

Before this is printed, the meeting will have taken place, at Mr Whitelaw's invitation, between Mr Faulkner and representatives of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and the Alliance Party, and it will have achieved nothing. It is hard to believe that the invitations to the other parliamentarians were meant seriously; their absence is due to clear British decisions. Ian Paisley cannot be there because of the army's blank refusal to permit even a Widgery enquiry into the latest paratrooper exploit—the gunning down of what, by all available evidence, were innocent unarmed Protestant civilians in a grisly repetition of the Cusack and Beattie murders of 1971. The SDLP, Republican Labour and Nationalists, cannot be there because Mr Whitelaw insists on delaying the ending of internment without trial.

The question of internment illustrates very well the gap between rhetoric and reality that seems compulsory in Northern Ireland. It is publicly said that it would be dangerous to allow this two hundred or so of 'hard core' extremists on to the streets because they would strengthen the Provisionals. The slightest acquaintance with the operations of the Provos shows this to be nonsense. Anyone who thinks that the present internees are needed to create havoc and mayhem has not been looking at the newspapers for a year. Apart from a natural affection for their comrades, the Provos have no reason to want an end to internment; the public support it brings is of far more military value than a group of ex-prisoners, often in poor physical condition, who have been out of action for a year. If the SDLP could claim the prestige in Catholic eyes of ending internment, the blow to the Provos would be shattering. Neither Mr Heath nor Mr Whitelaw is so stupid as to overlook these obvious truths. They are maintaining internment not from fear of the Provisionals but from fear of the UDA.

Because the opening of Long Kesh would be seen as a symbolic victory for the Catholics, the UDA would be under popular pressure to react angrily and there would be more attacks on Catholic homes. But the situation is again more complex. Protestant 'extremists' are no more stupid than Mr Heath and perfectly capable of seeing that an end to internment would weaken their ostensible enemy, the Provisionals. But their most dangerous enemy is not the IRA but the official Unionist Party. Despite, or even because of, recent attempts to patch up some kind of alliance of the working-class and populist UDA with the Unionist establishment, the former are well aware of the danger of being absorbed and manipulated by Faulkner. They need their popular support as Protestant defenders, and that depends to a great extent on the continued activity of the Provos.

In this tangled situation the British are likely to do nothing. As Mr John Taylor has predicted, the Darlington conference will be

used by the British to demonstrate that the Irish can find no agreement, and will pave the way for an imposed British solution. None of this, though, matters very much because the important date was never late September but 24th March, 1973, when Stormont will have to be reconstituted. There are those who think this unnecessary, that the province could be ruled directly from Westminster like an English county, but these are either people like Mr Enoch Powell who know and care little about Ireland but want to make a nice simple British nationalist point for home consumption, or else people like Ian Paisley who reluctantly accepts integration because he rightly sees it as the only way of staving off an eventual united Ireland.

Our own belief is that peace will not really come to Ireland until its wealth and resources are in the hands of all the workers of the thirty-two counties. But, as James Connolly saw, although the basic problems are not those of nationalism or religion, it is first necessary to dispose of these. They will be eliminated not by some new constitution for a 'united Ireland' but by the *process* through which such unity is achieved. *Pace* Cardinal Conway, it would be perfectly possible to bomb a million Protestants into some kind of united Ireland (this, after all, is exactly what the British did four hundred years ago) but such a process would not solve but exacerbate the problems with which we are concerned.

We have repeatedly argued in these pages that the way to Irish unity (and hence, ultimately, the way to Irish socialism) lies through negotiations between two Irish states. The more independent of England the Northern (and predominantly Protestant) state becomes, the more it will recognize that its true interests lie with the South. Total independence for the North is unfortunately not now thinkable—not because of any insuperable economic difficulties but because the rise of Vanguard now means that it would be a viciously repressive sectarian state which even Jack Lynch's Republic would not be able to tolerate—but the movement must be towards a Northern Ireland whose own people control their own destiny. This implies that democracy must be introduced to the region. Various Unionist, para-Unionist and Liberal parties have already come up with some of the machinery by which this might be done (Committee government, P.R. and the rest of it) but, of course, the vital prerequisite is the introduction of ordinary democratic civil rights, the abolition of internment and the whole Special Powers Act, a clear Bill of Rights guaranteeing free speech and applying something like the Race Relations Act to religious discrimination, the disarming of 'gun clubs' and other political murder squads, the legalizing of Republican political activity and the end of military repression. Naturally there would be attempts to wreck any such arrangements, certainly from right-wing Protestants but also probably from the equally right-wing Provisionals, but these will fail if the people as a

whole, from their different points of view, can see the new democratic Assembly as the best that can be done to represent and guard their interests.

A major task for such a new government is to negotiate with the South over matters of common interest, and this, of course, implies unconditional recognition by Dublin of the sovereignty of the Northern state. They can and must co-operate over questions of tourism, transport, telecommunications, electricity, health services, education and the development of the Foyle valley and the Newry/Dundalk areas, and they will have to find a common solution to the problems created by membership of the E.E.C. It is even in the long-term interests of Britain to encourage such particular co-operative projects by subsidy, and they should give rise to a set of cross-border institutions upon which unity can eventually be founded.

A primary area of such co-operation must be security. Until a joint Irish authority can be set up, it will have to remain temporarily, uneasily and inefficiently in the hands of Westminster, but such an Irish authority is the only way to make sense of the ritual appeals to Mr Lynch to 'do something' about guerrilla activity. As it is set up, the British army will withdraw and with it the, now largely sectarian, UDR which is supposed to be part of the army.

It must be emphasized at this point that the border is, in fact, perfectly secure. Neither Party that commands majority support in Ireland wants it abolished now. Fianna Fail is here completely at one with the Unionists; the whole of their carefully constructed political machine would collapse under the weight of an extra six counties. As the *Irish Times* put it: 'The Fianna Fail government would no more welcome the invasion of Leinster House by the Humes, Devlins, Coopers, Faulkners and Paisleys than they would welcome the return of the Black and Tans'. Nor is it just a matter of party calculations; there is mass support for this attitude; Jack Lynch won his massive victory in the mid-Cork election because, like de Valera, 'He kept us out of the war'. However, it would do no harm (and it would help to calm some Protestants) if a treaty between Northern Ireland and Britain guaranteed her borders against military invasion. The security forces are needed for quite other purposes.

A joint Irish security authority could, of course, be dangerously repressive; it would have to be carefully watched both in Leinster House and Stormont. It could make life immensely more difficult for radicals of all kinds and would present grave risks for the future. But radicals, like every other group, will have to face and deal with risks if we are to get anywhere at all. The dangers of a police state can be partly met by the creation of small local, unarmed, police forces to deal with matters that do not immediately involve security, but in any case, the risk of putting too much power into the hands of

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changing institution is provisional, and we have to learn to be able to be contemplatives in the midst of the dynamic, in the midst of movement' (p. 339).

Religious communities are becoming more and more like discussion clubs. This book raises questions that would make these discussions more worthwhile. Without doubt it is one of the best books on monastic and religious life since the council. It has a lot of lessons for both the destructive progressives and conservatives and much encouragement for constructive religious who love the religious life but are beginning to lose heart.

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### COMMENT *(Continued from page 436)*

the ruling class is outweighed by the chance at last to create a strong cross-border working class movement.

It goes without saying that the introduction of democracy to Northern Ireland has to be accompanied by similar moves in the South. Some things can be done immediately. The trivial matter of removing the 'special position' of the Roman Catholic Church from the Constitution will in any case be dealt with in November, there will need to be more pressure for new legislation on the sale of contraceptives, but much more important is the rescinding of recent repressive legislation and, of course, the Curragh camp will have to be pulled down on the same day as Long Kesh. The more difficult and lengthy task of prising the clerical grip off education and welfare services may have to await the co-operation of the northern Protestants, though in the North itself, the Catholic Church authorities need not wait so long before moving towards integrated education and adopting, as other hierarchies do, a more liberal interpretation of what used to be the *Ne Temere* decree. I do not myself think, any more than do most Northern Protestants, that in all these matters we can take an easy liberal secularist line; there are unpredictable dangers in tampering, even in the most apparently rational way, with the ecology of a culture, but, to say it once more, there is no hope for the future without risks for everybody. England's intervention in Ireland over the centuries has created so much fear and insecurity in the country that there is little room for faith; but faith is the only possible foundation for hope and for love.

H. McC.