by coercion or however, they would be nothing more than a delusion. This is an argument that I used to bring to Daithi Ó Conaill and Joe Cahill back in the '70s, that real Republicans could never live with success in the form of having a defeated and demoralized Protestant community on their hands. The real movement has seen that.

308

I'm not, as I said, assuming that this bombing is your action, but I think, from your political position, that these things need to be said to you both. I am anxious, as I told you on the phone, Bernadette, to see you if you come over to the U.S. as planned. I'll gladly make the trip down to New York if you get there and not to Boston. And I would like to meet and talk with you both, Michael and Bernadette. when I am next in Ireland -- I'll check out the clutch this time.

With respect and best wishes,

in Christ,



Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Sketch Summary of Recent Northern Irish History
as seen from opposite sides of the community.
Ray Helmick, S.J.

August 1999 Supplement.

Hopes ran very high after the events of 1998. The Good Friday Agreement, ratified eventually by the UUP and by Sinn Fein, and confirmed by popular vote both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic, appeared to set the troubled Province's course for reconciliation through democratic institutions. That the Unionist public's enthusiasm for the agreement had cooled after the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis demonstrated its enthusiasm for the Balcombe Street bombers seemed not to matter too much. There was still a clear Protestant Unionist majority within the 72% referendum endorsement of the agreement. Getting through the tense marching season of 1998 without catastrophic breakdown of the relative peace reassured people that the worst was past, despite the burning of the three children during the agitation over the Drumcree march, and the monstrous car-bomb in Omagh. The worst cloud hanging over the proposal for a democratic assembly appeared to be uncertainty whether all the UUP members elected to it would stand behind David Trimble's endorsement of the agreement or defect to the "No" faction of Ian Paisley and Robert McCartney.

By summer's end, UUP leader David Trimble was elected First Minister. John Hume, entitled as leader of the SDLP to the post of Deputy First Minister, declined the job and passed it to his own deputy, Seamus Mallon. In the general good feeling, it was announced that the year's Nobel Peace Prize would go to Hume and Trimble as architects of the peace.

The summer's ill temper, however, had left a bad taste in Unionist mouths. Dates for the election of the remaining seats in an Executive began to be postponed, as Unionists once again demanded that the IRA should first begin the decommissioning of its weapons before Sinn Fein could take the two seats to which it felt entitled by its electoral performance. This was the very issue on which the first cease-fire had failed, and had been carefully postponed by the Mitchell Commission of 1996. Sinn Fein and the IRA pointed out that the Good Friday Agreement did not specify that and actual decommissioning should happen before the seating of Sinn Fein members in an Executive, only that it should be completed by May 2000, two years after the confirmation of the agreement by the British and Irish parliaments.

Formation of the cross-border bodies specified in the agreement required action by this still non-existent Executive. Seamus Mallon and the SDLP firmly rejected Unionist proposals that these bodies be appointed in the absence of an Executive. Now deadlines for implementation of all parts of the agreement began to be bypassed and the tone of discourse became, as in earlier times, progressively more vitriolic.

Powers allotted to the new Assembly would in any case be limited, but in the absence of an Executive could not be transferred -- "devolved" in British parlance -- at all. April 10th, the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, was seen as a critical deadline by which the formation of the Executive had to be completed. The date passed without success at this, to the accompaniment of further demands for prior decommissioning by the IRA. Prime Minister Blair and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern issued the Hillsborough Declaration, suggesting that Sinn Fein be granted its seats on the Executive only if the decommissioning begin simultaneously. Republicans saw this as a unilateral attempt to revise the Good Friday Agreement. The two Prime Ministers allowed ten days for the parties to cool off and agree on the Executive. This created another deadline and another failure.

The next deadline to fail was June 30th. Both governments were intensely anxious to have the Executive question resolved before Drumcree and the marching season. When this date too passed without agreement, they set another on July 15th. This time the British Parliament passed implementing legislation to devolve powers to the new Assembly as soon as the Executive was chosen. A session of the Assembly was convened to elect the Executive. David Trimble, First Minister, and his entire UUP delegation

boycotted the session, having declared beforehand that they would not budge on the decommissioning issue. The meeting of the Assembly became a scandalous farce, discrediting the entire process and plunging the Province into deep gloom over the likelihood of thwarting all movement toward peace.

The Orange parades, meanwhile, had gone off with minimum disruption. The local lodge in Portadown still refused to talk directly with the Garvaghy Road residents, and were consequently refused permission to walk down that road by the Parades Commission. Yet the day, Sunday July 4th, went by without the previous year's assaults on police and army barriers. Participants hoped that their good behavior would win them the desired permission to march. The Commission held to its requirement that the marching groups had to engage in meaningful dialogue with residents' groups before gaining that permission. The normally contentious and often violent march on the Orange Day itself down the Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast was prohibited on that same basis. The lodges then transferred the main terminus for the year's parade to a nearby site to bring the whole parade as close to the forbidden road as possible, and again the orderly conduct of the march was a bid for permission to use the prohibited route in the future. The Orange marchers were able to collect congratulations for their good behavior without any lessening of the tensions.

Sinister omens of approaching breakdown from the IRA's side appeared at this stage. Four persons were arrested in the United States, another four in Ireland, when shipments of guns through the post were discovered early in August. About the same time, a 22-year-old Belfast Catholic was found murdered. The supposition was that he had been killed by the IRA as a police informer. Vociferous accusations were brought that the IRA bore responsibility for both these actions, and a calculatedly obscure IRA public statement on the subject only further inflamed suspicions.

American Senator George Mitchell had by now acceded to the request of British and Irish governments to chair a review of the Good Friday Agreement. Mitchell had given the example the previous year of skillful use of a deadline, the instrument the two governments had since used with such little success, to bring about the original agreement. The Republicans, though anxious to pay respect to George Mitchell, yet reserved their judgment on whether or not to take part in this review, insisting that it not take the form of a renegotiation of the agreement already accepted.

Those are the dim prospects at the time of writing this supplement. As this crisis was developing, people commonly said that they had come through so many more difficult times that the peace process could not possibly be stopped because of such trivial issues. That remains to be seen. It has become a basic Republican supposition that the delays over the decommissioning issue are really only the sign that Unionists still remain determined to prevent Catholic participation in government. Unionist Assembly member and spokesman Dermott Nesbitt vehemently denies this, claiming that David Trimble and the mainstream of the UUP urgently want to bring Sinn Fein into an Executive, and are genuinely unable to do this without seeing some decommissioning of IRA weapons. Only very late in the agitation over this question did it eventuate that Prime Minister Blair, on the very day of the Good Friday Agreement, had given David Trimble a side letter assuring him that it *should* not be necessary or him and his party to sit in an Executive with Sinn Fein members unless there had been some decommissioning first. That side letter could not of itself change the content of the agreement, but it seems likely that Trimble had used it to gain acceptance by the leadership of his party, and was now unable to change from that position without losing his own position in the party.

Two things had been gained so far: a clear recognition on the part of the Republican movement that no constitutional change could occur in Northern Ireland without the consent of the Unionists; and an equally clear recognition by Unionists that if they would not share power they would not have any. If the crisis could not be resolved, the likelihood was that the two governments would resort to a renewal of Direct Rule, this time exercised jointly between them. Unionists had far more to lose by that development than Republicans.

311

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 4, 1999

Hon. Tony Blair
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London, England

Dear Mr. Blair,

Christ's Peace!

I have never presumed to write to you before, though I often do to my own President of the United States. But the current situation in Northern Ireland alarms me sufficiently so that I felt I should approach you.

Northern Ireland is not a casual interest for me. I have worked, often as mediator, with practically all groups in the Province since 1972, lived in London for that purpose for nine years, up to 1981, and was for some six weeks, late July into September of 1981, the mediator between the Northern Ireland Office and the Army Council of the IRA in the matter of the hunger strike. Of those persons you see regularly, Adam Ingram can perhaps best tell you how close I am to events there.

The impasse between UUP and Sinn Féin threatens now, I believe, to disrupt the entire peace process. The level of violence, from punishment beatings and shootings by both sides to the Collins murder and today's statement by the IRA that their armoury has been raided by dissidents, rises conspicuously in response to the vacuum of political action.

I am quite convinced myself that the IRA should do some decommissioning, even knowing as I do that there is no way to monitor how much of their cache they may have disposed of and also that what they decommission is easily replaced. The "silence of the guns," as the SDLP people keep telling us, has more importance. Decommissioning is nevertheless an important way of reassuring everyone else in the political process that the IRA's war is definitively over. The trouble is that the demands now made by Mr. Trimble and the UUP leadership are not a way to get the IRA to decommission, but actually create an obstacle to it.

I have also kept arguing, to one and all, since last summer that David Trimble needs special consideration and concession in this matter so that he will not lose the narrow majority among Unionists, and even among his own UUP members of the new Assembly. I believe that is now less urgent than it was during the summer, that if UUP members were about to bolt in the Assembly they would have done so by now, and that Mr. Trimble at this stage is looking for a triumph in forcing decommissioning as the price for Sinn Féin seats on the Executive. That certainly is the way it is seen not only by Republicans but quite generally in the Catholic/Nationalist neighbourhoods: that the Unionists want a demonstration that the old Stormont system has returned, this time with Republican acquiescence, and that they can still force any issue simply by throwing a tantrum.

What is clear, and is admitted even by Mr. Trimble and the UUP leaders themselves, is that prior decommissioning before the awarding of Executive seats to Sinn Féin is not a part of the Good Friday Agreement to which the UUP committed itself, though decommissioning by a determined date in the year 2000 is. The Unionists are demanding something beyond what they have already agreed to. There is a great deal of posturing on both sides of this issue, an insubstantiality to it that should make it nugatory for both, but both sides have gotten so dug in about it that it becomes increasingly difficult for either to back down. Everything that has been accomplished is thus at risk.

312

I don't believe either side should be allowed to set any condition above and beyond what was formally agreed on Good Friday, affirmed by the referenda and further confirmed by the Assembly vote. "Should be allowed" means responsibility of government, of your government, though I think you should have the explicit support of the other governments, Irish and American, that supported your enormous effort in fostering the agreement itself as you act, in time of great pressure, to meet that responsibility.

I have much sympathy with Mr. Trimble and his difficulty with his own party, even as I reject his claim, on that basis, to require a condition not a part of the agreement. I think he should have help with that dilemma. The form such help should take is that government -- British government with support from the Irish and American governments -- take the heat by determining that no such added condition is admissible, and that Sinn Féin should consequently have the Executive seats it has won in the election without prior decommissioning by the IRA.

If that is a bitter pill for the UUP dissidents, it ought not be sufficient for the party to walk out of the Assembly, as they have threatened. With the heat taken off Mr. Trimble himself, it should even be some political relief for him. Breakdown from the Nationalist side, both SDLP and Sinn Féin, is far more certain if the unwarranted prior condition is upheld.

What I suggest is that there is a question of the onus of failure in this enterprise that the whole Province population so much wants to succeed. If the decision, that the added condition may not be required, is government's, clearly stated, then the UUP would bear the full onus were they to walk out, and are unlikely to want to carry it. Their acceptance might be sullen, but would be there.

The full onus would shift then to the Republican side. I feel sure that the IRA itself would offend its own constituency in ways it could not afford to bear if, after seeing such progress on the political level as the awarding of Executive seats to Sinn Féin members, they did not then take some significant step in decommissioning weapons. Government, and the whole community, would be on far stronger moral ground in demanding it than they have been under the circumstances of the Unionist ultimatum.

It is a matter of who goes first, so that the impasse can be broken and the actual confidence of both sides be built up. On the legal grounds of the agreement, it is the Unionists who should yield. On moral grounds, the IRA should respond. The whole Nationalist side, distinctly including the most determined Republicans, will see significant progress if the actual agreement, so much threatened by what they see as simply Unionist unwillingness to deliver on what they have already promised, is implemented in this way. Their confidence will be built, in ays that should enable them to make the corresponding concession. The Unionists, even as they may sulk, will see some genuine decommissioning, and will consequently gain new confidence to counter the disappointment they will feel.. And that new confidence will be placed in their Nationalist neighbours, rather than in the expectation that they will be supported by government in making even unwarranted demands on those neighbours.

I will send this letter to you by express mail, as the day of reckoning comes so near. And since I have suggested that the action I recommend to you have the support of Irish and American governments, I will take the liberty of sending copies both to Mr. Ahern and to Mr. Clinton.

With all best wishes, and true admiration for the splendid work you have done in the Irish and many other matters, I am yours,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 4, 1999

Dr. Martin Mansergh
Special Adviser to the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Dublin 2
IRELAND

Dear Dr. Mansergh,

Christ's Peace!

I've just written to Prime Minister Blair about this threatening impasse between the UUP and the Republicans over decommissioning, and recommended that he needs to take the heat off David Trimble by making it a government determination that a condition of prior decommissioning is not a part of the Good Friday Agreement and is therefore inadmissible.

I suggested to him that, in doing so, he should have the explicit support of both the Irish and the American governments, that so strongly supported the work of fostering the agreement in the first place. Hence I thought I should get copies of this letter directly to Bertie Ahern and William Jefferson Clinton. Putting it in your hands, I'm sure, is the best way to guarantee that it gets to the attention of the Taoiseach. Might I ask you to put it before him?

With thanks,

in Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

314

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

February 4, 1999

President William Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

I've just written to Prime Minister Blair about the threatening impasse in Northern Ireland over the decommissioning of IRA armaments. I recommended to him that he take the heat off David Trimble by making it a government determination that to set a condition of prior decommissioning before allowing the Sinn Féin members to take the seats they have won in the new Executive is not a part of the Good Friday Agreement and is therefore inadmissible.

If he does this, I argued, he will make it possible for Mr. Trimble to concede the point without losing control of his party, as he might otherwise, and will also make it politically unacceptable, even with its own constituency, for the IRA to refuse to decommission. It is a matter of building confidence on both sides, and I believe this action by British government would successfully serve the purpose.

I suggested to Mr. Blair that, in doing this, he should have the explicit support of the Irish and the American governments, both of which so strongly supported the work of fostering the agreement in the first place. Hence I thought I should get copies of this letter directly to you and to the Taoiseach. I've sent a copy to the ever reliable Martin Mansergh, asking that he put it before Mr. Ahern, and hope that the copy enclosed here will have your attention.

With thanks,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

315

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 11, 1999

Mr. Gerry Adams
Mr. Martin McGuinness
Sinn Fein Head Office
51-55 Falls Road
Belfast 12

FAX: 011-44-1232 231723

Dear Gerry and Martin,

Christ's Peace!

Over these last months, as the Good Friday Agreement has come under increasing threat, I've kept writing to Unionists and to Tony Blair rather than to you. For that reason, it is quite a while since I wrote to both of you together this way. Right now, when there is real possibility that the agreement may break down altogether, I feel that your thinking has become critical.

My message, over this time, to the Unionists and Blair has been that the Good Friday Agreement did not call for prior decommissioning before you had your seats in the Executive, that the deal was a deal, and that it was not legitimate to add further conditions.

There is a lot of that correspondence. I thought of sending you all of it, and it is too much to burden you with at this point. I will attach to this letter, though, the main letter I sent to Tony Blair last February 4, arguing that it was government's responsibility to require fulfillment of the agreement as made. I recognized the political pressure faced by Trimble, and asked Blair to take the heat off Trimble by making that decision himself. I thought he should have support from the Irish and American governments such as he had had last year about the agreement itself, and consequently sent copies of this to Bertie Ahern (care of Martin Mansergh) and to President Clinton.

It did get response. Blair's private secretary wrote back immediately, saying it had been read seriously and had also been referred over to the NIO. Martin Mansergh replied, saying Ahern had read it, and adding apprehensively that it was difficult to address the question while the IRA was saying it would never do any decommissioning. Clinton did not answer -- he does often, but not always. But it is my impression that the line he took with David Trimble at the St. Patrick's Day meeting in Washington was rather like this.

Just last week I had a further substantial letter, through a private secretary, from Paul Murphy, as response to this letter to Blair, which had been referred to him. He spoke the same language as the April 1 Hillsborough Declaration, with all the ambiguities you and the IRA have been noting since. So I wrote again to Mr. Blair, reinforcing the same message while acknowledging what I think was good will in the Hillsborough statement. I warned that it was still the addition of a new condition to what had already been agreed, and that it would then be government that had destroyed the agreement if it fell apart, after all the work he had put into it. I sent a copy of that to Paul Murphy, with an added letter to himself.

But now it has become a question of what the IRA will do if the agreement falls through. I know very well, that is their decision and not yours. But your advice and urging will certainly have earned their attention, even if a lot of disillusioned people are saying: "I told you so."

The people who really oppose reaching a peace settlement, this or even a better one, are betting upon it that the IRA will now break the cease-fire and put itself in the wrong. I would argue that the IRA should not do that, but should instead make it plain that the Unionists are the ones breaking the agreement.

316

Several months back, when this danger to the agreement was still a distant shadow, I used to hear it said that the IRA would likely hold to the agreement even if the Unionists refused to keep to their part of it. The reason given was that something had already been accomplished, in that the Irish government had now acquired a role in the North. The tone now sounds more threatening and alienated, doubtless because both British and Irish government have taken the side of the Unionists in this unwarranted precondition. I hear not only the explicit content of Brian Keenan's graveyard statement, but also the familiar music of his reference to the "Free State," and I worry.

Most of the public has spent the last year with heads in the sand, saying that worse crises had been overcome and this one could not destroy what was already accomplished. Now people have woken up with shock, and seem to believe that the violence really could return.

I see it said that both Republican and Loyalist groups have become convinced that new violence would not at all promote their causes. I have long been convinced that these militant groups, of both sides, are the ones who have taken the peace initiatives, and that the main-line Unionists have yet to understand what both Loyalists and Republicans know, that any settlement has to build on accomodation between them. The Unionists are still playing for victories.

The Assembly and Executive elements in the agreement may or may not break down this week. The intricacies of it are hard to read from this distance. My understanding is that Mo Mowlam will activate the d'Hondt mechanism (peculiar language!), setting up the Executive, which will include seats for the two of you from Sinn Féin. The Hillsborough Declaration is supposed to set a month's delay before that Executive acquires its authority. I don't know how the Republican rejection of the supposed compromise affects that month's delay. But with or without the month's delay, it is then up to the Unionists to sit in the Executive with you or to walk out. If they in fact sit with you through the month's delay, that may actually give time for some change of heart. I believe, as you do, that this should be their change of heart, not the IRA's.

What happens if they walk out? The IRA could go back to war, or could call their bluff and refuse to initiate new violence. If the IRA goes back to war, Republicans take the blame for the breakdown, and I don't see what would bring the new war to another stop. If instead the IRA declared that it had no intention of going back to war, but insisted on the deal that was made, the whole onus would rest on the Unionists. I believe that would get them in big trouble with their own constituency, and lead to a real improvement in the situation. With great respect for the effort Republicans, both Sinn Féin and IRA, have made to promote the peace, I think that is the IRA's best course in that event, the one that would serve its interest.

And then decommissioning. I agree entirely that this is a phony issue. The real issue all along has been Unionist distrust of your movement. Prior decommissioning, I know, is not acceptable as a condition. It was explicitly ruled out as that, both by the 1996 Mitchell Commission report and by the Good Friday Agreement. But once there is no smell of precondition left to it, if you get to that, then some truly voluntary decommissioning would be in order.

I'll leave you with that. Best wishes,

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 6, 1999

The Honourable Tony Blair
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Prime Minister Blair,

Christ's Peace!

Thank you for responding so promptly, through your private secretary, to my letter of February 4 on the peace process in Northern Ireland. Mr. Paul Murphy, to whom you had referred my letter, also responded through his own private secretary in a letter I received today.

I remain convinced, like many others, that some decommissioning of weapons by the IRA should happen. This does not make sense as an end in itself, since there is no way to monitor it, but it has importance as a way to build confidence. As I argued before, though, the UUP demand that it precede the seating of Sinn Fein members in the Executive is an actual obstacle, a way not to achieve it.

I feel the process of implementing the Good Friday Agreement is off the rails now, and that is why I write to you again. Your April 1 joint statement with Mr. Ahern, after your disappointing days of face-to-face negotiation had failed to bring a compromise, represents a commendable effort to craft a position both sides can accept. After hearing the various Sinn Fein and IRA responses over the Easter weekend, in their commemorations of the 1916 rebellion, I don't believe you succeeded. Mr. Brian Keenan's comments, describing it as an effort to renegotiate the agreement already made, had special importance. Public statements from him are a great rarity. Another unnamed person, who I expect would have been a predecessor Chief of Staff, either the one from South Armagh or the one from East Tyrone, both of whom had given critically important endorsement of the agreement, was quoted as saying the peace effort stood in grave crisis.

Those statements should alarm us all. They have good reason to complain that even your joint statement with Mr. Ahern introduces a new condition for Sinn Fein's full participation in the Executive that was not part of the agreement.

Mr. Murphy's secretary writes to me: "The reason why people rightly want [decommissioning] to take place is because they want an end to violence in Northern Ireland and they want to have confidence that this is a permanent end." That is truly the weakness of the argument. No one among the Republicans seems to believe that is the reason. Instead, knowing well that the importance of decommissioning is symbolic rather than real, they see the reason as a desire by Unionists simply to have a public triumph over the IRA. Consequently, they believe both governments, taking the Unionist side, have merely succumbed to their pressure. It does all the more harm, in that interpretation, that Mr. John Taylor, on behalf of the UUP, promptly moved the goal still farther after your statement, saying that the decommissioning must be "substantial." They expect nothing other than escalating demands if they yield to this.

Their hard-liners, whose opinion has to be guarded against just like the Unionist hard-liners, actually believe that the "securocrats," as they call them, planned from the beginning to put an enticing agreement before the IRA only to snatch it back at the last moment. The reasoning they attribute to these residual hawks in the British establishment is that they can thus provoke new violence at a time of the IRA's weakness, still in will-o'-the-wisp pursuit of a defeat of the IRA in the field. (You may be encouraged to know that none of these Republicans appear to attribute that kind of hidden agenda to you or to Mo Mowlam, only to the military and security types of the old Tory establishment.)

These suspicions have to have serious attention as dangers to the prospects of peace that everyone has worked so hard to achieve. It remains true that a condition has been demanded that is not in the Good Friday Agreement. Mr. Keenan's statement, echoing that of Mr. Mitchell McLaughlin, held out the prospect of "voluntary decommissioning" if the agreement is implemented, i.e., if the allotment of seats takes place. IRA statements no longer take the strident line that there will never be decommissioning, as they did some months ago. There is good reason to expect that it will follow upon implementation of these other parts of the agreement. Neither government nor the UUP carries adequate moral authority if their demands are not supported by the agreement they accepted last year, but will have full moral authority to require this reciprocal action once the agreed measures have been implemented. That would even justify stepping back from that implementation if there were no such reciprocity.

There may seem little difference between this and the compromise you declared with Mr. Ahern. A difference is seen by Republicans, however, so long as genuine assumption of the authority Sinn Fein sees itself as having earned by the ballot, and by the extensive persuasive influence they have exercised over the IRA, is still conditioned on a step that goes beyond what was agreed.

I fully appreciate the political constraints under which Mr. Trimble acts. Sinn Fein, and the IRA itself, also act under constraints. Action that surpasses the limits their constituency allows could split them both apart and result in a renewed campaign of violence. I do not believe they seek that. They do believe that some Unionist and "securocrat" elements do actively seek it. For this reason, as I wrote to you before, I believe British government should take the heat over this issue on itself, and consequently away from Mr. Trimble, saying simply that a deal is a deal, and the Executive agreement should be implemented as made, without added conditions. In this, British government should have the same backing from Irish and U.S. governments that it had for the Good Friday Agreement itself.

I truly fear that government is miscalculating dangerously in this matter. Even back in the Autumn, when people were still blithely saying that this impasse could never stop the agreement after so many more serious problems had already been resolved, I had great apprehension that people were not taking this seriously enough. I am very reluctant to see this prospect of peace fail utterly, as it might. I would find it tragic if such failure resulted from erroneous judgment in a government that has worked so tirelessly to bring about the peace.

With all best wishes,

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

3/9

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

April 6, 1999

Hon. Mr. Paul Murphy
Northern Ireland Office
Block B, Castle Buildings
Belfast BT4 3SG
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Mr. Murphy,

Christ's Peace!

Mr. Liam Barr's very thoughtful letter on your behalf arrived today, in relation to the one I had written to Prime Minister Blair February 4. My thanks to him and you.

I remain very apprehensive of failure to implement the Good Friday Agreement, and consequently wrote once again to the Prime Minister. Since he referred my previous letter over to you, and since the time is short, I enclose here a copy of what I sent him.

The good will shown both by Mr. Blair and Mr. Ahern, I fear, could yet come to naught. As I read the Republican responses over the Easter weekend and its commemorations of 1916, they see the intended compromise proposal, which grants only a shadow executive until such time as the IRA makes a start at its decommissioning, as imposing an obligation different and additional to what was actually agreed last year. As I wrote to the Prime Minister, I believe the peace for which you have all worked so steadfastly could be lost over this added condition. I grant entirely the obligation that lies on the IRA to honor the commitment it made in the agreement, to decommission over the course of the two years. Something else is demanded in this conditioning of the agreement, however, and I can only concede their interpretation that it amounts to a unilateral change in the agreement.

That is the abstraction, the statement of principle. I understand just as well the political constraint under which each side, Republican as well as Unionist, operates in this impasse. Mr. Trimble could lose the majority assent of Unionists if he conceded on this himself.

I do actually hold him and his colleagues responsible for eroding the Unionist assent to the agreement that was there at the time of the referendum. They went right back to this demand, to which a solution had already been found through the original Mitchell Commission and in the agreement itself. Now Mr. Taylor's ratcheting up of the prior decommissioning demand to "substantial" has convinced the Republicans that they could expect nothing other than escalating demands from the UUP. I don't believe that the main-line Unionists have yet understood, as both Loyalists and Republicans have, that peace can be made, to the benefit of all, by accommodating the other tradition rather than by winning victories over it.

But that, in this matter, is water over the dam. Right now, Mr. Trimble needs someone to take the heat off him by saying that the deal made last year should be implemented as made, rather than requiring him to say that to his Unionists himself. And that, I have argued, is now the responsibility of government, which so assiduously promoted the agreement in the first place.

My admiration for the great commitment you and this government have shown to this work of peace. I truly don't want to see you stumble. Best wishes,

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

320

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 7, 1999

Roy Beggs, M.P. East Antrim
Office & Advice Centre
41 Station Road, Larne
Co. Antrim. BT40 3AA
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Roy,

Christ's Peace!

As I watch these days slip by that are so decisive for the future of Northern Ireland, I've been remembering the occasion out at Galgorm Manor a few years ago when I last saw you at one of Tom Tracy's grand dinners. Martin Smyth was there next to me at the table, old friend of many years. Martin and I had both made a habit of paying one another intensely respectful attention ever since 1972, and come to understand one another rather well across the gulf that makes that understanding so difficult. Tom Tracy had his friend Gene Shestack, the double for Pope John Paul II, there in full regalia, and I wondered out loud which was the more alarming spectacle at table with all those Unionists, the Pope or the Jesuit.

I recall well that I had your attention, that of the various Cunninghams and several others, when I spoke of the process and need of accomodation that was going on. I had been talking with Republicans, as I always do, and had been out to Derry just that day, along with the young rabbinical student I had brought with me that year, David Burstein. We had had a long and very frank discussion with Martin McGuinness, on which I reported to you all. I was convinced, and remain so, that the meaning of the IRA's cease-fire was a decision on their part that they must not continue to use coercion, military or political, in pursuit of their Republican objectives. I felt it was very important that Unionists understand that, test it and respond to it. Your own response to that, and Martin's had been cautiously positive, a hope that it might be so.

That was early November, 1995, and the IRA's cease-fire was about to break down the following February over what, in their view, was stalemate, failure by Britain or the Unionists to credit or recognize what they had done. The decommissioning question was already center stage, and seen by them as simply stratagem to avoid response to their initiative.

Since then we have seen the Mitchell Commission report, the election for the Forum, the All-Party Talks, the reinstatement, at long last, of the IRA cease-fire, and the Good Friday Agreement. I was somewhat surprised when you came out among the group of UUP MPs who rejected the agreement, though I understand the anxieties behind that position and can only respect it. I've always believed it was a mistake, though, a lost opportunity to accomplish the real consolidation of Ulster in a way that will win the assent of both traditions.

The decommissioning argument itself has never impressed me as genuine. There are all the reasons why it isn't trustworthy -- you know them too well for me to recite them. What will be trustworthy is genuine political consent, which is what the whole process is working toward. I do indeed want to see actual decommissioning, but I've believed from the start that the demand for it as a prior condition is precisely the way not to get it. And I've also believed that decommissioning has never been the issue in the decommissioning debate, that it has instead been simply a symbol, standing for distrust and reluctance to come to agreement or cooperation.

Building the trust is the essential ingredient for any progress toward a civilized relation between the two traditions, and clearly that is not there at present. I look for people to be searching for ways to make it possible, and I've grown accustomed to finding people, instead, looking intently for ways to prove that nothing is possible. That's the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Roy Beggs, July 7, 1999

From talking with people in all the militant movements, Loyalist and Republican, all the years I've been about Northern Ireland, i.e., since 1972, I've been aware that they, who have been directly involved in the violence, have known very early that what was there in Northern Irish society didn't work. All those years it meant that both sides tried, by a coercive violence that I would never accept, to change it, basically to the advantage of their own community. But from very early in the process, in fact since early in the '70s, these same people have been looking for a way to create a society that would accommodate both traditions. It took them an inordinate length of time to overcome the violence tradition, and recognize that they had to renounce all coercion and become the guarantors of one another's difference if they were to have a real reconciliation.

It is entirely intelligible to me that these are now the people who worked for and who genuinely stand by the agreements. It's just as understandable that the people who have stood apart from the violence all the time are now suspicious of any agreement, hang back and try to find ways to evade any placing of trust in those who have been their adversaries.

Naturally, there are also die-hards in both camps who want to subvert any chance of agreement by violent provocation. I don't worry so much about them, because they are a fringe element and really a police matter, controllable. The real danger of plunging Northern Ireland back into the life of violence it has experienced before is that refusal of trust. The granting of trust, by measurable increments, can never be a matter for one side only. As I read it, real things have been done in these recent weeks to merit some testable measure of that trust.

Roy, I write because I know you as one of the most honest people I have met. I'm conscious that, after more than a year defending a rejection of the agreement, you must be under a great deal of pressure to maintain solidarity with the No block. I respect your judgment entirely, but I fear that, by sticking to that refusal of trust, you and your colleagues risk the future of your society. I wish you would think of it again.

With best wishes,

In Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

322

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 8, 1999

Ken Maginnis, M.P., Fermanagh and South Tyrone
20 Brooks Street
Dungannon, BT71 7AN
NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear Ken,

Christ's Peace!

This decision over decommissioning and Executive seats looms over the whole effort to produce agreement in Northern Ireland now. I've tended to keep my distance, as the far-off Jesuit voice in all this matter. I do know how important it is for all of you to reach an agreed position, and how constructively you yourself have worked toward it, and I don't want to see it lost now.

David surely finds himself in a bind with his party, and in fact I gave my opinion to Tony Blair as far back as early in February that the British government should take responsibility for this question and in that way take the heat off of David. The deal, I felt, was a deal. The Good Friday Agreement had not said that decommissioning should precede the naming of Sinn Fein to the Executive. I'm as much in favor of decommissioning as anyone, have argued for it to Sinn Fein and IRA people and even tried to devise strategies that would make it easier for them to begin the decommissioning without feeling humiliation or surrender. The insistence on prior decommissioning, though, has been the way *not* to get it, to give it just those surrender characteristics and make it impossible.

You've understood that, I believe, and were very positive last year that progress toward genuine disarmament was in fact being made. I feel mistakes were made along the way, in not forming up the Executive as soon as the referendum and elections were done, before last year's marching season poisoned relations. Actual decommissioning, I believe, would then have followed promptly, and will even now if this crisis is successfully passed.

All the same, the issue is not really decommissioning, but trust. I've been convinced for some years, after having conversation with militants of both Loyalist and Republican sides ever since 1972, that it was these people who had seen first that what existed in Northern Irish society didn't work, and decided to change it. Their first responses were violent coercive efforts by each side for the exclusive advantage of its own tradition. But right from the early '70s these same people were looking for accomodation. It took an unconscionably long time, but they found the formula and expressed it in their cease-fires, that they must recognize the legitimacy of one another's political aspirations and standing in the community as a whole, renounce coercion, either military or political, and become the guarantors of one another's difference.

I know that it's been difficult for the Unionist community, and in fact for everyone who was not involved as protagonist in the violence, to believe they really meant that. I do believe it, as you know, of both Loyalists and Republicans. Obviously there are the die-hard rejectionists on either side who continue the violence. They are a fringe element, and hence a police matter, more and more controllable if and as the political dust settles. They will become politically important only if the political opportunity is botched. I don't find them worth as much worry as the lack of trust.

Because there is another element. The watershed decision to recognize the legitimacy of those who had been the adversaries has been made, truly as I see it, by those who were the militants. I've learned enough of you, Ken, to realize that you have recognized that legitimacy of the others too. I used to think of you as very resistant to it, and found that while you've looked hard at every evidence against it you are really there. The division within the UUP leadership is located right there. Many haven't taken that step.

That the issue is really trust rather than decommissioning has been seen very clearly from the Republican side. Their perception of that brought about the breakdown of the original IRA cease-fire. They saw the erection of this issue into an unbreachable obstacle simply as obstruction, evidence that neither British government nor Unionists really wanted the initiative toward reconciliation that they, and the Loyalists, had made.

The Unionist public, I think, really came well beyond that refusal to countenance progress toward agreement. There were things that shook their confidence in the way things were going. One of the most important was doubtless the reception of the Balfour Street convicts at Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis last summer, a very offensive business. I feel that David has mistakenly catered to his own opposition within the party over the year, and created a box in which he is now captive, giving the initiative to his enemies. Bringing Geoffrey into the negotiating team has really made him the principal negotiator. His objective is to foil rather than to gain agreement, and I truly suspect him of acting out of personal political ambition rather than in service to Northern Irish or even Unionist society.

What is really needed, as I see it, is serious political decision, both by Republicans and Unionists, that can only be based on growing trust. Much of that has already been done over these last years, and could be lost. That, rather than a real reduction of the capacity for violence, is what makes decommissioning important. It is symbol only. There is no way of monitoring it, and it is always easily reversible. And as symbol it stands for Unionist distrust that the Republicans have really made the decision they claim to have made.

What Tony Blair described last week as "seismic shifts" in Republican position really did happen, I believe. Unionists have been on both sides of the issue whether Sinn Fein and the IRA are one entity or two, with Paisley saying they are identical and the UUP saying a statement from Sinn Fein was inadequate unless there were another statement from the IRA itself. I take it that Adams and McGuinness and their supporters really had to make their case for this new policy to the IRA, that they had to get the IRA truly to accept Sinn Fein's policy as theirs, and that they still have to mind their step. Every new concession has to be checked out, that it not go beyond what the IRA leadership will bear. That context makes it really significant that Sinn Fein last week offered [it's urging for] actual handing over of weapons *after* fulfillment of last year's agreement on the Executive. I really hope there will be an IRA statement to that effect too.

I've written yesterday to Roy Beggs. I don't believe he should really be in the opposition to the whole agreement as such. I have great respect for him. I think I understand the anxieties he must feel. But I think that was the wrong step for him. I'll try to write to Martin as well, something I always do with great affection, but I'm afraid he may be more entrenched in his opposition.

My highest respect to you and the integrity with which you are acting, Ken. I hope you come out of this with an agreement you can build on. Best wishes,

In Christ,

Ray Helmick, S.J.

324

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02167-3802

July 8, 1999

Mr. Sandy Berger
National Security Adviser
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20504

Dear Mr. Berger,

Christ's Peace!

Thank you for having Mr. Greg Schulte write, for you and the President, in acknowledgement of the various things I had written after returning from Belgrade with the Jackson expedition. I'm glad to see more recent developments in that quarter, and appreciated the remarks Mr. Schulte made for you.

I've been in the habit, for many years and several presidents, of sending copies of anything I wrote that could have political consequence to the White House, to be accessible to the President or his assistants. While Tony Lake was in your position, I always knew he was the proper person to route these things. I've been less certain since.

But quite soon after his election, I wrote to Mr. Ehud Barak, resuming what had been a rather substantial correspondence with his predecessors, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin. I had never known what I could usefully write to Mr. Netanyahu, and so never attempted it, though I had continued correspondence with Yasser Arafat and many other Israelis and Palestinians. I thought this letter ought to be known in the White House.

And working at a different level, I've been writing the last couple of days to UUP figures in Northern Ireland, people I've known closely over many years now, Roy Beggs and Ken Maginnis. I've never felt that Roy ought to be among the No voters on the Good Friday Agreement. He has in the past recognized some elements in the situation that must be nagging at his very active conscience now. If he could be persuaded to change his position now, it would make a serious crack in the rejectionist camp. And while Ken, always a very demanding monitor of what the IRA is doing, has been very constructively on side all the last year, my friends and I felt he needed some encouragement just now too. I spent a while sweating over my computer, trying to compose a comparable letter to Martin Smyth, a long-time good friend, but didn't feel anything I could say would move him.

With best wishes,

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

FAX Cover Sheet
(617) 552-2977

To: National Security Adviser
Mr. Sandy Berger
The White House

FAX: (202) 456-9300

From: Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Professor of Conflict Resolution
Boston College

Dear Mr. Berger,

With President Clinton preparing for his visit to Ireland next week, I thought I should give him my view of how things line up there at present, as I did consistently throughout the time of your predecessor as NSA, Tony Lake.

I would appreciate it if you would put this letter before the President.

With thanks,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

3 pages, including this cover

326

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

December 6, 2000

President William Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

FAX (202) 456-9300

Dear President Clinton,

Christ's Peace!

The "P. O'Neill" statement issued by the IRA last night was surely meant more for your attention than anyone else's, as you prepare for your visit to Ireland next week.

Reading the news accounts of it in Irish and British papers, I could hardly believe they were all interpreting the same statement. As one who has followed these matters closely for many years, and communicated on them regularly with Tony Lake when he was your National Security Adviser (I first wrote to him just before your first visit to Ireland), I felt I should give you my reading.

The statement should really be taken as very positive. The IRA commits itself anew to "the resolution of the issue of arms and our view that this is a necessary step in a genuine peace process." You will have noted that General de Chastelein has greeted the statement as "a helpful move towards resolving the arms impasse." In that he concurs with the positive reading of the IRA's intentions that was given by Cyril Ramaphosa and Martti Ahtisaari at the time of their second inspection in October.

In view of this, the alarmist readings in such places as *The Guardian* should be discounted. The best readings I saw were in *The Irish Independent*.

David Trimble is riding a tiger just now, a large part of his party ardently seeking an excuse to demand that he close down the Executive and the whole Good Friday Agreement. I feel he should be given great consideration and congratulated publicly on holding to the Agreement, but the point made that efforts to constrain the IRA to act on an agenda set by the Unionist Party (the ban on Sinn Fein participation in the cross-border bodies) will only delay the IRA's implementation of the measures to which they have so plainly committed themselves. Trimble should come away from the effect of your visit strengthened, but strengthened *against* such maneuvers by the die-hards in his party, not abetted in succumbing to them. What those demands from the UUP hard-liners show is a desire for victory over Republicans rather than for accommodation. Both Loyalist and Republican militant groups have grown beyond that kind of thinking, and that is the meaning of their long-maintained cease-fires.

The police reform issue is tangled in this whole matter. I believe, personally, that the IRA and Sinn Fein will have to back down on their rejection of the Parliamentary Act on this subject. Chris Patten's own endorsement of what is done, after the objections raised by two of his commissioners, impresses me as quite genuine, but the endorsement that speaks to me most positively is that by Kathy O'Toole. I take that very seriously.

The subject of police reform is perhaps the strongest current element in the Republicans' aversion to Peter Mandelson, and I believe he has been right on this particular matter. He has, however, alienated all the Nationalists, SDLP as well as Republican, worse than Mo Mowlam ever did the Unionists. That's not a good performance.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and Seamus Mallon are much better on the mark, indicating that the implementation stage of this reform, to be done by the new Board rather than by Parliamentary Act, is the critical stage. They have delayed any recommendation that young Catholics should begin signing up for the new Police Service until they see how that implementation will be carried out, but have urged that all the political parties appoint their members to the Board so that they will be able to play their part in the implementation. That, I feel, is what should be urged on Sinn Fein, with whatever reservations they might want to make in doing it.

The most important occasion on which you might urge that, and also give, as I would hope, the sort of recognition that de Chastelein, Ahtisaari and Ramaphosa have given to the IRA's commitment to "the resolution of the issue of arms," will be at your appearance in Dundalk if, as reported, that is one of your stops. The South Armagh people, whose interest in British demilitarization in their own area is at the heart of the whole current imbroglio over the Agreement, and whose assent is the most essential feature of any decision in the IRA, will be there. Respectful recognition of the ways in which they have advanced the peace process will be more valuable than almost anything else you could do.

Do please excuse me for the free advice. I greatly admire what you have done for peace in Ireland over your Presidency. Best wishes on this visit.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

328

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 5, 2001

Dear Father Helmick:

Tony Lake and Sandy Berger have kept me apprised of your observations on the Northern Ireland peace process over the past few years, and I am grateful that you wrote again on the eve of my recent visit to Dublin, Dundalk, and Belfast.

Your insights into the current state of play track very much with our own, although I hope you will understand my hesitation to go into specifics here.

I came away from my meetings with the Prime Minister, the Taoiseach and political leaders convinced that there is broad recognition of the need to restore momentum to implementation of all aspects of the Good Friday Accord. I am determined to use the remaining weeks of my Administration to assist the parties in any way we can to overcome the current impasse.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful and valuable suggestions.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

The Reverend Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Jesuit Community Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02467-3802

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

August 28, 2001

Dr. Martin Mansergh
Special Adviser to the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Dublin 2
IRELAND

Dear Dr. Mansergh,

Christ's Peace!

The disgraceful IRA caper down in Colombia has put a new, altogether needless burden on efforts to bring the Northern conflict to a peaceful resolution. I've been two years now largely standing back, not wanting to interfere as local participants negotiate this situation. Just now, the more constructive Republican players are disabled by the embarrassment caused by the Colombian affair, and I'd like to make some suggestions. My reason is that I've had some windows into the oddities of Republican structure that may conceivably be unavailable even to yourself.

The most important question, in their own terms, before Republican leadership now, as I hear it, is internal. Who is in charge of the movement? After all the years that the military leadership, IRA Army Council, has set all norms, and civilian Sinn Fein politicians have needed Army Council license for anything they might do or say, the political process of these last years has made the Adams-McGuinness-McLaughlin leadership into principal players, licensed to take initiatives and steer the process in ways that the Army Council is always interested in monitoring but can no longer fully direct.

A transition situation exists, a transfer of power from military to civilian control. It is extremely painful, but both sides have acted with deliberation and pretty responsibly. I used to believe, in the early years of cease-fire, against the assertions of many others, that the principal Sinn Fein leaders were kept isolated from IRA leadership, especially from Army Council membership, even from formal IRA membership, despite their having been high-ranking in IRA leadership earlier. At present, I'm inclined to accept the widespread belief, as I am told it, that three of the Sinn Fein Westminster MPs, Adams, McGuinness and Pat Doherty, are Army Council members. I see that as an element of the transition itself. Doherty, I hear it said, has been a Council member through much of the "troubles." Mitchel McLaughlin, I am told, has never been IRA, and is therefore the one presented (along with the less prominent Alex Maskey) to deny on behalf of Sinn Fein that the three blokes arrested in Colombia are anything to do with Sinn Fein.

You notice, I take the precaution of surrounding any of these statements with "I am told" or "alleged." That does make the writing clumsy!

330

I used to comment, to you and others back in and around 1994, that the basic rural members and leadership of the IRA, the folks in South Armagh and East Tyrone, had so little politics -- nothing beyond "Brits Out" -- that they had no use for Sinn Fein and did not even join it. They never felt any need to tell Sinn Fein leadership what they planned or were doing either. I am told, and it sound perfectly credible to me, that this habit remains even now, and that the core leadership of the Army Council does not tell all to the political figures who have been co-opted onto the Council for these purposes of transition. That affects the question of who knew and approved this Colombian venture.

That core leadership: Tom Murphy of South Armagh has been through libel suits over the *Times* assertion that he was Chief of Staff and has lost. He would be central to the leadership, as I hear it, one of the skeptics at the time of the 1994 cease-fire, but has now been the most important decision-maker in determining that the IRA as such, the military arm of The Republican Movement, endorses and promotes the policies that the Sinn Fein leadership has brought into the movement: end of the armed struggle, a choice for accomodation with the Protestant-Unionist population of the North, not as abandonment of the United Ireland proposition but as recognition that it can come about only by consent. That proposition could not be accepted by the movement without the participation of the South Armagh people for whom Tom Murphy speaks within the secretive context of the movement. He and they have some other priorities as well. The "independent Republic of South Armagh" is a thriving business proposition for them.

Kevin McKenna of East Tyrone, I am told, was the other central figure, like Tom Murphy without more politics than "Brits out," but like many others in his area even more embittered about the clash with Unionists and their British support, because of living cheek by jowl with them in East Tyrone. The Chief-of-Staff position on the Army Council passed back and forth between Kevin and Tom, as I hear. Even when they have not held it personally, they were still the essential voices that had to be heard.

Here I am reciting things that you already know, as preface to what I believe I'm seeing now. The country echelons of the IRA understood very well that no uprising had any chance without Belfast participation, and they needed a lead figure there. From early in the game, I am told, that was Brian Keenan, who came under Kevin McKenna's patronage, needing that because he had no political base in the movement himself, unlike Tom Murphy, who had solid popular standing in South Armagh, or Kevin McKenna, who had it in East Tyrone. That Brian Keenan, reputedly, is Chief of Staff at present, and the person meeting General de Chastelain, is by grace of Tom Murphy, Kevin McKenna being fairly out of the picture now, retired and reportedly unhappy with the peace process. Brian is spoken of as practically the one and only genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary in the movement. As ideologue, he was acceptable to the non-ideologue Kevin McKenna because he and McKenna, for different reasons, both wanted to tear down everything. I've heard accounts of Keenan strutting about in his leather boots, lecturing his fellows that this was not just about Ireland but was the world revolution.

Keenan also did things without authorization, as a consistent pattern. Few others could get away with that, but Murphy and McKenna needed him to organize Belfast. There was a time in the 70s when Seamus Toomey was Chief of Staff, by agreement with the country lords, but actually served as a front for Brian Keenan. I am told of a typical Keenan initiative of that time, the series of bombs in Dublin hotels, cinemas etc. in 1976. Those (not the UDA bombs of 1974) were designed to look like the work of the UVF, which felt flattered and acknowledged them, but were actually, I am told, arranged by Keenan, to disrupt some threats of peace breaking out at that time. Whether he told Toomey about it is hardly relevant, as he ran Toomey, but he did not inform Ruairi O Bradaigh or Joe Cahill of it and took care that they should not be able to trace it to him, as it was not authorized. Your Special Branch people will be quite familiar with that episode.

To bring this up to current times, Keenan as Chief of Staff, people tell me, is now answerable to Murphy, who holds the real Army Council power. What is decided at the upper military levels is not told to Adams and McGuinness, the politicians, even if they are members of the Council. Instead there is another operative level of military command, the Headquarters Staff, practically all of whose members owe their positions to one of three people: Murphy, McKenna or Keenan, and pay their loyalty to them. An action ordered or undertaken by Headquarters Staff people need not be known or approved by others, even on the Army Council, than the one or two to whom they have this relation. Jim Monaghan, reputedly Chief Engineer, is said to be Headquarters Staff and to have been so for a long time, answerable to Keenan. He is reportedly not a member of Sinn Fein: hence Mitchel McLaughlin's denials that he belongs to them.

This Colombian venture, I am told, is the unauthorized work of Brian Keenan, as was the Florida gun-shopping a while back. Brian is reckoned a very dangerous man. Others in the movement hesitate to cross him.

So now you have the impetus of the peace process brought to a near halt by this caper, Gerry Adams, normally so articulate, with nothing to say about it than that he is on vacation, Martin McGuinness keeping out of the way of any questions, Mitchel McLaughlin and Alex Maskey issuing unimpressive denials, the Irish government asking for answers that are not forthcoming, the anti-agreement Unionists in full cry claiming that this proves they should never have gotten involved in any dealings with Sinn Fein in the first place and that the whole Republican Movement should now be excluded from any part in a settlement, and pro-agreement Unionists intimidated from looking for any openings in all this gloom.

What could restore some degree of political credit to Sinn Fein to continue seeking peace on behalf of The Republican Movement? Only that those really responsible be removed from power in the movement. (The IRA doesn't need to shoot them any more. There has been sufficient progress that they can simply be told that their

services are no longer needed.) They have disgraced the movement, acted against central policy and endangered things are of first importance to the movement.

Who can act on that? Not Gerry Adams and the political leadership. I have seen and believe the comment that, if Gerry Adams called for the dismissal of Brian Keenan, he would be dead within twenty-four hours. It is total impasse for him.

And Brian is not the only untouchable. Jim Monaghan as Headquarters Staff for many years is similarly so. McCauley, coming from East Tyrone, is also close to the same category.

Tom Murphy could read them out of the movement and disavow the Colombian action. It's possible that he did know of it in advance, and failed to see the problem with it, but he is the only one with internal authority to dismiss this group and rehabilitate the movement. He, more than anyone else, habitually does things in such secrecy, the secrecy that taints the whole movement, political as well as military, with a smell of fascism, that he is unlikely to take any such action unless everything is uncontrollably out on the table.

And that is why I write to you. No one in the movement can put all this on the table, but Irish government can. You've been asking for explanations, which you know you will not get from the Republicans. You are in a position to say you see what has happened and who is responsible, and that they have grievously betrayed trust within the movement, showing themselves as people with whom it is impossible to deal.

You will be a better judge than I of whether that is really within the options of government. I recommend it to you.

In Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.

Oifig an Taoisigh
Office of the Taoiseach

7 January 2001
actually September

Rev. Fr Raymond G Helmick S.J.
Jesuit Community
Boston College
Chestnut Hill
Massachusetts 02467-3802
USA

Dear Fr Helmick,

I deeply appreciate your sending your very interesting letter of 28 August 2001, which I have shared with the Taoiseach. I believe your analysis of the situation has a ring of truth about it. Both Governments are determined to put things back on track and not let anyone off the hook.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Martin Mansergh
Special Advisor to the Taoiseach

339

JESUIT COMMUNITY BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL MASSACHUSETTS 02467-3802

July 18, 2002

Gerry Adams
Northern Ireland Assembly
Stormont
Northern Ireland

Dear Gerry,

Christ's peace!

The statement of apology to victims from the IRA took me quite by surprise. I find it one of the most significant actions of healing that has yet happened in Northern Ireland, a better medicine for the remaining hatreds and resentments that we now see played out in North Belfast, at Drumcree and on the Short Strand than any other.

What I have heard from Republicans over the years, before and since the ceasefires and the peace process, has always been that the war was just, that IRA members were soldiers. While the movement learned and committed itself to the principles of accommodation and consent, there could be no regrets. That differed from what I would hear from Loyalist paramilitaries, even while the fight was at its height. Every conversation with them tended to begin with their admission, "We have done terrible things," and their ceasefire declaration of 1994 explicitly included apology for those wrongs. I've always understood the pride Republicans took in their principled stand against injustices, and seen how this was reflected in that just-war attitude, but I have also known how the grief of victims, some of them the unprotected bystanders, others losing their lives or injured in the service of things they believed in, was left unacknowledged.

The IRA's beautifully crafted statement addressed all of that admirably, and must reflect a deep period of self-examination that has gone on unobserved throughout the movement for some time. A statement of that caliber could not be made without the consent of people who have gone through such a process. I've read the ungenerous immediate responses of Unionists, and realize that they must simply be terrified by the fact that the IRA has made such moral advance over themselves. The Unionists have never had the insight that the Loyalists had. Some of the commentary has tried to explain the IRA's statement in terms of some immediate political advantage it could win, but it transcends any such motives.

After all the correspondence you had from me over many years, I have stood back lately, since you and Sinn Féin have so successfully asserted your place in the dialogue of power and a political process has become so much a reality. Right now, without wanting to be a nuisance, I'd like to comment on what lies ahead.

You have a Catholic population feeling very buoyant now, and badly discouraged Protestants. That, I feel, is the principle thing Republicans now need to address. After all the years in which working-class Protestants got their jobs on leaving school and could rely on them for life, they've lost that, and have never built the educational foundation on which to go on to the higher-tech jobs that open now. Catholics had to get educated for contingencies, and are now better prepared for new opportunities. The Protestant sense of possession in Northern Ireland is gone too, and none too soon at that since it was built on injustice, but the sense of loss is real, especially for the many people who had little else but that.

I know how Republicans rightly resent suggestions that the balance now be tilted toward the Protestants because they feel so bad. It is a manipulative thing, one more trick of the old establishments, when it is proposed that governments tilt that way. But for Republicans themselves, the agenda should be to welcome the Protestants into the new society that you, more than they, are building, to give them their place in it, help their working-class people to find their way to real justice and equality in it, and so assure them of your genuine good will toward them. That, unlike the manipulative tilting of the balance by outside governments, is no betrayal of the traditional goal of unity in Ireland, but rather is the best way to show the Protestants that their life, their tradition, their successful future in Ireland is your intention.

Over the closing period of the Long Kesh prison, when I was often meeting prisoners of both camps in the H-Blocks, we often discussed the decisions both sides had made about accommodating one another, in terms of each becoming the guarantor of the other's difference. What I propose here as basic Catholic and Republican policy toward the people of the other tradition is very vague, I know. I wouldn't even attempt to flesh it out until I knew your people really believed this was the direction they wanted to go. That IRA statement of the other day, so respectful of the suffering their war has brought on these other people, indicates to me that it may be so. If so, I would like to stand with you.

With best wishes,

in Christ,

Raymond G. Helmick, S.J.
Boston College

336

Gerry Adams MP
Uachtarán Shinn Féin

24th July 2002

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A Chara Raymond

Thank you for your letter of July 18th regarding the recent statement from the IRA.

I welcome this very important apology and statement of condolence and believe it is a genuine effort by the IRA to address the grief and pain of the families of non-combatants who were killed as a result of IRA actions.

I also welcome the fact that the IRA acknowledges the grief and pain of the relatives of all of those killed in this conflict. This statement and the reiteration by the IRA of its total commitment to the peace process is a significant contribution to the process of conflict resolution.

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Gerry Adams MP MLA

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