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This report traces the relationship between the Fianna Fail Party of the Irish Republic and the clandestine Irish Republic Army (IRA). The deep historical roots of their common beginning have prevented them from breaking away from their inflexible traditions and developing any workable solutions to ending the conflict and the partition of Ulster. Significant in this report is the historical struggle with Britain for independence that lent legitimacy to violent resistance; the influence of Eamon de Valera in developing a constitutional vehicle for republican aspirations and the uncompromising intransigence of extremists in both organizations that preclude them from moderating their goals to any significant degree.

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Soldiers of Destiny: The Fianna Fail Party, The Irish Republican Army and a United Ireland

John J. Prusiecki, Jr.

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirement
of the degree
Master of Arts
in the Department of West European Studies
Indiana University
December 1990

Accepted by the faculty of the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree Master of Arts in the Department of West European Studies, Indiana University.

James B. Christoph, Chairman

Norman Furniss

James M. Diehl

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J.J.P.
Bloomington, IN
Dec 1990

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> The most ridiculous and insolent of tyrannies is the vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave.
>
> -Thomas Paine, Rights of Man, 1792

For over seven hundred years the desire to form a single, sovereign nation has been the central tenet of Irish nationalism. During this period countless Irish visionaries have pursued the goal of independence from Great Britain with single-minded determination. To the most committed, the establishment in 1921 of an independent state for twenty-six of the thirty-two Irish counties was at best only a partial realization of that goal, and at worst an outright betrayal to those Irish patriots who sacrificed their lives in the quest for complete Irish unity. To many still today, the efforts to 'free' Ulster from Great Britain are but a continuation of this sacred struggle for mastery over Ireland.

Though religion is commonly thought to be the reason for the Ulster crisis, it alone does not completely explain this conflict, or even the nature of Irish politics itself. In essence partition is about the vestiges of colonial rule and colonial privileges that the Irish subconsciously battle to discard in their desire to finally achieve the realization of their total territorial sovereignty as an independent state. Yet the influence of Great Britain is unalterably sketched across the face of the nation. Despite the turmoil in Ulster, the Republic maintains a very stable political system that was a direct result of the evolution of British parliamentary democracy during the nineteenth century.

Even the Irish party system was structured in response to British rule. Irish political parties were not founded on socio-economic issues but were divided over issues of national and cultural identity, over relationships with the ex-imperial power and over what might best be described as different stages towards national development.[1] Paradoxically, British influence is equally responsible for the proliferation of violence that has also had a marked influence in Irish society. In many ways, the struggle for Irish independence can be seen as one long rebellion and the reliance on the gun has become a tolerated, if not approved part of Irish political life. These two traditions then: the one constitutional and nonviolent, the other unconstitutional and violent have deep historical roots in the Irish state. It is especially important to understand that the role of violence cannot be understated in the recounting of Ireland's past. Violence has played an enormously important part in Irish politics, both in a symbolic way and as part and parcel of mass movements, even those mass movements customarily regarded as eminently constitutional. In fact, the two modes of action were often used simultaneously and were sometimes mutually sustaining.[2] It was this cooperation between the two traditions that accelerated the achievement of Irish independence in 1921.

Since the time of this 'partial' independence, however, neither tradition has made any real progress towards the final step of total sovereignty: the ending of the partition of Northern Ireland from the Irish state. To what can the failures of the

last seventy years be attributed? Why has the Irish Republic, either constitutionally or unconstitutionally, been unable to secure a workable solution to the Ulster dilemma? The focus of this paper will be on an examination of the nature of this frustration within the Republic of Ireland. More specifically, this paper will trace the constitutional and unconstitutional traditions in Ireland and analyze the effect that their efforts have had on the realization of this illusive goal. Of the Irish parliamentary parties, the Fianna Fail party represents the constitutional tradition most completely. Not only has the party won fifteen of the twenty-one general elections since 1927 and has thus been responsible since that time for the majority of the Republic's policies and actions towards Ulster, but the party also has deep historical roots in the unconstitutional tradition. This tradition, commonly referred to in Ireland as the 'republican movement', is manifested in the clandestine Irish Republican Army or IRA. The relationship between these two organizations has had tremendous influence over the course of Irish history and must bear significant culpability for the impotence of Ireland's not inconsiderable efforts to settle the Ulster crisis.

This essay will concentrate on the relationship between Fianna Fail and the IRA and the effects of their ideology and strategy on the realization of a united Ireland. While the influence of Great Britain and the politics and events in Northern Ireland itself are also important to a complete understanding of this dilemma, they will only be referred to in the context of

their impact on Fianna Fail and the IRA within the Republic. Structurally, this paper will begin with an analysis of the common origins of Fianna Fail and the IRA.

Since the Norman invaders first set foot on Irish soil in the twelfth century, Irishmen have arisen to resist foreign subjugation. The brutal and exploitive nature of this colonial existence led many of these Irishmen to turn to violence in their attempts to expel the British oppressors. Calling themselves republicans, these men were convinced that Britain would be persuaded not by force of argument but by argument of force.[3] The sacrifices made in the many failed efforts to overthrow the British established a sacred tradition that was enriched by the blood of the fallen and became an integral part of Irish culture.

Yet the uncompromising faraticism of these men also contributed to the continuation of bloodshed after the achievement of independence in 1921. Dominion status with Britain and the partition of Ulster was unacceptable to the republicans and led to a bitter civil war that shattered the nation. Even after hostilities ended many of the republicans remained defiant and this intransigence soon predicated a major division within their own ranks.

With this common background, Chapter 3 will trace the split that developed between Fianna Fail and the IRA not long after the end of the Civil War. Though united against the Anglo-Irish Treaty as the war began, the republican movement came apart over the unquestioned reliance on force to promote republican ends.

Frustrated and disillusioned by this stance, a large number of IRA fighters opted to abandon violence and redress the national question through constitutional means. Led by Eamon de Valera, they formed a new political party called Fianna Fail that remained committed to a united Ireland but rejected the preeminence of the physical force tradition that underscored IRA ideology.

De Valera shrewdly developed his party into a national movement that became the party of government in the twenty-six county state. This prominence eventually brought him and his party into conflict with his old friends in the republican movement and would call into question the strength of Fianna Fail's commitment to its national aims.

In Chapter 4 the status of the renewed 'Troubles' and its implications on the IRA and Fianna Fail will be reviewed. The explosion of civil rights violence, sectarian bloodshed and the introduction of British army units into Ulster in 1969 reawakened the plight of the Northern Catholics and the incompleteness of the national question to the people of the Republic. The suddenness of this eruption also shook both the IRA and Fianna Fail to the very core of their foundations. Both were forced to review their past and grapple with the direction of their future. This conflict between tradition and reality would alter the internal structure of both organizations and lead them to contemplate the utility of their historic goals in light of the changing social, economic and political conditions that have affected the island on

both sides of the border.

This paper will conclude with a final chapter reflecting on the past and predicting the future for the IRA, Fianna Fail and a united Ireland. The IRA, despite its efforts at practical politics, remains committed to the gun. In fact, the movement has become an extremely experienced guerilla force. But to simply call it a terrorist organization is to fail to understand the true nature of its existence. Its longevity, history and goals suggest that the IRA is deeply rooted in the society in which it operates, both north and south.[4] Its presence seems unlikely to diminish.

Fianna Fail has shown a practical nature that has contributed to its solid support base in the Republic. Critics of this stance have charged Fianna Fail with 'verbal republicanism' and of allowing its traditional orientation to be sacrificed in the quest for continued power and control. Yet despite these assertions, the hallowed legacy of de Valera continues to influence the formulation of party policy and remains the central fixture of Fianna Fail ideology.

In the face of all the rhetoric about unification, what can be said about a united Ireland? The absorption of Ulster into the Republic could create tremendous social, political and economic upheavals that would dramatically alter the structure of the Republic and the nature of Irish society. The IRA and Fianna Fail have taken different stands on the impact of these potential changes despite the claim that they both seek the same final goal

of a thirty-two country state.

What then does the future hold for Irish unity? Is there a solution to the 'Troubles'? In addition to the IRA and Fianna Fail, other players have significant roles in the drama. The substantial responsibility of Great Britain, the voice of Unionist Ulster and the plight of the Northern Catholics must all be fully considered in developing any formula to bring peace and stability to the island. Yet the Republic remains the key to developing a solution and within the twenty-six counties the predominant influence over any solution rests with the IRA and Fianna Fail. While born of the same cause and still dedicated to the final goal of a united Ireland, their conflict over means has transformed them from close allies into bitter foes. Yet the failure of their constitutional and unconstitutional methods can be traced to the strong bond of their republican past. For despite the divergent efforts each has taken to secure their sacred goal, the strength of their common past has constrained them with an ideological inflexibility which has not only retarded any real movement towards Irish unity, but has actually served to propagate the twenty-six county state and underpin its differences with the North.

Endnotes

1. Tom Garvin, The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 181.

3. Harvey W. Cox, "Who wants a United Ireland?" Government and Opposition, 20 (Winter, 1985), p. 29.

4. Jim Smyth, "A Discredited Cause? The IRA and Support for Political Violence," in Ireland's Terrorist Trauma: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, ed. Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 118.

Chapter 2: A Common Beginning

A. The Roots of Irish Republicanism.

> I made speedily what was to me a great discovery...that the influence of England was the radical vice of our government, and consequently, that Ireland could never be either free, prosperous or happy, until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable whilst the connection with England existed.
>
> -Theobold Wolfe Tone, 1791

To understand the common roots of Fianna Fail and the IRA it is necessary to review the history of Irish nationalism and the republican movement. Over the years Irish nationalism has been reared less on the rights of man than on historical wrongs.[1] The first alien people to invade the island were Normans during the late twelfth century. This invasion involved almost as much assimilation between the Irish and the Normans as it did fighting amongst them, and the actual conquest of the island was conducted by the English Tudor monarchy in the late sixteenth century. With the coming of these new aggressors the Irish were not only persecuted for their heritage but also for their Catholic faith. The great planting in Ireland of Scot and English settlers, most thoroughly conducted in the six counties of Ulster, followed and created a cleavage between the two sections of the Irish population which set a pattern for the social and political discriminations that followed. In 1641, a rebellion broke out as the displaced Gaelic Irish attempted to recover their confiscated lands. Ruthlessly suppressed by Oliver Cromwell over the next ten

lands. Ruthlessly suppressed by Oliver Cromwell over the next ten years, the terrible suffering he inflicted on the Catholic rebels forged for them something very like a single identity and widened the gap between them and the Protestant part of the population.[2] The religious roots of the English 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 further strengthened the confessional basis of Irish ethnic identity. After William of Orange's crushing victory over French regulars and Irish volunteers at the Boyne River in 1690, British subjugation became even more oppressive. The harsh penal laws isolated the vast majority of the Catholics in Ireland and reinforced their inferior identity. These legal discriminations against Catholics, the hostility and contempt of many of the ruling caste for the religion and culture of the defeated Catholics, and an intensely exploitive land system all reinforced each other and assisted in the growth of anti-Protestant and anti-English popular nationalism.[3] To increase the frustration of the beleaguered Catholics, the Irish parliament established by England was controlled by the wealthy Protestant land owners and by patronage from London. The native Irish had become virtual slaves in their own country.

Ironically the men who first organized an effective opposition to redress these blatant discriminations were not Catholics, but upper and middle class Protestants. Inspired by the tremendous idealism of the French Revolution, a group of these Irish-born Protestants set about to promote social, economic and political equality for all Irishmen. It was during this time that

the term republican was first used in an Irish context. Simply put, an Irish republican, in theory, advocated a nonsecular, united thirty-two county Irish republic, but in practice, the term came more to mean one who sought to separate Ireland from England by force.[4] These Irish Protestants began their efforts with this theoretical goal in mind and were charismatically led by a young member of the Anglo-Irish landlord class named Theobold Wolfe Tone. Tone was deeply conscious of his Irish heritage and sought to substitute the common name of Irishmen in the place of denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter. He was not initially inclined toward violence or rebellion, but simply wished to reform what he saw as an unjust colonial system in which only the predominantly Protestant landed aristocracy enjoyed full rights. In 1791 Tone helped found the United Irishmen in Belfast. Originally consisting primarily of Protestant tenant farmers, independent artisans and enlightened Presbyterian middle class, this organization's ambitions were lawful enough: the union of all Irishmen of all religions and the establishment of an annual parliament elected by universal male suffrage.[5] Greatly moved by the French experience, Tone genuinely wished to form "a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights and union of power among all Irishmen of every religious persuasion, thereby to obtain a complete reform of the legislature founded on the principles of political and religious liberty."[6] Tone tirelessly promoted this vision throughout Ireland and while some legislation was passed to grant some basic rights to selected Catholics, the

majority of the Protestant ruling class rejected Tone's ideas and branded him as a subversive and a malcontent. Frustrated and bitter, Tone turned to force as the final recourse to achieve his goal. By actively recruiting Catholics of all social and economic standing, he proceeded to turn the United Irishmen into a revolutionary organization. He was undaunted in his determination:

> Our independence must be had at all hazards. If men of property will not support us, they must fall; we can support ourselves by the aid of that numerous and respectable class of the community-the men of no property.[7]

Enlisting French aid, Tone organized and led three revolts between 1796 and 1798, to secure the nonsectarian republic he so deeply believed in. Unfortunately, poor planning, bad weather and effective British countermeasures combined to put down all three attempts with quick dispatch. Tone was captured and sentenced to hang but died mysteriously in his prison cell.[8]

The legacy of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen continues to carry enormous weight within the republican movement. Tone became not only another martyr but also the founder of Irish Republicanism, his written word the basis for future doctrine and his grave at Bodenstown in County Kildare the center and shrine for generations of Irish revolutionaries.[9] His goal of a nonsectarian state governed by the humanist principles of the Enlightenment theoretically remains the ultimate goal of today's republicans, and his decision to employ physical force sanctified that tradition by providing hallowed martyrs from which the

republican cause draws its historic continuity.

Not long after Tone's death, the British government imposed the Act of Union in 1801, placing the entire island under direct rule from London. To the remnants of the United Irishmen this outrage hardened their determination to strike back against the British oppressor, and another futile revolt was launched by Robert Emmet in 1803. A complete failure once more, this insurrection added more martyrs to the movement. Nor did this Act of Union charge the self-serving and callous attitude of the British administration in Ireland which continued to exploit and ignore the majority Catholic population. The tragedy of the Great Famine in mid-century attests to this indifference as Ireland lost over 1.5 million people through starvation, disease and forced emigration in the period 1841 to 1851.[10] The Famine revived the republican movement and led to further uprisings by the Young Irelanders in 1848 and the Fenian Brotherhood in 1867. Though both again were terrible failures they served to continue the enrichment of the tradition of physical force by the blood of their dead. Additionally, the Fenians, formally known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood or IRB, extended enduring roots among the peasantry and lower middle class and solidly linked agrarian reform to republican aspirations.[11]

Not all Irishmen believed that violent rebellion was the cure for Ireland's ills. Political movements were also established by Irish nationalists who felt more could be achieved through political agitation than through bloodshed. These nationalists

desired Irish self-government as did the republicans, but differed in that they did not seek to separate Ireland from England by force. Daniel O'Connell organized a formidable political backing and gained religious and political emancipation for the Irish in 1829. Isaac Butt, Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell furthered O'Connell's activism by forming the Land League in 1879. An astute politician, Parnell used a powerful and frightening combination of two very different kinds of agitation-parliamentary obstruction and agrarian disturbance-to gain considerable land reform concessions for the Irish peasant from the British parliament.[12] Culturally, the last decade of the nineteenth century also saw a revival of Irish consciousness in the form of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Gaelic League. The former, by organizing young men into football and hurling clubs, reinforced their Irish heritage, as did the latter in its efforts to revive the Irish language.[13] Both would unwittingly later serve as incubators for the republican movement. As the nineteenth century ended, the Irish were still struggling to find their own identity and proper direction for their future. The republican movement, now mostly united in the IRB, remained determined to strike another blow for independence at the first opportunity.. The parliamentary nationalists also searched for a feasible road to freedom from Great Britain. The divergent paths of armed resistance and political agitation would finally cross after the combined failures of Home Rule and the Easter Rising.

B. Easter 1916, Sinn Fein and the Birth of the IRA.

> Life springs from death, and from the graves of patriot men and women springs living nations. The Defenders of the Realm...have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland hold these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.
>
> -Padraig Pearse, 1913

To the British Home Rule was designed to finally put an end to 'that damnable Irish Question' that had so dominated British politics that Gladstone once described it as 'leading to the utter destruction of the mind of parliament, to the great enfeebling and impeding of its proper working.'[14] Except for predominantly Protestant Ulster, which howled that 'Home Rule is Rome Rule', most Irishmen considered this arrangement to be an acceptable solution. Originally designed by Parnell and his parliamentary nationalists, Home Rule was simply the establishment of an Irish parliament to allow Irish internal self-government under its continued association as a loyal member of the British Empire. Though vigorously debated for over twenty years, Home Rule was finally passed by the British parliament in 1914. The bill was warmly welcomed by the Irish parliamentarians, now led by John Redmond, who saw it as the final settlement which would transform Ireland into a peaceful, prosperous and loyal part of the British Empire.[15] To the republicans and the IRB leadership it was a totally unacceptable compromise that fell far short of Irish sovereignty, and would have to be resisted at all costs. Home Rule would not progress far enough to allow this resistance, however, as the Protestant minority in Ulster also threatened to

resist this bill with force of arms. Coupled with an equally serious threat of mutiny by British army units in Ireland over the enforcement of Home Rule on Ulster and the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, the British government decided to postpone the bill's enactment until after the war's end.

At this time it is necessary to mention two other organizations that would play key roles in the process of Irish independence. The first was Sinn Fein. Founded by a Gaelic literary figure named Arthur Griffith in 1905, its title in Irish means 'ourselves alone'. Griffith's political program somewhat paralleled that of the parliamentary nationalists. Griffith did not form Sinn Fein as a revolutionary movement, did not favor armed rebellion, or declare for a republic. He was, in fact, a monarchist and a pacifist.[16] Yet while he did accept the sovereignty of the British monarch in Ireland, he stressed that only the Kings, Lords and Commons of Ireland had the right to rule Ireland. He liked to use the analogy of the 'Dual Monarchy' of Austria-Hungary as the best solution for Ireland. Ironically, the latent nationalist and anti-British sentiments of his program led the British to consider the movement seditious and revolutionary. The second organization of importance was the Irish Volunteers. This paramilitary organization was created in 1913 in response to the establishment of a similar group in Northern Ireland called the Ulster Volunteers. This Unionist formation was designed to forcibly resist the imposition of Home Rule. Not to be outdone, Irish nationalists formed the Irish Volunteers to resist the

English politicians who were attempting to make a football out of Home Rule.[17] Slowly infiltrated by the IRB, the Irish Volunteers were divided on whether or not to fully commit themselves to take part in the next republican uprising.

This uprising was not long in coming. As the war's slaughter began to take its toll on Britain, the republicans felt it necessary to exploit the old adage that 'England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity.' Also, the IRB leadership decided that unless their generation rose in dramatic rebellion, republicanism would fade into oblivion because of Home Rule.[18] One of the IRB leaders who would play a key role in the rebellion and whose republican legacy would stand in stature next to Tone's, was a Gaelic schoolteacher named Padraig Pearse. An adherent of the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic League, Pearse felt a deep Irish consciousness and sought to renew this essence of Gaelism in the Irish people. He was even more obsessed with maintaining continuity with the ghosts of the republican past. He believed that "patriotism is in large part a memory of heroic dead men and a striving to accomplish some task left unfinished by them" and that bloodshed was "a cleansing and sanctifying thing, and that the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood."[19] To Pearse the symbolism of maintaining the republican tradition and passing it on to the next generation was of more value than the military success of the rebellion, and he made it clear that "if the rose tree of Irish freedom had to be watered each generation with the blood of patriots, then they were

willing, sure that their sacrifice would in time bring bloom to what seemed in the spring of 1916 to be a dry and shattered trunk."[20] Convincing the IRB leadership to strike, Pearse attempted to gather together all strands of republicanism for the uprising. He even joined forces with a revolutionary socialist named James Connolly, who had formed his own marxist 'Citizen's Army' of Irish workers in Dublin. With the theme of redemption clearly in his mind, he symbolically planned to initiate the insurrection on Easter 1916.

Predictably, the rebellion, known throughout Ireland simply as 'the Rising', was a dismal failure. Unable to secure full support of the Irish Volunteers, plagued by poor coordination, and opposed by the parliamentary nationalists who still believed in Home Rule, the Rising was quickly suppressed by British troops. Two essential points from this episode, however, must be highlighted. First, Pearse and Connolly proclaimed the establishment of the Irish Republic at the onset of the Rising. Declaring "the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible,"[21] this proclamation would come to be acknowledged by the republican movement as the founding basis for the republic's legitimacy. The second key aspect was the martyrdom of the rebel leaders. Most of the Irish people did not approve of the rebellion and large numbers of Dubliners even jeered the captured rebels as they were paraded through that city. But the immediate executions of fourteen rebel leaders, to include

Pearse and Connolly, dramatically changed Irish attitudes. The apparent cold-blooded and callous nature of these executions outraged and angered most Irishmen and swung a great majority of the Irish people away from constitutional nationalism and into the republican camp.

Ironically Sinn Fein inherited the renewed commitment resulting from the Easter Rising. Due to the perceived anti-British and nationalist sentiments of Sinn Fein, the British government thought the party largely responsible for the abortive rebellion. Thus when Irish public opinion swung behind the rebels, Sinn Fein inherited the glory of this 'noble deed.' The remaining republican leaders not dead or jailed united behind the party and within a year, Sinn Fein's popularity and influence spread throughout the country. Aware now that Home Rule was a fading vision, Griffith looked for a new political solution while the republicans began preparing for the next push. Suffering under repressive martial law imposed by the British after the Rising, republican leaders built a new paramilitary group that was composed of the remnants of the Irish Volunteers, the Citizen's Army and the IRB. Ostensibly dedicated to renew the struggle against Britain, but with the more immediate mission of resisting the conscription of Irish youth in the British army, the Irish Republican Army was officially proclaimed in August 1918.

Politically, Sinn Fein began to formulate an effective strategy under the inspiration of an American-born mathematician of Spanish-Irish heritage named Eamonn de Valera. One of the only

surviving commanders of the Easter Rising, de Valera's prominence in the republican movement soon led to his election as president of Sinn Fein in 1917. Feeling now that 'the Irish should battle England with votes and then, if that failed, with rifles,"[22] he convinced the party to adopt one of Griffith's original political proposals. This plan stated that Irish candidates should run in the December 1918 Westminster elections and then withdraw from the London parliament, meet in Dublin and constitute themselves as the Irish parliament or Dail Eireann. They would then proceed to rule the country and the British government in Ireland would, it was hoped, wither away as the people gave their allegiance to the new Irish government.[23] After conducting an extensive campaign throughout Ireland, Sinn Fein's results in the elections were impressive; the party won 73 of the 105 Irish seats. The country, with the exception of Ulster, whose Unionist candidates won 26 seats, had repudiated Great Britain and chosen Sinn Fein. On January 21, 1919, the new Dail met in Dublin, voted a constitution, a declaration of independence and a program of social and democratic rights, and affirmed their loyalty to the thirty-two county republic declared during the Easter Rising.[24] Britain refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of this body and continued to enforce harsh martial law. The intransigence of both sides hardened, and by the autumn of 1919 an undeclared war had developed between the British and the Irish republicans. It was into this conflict that the new Irish Republican Army plunged and quickly drew its baptism of fire.

C. The Anglo-Irish Treaty and Civil War.

> If the Republicans stand aside and let the Treaty come into force, it means acquiescence in and the abandonment of the national sovereignty and in the partition of our country-a surrender to the ideals for which the sacrifices of the past few years were deliberately made and the sufferings of these years consciously endured.
>
> -Eamonn de Valera, 1922

The Anglo-Irish War of 1919-1921 was a bloody, vicious guerilla struggle that deepened the enmity between the two opponents and savaged the Irish countryside. Though Sinn Fein, under de Valera's guidance in the new Dail, attempted to gain judicial control of the country and make the British government in Ireland unworkable, the military effort became paramount as chaos and disorder spread. Showing no quarter and receiving none, the IRA became 'the midwife of the nation-state' in its single-minded and determined pursuit of a military solution to free the country. Neither side could gain a total victory, but the IRA's aim of making the country ungovernable succeeded in forcing the British to compromise. Exhausted after four years of war in Europe, the British people quickly grew tired of this bloody stalemate and pressured their government into negotiating with the Irish leaders.

The resulting talks culminated in London on December 6, 1921, with the Anglo-Irish Treaty. This document would profoundly alter the course of Irish history and create bitter divisions throughout that country. A good deal of the culpability for this outcome

must lie with the Irish leaders who conducted the Treaty negotiations with the Ulster Unionists and the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George. De Valera strangely refrained from heading this delegation and the Sinn Fein members, led by Griffith and the head of the IRB, Michael Collins, allowed the issues of Crown and Ulster to become confused.[25] Instead of standing on these national principles, they attempted to work at political deals with a master of politics and were outmaneuvered in the process by the clever machinations of Lloyd George.[26] Cajoled, bluffed and finally threatened with an immediate resumption of hostilities, the Irish delegation was forced into signing a treaty that fell far short of republican aspirations. The Anglo-Irish Treaty partitioned Ulster and set up the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. A representative of the Crown was to be appointed as dominion governor-general and members of the Dail were to take an oath to the Free State constitution, which pledged them to 'be faithful to His Majesty George V, his heirs and successors.'[27] To the delegation, it was the best that could be gained in the face of Unionist intransigence and could be used as a stepping stone to further sovereignty and unity.

The reaction in Ireland was less rational. Shock and outrage filled the republican ranks and the Treaty was denounced as another example of British duplicity. To the IRA, depleted and bloodied from the war, it was an unacceptable solution that betrayed the legacy of Tone and Pearse and disestablished the

Republic proclaimed at Easter 1916. Cathal Brugha, IRA Chief of Staff, was direct in his rejection of the Treaty:

> If...our last cartridge had been fired, our last shilling had been spent and our last man were lying on the ground and his enemies howling round him and their bayonets raised, ready to plunge them into his body, that man should say-true to the traditions handed down-if they said to him: 'Now will you come into our Empire?' - he should say, and would say: 'No, I will not.' This is the spirit that has lasted all through the centuries and you people in favor of the Treaty know that the British government and the British Empire will have gone down before that spirit dies out in Ireland.[28]

Yet an equally large portion of the country did feel that the Treaty was an acceptable solution that would end the killing and allow Ireland to eventually become a free and sovereign nation. Led by Michael Collins, these 'pro-Treaty' supporters felt that the Free State was a temporary strategic requirement in the continued pursuit of the still inviolate, mystical republic. They also accepted partition under a Treaty clause that would provide for a boundary commission to reexamine and adjust the border at a later date. They were sure that any border adjustments would probably make the Northern government politically and economically unviable.[29]

For a month after the Treaty was signed both sides struggled to convince the Irish people of the righteousness of their stand. De Valera, parts of Sinn Fein and the IRA continued to defend the Republic proclaimed in 1916 and established constitutionally by the nation in 1919. But Collins, whose charisma and leadership matched de Valera's, was equally persuasive in his argument that accepting the Treaty would give the Irish 'the freedom to be free'

and would pave the way for complete unity. In the final vote, Collins won as the Dail ratified the Treaty 64 to 57 on January 7, 1922.

This did not end the conflict, however, as acceptance of the Treaty only shattered the national unity that had been so instrumental in forcing the British to the negotiating table. Each nationalistic institution: the Dail cabinet, the Dail, the Sinn Fein party, the IRA and the IRB, was torn apart by the Treaty debate. It was a very emotional split; a struggle between those who were prepared to come down to earth from the loftiest heights of Irish nationalism and those who were not.[30] The split in the IRA and the disassociation of the anti-Treaty elements, de Valera prominent among them, led to near anarchy in Ireland and made civil war a virtual certainty. The IRA obsession with purely military means was strengthened by the failure of this political solution and drove them to forcibly resist the pro-Treaty state as a British puppet. The Free State government attempted to maintain peace in the country but when IRA forces-a term now applied only to anti-Treaty Republicans-occupied government buildings in Dublin in April 1922, Collins, in his capacity as commander and chief of Free State military forces, was forced to act. His decision to commit Free State troops, many of whom were former IRA men, to eliminate the IRA resistance plunged the nation into bloody civil war.

For two years, the pro and anti-Treaty forces would battle each other in another guerilla campaign that rivaled the Anglo-

Irish War in brutality and destructiveness. Equally indecisive, the war was characterized by its decentralized nature and lack of coherent strategy by either side.[31] The war-weariness of the Irish people finally swung the balance in favor of the Free State forces. De Valera, who continued to work towards a political solution with Collins during the conflict, also saw that continued resistance was becoming counterproductive. He saw his support slipping away as the Irish electorate in 1922 and 1923 voted overwhelmingly for the Treaty and against Sinn Fein. Aware now that the anti-Treaty forces could not defeat the Treaty militarily or politically, de Valera felt that the next best course would be to revise the Treaty. To do this it would be necessary to forego the military effort that had so wearied the people and politically unify the electorate to rid the Treaty of those stipulations that were a betrayal to the republican past. By May 1923, de Valera had convinced the IRA to lay down its arms in the realization that continued resistance was useless and would only prolong needless bloodshed. While de Valera now began to look to the political arena for his next move, many of the committed republicans considered the cease-fire only a temporary respite to regrouping and rebuilding their depleted forces. To them there would be no compromise or an abandonment of the physical force tradition that had driven Britain from the twenty-six counties. They would bide their time. The opposite paths of de Valera and the IRA would soon further split the republican movement.

Conclusion

As shown, the republican tradition is deeply ingrained in the country's past. Developing a tenacity and resiliency through the years of British oppression, the republican movement united many Irishmen in a common cause. The legacy of Wolfe Tone became the cornerstone of the movement for it provided both a framework for a nonsectarian union and a hallowed tradition of sacrifice and martyrdom for the cause of Ireland. The strength of this legacy was reinforced by other valiant efforts, and Pearse's proclamation of the Republic reaffirmed the republican goal and added new heroes to the cause. Republicanism had become part of the Irish psyche.

After the failure of the Rising, the republican leadership chose to unite the movement within the political framework of Sinn Fein and solidify its support throughout the country. Transformed into the vehicle for republican aspirations, Sinn Fein soon came to represent the united voice of Catholic Ireland. Yet when its political efforts to form the Dail Eireann were rebuffed by the British, the militant republicans, now calling themselves the IRA, returned to the tradition of physical force. Their success in forcing the British to grant independence was undermined by the incomplete framework of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The strength of the republican legacy would not accept the compromise created by the Treaty and led to the IRA's rejection of the new Irish Free State. In a tragic page of Irish history, the IRA was finally

forced to lay down its arms after two years of bloody civil war. While this failure led realistics like de Valera to acknowledge the necessity for political activity to promote republican ends, the hard-liners in the movement would not consider any abandonment of republican principle or participation in any illegitimate political institutions. The stage was now set for internal division and conflict within the republican ranks.

In sum, there is no doubt that the republican tradition was instrumental in gaining Irish independence from Britain. And for its role in this achievement, the republican movement would earn a hallowed place in Irish history. Yet the intransigence of the movement would also lead to bitter civil war and renewed bloodshed. The inflexible legacy of the republican past emerged from the civil war bowed but not beaten and its uncompromising nature would proceed to further divide the movement and bring the IRA into violent conflict with the established Free State government.

Endnotes

1. George D. Boyce, Nationalism in Ireland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 20.

2. Robert Kee, The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), pp. 15-16.

3. Tom Garvin, The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p. 16.

4. Sean Cronin, Irish Nationalism (Dublin: Academy Press, 1980), p. 23.

5. Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, The Provisional IRA (London: Heinemann, 1987), p. 8.

6. Tim Pat Coogan, The I.R.A. (Glasgow: William Collins and Sons, 1987), p. 18.

7. Sean Cronin, The Revolutionaries (Dublin: Republican Publications, 1971), p. 9.

8. Ibid., p. 21. Tone died of a deep puncture wound in his neck. It has never been conclusively proven if it was self-inflicted or not and there was a great deal of controversy over the medical care, or lack thereof, that was provided for Tone when he was found bleeding profusely in his cell.

9. J. Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army: The IRA: 1916-1970 (New York: John Day, 1970), p. 7.

10. George Dangerfield, The Damnable Question: A Study of Anglo-Irish Relations (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), p. 11.

11. Michael MacDonald, Children of Wrath: Political Violence in Northern Ireland (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), pp. 104-105.

12. Dangerfield, p. 18. Chapter 5 of Garvin provides a very thorough chapter on Parnell and his Irish Parliamentary Party.

13. Garvin, p. 100.

14. Kee, p. 4.

15. Patrick Buckland, A History of Northern Ireland (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p. 8.

16. Ronnie Munck, Ireland: Nation, State and Class Struggle (London: Westview Press, 1985), p. 118.

17. Dangerfield, p. 98.

18. MacDonald, p. 107.

19. Ibid., p. 110.

20. Bell, The Secret Army: The IRA: 1916-1970, p. 9.

21. Cronin, Irish Nationalism, p. 315.

22. Dangerfield, p. 260.

23. Garvin, pp. 105-106.

24. Bell, The Secret Army: The IRA: 1916-1970, p. 19.

25. Historians have differed over de Valera's absence from the negotiating team. Critics have claimed that he knew Lloyd George would not abandon Ulster or concede anything but dominion status and so wished to evade the condemnation that would result from any such settlement. Others claim that de Valera felt more effective remaining in Dublin where he could garner popular support for the final Treaty. This was predicated, however, on his insistence that the Treaty be reviewed in Dublin before it was signed. This the delegation failed to do in the face of Lloyd George's pressure.

26. Cronin, Irish Nationalism, p. 136.

27. Coogan, The I.R.A, p. 46.

28. Cronin, Irish Nationalism, p. 146.

29. Kee, p. 725.

30. Ibid., p. 731.

31. Michael Hopkins, Green Against Green: The Irish Civil War (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 128.

Chapter 3: Estranged Brethren

A. The Irish Free State and the Birth of Fianna Fail.

> I think it would be right to say that Fianna Fail is a slightly constitutional party...perhaps open to the definition of a constitutional party, but before anything we are a republican party...our object is to establish a Republican Government in Ireland. If that can be done by the present methods we have, we will be very pleased, but if not, we will not confine ourselves to them.
>
> - Sean Lemass, 1928

In the summer of 1923, the Irish Free State appeared to have finally righted itself and was now prepared to enter the world scene as a newly independent state. In actuality Ireland was still reeling from the bitter Civil War and the Free State leadership struggled to establish a stable and effective government. Many key leaders from both sides had perished in the war, most notable among them Michael Collins, who was killed in August 1922.[1] Though the electorate had approved of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, politically the country was still divided between those who accepted dominion status and partition and those who did not. This split polarized Irish politics and the party system that would emerge from it was based less on the reflection of divisions in the electorate than on the causes of them.[2] The political party that formed the Free State government was called Cuman na nGaedheal and after the death of Collins was led by William T. Cosgrave. As the first Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Cosgrave was faced with a formidable task of stabilizing the

country and ensuring the continuation of a liberal-democratic system of government. In this he was largely successful, although the adoption of heavy-handed measures to curb lawlessness and IRA extremists did not always endear his administration to the populace.

Sinn Fein and the IRA meanwhile pondered their future strategy. De Valera saw political activity as the logical step to maintain the republican cause. Claiming that Sinn Fein represented the true republican government, his strategy was to deny legitimacy to the Free State administration. Pointing to the policy of abstention that Sinn Fein had so successfully used until 1919, de Valera rejected participation in the Dail, believing that republican representatives would be tainted by participating in an assembly set up under English law.[3] Instead de Valera proposed that Sinn Fein continue to contest elections, but refuse to take their seats in this illegitimate legislature. In this manner Sinn Fein hoped to paralyze the Free State Dail and render the government ineffective. In the shadow of this strategy he retained the threat of renewed force. Though de Valera was instrumental in getting the IRA to lay down its arms in 1923, he refused to discard force as a potential means to the republican end:

> I believed and still believe, that if a nation held in subjugation by a foreign power were to exclude altogether the idea of using physical force to free itself, it would in effect be handing itself over as a bound slave without hope of redemption.[4]

The instrument of this force, the IRA, also contemplated its

future. Despite de Valera's claim that the IRA was the military arm of the legitimate government of the Republic, the IRA's main loyalty was to itself. In the eyes of IRA extremists, the violent republican tradition did not feel itself bound by the wishes of the majority of Irish men and women, and though they had been defeated militarily and politically, this did not reduce the legitimacy of their cause.[5] As the Free State government strengthened its control over the country and Sinn Fein's abstentionist policy appeared initially to yield little fruit, the IRA withdrew deeper into itself and grew increasingly mistrustful of Sinn Fein and its politicians.

Within two years of the cease-fire, the republican movement was further shaken as the conflict over means intensified. The IRA had continued to wage an intermittent campaign of violence against the fledgling state which resulted in increased repression by the Free State authorities. The Public Safety Act of 1923 allowed the government to intern prisoners without trial and arrest and detain anyone who was deemed a threat to 'public safety.' Later this Act was amended to suspend the right of habeas corpus and revived the state's power to detain.[6] Pressured by these stringent methods and frustrated by the impotence of Sinn Fein's political strategy, the IRA withdrew its recognition of the republican government in exile and affirmed its allegiance to its own Army Council in November 1925.

De Valera also reviewed Sinn Fein's strategy. While the abstentionist policy had been very successful up to 1919, it was a

complete failure now. Unlike the popular anti-British sentiment that existed before, there was no unanimous distaste for the Free State government. De Valera was also appalled at the uncompromising use of violence by the IRA and felt that Sinn Fein's continued association with physical force was isolating the party from the main stream of Irish political life. Genuinely seeking to achieve unity, de Valera understood that it would first be necessary to gain power in the twenty-six counties. The policies of abstention and physical force had done little to realize that power and de Valera felt he could no longer ignore the long established parliamentary tradition of the country. He saw his chance in December 1925, when the Treaty-promised Boundary Commission failed to change the border with the North, effectively abandoning the large Catholic portions of Ulster to Unionist rule. The Irish populace was enraged at this outcome and blamed the Cosgrave government for allowing it to happen. With Cuman na nGaedheal's popularity sinking, de Valera saw an opportunity for Sinn Fein to regain its prominent position on the Irish political scene and make the first steps to take control of the Free State government.

Sinn Fein and the IRA were unmoved. Determined to remain committed to the 1916 Republic, they refused to countenance participation in the Free State's political institutions. De Valera argued against this intransigence, accepting that after having lost the Civil War and two elections and with the Free State administration clearly recognized by the public, there was

no prospect of changing the status quo through the pretense that the Republic still existed and that it was entitled to claim the allegiance of the people.[7] Though he still refused to acknowledge the oath to the Crown required of all Dail members, he was certain that only by returning to the political scene could the republican goal be realized. A close political compatriot, Gerry Boland, was more direct in the rationale for competing against Cosgrave's government:

> All right, they have broken their oath to the Republic, they have beaten the hell out of us in the Civil War...they have killed our comrades and terrorized our families, they have turned the people against us through misrepresentation, they have betrayed the national cause and, in particular, the Six Counties, all for a British bribe. Are you going to sit back and let them enjoy the fruits of their treachery?[8]

These arguments convinced many Sinn Fein and IRA adherents, but not enough. After the annual Sinn Fein ard-fheis (convention) in early 1926 rejected de Valera's proposals and were seconded by the IRA Army Council, de Valera broke from Sinn Fein and set about to form his own political party that would accept the Free State institutions but would not waver in its determination to fulfill its republican goals.

On May 16, 1926, de Valera formally introduced his new party at the La Scala Theatre in Dublin. In his effort to maintain continuity with the republican past he named his new political organization Fianna Fail. An Irish phrase loosely translated to mean 'Soldiers of Destiny', it was the alternate official title given to the Irish Volunteers, who after the Rising were to form

the core of the IRA. The name asserted the continuity of de Valera's party with the militant republican tradition of Sinn Fein, the IRA, the Fenians and the United Irishmen. Additionally it forged an identity between the power of the state and the new party as every Free State soldier's cap badge contained the FF symbol which had been inherited from those same Volunteers.[9]

Ideologically, de Valera sought to portray Fianna Fail as much as a national movement as just a political party. Relying on tradition, emotion, a particular view of the past, Fianna Fail was built on simple beliefs: in the national cause, which embraced unity and the restoration of Irish; in self-sufficiency, based on the land and other native resources; and in the integrity of small communities, whose bodies were conveniently coterminus with those of the Catholic Church and the GAA.[10] He delineated seven primary party objectives to stress the importance of these beliefs, all the time underscoring the paramount goal to pursue every action necessary to secure a republican form of government. This first aim was the essential element in the character of the party. It was the reason for Fianna Fail's existence and the force which kept people of different backgrounds and different social and economic outlooks united.[11] With this motivation de Valera began to build his political machine.

An astute politician, de Valera sought to construct solid grass roots support for his new party. Stressing the Irish nature of Fianna Fail he appealed directly to the 'have-nots' in Irish society: the rural lower class of small farmers, shopkeepers and

traders vulnerable to economic depression. This approach also drew great support from the western counties of the country where Irish was spoken in many areas. Especially important to his grass roots strategy was the use of small constituency cumainns (party clubs). By setting up these clubs in countless small towns throughout the twenty-six counties, de Valera spread the influence and appeal of Fianna Fail to areas never approached by Cuman na nGaedheal.

Of course the core of Fianna Fail remained the republican movement. The widespread and effective organizational structure of Fianna Fail was a direct result of its ties to Sinn Fein and the IRA; the party was built almost directly from old IRA companies, battalions and divisions De Valera rationalized this cooption by stressing that Fianna Fail's only difference with Sinn Fein and the IRA was in the matter of tactics. Fianna Fail still did not accept the legitimacy of the Free State, calling it a pretense at democracy. It was merely a question of recognizing the de facto situation for practical reasons.[12] In fact, many Fianna Fail members had not completely broken with the IRA and some still maintained ties with Sinn Fein.

The effects of Fianna Fail's move were soon evident. In the June 1927 Dail elections, the party won 27.1 per cent of the popular vote and forty-four Dail seats. Though it failed to unseat Cuman na nGaedheal from power, the results were impressive. More importantly, Sinn Fein, still running under its abstentionist policy, drew only 3.5 per cent of the vote. Anti-Treaty voters

had come down clearly in favor of a practical and pragmatic line rather than the purist and unworldly approach of Sinn Fein.

Despite the success and appeal of Fianna Fail, de Valera was still faced with one major obstacle: the requirement for all Dail members (Teachti Dala or TDs) to take the oath to the British Crown. Though clearly anxious to enter the Dail, de Valera could not bring himself or his party to comply with this distasteful necessity. To overcome this dilemma de Valera planned to use his newly created support base to push through a referendum to abolish the oath. Events soon usurped his initiative, however, as the IRA assassination of Justice Minister Kevin O'Higgins in July 1927 led the Cosgrave government to implement more heavy-handed measures against the republican movement. Among them was a statute which would unseat any prospective TD who refused to take the oath. Faced with this pressure, de Valera led Fianna Fail into the Dail, dismissing the oath as 'an empty formula.'[13] The entrance of Fianna Fail into constitutional politics did much for the legitimacy of the Free State and also provided a legal safety-valve for republicans tired of IRA violence and Sinn Fein's impotence.

Encouraged by the June election results, de Valera continued to improve Fianna Fail's support base. Though he maintained cordial ties with IRA and Sinn Fein leaders, his assimilation of the republican movement continued as the repressive legislation of the Free State government pushed many republicans into the Fianna Fail camp. By the end of the decade, Fianna Fail had become one

of the strongest parties in the country, second only to Cuman na nGaedheal.[14] De Valera sensed that his moment was just beyond the horizon.

B. De Valera Chooses Sovereignty over Unity.

> If we make sure that five-sixth of the country is made really Irish we will have the preservation of the Irish nation in our hands. Time will settle the other thing.
>
> -Eamon de Valera, 1957

As the 1930s unfolded the IRA sought to resurrect its sagging fortunes. Fianna Fail's success had drawn away many of its members and the harsh law-and-order legislation of the Cosgrave regime continued to pressure the remaining fighters. Even Sinn Fein faded into obscurity, all but coopted by Fianna Fail. The IRA Army Council briefly steered the movement to the left, proposing a policy called Saor Eire (Free Ireland) in 1931, based on the revolutionary socialism of James Connolly. This move brought immediate condemnation from the Catholic Church, which maintained significant influence in Irish society, and led the Cosgrave to insert Article 2A to the Free State Constitution in October 1931. This Public Safety Act permitted outlawing subversive groups and parties, the arrest of radicals, sweeping searches and the establishment of Military Tribunals to try the suspects.[15] At the top of the government's list of outlawed groups was the IRA. Embattled, the IRA soon discarded Saor Eire and Sean Russell, a hard-core traditionalist, gained the leadership of the Army Council. Russell regarded all creeping

steps to the left with disdain and the IRA's involvement in politics as a detour. For him the only way to break the connection with Britain was by force and the only task of the IRA was to supply that force.[16] The IRA reaffirmed its unyielding commitment to its historical mission.

By the 1932 Dail elections de Valera knew he was on the doorstep of power. The Cosgrave administration had lost much of its popular support due to its unsuccessful economic policies and the harshness of its law-and-order legislation. Fianna Fail continued to improve its broad base of popular support and was ready to assume control of the country. Even many IRA men covertly supported Fianna Fail, hopeful that the acquisition of power by their old ally de Valera would bring an end to the government's repression and lead to the realization of the thirty-two county republic. The election results were convincing. Fianna Fail won 44.5 per cent of the popular vote and seventy-two of the 153 Dail seats. When seven Labour Party TDs agreed to support de Valera, Fianna Fail had the necessary majority to change the government. Though there was some apprehension within Cuman na nGaedheal about Fianna Fail's loyalty to the state, a feeling engendered by frequent remarks similar to de Valera ally Sean Lemass' 'slightly constitutional' speech in 1928, the transition of power proceeded without complications. The peaceful changeover illustrated and reinforced the strength of constitutionalism in Irish political culture.[17] Fianna Fail was to begin a period of power that would run uninterrupted for

fifteen years and establish them as the party of government in the state.

De Valera quickly set out to implement the seven aims of the party. Concisely, this meant the establishment of a thirty-two county republic, economic self-sufficiency with emphasis on agricultural development and restoration of the Irish language. Though he still refrained from completely rejecting physical force, he saw its immediate use as counterproductive. Instead he concentrated on first uniting the country behind his administration then pursuing Irish sovereignty from Great Britain. Once achieved, he could then work to draw the North back into the country through political and economic means. In this manner de Valera hoped to further coopt the IRA by showing them that he had not abandoned their republican objectives. He proceeded to immediately abolish the Dail oath and suspend government suppression of the IRA. This was followed by a government authorization to expand pensions to those who fought on the republican side during the Civil War. This strategy of offering 'the carrot' was part of de Valera's plan to steal the IRA's assets, thereby ending the necessity for an alternative secret army within the state.[18] Aware that he could not totally coopt the republican movement, de Valera also maintained contact with the IRA Army Council, hopeful that he could establish a working relationship to preclude violence in the twenty-six counties and coordinate their efforts to reunite Ulster.

Initially, de Valera's strategy seemed to pay off. Many IRA

men wholeheartedly supported the new government as Fianna Fail appeared to be steering a course that would fulfill republican goals. In his continuing efforts at sovereignty, de Valera suspended land annuity payments to Britain in 1932. Cheered by the republicans and small farmers, this action initiated an economic war with Britain that would eventually prove counterproductive to the Irish state. But at the moment the Irish people were firmly behind him as he took steps to remove the shackles of economic dependence that Britain had used so imperviously against the country. Yet the hard-core IRA men refused to be completely mollified. Paramilitary violence erupted between IRA members and a neo-fascist splinter of the old Cuman na nGaedheal party called the Blueshirts in 1933. When this factional fighting intensified and renewed attacks against the state occurred, de Valera was finally forced to take stern action. In the summer of 1936, large police raids were carried out in Cork and Dublin to apprehend IRA leaders. In June, de Valera and the Dail voted to outlaw the IRA and reintroduce the harsh Cosgrave legislation, which included the proscription of subversive groups and parties under Article 2A. Though it was a difficult decision, de Valera was driven, both by the necessity of upholding governmental authority and the need to show the people where the government stood, to act forcefully against his former friends.[19]

De Valera's decision to suppress the IRA did not completely sever his ties to the republican movement. His motives centered primarily on his disillusionment with physical force. Though he

shared the conviction that as long as partition remained, violence was inevitable, he came to believe that any attempt to end partition by force would fail. Thus his strategy continued to be the conversion of all republicans into the Fianna Fail camp and to show that force would not only in all probability fail, but that even if it were to result in unity, this unity would be intrinsically unstable and probably transient.[20] Yet not all members of his own party disapproved of force; in fact, many gave tacit approval to IRA action provided it was directed against Great Britain and the Unionists in the North. So while de Valera used 'the stick' to maintain order in the state, he was careful not to create new martyrs, and with continued guarded sympathies for the emotions of the IRA, only decried the futility of their means. He now sought to insert 'the carrot' that would further bind the IRA to his party.

The abdication of Edward VIII later that year provided such an opportunity. De Valera used this royal distraction as an opportunistic tactic to speed through the Dail the Constitutional Bill eliminating the Crown from the Irish Constitution: the Governor-General no longer existed. Not stopping there, de Valera moved to also abolish the Free State. He introduced a new constitution to the Dail on March 10, 1937, that was republican in everything but name. In his desire to wean the IRA into constitutional politics and to reaffirm the republican aspirations of his party, de Valera's constitution could be viewed as his culminant effort to destroy the Anglo-Irish Treaty and to

positively assert the complete sovereignty of the Irish state. The anti-partitionist and strongly Catholic nature of the constitution greatly heartened Irish republicans but deepened the suspicion and mistrust harbored by the North towards the twenty-six counties. Especially disturbing to Ulster and Great Britain were Articles 2 and 3. Article 2 claimed for the nation jurisdiction over the entire island and Article 3 accepted that 'de facto' the laws of the state could only be exercised in the twenty-six counties 'pending the reintegration of the national territory.'[21] On top of these claims, Article 44 confirmed a 'special position' for the Catholic Church in the affairs of the state. De Valera inserted this article to further strengthen Irish unity and to win over the unqualified support of the Catholic Church. This institution wielded considerable influence in Irish society and had not always fully supported republican pretensions. The irredentist provisions of Articles 2 and 3 and the confessional basis of Article 44 led to the development of a 'seige mentality' amongst the Ulster Unionists and served to further alienate them from the South.

Though opposition in the Dail, led by the regeneration of the old Cuman na nGaedheal party, now called Fine Gael (Family of the Irish) opposed the Constitution over these very points, it was approved by the electorate in a national referendum and won the support of Irish nationalists. On December 29, 1937, the Irish Free State, spawn of the Anglo-Irish Treaty was gone, replaced by 'Eire/Ireland'.[22] Yet de Valera, conscious of the growing

suspicion in the North, refrained from labelling the state a 'republic.' He was afraid this step might cut off the six counties for good and would preclude him from drawing the North back into the fold by political or economic means. Unfortunately, de Valera's economic policies seemed to be no more successful then those of his predecessors. His emphasis on self-sufficiency was not showing success and the economic war with Britain was also stagnating the Irish economy. A partial way out of this dilemma was found in the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 25 April 1938. This document, signed by de Valera and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, ended the economic war and returned to Ireland several Treaty ports granted the British in 1921. Shrewdly, de Valera was able to restimulate the economy as well as remove the last vestige of the British presence in the twenty-six counties. De Valera's stature was growing and his grip on national sentiment becoming more secure.

As his position became more stable, de Valera softened in his attitude toward his old comrades. The republican orientation of his past actions had greatly reduced the core of the IRA committed. Still finding it difficult to condemn the IRA out of hand, de Valera even permitted the republicans to conduct their annual commemoration at Tone's grave at Bodenstown in 1937. He continued to assert publically that he would lead the nation to unity through peaceful, constitutional means and felt that within a few years the IRA would transfer their allegiance to him as the allure of Fianna Fail would draw the majority of the IRA's

faithful into his successful party.

The growing international tension and imminent prospect of war changed all that and led to a major break between Fianna Fail and the IRA in 1939. As Nazi Germany forced the world towards war, Russell and the IRA attempted to take advantage of Britain's difficulty by initiating a bombing campaign in England. Additionally, Russell also began to make overtures to the Nazi government for military assistance to help the IRA rid the British from Ulster. De Valera, who refused to fight 'England's war' twenty-five years earlier was determined now, as Taoiseach, to keep Eire officially neutral.[23] To him, it was an extension of his desire to establish total Irish sovereignty and demonstrate to the Irish people and the world that Ireland was free from the fetters of British domination. De Valera even rejected an offer by Prime Minister Winston Churchill later in the war to reopen the partition question in return for Irish participation in the war. This approach received great popular support in Ireland and further enhanced de Valera's stature with his people. Now the machinations of the IRA threatened this neutrality and could, should IRA-Nazi collusion reach a peak, provide a perfect pretext for the British occupation of the island. Thus reluctantly but forcefully, de Valera enacted an Offenses Against the State Act in June 1939, which suspended many civil liberties and permitted internment without trial. Liberally using this measure the government interned over 400 activists during the war years, not all of them IRA volunteers. De Valera rationalized this action by

stating 'that for a divided people to fling themselves into this war would be to commit suicide' and that the IRA's determined anglophobia and support of Germany required harsh action to ensure the security of the state and the stability of the government.[24] Fortunately for de Valera, the IRA bombing campaign fizzled out within a year and the contacts with Nazi Germany amounted to nothing.

Thus by the end of the war the IRA was near extinction. Down to under two hundred members, many who languished in government detention centers and leaderless after the death of Russell in 1940, the republican movement was as insubstantial as the republic it sought. For this de Valera was largely responsible. His commitment to establishing the sovereignty of the state was very successful in its cooption of the republican movement and brought him great national support. Yet these actions also created a substantial gap between the twenty-six counties and Ulster that the hard-core republicans did not fail to notice. The irredentism in the 1937 Constitution, the dominant role of the Catholic Church in that same Constitution, the stress on the restoration of the Irish language and the protectionist economic policies definitely gave the state an Irish identity but also gave it a homogeneous Gaelic and Catholic basis that made it increasing incompatible with Unionist Ulster. Far from undermining partition as he sought, de Valera had marked its entrenchment, for though he had subverted the Free State, he had also solidified the twenty-six county state.[25] Fearing persecution and forced assimilation in

de Valera's Ireland, the Unionist majority in Ulster were now even more determined to remain loyal and devoted citizens of the British Empire. Even de Valera eventually seemed to acknowledge that his short term goals of sovereignty had lessened the long term prospective for unity. He attempted to diffuse this realization by claiming that time would bring the North back but added the caveat that "France was France without Alsace-Lorraine...and Ireland will be Ireland without the North."[26] As the country entered the post-war era the reality of the twenty-six county state made the goals of the republican movement appear increasingly unattainable.

C. Republicans in Decline: Aspiration over Commitment.

> I know that it is the wish of every right thinking person that we are finished, finally, with this kind of unlawful activity and that all those who have supported it will realize that they have been out of touch with the realities of our time.
>
> -Charles J. Haughey, 1961

The 1948 Dail elections marked the end of Fianna Fail's first long period of power. With partition losing its prominence on the political scene and Ireland's economy lagging far behind the rest of her European neighbors, the Irish electorate felt a change was warranted. Though the party still received 41.9 per cent of the popular vote, Fine Gael and the Labour Party, in coalition with four minor parties and one independent, were able to establish a minority coalition government led by Fine Gael TD, John A. Costello. Due to the varied make-up of the coalition, however,

Costello was unable to implement any radical economic policy changes and the country continued to drift for the next nine years. Forced out of office by Fianna Fail in 1951, but able to rebuild a second minority coalition in 1954, the Fine Gael-Labour governments did not substantially improve the economic situation in the country. Ironically, Costello's most controversial achievement during his time as Taoiseach came in regard to Ulster. On April 18, 1949, Costello announced the repeal of the External Relations Act and proclaimed the Republic of Ireland.[27] His primary motivation for this was to wash away some of the anti-national mud that Fianna Fail and other opponents had thrown at Fine Gael over the years and to draw away republican sympathizers from Fianna Fail's support base who might be wavering on continued allegiance to that party. Predictably, Fianna Fail boycotted the official christening ceremony on Easter Monday 1949, as de Valera reaffirmed that his party stood for a thirty-two not a twenty-six county republic.

The IRA also viewed this move with skepticism. Still committed to the physical force tradition, the movement spent the first postwar decade attempting to recruit and train new volunteers. But, as in the period following the Civil War, a small group of republicans split from the movement and attempted to develop a political party to promote republican goals. Led by a former IRA chief of staff named Sean MacBride, this group called their party Clann na Poblachta (Party of the Republic). Espousing basically the same philosophy as Fianna Fail, MacBride sought to

break up what he considered to be a stagnant and complacent party system. This attack on Fianna Fail even led MacBride to support Fine Gael in the 1948 election and his party's thirteen per cent of the vote and ten Dail seats contributed to Costello's minority coalition. Needless to say, MacBride's influence was significant in Costello's decision to proclaim the Republic.

This attempt by the coalition to increase its support base had repercussions outside the Republic. Britain, angered by Costello's decision and under great pressure from the equally mistrustful Unionist government in Ulster, passed the Ireland Act on May 3, 1949. This bill contained the following provision:

> It is hereby declared that Northern Ireland remains part of Her Majesty's Dominions of the United Kingdom and it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of Her Majesty's Dominions and the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland.[28]

The reaction in the Republic was universal outrage. Claiming that Britain had 'endorsed the existing Partition of Ireland', the Costello government condemned the Act and called on Britain to 'end the present occupation of our six North Eastern Counties.'[29] The Ireland Act also spurred dormant republican sentiments in Fianna Fail and greatly heartened the IRA. The former began a vigorous campaign to reestablish itself as the sole legitimate repository for the republican cause, while the latter, still trying to pick itself up after the war years, welcomed the renewed republican fervor and the accompanying influx of volunteers it created. Marginalized by these actions, Clann na Poblachta,

though it continued to win Dail seats until 1965, never again gained more than five per cent of the vote and soon faded into obscurity.

In what was to be his last election as leader of Fianna Fail, de Valera's landslide win in 1957 marked the second great resurgence of the party. Winning 48.3 per cent of the vote and 78 Dail seats, the party rode to power under its renewed commitment to 'the ideals of 1916...and the principles to which they subscribed between 1917 and 1921 when they were the Sinn Fein party.'[30] Beginning a second uninterrupted sixteen year period in office, Fianna Fail inherited a country still struggling for economic stability. De Valera, clearly conscious that his protectionist policies were a dismal failure, looked for new solutions to improve the economy. He also looked for a successor to implement these policies. At 75 and with failing eyesight, de Valera knew that the rigors of office would be too strenuous for him. He found his replacement in the person of Sean Lemass. Lemass was an old friend and ally of de Valera's with impeccable nationalist credentials. As a young teen he had been at the GPO during the Rising, had fought with de Valera during the Civil War and had served in every Fianna Fail cabinet since 1932. With great confidence, de Valera turned over leadership of the state to Lemass in 1959.[31]

As the new Taoiseach, Lemass quickly attacked the problem he felt most pressing to the nation: the economy. Reviewing the past eleven years in and out of opposition, he also perceived that

there was a danger to the party's electoral base if a solution to Ireland's economic difficulties was not found. The remedy he discovered and vigorously implemented was for the state to spend money on modernizing agriculture and industry, to solicit foreign capital to locate in Ireland and to abandon protection for export-led growth.[32] To supplement this, Lemass also tied Ireland closely to the rest of Europe; GATT was joined in 1960, the Republic applied for EEC membership in 1961 and joined the EFTA in 1965. This policy bias toward free trade had an immediate and positive effect. The country began an economic boom that would last over a decade and would significantly improve the living standards for the Irish people.

As equally adept politician, Lemass also used these policies in skillfully presenting economic growth as an essential step on the road to unification. Irish political journalist Dick Walsh explains his pragmatism:

> Lemass refused to concentrate on the Civil War as a source of political division, hardly ever used the Irish language and believed that to go on talking about partition, when no one intended to do anything about it, was a waste of energy. To him the argument was not about achieving independence but about the use that was to be made of the independence that had been achieved.[33]

Accordingly, Lemass took on a gradualist approach to Ulster, spoke little about the party's first national aim, and stressed that attention should be first focused on the Republic. By improving conditions in the state through the logic of market relations, Lemass felt the economic desirability of the Republic would draw the North back into the South.

As the economy took off, the immediate question of partition became obscured as the electorate became engrossed in the material rewards of economic growth. Yet the IRA was undaunted. Buoyed by the republican revival following the Ireland Act in 1949, the IRA Army Council dismissed the public's distraction in developing its next step to drive the British from Ulster. Though the IRA had revived Sinn Fein in 1949 to provide a political outlet for the movement, they still refused to consider abandoning the tradition of physical force. They felt committed to this policy partly through loyalty to those who had already lost their lives and also because of a deep distrust and dislike of politicians. An IRA volunteer dismissed the criticism that the movement lived in the past:

> It is charged that we pay more heed to the words of dead heroes than we do to living leaders. We accept that as a compliment. Comparison between the statements of aim of living leaders and the writing and speeches of dead heroes is the only way to be certain that the living pursue the aims of the dead.[34]

The Army Council, acknowledging that violence south of the border was extremely counterproductive, decided instead to renew the armed struggle in the six counties. The ensuing 'Border Campaign' began in December 1956, with attacks on border posts and military installations throughout the North.[35] Poor organization and planning limited the success of these raids but British anger over the excursions led Costello to reimplement the Offenses Against the State Act to apprehend the IRA activists. De Valera continued this policy upon taking office the next year, as did Lemass in

1959. Though severe state action against the IRA normally aroused some indignation in the South, and, in defiance of national leadership, some Fianna Fail representatives did express sympathy with the IRA, as a whole the Border Campaign had no popular support from the Republic. Transfixed with the economic boom ushered in by Lemass, the populace lost focus on partition and gave full support to the suppression of the movement under the capable direction of a young Fianna Fail Justice Minister named Charles J. Haughey.

The IRA, now harassed on both sides of the border and unable to sustain any consistent operational success, called off the campaign in January 1962. A classic example of the physical force tradition, the IRA ignored Clausewitz and gave no thought to the political consequences of its actions or how these actions might be turned to bringing its goal of a republic nearer.[36] Though a proclamation was made confirming the movement's 'pledge of eternal hostility to British Forces of Occupation', there was a hollow ring to its issuance. The public's preoccupation with economic concerns and the IRA's myopic focus on purely military means had again marginalized the republican movement. After Lemass met with the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terrence O'Neill, in 1965 to symbolize the Dublin government's official desire for detente with the North, the majority of the Irish people concurred with this gradualist approach that would promote unity through dialogue and mutual consent. As the Irish economy continued to improve and functional cooperation with the North

began, the republican cause appeared to have become an even more distant aspiration that would never be fulfilled.

Conclusion

De Valera's decision to break with the IRA and Sinn Fein profoundly affected the republican movement. Displaying a realism and practicality that would come to symbolize his new party, de Valera acknowledged that the inflexible use of force could not bring unity to Ireland. Though he reaffirmed his commitment to the republican end he felt that the use of constitutional, parliamentary means were necessary to eventually realize this goal. He then proceeded to establish the sovereignty of the twenty-six county state, giving the Irish people a sense of identity that had previously been undefined. But in doing so he not only punctuated the South's differences with the North, but also left his own inflexible legacy that would hinder the party in its future efforts to unite the island.

The 1937 constitution and the requirement for a unitary Irish state became the central, nonnegotiable tenets to Fianna Fail ideology. Though his successor, Lemass, softened his attitude toward the North, de Valera's hallowed stature ensured that the central aims of the party would remain unchanged.

Meanwhile, the IRA stayed myopically committed to the armed struggle. Although de Valera tried to establish a cooperative relationship with the movement, the IRA's intransigent reliance on force eventually made it necessary for de Valera to suppress the

movement when its activities threatened the stability of the state. The IRA's inability to develop any political program or address any issue other than the North contributed to the movement's marginalization. As the boom of Lemass' new economic policies brought material rewards to the Irish people, the IRA and the issue of unification became increasingly irrelevant.

Endnotes

1. There is significant speculation over the course of Irish history had Collins survived the war. Though accepting the Treaty, his charismatic and forceful personality, his deep ties to the republican movement and his 'stepping stone' approach to unity and sovereignty may have united the republican cause and could have prevented the bipolar divisions that have plagued Ireland since.

2. Basil Chubb, The Government and Politics of Ireland, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), p. 97.

3. Dick Walsh, The Party: Inside Fianna Fail (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), p. 9.

4. Kevin Boland, The Rise and Decline of Fianna Fail (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1982), p. 26.

5. Patrick Bishop and Eamon Mallie, The Provisional IRA (London: Heinemann, 1987), p. 20.

6. Ronnie Munck, Ireland: Nation, State and Class Struggle (London: Westview Press, 1985), p. 25.

7. Boland, p. 16.

8. Ibid., p. 20.

9. Tom Garvin, The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), p. 154.

10. Walsh, p. 4.

11. Boland, p. 33. The seven goals of Fianna Fail are listed on page 36.

12. Ibid., p. 22.

13. John Bowman, De Valera and the Ulster Question: 1917-73 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 96.

14. The Irish electoral system of Proportional Representation by means of the single transferable vote allows for many small, ancillary parties to survive. In 1927, for example, in addition to Cuman na nGaedheal, Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein, four other smaller parties, to include the Irish Labour Party, held seats in the Dail. For percentages and thumbnail sketches of these parties see Michael Gallagher, Political Parties in the Republic of

Ireland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), Chapter 5.

15. J. Bowyer Bell, The Gun in Politics: An Analysis of Irish Political Conflict, 1916-1986 (Oxford: Transaction Books, 1987), p. 217.

16. J. Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army: The I.R.A.: 1916-1970 (New York: John Day, 1970), p. 130.

17. Gallagher, pp. 13-14.

18. Bell, The Gun in Politics, p. 218.

19. Tim Pat Coogan, The I.R.A., (Glasgow: William Collins and Sons, 1987), p. 122.

20. Bowman, p. 306.

21. Ibid., p. 148.

22. Bell, The Secret Army: The I.R.A.: 1916-1970, p. 138. Interestingly enough, the new Constitution was accepted only by a simple majority of those voting. 31 per cent of the populace did not vote and 30 per cent, led by Fine Gael, voted against it. De Valera's grip on the pulse of the nation was far from complete.

23. Kelley, Kevin, The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA, (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. 66.

24. Walsh, pp. 123-124.

25. Bowman, pp. 314-315.

26. Walsh, p. 123.

27. Gallagher, pp. 48-49.

28. Coogan, p. 324.

29. Ibid., p. 324. This 'occupation' was also the reason given by the Irish government in its refusal of an American invitation to join NATO in 1949.

30. Bowman, p. 291.

31. De Valera did not completely exit the political scene. He was immediately elected President of the Republic and served in that mostly ceremonial position until 1973.

32. Brian Girvin, "The Dominance of Fianna Fail and the Nature of Political Adaptability in Ireland," Political Studies, 32 (September 1984), p. 466.

33. Walsh, p. 78.

34. Coogan, p. 280.

35. Kelley, p. 73. Clearly designed to invite a reciprocal response from the Republic, the Army Council designated Army Order 8 that prohibited military activity south of the border in the early 1950s. It was hoped that the Republic would allow the IRA a safe territorial base for their raids into the North.

36. Bishop and Mallie, p. 28.

Chapter 4: Into the Crucible: Since the "Troubles"

A. Background to the Violence.

> Partition is more than just a Border, more than just an artificially-maintained barrier, more than just an economically-disruptive decision, more than just a culturally-divisive influence, more than just a historic affront. Partition is a deep, throbbing weal across the land, heart and soul of Ireland, an imposed deformity whose indefinite perpetuation eats into the Irish consciousness like a cancer.
>
> -Jack Lynch, 1970

By late 1960s, the question of partition no longer seemed to play a central role in the politics of the Republic. The emasculation of the IRA during its failed Border campaign, the peaceful initiatives established between North and South by O'Neill and Lemass, and the preoccupation with the economic success of the decade all served to reduce the importance of this far-off and illusive goal in the minds of most Irishmen. The Republic was stable and growing, reaching to catch up with the rest of its European neighbors and hopeful that its divisive past would become a distant memory. Lemass, content with his role in revitalizing the economy and reestablishing the primacy of his party, retired from the political scene in 1966. The new Taoiseach was Jack Lynch, Lemass' deputy and an experienced Fianna Fail politician. A former sports star from Cork, Lynch was extremely popular with the electorate but had no family links with the party or the struggle for independence, a disadvantage to those Fianna Fail members who believed that republicanism was bred in the bone.[1]

Lynch began where Lemass had ended by continuing to promote the North-South rapprochement initiated by his predecessor.

Yet things were not as they appeared in Northern Ireland. Since the setting up of the state in 1921, the predominantly Protestant Unionist majority had maintained complete political, economic and social control over Ulster.[2] This dominance over the Catholic minority was a relic of colonial rule and was further strengthened by the irredentist and confessional bias in de Valera's twenty-six county state. Fearing the loss of their identity in such a state, Unionist leaders were prompted to increase their control over Ulster and reinforce their ties to Great Britain. This control led to blatant discrimination against the Catholic minority. Electoral discrimination was prevalent in local government where gerrymandering of voting districts ensured Protestant control even in predominantly Catholic populated areas. Housing was another area of bias and employment was probably the most glaring area where Catholics were shamelessly neglected. By the late 1960s, the Northern Catholics could stand it no longer. Looking to the American Civil Rights movement for inspiration, they formed the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) in 1967. Their goal was to reform the Northern state so as to provide equal opportunity for all people, regardless of religious preference. More specifically, their aims included the following:

> ...they were bent on reform. Principally concerned with housing and with jobs, over both of which the Protestant Unionist majority exercised discrimination in favor of their own kind, the demands of the NICRA also included universal suffrage in local elections to replace the

> propertorial voting system unique to the North...and an impartial redrawing of constituencies. They wanted a points system for local authority housing, legislation on job discrimination and certain security changes, including the disbanding of the B Specials and the repeal of the Special Powers Act.[3]

The NICRA proceeded to promote these goals through political agitation and protest, hopeful that these peaceful means would awaken the Ulster government to the seriousness of their condition and lead to much-needed reforms. They were greatly mistaken. Protestant paramilitary groups reacted by attacking NICRA protesters and assaulting Catholic ghettos under the apparent indifference of the Ulster police and security forces. During the summer of 1969 the situation exploded. Rioting erupted in the two major Northern cities of Belfast and Derry and people began to die in Northern Ireland. As this sectarian violence escalated and casualties increased, the British government was forced to commit Royal troops to maintain order in this beleaguered state.

The sudden violence of these riots rudely awakened the people of the Republic to the plight of their Catholic brothers in the North. Shock and anger were widespread and an issue long dormant to many in the state now became one of utmost urgency. Fianna Fail and the IRA were equally caught off guard by the suddenness of this conflict and were forced to make hard choices over their responsibility to the Northern Catholics and to the fulfillment of long-held republican goals. Their ultimate decisions would both threaten the unity of their organizations and call into question the depths of their commitment to the realization of the thirty-

two county Irish state.

B. The IRA Struggles with its Future: Birth of the PIRA.

> We believe that by armed struggle alone can we achieve our objectives.
> -Sean MacStiofain, 1972

After the fiasco of the Border Campaign, the IRA leadership was forced to take a hard look at the futility of their past tactics and the deterioration of the movement. Aware that the organization neared extinction, the Army Council accepted that hard realities had to be faced. Arriving at such self-criticism was no easy process for an organization steeped in tradition and ritual and constantly paying homage to past heroes. Finding fault with the theory and practice of the Border campaign, rather than simply indicting Northern Catholics for allowing themselves to be distracted verged on heresy in the view of many republicans.[4] Yet the IRA was to begin its 'Great Rethink'.

Basically the leadership felt that two major areas of IRA policy needed to be reconsidered. The first area was a social strategy to build 'grass roots' support among the populace on both sides of the border. The second area concerned the legitimacy of engaging in political activity. With the failure to gain adequate support by purely military means clearly evident, the IRA decided to win the confidence of the people through economic issues.[5] Led by the IRA Chief of Staff, Cathal Goulding, the movement began to contemplate major socialist and non-sectarian revision to Ireland based loosely on the teachings of Connolly and Tone.[6] Goulding

soon found an ally in Roy Johnston, a socialist intellectual who had links to the Communist Party of Ireland. Together the two men became convinced that the IRA must concern itself with the needs of ordinary people. Goulding and Johnston soon devised a requisite formula to propel the movement towards a socialist triumph in the years to come. This formula became known as the 'Stages Theory' and stated that socialism could be achieved in Ireland in three distinct phases: the establishment of a capitalist democracy in Ulster by the non-sectarian efforts of the proletariat there; the welding of the Northern and Southern proletariat; and the militant overthrow of capitalism on the whole island.[7]

Still true to the final goal of a united Ireland, this approach differed from the past in two important ways. Central to this theory would be the abandonment of political abstentionism and the tradition of armed resistance. Goulding publically decried the movement's concentration on the physical force tradition, contending that it alienated popular support as often as it gained it.[8] Only through the revocation of violence could the IRA hope to unite the sectarian proletariat of Ulster. Equally important would be the need to educate and politicize this proletariat. The IRA's obsession with the Rising and the 1919 Dail had made the abstention policy a symbolic and sacred tenet of their ideology. Goulding and Johnston felt that if the IRA and Sinn Fein were truly serious about cultivating links with the people, the movement would have to stop its self-indulgent

dreaming and get to work on nitty-gritty issues in assemblies that the people now recognized through their votes.[9] Unless the IRA and Sinn Fein overcame their nostalgia and cut republicanism free from its historical impedimenta they were doomed to remain impotent.[10] Johnston captured the mood:

> There was already a trend towards the recognition of realities....The idea was that if links could be cultivated between the movement and the people, the roots would be firmly in the ground and a principled political stand would be made, even in 'illegal assemblies' such as the Dail, without automatic corruption.[11]

In a movement badly lacking in social and economic content, Goulding and Johnston provided a tactical blueprint and a general strategic direction. To many frustrated by failure, at long last it appeared that a way had been found to lead Ireland out of the colonial wilderness and towards a republican millennium.[12] The IRA was beginning to shake itself loose from its inflexible traditions.

With the rise of the NICRA Goulding saw an opportunity to promote his social strategy and begin to establish grass roots support in the North. He directed that the IRA would restrict its energies to pushing for the basic demands of the association and no more. Preoccupied with reform issues, prohibited from using military force and heavily influenced by the extensive number of socialists found in the NICRA, the IRA moved further away from its traditional posture. Yet the failure of the NICRA would highlight to many the impotence of Goulding's new direction. As Ulster descended into violence, the cautious revolutionary

strategy sketched out by Goulding and Johnston began to look increasingly inappropriate:

> By the start of 1969 the dynamics of the civil rights movement was slipping out of control of conventional nationalist politicians into the hands of the young middle-class Catholic demonstrators....None had any allegiance to the IRA, and little interest in its political programme. What they did have a use for was the very military tradition the IRA leadership had tried to shed.[13]

The neglect of the military tradition was clearly captured by the status of the IRA units in the North in August 1969. In Belfast, for example, the actual armament of the IRA consisted of five handguns; of the sixty IRA Volunteers there, only seven were actually active and none were full time fighters.[14] Long claiming to be the only protectors of the Northern Catholics, its present condition left the IRA sadly unable to provide any assistance against Protestant sectarian attacks. The graffito of the time in the Catholic ghettos-"IRA=I Ran Away", conveys the sense of despair felt by many residents who believed the old IRA leadership was more intent on conducting seminars on Marxist theory than on looking after their own.[15] The validity of the Ulster crisis quickly moved the IRA to action and initiated divisions that would shatter the movement and call into question the prevalence of past traditions over present realities.

As Goulding promoted his non-sectarian, socialist strategy within the movement, a sizeable number of IRA hard-liners were dismayed at the radical abandonment of the past expressed in Goulding's formula. Even more sure of the need for military force

as the violence increased in the North, these men demanded immediate action. Bitter over the hesitancy of Goulding's Dublin-based headquarters to provide arms or protection to the Catholics of Ulster, and aware that the initial presence of British troops was greeted with relief by many of these same Catholics, these militant activists saw their raison d'être slipping away. A good number of these men were Northern-born, children of Belfast and Derry ghettos who had strong roots within the movement and even stronger beliefs in defending their homes and families. They considered themselves keepers of the flame, die-hard traditionalists who still looked at the Dail of 1919 as the source of all governmental legitimacy on the island.[16] Yet this in itself was not the primary reason for their eventual split with the Goulding-led faction. Most of these men were aware of the need to develop some sort of political program that would guide the ensuing campaign. They were not adverse to Goulding's attempt to make the IRA more than a purely military organization. But they were irreconcilably opposed to Goulding's preoccupation with the political line to the neglect of the national question and to the repudiation of the armed struggle.[17] Tenaciously committed to maintaining continuity with past heroes, these men would not contemplate any policy that abandoned the tradition of armed resistance. Emerging as the leader of this faction was a London-born Irishman named Sean MacStiofain. MacStiofain's predominant personality traits were rigid Catholicism and authoritarian and fanatical devotion to the republican cause. About the insistence

of the Ulster Protestants to their British past, MacStiofain unequivocally stated:

> ...there would be no place for those who say they want their British heritage. They've got to accept their Irish heritage, and the Irish way of life, no matter who they are, otherwise there would be no place for them.[18]

Coupled with this obduracy was an equally unyielding refusal to sacrifice any past traditions. To MacStiofain and his followers reluctance to move with the times and abandon abstentionism was not regarded as a vice in an organization in which rigidity of thought and refusal to compromise were admired and honored.[19]

The overwhelming socialist influence promoted by Goulding and the relationship of Johnston to the Communist Party also contributed to dissension within the IRA ranks. The strong Catholic background of many republicans inherently led them to oppose any philosophy that carried a Marxist taint. Many accused Goulding of seeking to establish 'extreme socialism leading to a dictatorship' and of endangering 'Irish and Christian values'.[20] As unrest and violence continued in Ulster, these traditionalists made it clear that they no longer felt any allegiance to the Dublin leadership and began to take unilateral action to protect the Ulster Catholics.[21] After Goulding was able to push his new strategy through the Army Council in late October 1969, the conflict came to a head at the annual Sinn Fein and fheis for the entire republican movement on 10-11 January 1970.[22] When Goulding was again able to pass a motion to scrap abstentionism, the break was complete. The Northern dissenters walked out of the

convention and reassembled to set up their own caretaker executive of Sinn Fein that would remain true to the hallowed principles of Irish republicanism.[23] This action divided the IRA into two factions. The Goulding-led, Dublin-based group would call themselves the Official IRA (OIRA) and Official Sinn Fein, and would continue to pursue a socialist ideology in hope of attaining an all-Ireland workers' republic. Favoring a non-violent, non-sectarian philosophy, the OIRA was convinced that "there could be no Ireland in Wolfe Tone's sense without the Protestant working class. They must be reached."[24] The OIRA's main effort would be through education, compromise and political activity.

The militant, traditional wing under MacStiofain would call themselves the Provisional IRA (PIRA) and Provisional Sinn Fein. They drew this title from the proclamation of the Republic of Ireland at the start of the Rising, and affirmed that any government in Ireland would be 'provisional' until the final establishment of a thirty-two county republic.[25] The PIRA or 'Provos' saw themselves and acted as an army of liberation. Aiming to secure an independent Ireland in which Protestants, Catholics and Dissenters would have equal rights, the PIRA had no doubt of its moral right to wage war against Britain. The PIRA's main efforts would be through abstention and violent resistance.[26]

The PIRA proceeded to arm and organize itself to defend the Northern Catholics. Within a year of their break with the OIRA, the Provos had firmly established themselves in the North and

began to strike out against British and Unionist military targets. To counteract this action the Ulster government initiated internment without trial in August 1971. The indiscriminate apprehension of countless Catholics, many not even associated with the republican movement, boosted the popular support for the PIRA on both sides of the border and brought in many new recruits. Buoyed by this influx, the PIRA intensified its operations in Ulster. The pinnacle of its success came in March 1972 when Britain, aware that the Ulster government could not maintain law and order and effectively administer the province, officially prorogued the Northern Ireland Parliament and imposed direct rule from London.

Although the PIRA's reliance on military action was unshakeable, many Provos saw the need, not necessarily for political activity but for a political program to show that they were not merely mindless gunmen and could propose a feasible solution to the conflict.[27] The policy that emerged in June 1972 was called "Eire Nua" or "New Ireland Policy." Reflecting the PIRA aversion to centralized authority and their advocacy of cooperation at the neighborhood and workplace level, "Eire Nua" called for a federal system modeled partly on the Swiss Cantons. Each of the country's four historic provinces-Leinster, Munster, Connacht and a nine-county Ulster-would have its own parliament with considerable power. The federal government in Dublin would play a smaller, more paternal role in a social and economic system that would be doctrinaire democratic socialism tailored to

Ireland's predominantly rural economy.[28] Also promoting a strict separation of church and state, this plan was devised to assuage Protestant Ulster and provide for their equitable participation in the new state. Though still committed to abstentionism, the PIRA was beginning to grasp the relevance of political activity.

Despite this understanding, the continued use of physical force began to undermine the PIRA's support base and success. The mounting death toll in Ulster increased frustration on both sides of the border and led to renewed repression of the movement by the Dublin government in the Republic and intensified military operations by British troops in Ulster, now supplemented with SAS forces. A temporary cease-fire initiated by MacStiofain in 1975 in the hope of promoting a negotiated British withdrawal and gaining a reprieve from British military pressure was unsuccessful, and within a year the British government began to phase-out the political-prisoner status it had given to IRA men back in 1971. The effectiveness of these actions crippled the movement, as most of the committed were either dead, abroad or languishing in British prisons in Ulster and England. With their backs again against the wall, the PIRA leadership searched for a way to rejuvenate the movement under the pressure of the present realities without compromising the hallowed traditions that were so fundamental to the cause.

C. Fianna Fail Struggles with its Past: The Arms Crisis and Beyond.

> Let us not appeal to past gods as if past generations had said the last word about Ireland. We have the opportunity to say for our generation what is in our hearts and minds.
>
> -Jack Lynch, 1970

The explosion of sectarian violence in Ulster also sent deep shock waves through the Fianna Fail party and the Lynch administration. As previously mentioned, Taoiseach Lynch had continued to promote the peaceful overtures towards the North initiated by Sean Lemass. Emphasizing reform and cross-border cooperation, the most he would say about partition was that it would continue to arouse 'deep feelings and emotions in the people and it is natural that expression will be given to their emotions.'[29] Yet the dramatic renewal of bloodshed in the six counties now forced Lynch and his party to come to terms with their rhetoric concerning the party's first national aim and the reality of taking decisive action to realize its achievement. Up until 1969 a yawning gap had developed between what the party had always maintained as its policy-indeed, its reasons for existence-and what the party had come to mean, between the rhetoric inspired by that certain view of history and the reality of the twenty-six county state shaped by de Valera and Lemass.[30] As with the IRA, hard decisions had to be made. The results of these decisions would lead to the divisive Arms Crisis that would sunder the unity of the party and threaten the stability of the state.

The violence in Ulster had indeed placed Lynch in a difficult situation. A very popular Taioseach, Lynch's lack of faraticism in a party which seemed to have more than its share of zealots,

his consensual style and ordinariness of manner, had combined to attract people across all boundaries of party and tradition.[31] Now his personality was seen as a liability by many party traditionalists who claimed that the time had come for decisive action to end the partition of the county. Lynch realized that all the past oratory over partition and the first national aim of Fianna Fail had finally caught up with the party, forcing him now to choose between adopting a traditional approach based on the orthodoxy of Pearse and Tone or pursuing a heretical, but more realistic, policy designed to meet the politico-geographic realities of the island of Ireland.[32] Also aware that Fianna Fail had built a practical, pragmatic record over the years that had established it as the party of government in the Republic, Lynch was determined to maintain the stability of the administration at all costs. As violence escalated, the most direct threat to Lynch and that stability came from the republican-leaning activists within the party. Prominent among these hard-liners were three men who held key posts in Lynch's own cabinet: the Minister of Agriculture, Neil Blaney; the Minister for Local Government, Kevin Boland; and the Minister of Finance, Charles Haughey. Of the three, Blaney was the most outspoken republican of traditional views, sympathetic to all those who, in his judgement, gave the Ulster Catholics real help, including the IRA.[33] Blaney was extremely vocal in pressuring Lynch for direct military involvement in the North.

On 12 August 1969, widespread sectarian violence engulfed the

Bogside, a predominantly Catholic section of Belfast. Blaney, Haughey and Boland again urged Lynch to send the Army into Ulster but the Taoiseach refused. He feared the international repercussions of such action and the indiscriminant murder of Belfast Catholics that the Army's move might invoke. Yet most of all, he feared the withdrawal of foreign investment from the South, the resulting unemployment and the compounded difficulties a border war would entail.[34] Deciding instead to promote a pragmatic approach to the problem, Lynch gave a nationally televised address to the Irish people on 13 August 1969, intended to assuage the republican elements in the party and the Republic, but not to restrict his freedom of movement or commit him to any one course of action. Beginning with his concern "that the spirit of reform and cooperation has given way to the forces of sectarianism and prejudice", Lynch claimed that the Ulster government was "no longer in control of the situation." Stressing that the use of British Army units was unacceptable to his government, he requested that a United Nations peace-keeping force be sent to Ulster. In the meantime, he directed Irish Army units to establish field hospitals along the border and ended his speech by remarking that "the Irish government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured" and that the "reunification of the national territory can provide the only permanent solution to the problem."[35] This speech greatly heartened the Ulster Catholics, who expected to see the Irish Army arrive shortly thereafter; the IRA, which felt that it gave them governmental approval to defend

their Northern brothers; and the hawkish Fianna Fail deputies, who felt that Lynch had reestablished his and the party's republican credentials.

All were soon to find that they had not correctly gauged the intentions of the Fianna Fail leader; for as Irish politician, author and ardent anti-republican Conor Cruise O'Brien caustically remarked, "Lynch's solution was to behave as much as possible like a pragmatist, while sounding as much as possible like a republican."[36] Concerned over the security of the state and fearful that direct military intervention might invite a British response that could lead to violence in the South, Lynch never seriously contemplated direct action but attempted to apply international political pressure on Britain to bring the crisis to a speedy resolution. Yet the crossed signals that stemmed from his public remarks would prompt the party hard-liners to initiate action to help defend the Northern Catholics and would lead to the most serious political crisis of modern times in Ireland.

The Arms Crisis was a direct result of the differing interpretations of Lynch's public stand on actions towards Ulster. The affair stemmed from an attempt in the spring of 1970 by Fianna Fail deputies to purchase arms with government funds and export them North and into the hands of Ulster Catholics. Though speculation over the true facts still exists, these men were convinced that they had the covert approval of the Lynch administration to undertake this venture. Yet Lynch, when made aware that Irish customs agents had seized the arms cargo in

Dublin and that the affair would soon be made public, immediately sacked the ministers implicated in the affair, Haughey and Blaney, and appointed a governmental inquiry to investigate and if necessary, indict anyone guilty of illegal importation of arms. This affair shocked the nation, divided the party and seriously threatened relations with Britain. Opposition TDs in the Dail called for the dismissal of the entire cabinet and questioned the legality of the government. Fianna Fail members were dismayed by the internecine bloodletting within the cabinet and unsure about where to place their loyalties. The issue of what extra-constitutional steps the government might take in its efforts to assist the Catholic minority in the North, after that same government had pledged itself to peaceful means and had foresworn the use of force in their endeavors to resolve the Ulster problem, polarized the party and the state.[37] The controversy dominated Irish political life and led to a proliferation of rumors and innuendos.

Critics of the government like O'Brien called Lynch a Machiavelli who approved of the venture until it failed and then turned on his subordinates to save his political career.[38] Another well-traveled rumor stated that the Government was behind the recent split of the IRA. Fianna Fail ministers allegedly tried to get the IRA to drop its new political activities in the South and concentrate on military action in the North. When this failed, they encouraged the split in the movement with the promises of arms to a new movement freed from any association with

Marxism or the extreme left.[39] Though PIRA Chief of Staff Sean MacStiofain later claimed that there was no collusion between the two organizations and that the weapons were meant for the Belfast Defense Committee and not the IRA,[40] the PIRA gained public support from the fiasco as the only organization, in the public's perception, genuinely concerned with protecting the Northern Catholics.

Meanwhile, the unity of Fianna Fail continued to weaken as the government brought charges of conspiracy to import arms against four men, prominent among them Charles Haughey. Their trial in September and October of 1970 highlighted the differences within Fianna Fail and brought into doubt the future direction of the party and the government. The defendants steadfastly professed their innocence, claiming that the government had given them full approval to undertake the action. Haughey even claimed to have no knowledge whatsoever of the affair. One of the defendants, John Kelly, a former IRA man and Belfast Catholic captured the defiance of the group:

> ...we did not ask for blankets or feeding bottles. We asked for guns and no one from Taoisieach Lynch down refused that request or told us that this was contrary to government policy...[41]

Though all four men were acquitted of all charges, it was clear that Lynch had ended his ambivalent stance on force and would not countenance its use in ending partition.[42] Lynch now proceeded to move quickly to unify the party and stabilize the government.[43] Calling on his considerable popularity, he appealed to the party faithful to maintain solidarity during this dangerous time. Bonds

of party loyalty were traditionally strong within Fianna Fail and they held together at this critical moment, despite the feelings of many who believed that Lynch had betrayed the party and abandoned the principal national aim at a time when circumstances were conspicuously appropriate for its realization. Even Charles Haughey, who considered himself a scapegoat for the whole affair, dutifully supported the administration, saying that "the unity of the party is of greater importance to the welfare of the nation than my political career." Though some defections were unavoidable, Blaney and Boland prominent among them, Lynch had saved the party for the time being. Yet this affair would cost the administration heavily. Despite its outward appearance of unity, Fianna Fail remained polarized by the Arms Crisis, as the pro-republican faction within the party had not given up its efforts to promote the end of partition. Even more serious, however, was the cost to the country. Ordinary democratic politics, respect for parliament, for the law and for the state were all seriously weakened by the Arms Crisis. O'Brien maintains that some of the popular respect lost by these institutions was transferred to patriotic lawbreakers, i.e., the IRA.[44] With his government intact, Lynch now turned to meet the challenge posed by the emergence of the PIRA.

Lynch was deeply concerned by the increase in violence that came from the vigorous defence of the Northern Catholics by the PIRA. As early as August 1969, just days after his address to the nation, Lynch had publically denounced the IRA's activities,

asserting "that no group has any authority whatever to speak or act for the Irish people except the lawful Government of Ireland, freely elected by the people," and that Government "would not tolerate the usurpation of their powers by any group whatsoever."[45] But Lynch was all too aware that he had to tread carefully to maintain the support of the republican-leaning Fianna Fail activists within the party. With as many as eleven deputies with strong sympathies for the IRA, Lynch was constrained, or as O'Brien remarked, forced into a "kind of collusion" with them, and was thus hesitant to move decisively against the Provos lest any determined action might bring him down through the defection of these dissident supporters.[46] Public sympathy also began to spread to the PIRA as well. For many people in the South, the PIRA had the same concern for the welfare of the Catholic ghettos, but whereas the government could only make vain promises ('we will not stand idly by'), the PIRA was seen to be doing something on the ground. It was not difficult for government ministers in the South to applaud secretly the defensive role of the PIRA in the North while publically condemning violence.[47]

Public support for the Provos continued to grow and reached a dangerous peak on January 30, 1972. On that day, known thereafter simply as 'Bloody Sunday', British paratroops indiscriminately fired into a crowd of Derry Catholics protesting internment, killing thirteen men and one woman. The Republic reacted with horror, anger and disgust. Lynch denounced the action as

unbelievably savage and inhuman and announced a day of national mourning in the Republic and withdrew the Irish ambassador to the United Kingdom. Emotions about the North ran very high and people talked and wrote of a national change of mood, like that which had set in after the executions of 1916.[48] The situation became even more perilous when, on the day of national mourning, February 2, an enraged crown of 20,000-30,000 surrounded the British embassy in Dublin and burned it to the ground with petrol bombs. Lynch deplored this action, and fearful that continued violence might further undermine the stability of the state, sought a way to dampen the explosive emotionalism that had presently overcome the public. HIs first concern remained the unity of the twenty-six county state, and despite renewed urgings within the party for military action, he was even more convinced that such involvement at this unstable time would be disastrous for the Republic and could lead to chaos on both sides of the border. He continued to promote peaceful initiatives and restraint.

Ironically, the PIRA's commitment to physical force helped cool emotions in the Republic and allowed Lynch to reassert the authority of the government. The dramatic increase in PIRA bombings which followed Bloody Sunday inflicted substantial casualties in the North, many of them innocent Protestants and Catholics. The apparent indifference to noncombatants shown by the PIRA contributed to a reversal of emotions in the South and began to diminish public support for the Provos. When a brief cease-fire in May came to nought and PIRA attacks intensified,

Lynch felt secure enough to move, albeit slowly, against the republicans. At the end of May, Lynch announced the reintroduction of Part Five of the Offenses Against the State Act of 1939, which permitted the conviction of suspected terrorists on the evidence of a senior police officer in a juryless court presided over by three judges.[49] When public reaction appeared to countenance this move, and the British government attempted to reduce tensions by releasing a significant number of internees in the Fall, Lynch was emboldened to move further.

In November 1972, Lynch proposed to again amend the Offenses Against the State Act with new anti-terrorist legislation to close down the PIRA's freedom of movement within the Republic. Initially some pro-PIRA sentiments were voiced within the party and strong resistance developed from the Fine Gael-Labour opposition over the widespread power this bill would give the government and the police. Then while the debate continued in the Dail, several bombs exploded in Dublin, killing two people and injuring eighty-three.[50] Opposition collapsed and the bill was passed by a vote of seventy to twenty-three. Irish police proceeded to round up a considerable number of PIRA suspects, including Sean MacStiofain, and the Irish prisons began to fill up again. Lynch had thus confirmed his tough line against the men of violence, initiating and sustaining a program of anti-terrorist legislation of quite extreme proportions. In addition to Section Five of the Offenses Against the State Act, the amendments included the outlawing of all terrorist organizations,

specifically the PIRA; an Emergency Prisons Bill; the setting up of Special Criminal Courts; the authority to fine and/or imprison any suspected terrorist who could not account for his movements and limited RTE (Radio Telefis Eireann or the state-run radio and television) freedom to report on PIRA affairs.[51] Lynch, now confident that his actions had restored stability to the state, dissolved the Dail in February 1973 and went to the country as a law-and-order candidate, anticipating a return to power with a more comfortable majority.

Unfortunately for Fianna Fail, Lynch had miscalculated the extent of his success in dealing with the North and the republican movement. The public disillusionment over the Arms Crisis and the government's inability to establish peace in Ulster raised many doubts within the electorate. Though public opinion polls during the '73 campaign indicated the belief that Fianna Fail could handle aspects of the economy better, the Fine Gael-Labour coalition was preferred in the whole security area.[52] The coalition would show no hesitation in controlling extremism and the public felt a new administration, freed from taint of a pro-IRA fringe, could deal more effectively with Britain. While Fianna Fail was still able to garner 46.2 per cent of the popular vote, Fine Gael and Labour were strong enough to form a clear majority coalition and end Fianna Fail's sixteen year reign.[53] Fianna Fail was to begin a four year period in opposition.

The new Fine Gael-Labour coalition, led by Liam Cosgrave, son of de Valera's old nemesis, immediately stepped up its suppression

of the PIRA and pledged to bring about a peaceful solution to the Ulster crisis through the mutual consent of all parties. Cosgrave proceeded to develop a plan for power sharing between the Catholics and Protestants, to be overseen by a Council of Ireland composed of Dublin, Belfast and London political leaders. Called the Sunningdale Agreement, it offered a novel approach to mediating the problem. Unfortunately for Cosgrave, Unionist intransigence and British indecision undermined the Agreement, which collapsed after a Unionist-led general strike paralyzed the province in 1974.[54] Equally damaging to the coalition was the Oil Crisis in 1973 and the resultant recession. As the Irish economy plummeted, public attention shifted away from the Ulster problem and refocused on the economic stability of the Republic. Yet the economic policy differences between Fine Gael and Labour prevented them from implementing any effective measures to revive the economy. By the election year of 1977, the country had grown tired of the coalition's preoccupation with security measures and anti-IRA legislation and disillusioned with its inability to stem the economic crisis. Lynch, who had spent his time in opposition concentrating on an effective economic plan to salvage the country, saw that the time was right for Fianna Fail to return to power. Reviving the party during the election campaign with a shopping bag manifesto to increase government spending to promote industrial expansion and reaffirming the pursuit of the national goal through peaceful means, Lynch and Fianna Fail were returned to power in a landslide victory, gaining 50.6 per cent of the vote

and eighty-four Dail seats.[55] Though the pro-republican elements in the party, now led by the resurgent Charles Haughey, continued to promote a more hawkish attitude towards Ulster and Britain, Fianna Fail appeared to have regained the unity and direction that the Irish electorate had grown accustomed to and was prepared to resume its place as the party of government in the Republic.

D. The Provos Deviate: The Armalite and the Ballot Box.

> ...it is evident that they intend to continue their protest indefinitely and it seems they prefer to face death rather than submit to be classified as criminals. Anyone with the least knowledge of Irish history knows how deeply this attitude is in our country's past.
>
> -Dr. Tomas O'Fiaich, Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, 1978

The problems facing the republican movement in the late 1970s were formidable. The phasing out of special prisoner status for the interned fighters, the intensified British military effort in Ulster and the apparent renewed apathy among the Southern populace towards the cause again forced the IRA leadership to contemplate its strategy. These winds of change were, strangely enough, first fanned in the cells of the Maze, an Ulster prison called Long Kesh by the IRA and used primarily to incarcerate republican prisoners. The IRA men there were outraged at the removal of their special status, one that had classified them as political prisoners and provided a prisoner-of-war camp atmosphere in which to maintain organizational strength and unity. It was seen as part of the British government's process of normalizing the problem of IRA

violence by presenting them as an unrepresentative group of common criminals.[56] An especially important part of this status was the ability to train and educate young fighters who did not completely understand the cause. The solidarity of this prison existence also served as an incubator for new ideas on how to salvage and improve the movement. Faced now with the loss of these opportunities and aware of the dismal status of PIRA active units in Ulster, the incarcerated republican leaders were moved to contemplate the radical readjustment of republican orientation.

The majority of these men were young Northerners, not old enough to have experienced the Border Campaign or to have developed as deep traditional convictions as their older leaders. Referred to within the movement as "Young Turks," these jailed fighters were led by Gerry Adams, Danny Morrison and Martin McGuinness.[57] Determined to find a better way to achieve republican goals, these men initially had no pat formula but did know that the war could not be won until the IRA had a firmer understanding of why and what it was fighting. Impassioned denunciations of British imperialism were not good enough; it was vital to formulate a more sophisticated political as well as military strategy in order to prevent avoidable bloodshed in the struggle to free Ireland.[58] They began by criticizing "Eire Nua" as hopelessly unrealistic and in effect simply enlarging the Protestant monopoly in Ulster. Willing to acknowledge the effects of public opinion on IRA efforts, they also moved to transform Sinn Fein into an instrument for grass roots political

mobilization. The old IRA leadership had acknowledged the problems with the military effort and did not turn a deaf ear to Adams' entreatments. By 1977, Adams had won over the Sinn Fein leadership and began to shift the movement's social emphasis away from "Eire Nua" towards the idea of an all-Ireland socialist state that sounded remarkably similar to conclusions made by Goulding and Johnston before the IRA split.[59] Unable to totally sway the Army Council, Adams continued to develop his social and political program to complement the military struggle. Developments in the Maze would soon serve as a catalyst to Adams' efforts.

Since the removal of their political status, republican prisoners immediately began to protest, demanding a return of their former status and denouncing their brutal treatment at the hands of prison guards. This protest involved their refusal to wear prison uniforms or wash and shave and eventually degenerated to the spreading of human waste and food throughout their cells. The republican prisoners were defiant in this action and their attitude was well captured in an IRA ballad:

> I'll wear no convict's uniform
> Nor meekly serve my time
> That England might
> Brand Ireland's fight
> 800 years of crime.[60]

This 'dirty' protest failed to move the British authorities, however, and soon led the prisoners to pursue more drastic measures. The decision to embark on hunger strikes to achieve their demands was agreed upon in late 1980. After an initial strike was called off by British overtures that proved insincere,

the IRA commander in the Maze, Bobby Sands, initiated a second hunger strike on 1 March 1981. The IRA's actual step into electoral politics came during the drama of this hunger strike and began as an ad hoc attempt to nurture the popular support created by that event.[61]

In April 1981, the death of the Independent Nationalist Member of Parliament (MP) from the Ulster constituency of Fermanagh-South Tyrone led to the call for an election that month to name his successor. The National H-Block/Armagh Committee, a united front of republican and nationalist organizations whose goal was political status for the Maze prisoners, recognized the symbolic value of running the dying Sands as a candidate to take advantage of the rapidly growing grass roots support for the Hunger Strike campaign and to attract international media attention.[62] Adams, who had very close ties to Sands and the dozen or so other strikers, was somewhat reluctant to embark into this venture so quickly, for Sinn Fein had not yet developed into an effective political organization. But he recalled that there was nothing new in putting forward a prisoner as a candidate. It was a time-honored republican tactic, dating from the nineteenth century. Plus Sands would run under the cumbersome designation of Anti H-Block/Armagh Political Prisoner, using the united label to spare the voter the problem of voting for the armed struggle and offer instead the chance for a straightforward vote against what was happening in the jails.[63] This would also placate the hard-liners in the movement, for it would not solely identify the IRA

with parliamentary politics.

The international media coverage that Sands' Hunger Strike generated charged the campaign and contributed to voter turnout. The emotionalism of the event even led the IRA's main Catholic antagonist, the reformist Social Democratic and Labour Party, to withdraw from the race in order to avoid drawing votes away from Sands' candidacy. The results were extraordinary. Sands polled 30,092 votes, beating his Unionist opponent by almost 1,500 votes.[64] Adams was amazed by this success and used it to continue promoting the power of political activity to garner support for the movement. Unfortunately for the strikers, the British steadfastly refused to compromise on political status and Sands died on the sixty-sixth day of his strike, 5 May 1981.[65] Nine other men would also die before the strikes were called off in August, but the entire episode taught the IRA that mobilization of public opinion around a particular event-especially one that involved such emotion-could be exploited as support for the movement and was a powerful propaganda tool.[66] This was strikingly evident by the overwhelming sympathy for Sands and his men expressed by the Northern Catholics and the majority in the Republic. In a remarkable display of solidarity and support over 100,000 people followed Sands' funeral procession through West Belfast. The Hunger Strike had allowed the IRA to reestablish itself in the heroic mold of past martyrs and reaffirm its legitimacy in a historical context.[67] An influx of new recruits followed, many young men from the South, disillusioned with the

economic stagnation there and moved by the actions of Sands and the others. To these young Catholics, schooled in the sacrifices of 1789, 1916 and the like, the meaning of Sands' death was unmistakable. He was dying for Ireland and his death confirmed the republican claim that Britain caused Irish suffering.[68] Emboldened by this resurgence of support, the "Young Turks" began full scale efforts to develop Sinn Fein into an active political wing of the movement.

Later th. : year, Adams felt ready to commit the movement to political activity. In November 1981, at the annual Sinn Fein ard fheis, Danny Morrison proposed a rhetorical question:

> Is there anyone here who objects to taking power in Ireland with the ballot paper in one hand and an Armalite in the other?[69]

This question was so posed to reassure old IRA hard-liners that political activism would not coopt military action, but that the two would work together in separate but interrelated functions. The overwhelming support that this motion received, plus the removal of "Eire Nua" from IRA strategy for a more socialist approach, marked the formal acceptance of the Adams-led Northerners to full control of the republican machine.[70] Sinn Fein proceeded to work on establishing grass roots support in Ulster while the IRA continued military efforts there. The political results were encouraging. In the 1982 Assembly elections, the party polled 10.1 per cent of the Ulster vote. This was followed by an increase to 13 per cent at both the 1983 Westminister and the 1984 European Parliament elections.[71] Sinn

Fein was beginning to develop its political base.

By 1985 Adams, who was elected president of Sinn Fein in November 1983 and also won a Westminster seat for West Belfast that same year, felt that it was necessary to breach the last major obstacle to political activity: participation in the Republic. In the wake of the Hunger Strike success, the National H-Block/Armagh Committee had run nine republican prisoners for Dail seats in the 1981 general election in the Republic. Surprisingly, two candidates won but were prevented from taking their seats due to their incarceration and the movement's current policy of abstention. Playing on this past success, Adams stressed that it was vital to win over the South if the movement was ever to unite the country in a socialist republic. Still resisted by the traditionalists who accused Adams of abandoning principles that gave the cause legitimacy, Adams was nonetheless able to win enough support to scrap abstention in the Republic at the 1986 ard fheis.[72] The Provos had thus gone full circle, splitting with the OIRA over abstention in 1970 and sixteen years later finally accepting the necessity of political activity to complement the military effort. Though some hard-liners broke ranks over this development, the Army Council accepted Adams' strategy and integrated it into its military planning. The results of this move have yet to bear fruit. Although Sinn Fein has not been declared illegal in the Republic as the IRA has, the party is still prohibited from using the national media to promote its political views under Article 31 of the Offenses Against the

State Act. Also marginalized by Fianna Fail, which many in the Republic have come to accept as the legitimate voice for republican aspirations, Sinn Fein has been unable to garner more than two per cent of the vote and has not yet won a Dail seat.[73] The continued military effort must share the blame for this as the continued violence in Ulster, albeit at a much reduced scale than in the turbulent '70s, does alienate many Irishmen who approve of the movement's ends but cannot countenance its means. Adams and his supporters remain undaunted. Continuing to promote its social and political vision, yet unafraid to undertake opportune military action against the British oppressor, the IRA's unshakeable faith in the righteousness of its cause and the legitimacy bestowed upon it by the sacrifices of past heroes makes its future presence on both sides of the border a virtual certainty as long as its goal of a united Ireland remains unfulfilled.

E. Fianna Fail Searches for Inner Stability: Internal Dissension, Opposition and Renewed Commitment.

> We will stand up for our nationalist ideals that until recently we believed were shared by all parties. We are not going to abandon the basic reason for our foundation as a political movement.
>
> -Charles Haughey, 1985

The return of Fianna Fail to power in 1977 brought new hopes to the party faithful that a more traditional approach toward Ulster would now be pursued by the Lynch administration. Even the IRA took Lynch's election victory like a course of vitamin shots,

hopeful that his return would lead to the removal of much of the harsh Cosgrave legislation that had severely curtailed its freedom of movement in the South. Though Lynch was more preoccupied with attacking the Republic's economic woes, it initially appeared that he had shifted his approach toward the IRA and Ulster. He quickly dumped Cosgrave's Criminal Jurisdiction Act, which allowed for certain terrorists in the South to be tried for offenses committed in Ulster, and remained firm on his government's refusal to extradite suspected terrorists to Ulster.[74] But Lynch's economic policies included closer cooperation with the important British markets and led him to extend more cordial ties towards the British government. By 1979, the polarization born of the Arms Crisis began to reemerge as Lynch appeared to have again abandoned the party's traditional aims. In August 1979, the IRA assassination of Lord Mountbatten in County Sligo shocked most Irishmen and pushed Lynch to initiate security arrangements with the British. The pro-republican faction was aghast at this move. In September, Sile de Valera, the late Taoiseach's daughter, publically expressed what many Fianna Fail members felt:

> If our political leaders are not seen to be furthering our republican aspirations through constitutional means, the idealistic young members of our community will become disillusioned...and turn to violence to achieve their aims...I look to our party, and particularly our leader, to demonstrate his republicanism and bring these beliefs to fruition in our people.[75]

Lynch's standing continued to fall. In early November Fianna Fail lost two by-elections in Lynch's own constituency of Cork and in

North East Cork. Haughey, his main antagonist within the party, began to intrigue covertly to replace him. Then in late December Lynch publically acknowledged that part of a forthcoming pact with Britain might include a security system whereby there would be 'overflights' into the Republic's territory by British aircraft pursuing IRA fighters.[76] This was the last straw. Public and party condemnation were immediate and overwhelming. Lynch, aware that the party had turned against him and that the public was no longer certain of his intentions, resigned as Taoiseach on 5 December 1979. In a hotly contested debate between a still polarized party for his successor, Charles Haughey was confirmed as the new Taoiseach on December 11th.[77] The pro-republican voice had reemerged within the party.

Haughey, a wealthy lawyer from County Mayo, had deep roots in Fianna Fail, roots well watered by his marriage to Sean Lemass' daughter. Yet in his own right, Haughey also possessed a thorough work ethic and considerable political savvy that allowed him to build solid grass roots support with the populace as well as among Fianna Fail backbenchers. Haughey now came under immediate opposition attacks over his republican stance as he inherited a crumbling economy and nascent overtures towards a more cooperative relationship with Britain. Conscious that elections were two years away, Haughey refrained from taking any decisive action about the economy. Instead he concentrated on the Ulster crisis and Anglo-Irish relations. Here Haughey, like his two predecessors, initially evoked the standard Fianna Fail rhetoric

about Ulster and the republican movement. Just after his election as Taoiseach he said, "I condemn the Provisional IRA and all their activities."[78] A month later he called Northern Ireland "a failed political entity" and noted that the best plan towards accommodation would begin with "a declaration by the British Government of their interest in encouraging the unity of Ireland, by agreement and in peace."[79] Haughey then sought to meet with newly elected British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and explore ways to promote this approach. Though Haughey publically displayed a great deal of optimism after his two meetings with Thatcher in 1980, in reality very little was accomplished. This was partially due to the tense atmosphere created by the IRA hunger strikers as well as Thatcher's inflexible commitment to honor the Unionists' demand to remain part of the United Kingdom.

Haughey's reluctance to play an active role in the hunger strikes also distressed republicans. Many thought his strong pro-republican past would compel him to publically support the hunger strikers' demands. Yet Haughey knew that he had little power to affect the situation or influence Thatcher, though he privately said he wanted to help. His silence swayed a good deal of sympathy to the IRA and hurt the party as the 1981 elections approached.

More harmful to the government, however, was the split within Fianna Fail. Many within the party considered Haughey a political opportunist who broke bonds of party loyalty to subvert Lynch's leadership. This division, coupled with Haughey's neglect of the

economy, the issue still predominant with most voters, led to the party's dismal fall from power. The party gained only 45.3 per cent of the vote in the September election, its lowest since 1961, and was again replaced by a Fine Gael-Labour coalition led by Garret Fitzgerald.[80] Though economic discrepancies within the coalition brought that government down in February 1982 and Haughey again became Taoiseach, internal divisions remained and Fitzgerald was able to form a stable majority coalition and force Haughey from office in November of that year.

Thus Haughey's neglect of the economy and the internal crisis within Fianna Fail knocked the party from power. Though discord remained concerning the proper approach to the national aim, the main division reflected the internal struggle for power and an antipathy to Haughey's leadership.[81] For the first time since it was founded, the party was not firmly committed to its leader. The depth of this struggle is evidenced by the fact that between February 1982 and February 1983, three attempts were made by party dissidents to remove Haughey as party leader. All three party 'no confidence' motions were defeated by narrow margins, largely due to Haughey's cultivation of backbench support. Relocated to the opposition, Haughey's first priority was to solidify his control of the party.

Haughey saw that the key to stabilizing Fianna Fail would lie in the grass roots support that had previously served him so well. To maintain this support, he began by recommitting himself and the party to the 'green card.' Realizing the emphasis his

predecessors had placed on the economy had now become a liability during the current recession, Haughey deepened the party's commitment to traditional politics. Proclaiming a new emphasis on anti-partition and the need for Irish territorial integrity, Haughey assiduously cultivated the grass roots of the party, exploiting the republican tinge in the party's western bastions.[82] By 1985, his grip on Fianna Fail was undisputed. He had clearly articulated a new ideological fundamentalism in Fianna Fail, in defiance of the liberal trends of the 1960s and 1970s.[83]

In the meantime his republican recommitment served the party well in opposition. Fitzgerald, who promoted the same accommodationist approach toward Ulster as his predecessor Cosgrave, undertook several ventures to end the Ulster crisis. The first, called the New Ireland Forum, took place in 1983. This conference brought together the major nationalist political players in the Republic and Ulster to develop possible solutions for the province. Their three final recommendations included a unitary state, a federal framework and joint Anglo-Irish authority. On top of this Fitzgerald also proposed a reworking of the Republic's constitution to ensure the needs of all traditions were fully met.[84] Haughey rejected this aspect but agreed to endorse the Forum provided that the unitary state was affirmed as the preferred solution. Reiterating that Northern Ireland was a political anachronism, Haughey contended that only a unitary state would be acceptable because none of the other models outlined would bring peace and stability to the North.[85] It was also a

reaffirmation of the traditional Fianna Fail policy and maintained continuity with the legacy of de Valera. Aware that without Fianna Fail support the Forum would be useless, Fitzgerald reluctantly agreed to Haughey's request.

Encouraged by the high level of public approval the Forum received, Fitzgerald decided to push further. In late 1983, he initiated talks with Margaret Thatcher to promote Anglo-Irish cooperation in solving the Ulster dilemma. An intergovernmental council was formed to study possible solutions, meeting thirty times over the next two years. The culmination of these efforts came on 15 November 1985 with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement at Hillsborough Castle in County Down, Northern Ireland. Basically the Agreement formally acknowledged that the problem of securing reconciliation in Northern Ireland was a joint one and gave the Republic a consultative role with Britain regarding policy in the North. The Agreement also established a joint secretariat to convene regularly to consider political, legal and security matters, to include cross-border police cooperation.[86] Fitzgerald felt the Agreement was the best possible proposal to diffuse North-South tensions and was firm in his commitment to include the Northern majority in any discussion of unity.

Again reaction was positive in the Republic. A poll conducted by "The Irish Times" showed that 50 per cent of the South's populace approved of the Accords, even though many were skeptical of its potential for success.[87] In the Dail, the Agreement was ratified by a vote of 88 to 75, a big victory for

Fitzgerald. Predictably, the main opposition came from Haughey and Fianna Fail. The party had always portrayed Fine Gael's conciliation toward Britain as supine behavior to British interests and a betrayal of republican principle.[88] Haughey was also direct in his criticism. He immediately dismissed the Agreement's main theme concerning the South's right to be consulted on matters relating to the internal affairs of Northern Ireland. This was insignificant, he contended, for the Irish government had always had a right to make its views known. He continued to denounce the constitutional implications of the Agreement, claiming that Article 1, which confirmed that Northern Ireland was a part of the United Kingdom, was in total conflict with the Republic's constitution and in particular Article 2. For the first time ever, he emphasized, the legitimacy of partition, which is contrary to unification, has been recognized by an Irish government in an international agreement.[89] He finished by warning that the Agreement would fail to reform Ulster or lead to a thirty-two county state.

In the meantime, Ireland's economy continued to worsen. With a budget deficit of 8.5 per cent of the GNP in early 1986, costly foreign borrowing, unemployment near 20 per cent and emigration rising, Fitzgerald's coalition began to unravel. The Taoiseach proposed tax and public expenditure cuts to reduce the balance of payments, while Labour wanted higher social benefits and no tax cuts.[90] Additionally, the Progressive Democrats began to draw away Fine Gael support with its new party appeal. By the end of

the year the coalition collapsed and new elections were called for February 1987.

Haughey, aware that public support generally favored the Hillsborough Agreement, ran a low key campaign. While not reversing his earlier stand on Fianna Fail's commitment to her traditional principles, Haughey believed that the importance of the country's economic woes had again relegated the Ulster problem to a position of secondary importance. Displaying a populist streak tempered with pragmatism, Haughey stuck to economic issues, and though he fared poorly on a live television debate with Fitzgerald toward the end of the campaign, he entered the election confident of victory.

His confidence was rewarded, but just barely. Fianna Fail won a plurality of the vote, but dropped one per cent from its 1982 totals and failed to get an overall majority.[91] With no majority single party government possible, Haughey quickly secured the vote of the Dail Ceann Comhairle (presiding officer) to break a Dail deadlocked at 82-82. He became Taoiseach of a single party minority government on 10 March 1987.[92] With an opportunism that has come to mark his political style and symbolize his reign as party leader, Haughey had led Fianna Fail back to power in the Republic.

Conclusion

Since 1969 both the IRA and Fianna Fail have been forced to deal with major ideological and organizational problems that have

hindered them in the pursuit of their republican goals. The IRA endured a major break when radical thinkers in the organization tried to draw the movement away from its intransigent past and towards a better conceptualization of present realities. And while the traditionalists balked at this heresy, within a decade and a half they came to acknowledge a portion of its necessity. The emergence of Gerry Adams brought a sophistication to Sinn Fein; his political leadership has shaped the movement into a revolutionary guerilla organization that now more closely balances the political effort with the armed struggle. But the gun still controls the party and the IRA remains primarily a military organization. Committed to continue the armed struggle against Britain, the IRA's resolute presence is unlikely to fade from either side of the border.

Meanwhile, Fianna Fail has followed a more pragmatic course. When the party's rhetoric threatened to undermine the stability of the government, it was forced to acknowledge that it was no longer a 'slightly constitutional party' and rejected the militant strain that existed in the organization. Fianna Fail accepted the reality of the twenty-six county state and its evolution as the most capable party to lead that state. Though it continues to play the 'green card,' it has tempered its zeal with an acceptance of the preeminent social and economic realities that are much more important to the public than any long-held frustrations over Ulster. Secure in its control of the twenty-six counties, the party is sure, as de Valera was, that 'time will

settle the other thing.'

Endnotes

1. Dick Walsh, The Party: Inside Fianna Fail (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1986), p. 22.

2. Of a population of approximately 1.3 million in the late 1960s, over 800,000 were Protestant. For exact figures see Patrick Buckland, A History of Northern Ireland (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), Chapter 5.

3. Bruce Arnold, What Kind of Country: Modern Irish Politics, 1968-1983 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 18. The B Specials were an overwhelmingly Protestant auxiliary police known to be especially harsh in their treatment of Catholics and the Special Powers Act gave wide powers of arrest search and detention without trial to the police.

4. Kevin Kelly, The Longest War: Northern Ireland and the IRA (London: Zed Press, 1982), p. 85.

5. Sean Cronin, Irish Nationalism (Dublin: The Academy Press, 1980), p. 189.

6. J. Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army: The IRA: 1916-1970 (New York: John Day, 1970), p. 340.

7. Kelly, p. 89.

8. Tim Pat Coogan, The I.R.A. (Glasgow: W. Collins and Sons, 1987), p. 420.

9. Kelley, p. 88.

10. Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, The Provisional IRA (London: Heinemann, 1987), p. 102.

11. Kelley, p. 87.

12. Ibid., p. 89.

13. Bishop and Mallie, p. 59.

14. Tim Pat Coogan, Disillusioned Decades: Ireland 1966-87 (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987), p. 208.

15. Paul Arthur and Keith Jeffery, Northern Ireland Since 1968 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 37.

16. Kelley, p. 127.

17. Ibid., p. 128.

18. Buckland, p. 147.

19. Bishop and Mallie, p. 101.

20. Cronin, p. 204.

21. Bishop and Mallie, p. 99.

22. Kelley, p. 126.

23. Ibid., p. 127.

24. Cronin, p. 204.

25. Arthur and Jeffery, p. 37.

26. Though the OIRA would initially continue to use force to defend Catholics in Ulster, by late 1972, the organization called a permanent cease-fire to focus on promoting non-sectarian working-class unity. Within a few years the OIRA had no military arm and continued to pursue its political aims as Sinn Fein the Worker's Party. By 1982, the party dropped the prefix Sinn Fein, completing its separation from the republican movement. Concentrating on its socialist aims as the Worker's Party, the organization is now an Irish equivalent of a eurocommunist party. Several smaller splinters of the republican movement also emerged during the turbulent 1970s; the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army. Though both are still involved in republican activities in Ulster, their impact is negligible and the PIRA remains the voice of the republican cause.

27. Coogan, The I.R.A., p. 468.

28. Bishop and Mallie, p. 261.

29. Arnold, p. 23.

30. Walsh, pp. 95-96.

31. Ibid., p. 92.

32. John Bowman, De Valera and the Ulster Question: 1917-1973 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 330.

33. Arnold, p. 39.

34. Walsh, p. 96.

35. The Republic of Ireland, Speeches and Statements on Irish Unity, Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish Relations by Taoiseach John Lynch: August 1969-October 1971 (Dublin: Government Information Bureau, 1971), p. 3. Britain vetoed the UN request in

the UN Security Council, claiming that Northern Ireland was an internal problem.

36. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 198.

37. Ronan Fanning, Independent Ireland (Dublin: Helicon Press, 1983), p. 209.

38. O'Brien, p. 250.

39. Adrian Guelke, "Loyalist and Republican Perspectives of the Northern Ireland Conflict: The UDA and the Provisional IRA," in Political Violence and Terror, ed. Peter H. Merkl (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 96.

40. Sean MacStiofain, Revolutionary in Ireland (Edinburgh: R and R Clark, Ltd., 1975), p. 141.

41. Coogan, Disillusioned Decades: Ireland 1966-87, p. 20.

42. Haughey, as mentioned, denied any knowledge of the affair and the other three defendants: CPT James Kelly of the Irish Army, accused of initiating the arms purchase; John Kelly, his IRA contact in Belfast and Albert Luykx, a nationalized Irishmen of Belgian descent who helped negotiate the arms deal in Antwerp; all claimed that they conducted the purchase under Defense Department approval. Essentially the case came down to a confrontation between Haughey and Defense Minister James Gibbons. The former claimed no involvement, the latter swore that Haughey had countenanced the venture. This conflict prevented the government from conclusively substantiating its case and all were acquitted. There still exists a great deal of mystery behind the extent of governmental involvement by all parties, to include Taoiseach Lynch, and the amount of clandestine arms importations possibly committed before the shipment was discovered in May of 1970.

43. T. Ryle Dwyer, Charlie: The Political Biography of Charles J. Haughey (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987), p. 86. Part of Lynch's strategy to ensure unity entailed calling for a "no confidence motion" in the Dail in November 1970. The strong bonds of party loyalty plus the even greater aversion to the possibility of turning the government over to a Fine Gael-Labour coalition at this critical time unified the Fianna Fail TDs and the 74 to 67 vote confirmed Lynch's leadership.

44. O'Brien, pp. 257-58.

45. Republic of Ireland, Speeches by the Taoiseach, p. 5.

46. O'Brien, pp. 262, 278.

47. E. Moxon Browne, "Terrorism in Northern Ireland: The Case of the Provisional IRA," in Terrorism: A Challenge to the State, ed. Juliet Lodge (Oxford: Martin Robinson, 1981), p. 151.

48. O'Brien, p. 282.

49. Bishop and Mallie, p. 189.

50. J. Bowyer Bell, The Gun in Politics: An Analysis of Irish Political Conflict, 1916-1986 (Oxford: Transaction Press, 1987), p. 225. There is a great deal of doubt about who was actually responsible for the bombings. The Fianna Fail government immediately blamed the PIRA, which helped secure the bill's passage. MacStiofain vehemently denies this accusation, claiming British and Fianna Fail duplicity in setting off the bombs, blaming the PIRA and then getting the necessary support to pass the legislation.

51. Arnold, p. 53. MacStiofain immediately began a hunger and thirst strike to protest his arrest. Allowing himself to be eventually persuaded by the government and some PIRA confidants to call off his strike, MacStiofain lost credibility with the hard-liners in the movement and was never able to regain the leadership of the organization.

52. Dwyer, p. 112.

53. Peter Mair, The Changing Irish Party System (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987) p. 37. For percentages and seats see Michael Gallagher, Political Parties in the Republic of Ireland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), Appendix 1.

54. Coogan, Disillusioned Decades: Ireland 1966-1987, p. 25.

55. Ibid., p. 29. For percentages and seats see Gallagher, Appendix 1.

56. Bishop and Mallie, p. 277. Since the 1969 split and due to the non-violent evolution of the OIRA, the term IRA came to mean the Provisionals and all references hereafter to the IRA refer to the PIRA.

57. John A. Hannigan, "The Armalite and the Ballot Box: Dilemmas of Strategy and Ideology in the Provisional IRA," Social Problems, 33 (October 1985), p. 33.

58. Kelly, p. 263.

59. Bishop and Mallie, p. 265.

60. Gerry Adams, The Politics of Irish Freedom (Kerry: Brandon Books, 1986), p. 72. The prisoners' five specific demands are listed on p. 80.

61. Hannigan, p. 33.

62. Ibid., p. 33.

63. Bishop and Mallie, p. 292.

64. Ibid., p. 294.

65. John M. Feehan, Bobby Sands and the Tragedy of Northern Ireland (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1983), p. 135.

66. Hannigan, p. 34.

67. Padraig O'Malley, The Uncivil Wars: Ireland Today (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), p. 269.

68. Michael MacDonald Children of Wrath: Political Violence in Northern Ireland (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), p. 120.

69. Bishop and Mallie, p. 301.

70. Ibid., p. 301.

71. Arthur and Jeffery, p. 44.

72. Bishop and Mallie, p. 358.

73. "Sinn Fein: Lonely But Deadly," The Economist, 4 February 1989, p. 50.

74. "Mr. Lynch and Ulster," The Economist, 25 June 1977, p. 14.

75. Conor O'Cleary, Phrases Make History Here: A Century of Political Quotations, 1886-1986 (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 1986), pp. 181-182.

76. Coogan, Disillusioned Decades: Ireland 1966-1987, p. 33.

77. Arnold, p. 142.

78. Dwyer, p. 127.

79. Arnold, p. 147.

80. Gallagher, Appendix 1.

81. Jonathon Marcus, "Ireland in Transition," The World Today, (March 1983), p. 119.

82. Ibid., p. 119.

83. Tom Garvin, "The North and the Rest: The Politics of the Republic of Ireland," in Consensus in Ireland: Approaches and Recessions, ed. Charles Townshend (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 104. Haughey did lose some supporters as one of his main protagonists, Desmond O'Malley, left Fianna Fail in 1985 and formed a new party, the Progressive Democrats. Liberal on moral issues and right-wing economically, it is also accommodationist on the issue of the North. Faring well since 1985, the party displaced Labour as the Republic's third largest party in the 1987 general elections. Ironically, a great deal of their success has come from an influx of dissident Fine Gael men.

84. The Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland Forum: Report (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1984). The members of the Forum were Haughey from Fianna Fail, Fitzgerald from Fine Gael, Dick Spring from Labour and John Hume from the Ulster Social Democratic and Labour Party. Sinn Fein and the IRA were conspicuously absent from the conference and Fitzgerald took pains to assert that "paramilitary organizations have nothing to show but a legacy of hate and suspicion."

85. Dwyer, p. 213.

86. Arthur and Jeffery, pp. 16-17. The full text of the Anglo-Irish Agreement is found in Appendix II.

87. "Cheerful, Not Hopeful," The Economist, 30 November 1985, p. 49.

88. Bishop and Mallie, p. 348.

89. Dwyer, pp. 219-221.

90. "Blown Away by Charley," The Economist, 30 August, 1986, pp. 44-5.

91. Brian Farrell and David M. Farrell, "The General Election of 1987," in Ireland at the Polls: 1981, 1982 and 1987, ed. Howard R. Penniman and Brian Farrell (Duke University Press, 1987), p. 238. The Progressive Democrats scored impressive gains, winning 11.9 per cent of the vote, drawing support equally from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

92. Ibid., p. 241.

Chapter 5: Reflections, Interpretations and Future Prospects

A. The IRA: Committed to the 'Long Haul'.

> If Wolfe Tone were alive today...he would stand with us...reviled as an upstart, a subversive and the 1798 equivalent of a gunman.
>
> -Gerry Adams, 1983

Despite the introduction of political activity encouraged by Gerry Adams, the brunt of IRA policy remains the armed struggle against Britain. Uncompromising in its determination to maintain this sacred tradition, the IRA has adopted a 'long haul' approach to the Ulster crisis. Simply put, the 'Long Haul' strategy acknowledges that it may take years to drive the British from Ulster and confirms that the movement is prepared to wage war indefinitely to promote this eventual end. The IRA admit that they are fighting for an objective to be achieved generations away but add that since they have received a torch kept alive by earlier generations, their generation must keep it alight and pass it on. They are sustained by the pride of being the chosen elite.[1] This elitism has helped to transform the IRA into perhaps the most sophisticated and experienced guerilla organization in Western Europe. Down from a peak of 1,000 volunteers during the 1970s, the Army now numbers around 200 fighters, organized in small, local cells that have improved cohesion and strengthened security.[2] A British Army intelligence report in late 1978 grudgingly acknowledged this developing trend within the movement:

> ...there is a stratum of intelligent, astute and experienced terrorists who provide the backbone of

> the organization...our evidence of the caliber of the rank-and-file terrorist does not support the view that they are merely mindless hooligans drawn from the unemployed and the unemployable.[3]

Yet this elitism has also contributed to the IRA's inability to effectively integrate the political with the military. The historic traditions that mandate the use of physical force have limited the IRA's vision and have even fostered an arrogance that underpins the movement's self-righteous belief in its infallibility. The depth of this arrogance can be summed up in statement made in 1924 by Mary McSwinney, a 'sea-green incorruptible' republican:

> All the citizens of Ireland today are legal citizens of the Republic; some are loyal, some disloyal, but all owe the same allegiance even if they all do not now pay it.[4]

With such a narrow focus it is not surprising that the Unionists of Ulster unequivocally reject the IRA and assert that no solution to the crisis can be achieved while it exists. But this single-minded commitment to violence has also disturbed many Ulster Catholics and Southern Irish. IRA military actions have often been bungled or poorly executed, resulting in noncombatant casualties and contributing to a growing resentment among all Irishmen, North and South. This "Paddy Factor," as it is derisively called by the British Army, led to the disaster at Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, in November 1987, where an IRA bomb intended for British Army units exploded prematurely, killing eleven ordinary Protestants and injuring nearly seventy gathered for a Remembrance Sunday service.[5] This fiasco led to renewed

security cooperation between the Republic and Britain and did little to enhance Sinn Fein's political initiatives on both sides of the border. Even though the IRA has publically apologized for any civilian deaths it has caused and has even disciplined overzealous units, the damage done by these actions only increases the public's frustration with the movement's intransigent use of force.

Still the IRA doggedly refuses to consider laying down its arms. The commitment to violence not only maintains continuity with the past but also gives the IRA its raison d'être. As many Provos understand, if they abandon militarism, if they cease to regard the eradication of the border as the immediate and vital aim, they might as well consign the movement to oblivion and continue as just another left-wing political party.[6] Thus they have developed a tenacious ethos which has allowed the movement to vindicate its actions. This ethos counts even the movement's most ignominious failures as successes if they reaffirm the ideal of an independent and united Ireland. Additionally, the glorification of sacrifice and the cult of martyrs are republicanism's way of dealing with its weakness, turning despair into inspiration.[7] With such methods of rationalization, the IRA will not be distracted from its pursuit of a united Irish state.

Logically, Sinn Fein suffers the most from this uncompromising stance. After the initial successes achieved in Ulster in 1982 and 1983, the party's standing has tapered off. Though strong local representation has been built throughout the

province and Sinn Fein draws around forty per cent of the Catholic vote there, it has not been able to decisively displace the reformist Social Democratic and Labour Party as the primary nationalist voice for the Ulster Catholics. In the Republic the party has had to face more formidable obstacles. With limited party machinery, still banned from the radio and television under Article 31 of the Offenses Against the State Act and marginalized by the republican pretensions of Fianna Fail, Sinn Fein has not been able to build the grass roots support so strongly desired by Adams. Also, a central hindrance to the development of Sinn Fein as a political force is its identification in the eyes of the voters as a party more concerned with the North and the objective of a united Ireland than with day to day political issues. Thus, there is considerable difficulty in transforming support for nationalist objectives into electoral success.[8] The party's dismal showing of 1.9 per cent of the poll in 1987 general election and a further drop to 1.2 per cent of the vote in the 1989 election shows that the 'ballot box' is not working in the South.[9]

What then is the prospectus for the republican movement in the days ahead? In Ulster the IRA's influence is likely to remain considerable. The single most important reason for this stems from its role as the only organization physically committed to defending the Ulster Catholics. And although the most blatant discriminations of the late 1960s have been erased, the Catholic minority still faces social, economic and political bias at the

hands of the Unionist majority. So a large part of the IRA's survival in the North comes from the fact that contemporary events still evoke vivid and bitter memories with many Catholics that reinforces the injustices of their existence and leads them to welcome the protection of the republicans.

In the Republic, the IRA's role is more difficult to decipher. Publically the IRA condemns the entire political system in the South, labelling it an illegitimate structure that usurped power through collusion with Britain. Its contempt for Irish political parties is even more pronounced. Gerry Adams has called the Dail "the preserve, by and large, of unprincipled careerists jockeying for ministerial Mercedes and using the taxpayers money to send Christmas cards to constituents."[10] Even Fianna Fail has not been spared from these virulent attacks. Adams condemned Fianna Fail for "unprecedented collaboration with the British regime" in its adherence to the Anglo-Irish Treaty and claims that the Treaty was designed "not in the interests of the Irish people, but to secure and protect the interests of British imperialism in Ireland." He has also accused Charles Haughey of "engaging in the politics of illusion and showing more concern for imagery than with substance."[11] Yet covertly there is still an undercurrent of mutual toleration that exists between the IRA and Fianna Fail, one that is so deeply rooted in their common past that it cannot be completely severed by any current antagonisms. Adams himself once commented that Sinn Fein "draws from the same pot as Fianna Fail,"[12] and a Fianna Fail deputy observed to Martin McGuinness

that the relationship between the two is that of 'second cousins.'[13] This stems in part from the fact that despite its suppression of the movement, many Fianna Fail party members continue to hold the IRA in an uneasy but high regard. The IRA's ideals, its intransigence and its bravery clearly puts it in line with the country's patriot dead, even if it might sometimes be inopportune to allow the heirs of the patriot dead to remain at large.[14] A good deal of this attitude is bound up in the fact that although the violence of the IRA is deplored, the reliance on the gun was instrumental in the achievement of independence for the twenty-six county state. The inherent irony in this paradox contributes to the tacit acceptance of IRA activity against the British. This toleration is also mirrored by the populace in the Republic. J. Bowyer Bell sums up this attitude:

> Political crime truly exists in Ireland and the IRA, whether engaged in train robbery or random bombing, can continue to feed on a considerable pool not so much of sympathy but rather of toleration...this by no means indicates that all Irish support the IRA or that the Irish ocean is friendly to the IRA fish, only that the habits of the past coupled with the situation in the North creates an ambivalence. The public tolerates the presence of the IRA.[15]

Additionally, the Southern public makes a distinction between action taken against the IRA in the Republic to maintain order and that taken by the British against the movement in Ulster. The former is seen as necessary for the stability of the state, the latter simply as more British oppression.

So notwithstanding the public's frustration with republican violence, the IRA will not go away. Though Gerry Adams has tried

to bring an acceptance of reality to the movement and has indicated his belief that IRA 'muscle' alone will not bring about the thirty-two county state that the movement desires, the IRA remains unwavering in its determination to wage war against Britain.[16] While this stance only serves to lessen the prospects for peace on the island, there is little chance that the IRA will dramatically change its orientation. The strength of its republican legacy is simply too strong. In short, as long as Ireland is divided and as long as England retains control over any portion of the country, armed republicanism will be an ineradicable tradition and the IRA, or some manifestation very much like it, will respond violently and unceasingly.

B. Fianna Fail: Under the Prodigious Shadow of de Valera.

> Our constitution enshrines in Article 2 and 3 the clear assertion of the belief that this island should be one political unit-a belief stretching far back into history and asserted and reasserted time and again by the vast majority of our people, North and South.
>
> -Charles Haughey, 1981

Fianna Fail's return to power in 1987 was not one that expressed overwhelming confidence in Haughey's minority government. The public had simply grown tired of Fitzgerald's coalition and its bungled efforts to improve the country's economic malaise.[17] Haughey proceeded to introduce an austere economic policy to salvage the ailing economy and rigorously adhered to it. The results were promising and by late 1988 the exchequer's borrowing requirement was down to under six per cent of the GNP and GNP

growth itself reached almost two per cent.[18] When public opinion polls in the Spring of 1989 showed Fianna Fail support at fifty-two per cent, Haughey gambled and dissolved the Dail in May. He called for new elections in June, hoping the government's resurgent popularity in the polls would translate into an electoral gain and return Fianna Fail to power with a solid majority. Unfortunately, Haughey miscalculated the strength of the public support. In a campaign that was not run with the usual Fianna Fail efficiency, the elections result were discouraging. While the party won 44.1 per cent of the vote, the same percentage as in 1987, they only took seventy-seven Dail seats, a loss of four.[19] Faced with another impasse in the Dail, Haughey's only option eventually became a joint administration with the Progressive Democrats, who fared poorly during the election but were ideologically the most compatible with Fianna Fail. For the first time in the party's history, Fianna Fail was forced to enter into a coalition government to maintain power. To many traditionalists this was almost as heretical as abandoning the party's national aim. Rumblings of discontent circulated amongst Fianna Fail members but Haughey really had no other feasible option and on 12 July 1989 was elected Taoiseach of a Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrats coalition.

This latest action by Haughey underscores the practical nature of the Fianna Fail party. Despite the uncompromising rhetoric behind the party's policy aims, especially in regard to the North, Fianna Fail over the years has displayed a pragmatism

which has significantly contributed to its evolution into the party of government in the Republic. Every Fianna Fail government, despite a long tradition of reunification rhetoric, has shown itself in practice to be more concerned with the internal stability of the Republic than with the return of Ulster to the nation. Though de Valera frequently denounced partition, his actions as Taoiseach solidified Fianna Fail's prominence in a twenty-six county state. Lemass abandoned de Valera's protectionism in his efforts to stimulate the Irish economy and Lynch's caution during the renewed 'Troubles' could be captured in a phrase attributed to him: "we must at all costs retain what we have achieved down here."[20] Though critics like dissident Fianna Fail member Kevin Boland have condemned Fianna Fail as "a once proud, idealistic and disciplined party that has degenerated into a miserable, unprincipled and leaderless rabble demonstrating its own chronic instability with every political wind that blows,"[21] the party's actions demonstrate its adaptability and perceptiveness in melding traditional party aims with contemporary realities.

Yet the shadow of de Valera still looms heavily over the party. His role as Fianna Fail founder and shaper of the modern Irish state gave him near deified status within the party. His seven original party goals have been unchanged, his 1937 constitution remains an unalterable feature of Fianna Fail ideology, and his vision of a unitary Irish state continues to be the basic, nonnegotiable tenet of Fianna Fail's stance towards the

North. Though Lemass, Lynch and even Haughey have deviated in some respects from the de Valera 'Bible,' none ever considered altering the orthodoxy of the constitution and the unitary state solution. And this approach has continued to draw substantial support in the Republic. Though the urgency and strength of the commitment has wavered over the years, a great number of Southern voters take great solace in the constitution's claim on the North and feel that a thirty-two county state is the proper solution to the conflict.[22]

Strangely enough, there is a considerable amount of irony in the legacy of Eamon de Valera. His striking success in achieving Irish sovereignty in the South while promoting an end to partition in the North actually made the latter goal that much more unreachable. His attempt at constructive politics on his side of the Boyne, while securing political stability in the South, also stabilizing the border.[23] The confessional and irredentist basis of his constitution clearly expressed a heretofore unstated Irish identity and proclaimed an Irish sovereignty that had been withheld so long under British colonial rule. And though de Valera's claim that nationality rather than politics was what mattered in Ireland suggests the key to his success, his policy of playing the 'green card' arguably ensured the dominance of Fianna Fail in Southern politics but also ensured that the 'orange card' would be all the more effective in the North.[24] The conflict produced by his legacy continues to plague the party as it attempts to find a workable solution to the Ulster problem.

Fianna Fail's attitude towards the IRA underscores this dilemma. As the constitutional embodiment of republicanism, Fianna Fail's bonds with the IRA are deeply intertwined. Yet as has been seen in preceding chapters, Fianna Fail did not hesitate from taking action to suppress the movement when IRA violence threatened the stability of the state. But this action usually stopped short of outright rejection of the IRA and in essence only repudiated its methods, not its aims or ideology. J. Bowyer Bell succinctly highlights the contradictions with which Fianna Fail must contend:

> Dublin has sought to stress the real over the ideal. The prime effort has been to strike at the pretensions of the IRA while stressing the legitimacy of the democratic institutions of the state....The government's problem is that many do not see a contradiction in supporting democratic institutions and tolerating the IRA. While the legitimacy of existing institutions is unquestioned, the presence of the IRA is accepted.[25]

So Fianna Fail, accepting this public ambivalence and trying to mix tradition with reality, has resorted to the carrot and stick to control the IRA. When their activities become too unsettling they are severely dealt with, yet during periods of quiet the government tends to look the other way. This attitude can also be seen in regard to the North. Fianna Fail administrations have used repressive measures to control IRA action at home while at the same time countenancing claims that the IRA's crimes in Ulster were political when it comes to the question of IRA men being extradited for offenses committed in the North.[26] The successive Fianna Fail governments' rejection of extradition has been so

strong that only after the international outcry which followed the bloodbath at Enniskillen in 1987 was Charles Haughey forced to implement that measure. Even then he inserted judicial safeguards that could hinder the process.

Although Fianna Fail has ensured the stability of the twenty-six county state, its reluctance to broaden its suppression of the men of violence has brought the party no closer to realizing de Valera's goal of a united Ireland. The irony of this is not lost on many critics who believe that the inflexible traditions of Fianna Fail and the IRA actually ensure the permanence of partition.

What then does the future hold for the party? Like the IRA, Fianna Fail is constrained by a hallowed legacy that underpins its very existence. It is unlikely that de Valera's goal of a unitary Irish state will be abandoned by the party faithful, despite the practical trends in recent administrations. This practicality has, however, given the party much flexibility in dealing with contemporary political, economic and social realities. For example, though Charles Haughey has no real enthusiasm for the Hillsborough Accords and still considers Ulster a 'failed political entity,' he has refrained from rescinding the legislation in order to avoid damaging Anglo-Irish relations. Additionally, the preeminence of social and economic concerns in the Republic has allowed the party to concentrate on these matters and avoid any possible compromises over the party's traditional aims in regard to Ulster. In fact, the issue of partition has

become very peripheral to many in the Republic and only the IRA's sporadic outbursts serve to remind them that the problem still exists. With this practical strategy Fianna Fail has been able to run a course that keeps faith with de Valera but allows the party to also respond to the needs of the populace. And though Fianna Fail's electoral standing has slipped slightly over the past decade, due more to internal party division and strategy miscalculations than any new trends in Irish politics, the party still draws support from over forty per cent of the country. Therefore with this strong position relatively secure in such a small and socially homogeneous country, Fianna Fail will more than likely continue to promote the vision of de Valera, conscious of the fact that without its considerable influence and input, no solution to the Ulster crisis can be achieved.

C. What About a United Ireland?

> It is perhaps the deepest political passion within this country that the North and South be united into one nation.
>
> -W. B. Yeats, 1925

The rhetoric surrounding the wish for a united Ireland has been substantial and unceasing since the introduction of partition in 1921. Though Fianna Fail and the IRA have naturally assumed the leadership in the struggle to unite the island, a good number of Irishmen with no connections to the republican movement also genuinely hope one day to see their nation as one. But with all the talk about a thirty-two county state, few have closely

examined the real implications that the North's return would have on the Republic.

Irish economist Anthony Coughlan has presented an optimistic assessment of the ending of partition. Claiming that the division of Ulster deprived the new Irish state of one-third of its potential population and half the country's taxable capacity, Coughlan believes that the unification of the island will economically benefit both North and South.[27] In this regard, he is in a minority. Many experts assert that the economic, social and political costs to unification would dramatically alter the face of a new Ireland and create insurmountable obstacles that could threaten the very functioning of the state. With high unemployment, inflation and declining industry the North's economy is far from healthy. A detailed estimate of the economic costs of Irish unity to the Irish Republic, prepared for the New Ireland Forum, made it clear that the fact that the Northern Irish socio-economic system is heavily dependent on British subvention means that the only form of Irish unification which would not place unsustainable burdens on the Republic's economy would be one entailing a continuation of heavy British financial involvement in Ireland through massive subvention of whatever new all-Ireland dispensation were to emerge.[28]

A particularly heavy portion of these costs would come from social welfare and health services. With higher state funding of social welfare expenditures in the North and a health system organized virtually on a state financed basis, in contrast to the

mixed state and private resources system in the Republic, the integration of these benefits would place a heavy drain on government spending.[29] An estimate done in the mid-1970s suggested that for the Republic to provide social services such as welfare, health care and education to everyone on the island, the average family in the Republic would be forced to pay at least an additional 30 per cent in taxes.[30] Though this statement is somewhat dated, it gives a rough idea of how difficult it will be to bring Ulster into the South. Additionally, the cost to the Irish government still adhering to Haughey's austerity policies, would be devastating.

The question of NATO would also pose a delicate problem. Notwithstanding the strategic implications of Ulster to NATO, the North contributes significantly to the British defense industry with state subsidized ship-building and aircraft manufacturing. Neutrality has been a key tenet of Irish sovereignty and the majority of Irish public opinion opposes joining the Alliance. With the Republic spending only 1.6 per cent of its GNP on defense, the decrease in demand in the North would only exacerbate the unemployment there. The entire question of unemployment and the need to promote new jobs would weigh heavily on the Irish government.

Socially there are other concerns. In the 1980s Ireland has been much preoccupied with matters of sexual morality, in particular abortion, contraception and divorce. The markedly different Protestant view on these issues would create major

social conflicts in a united state. Also, the Ulster Protestants will require the assurance that their non-possession of Irish language qualifications and their upbringing outside the Catholic educational network will not disadvantage them in any way.[31] This Protestant identity would make its mark in the political arena too. Although unification would theoretically remove the bases for sectarian party politics, it is unlikely that the Unionists would politically demobilize. The potential impact of a twenty per cent block of representatives from Protestant Ulster on the Dail could have an immediately destabilizing effort on Irish politics.[32] In short, the social, cultural and political homogeneity of de Valera's Republic would be lost with the integration of the Ulster state.

To the IRA these costs are not of consequence. The republican movement visualizes a complete restructuring of the Irish state once unification is achieved. Adams' goal of a decentralized socialist state remains the ultimate objective of the IRA. This approach has alarmed many in the Republic, including Fianna Fail, who see the IRA promoting Marxism, subversion and anarchy in the Republic. Yet Adams denies these charges, stating only that the union of Ulster will necessitate institutional changes to ensure the positive integration of the Protestant minority. Daithi O'Conaill, a close associate of Adams in Sinn Fein, addressed this issue in 1982:

> It is not the policy of the republican movement to overthrow the government of the South. What the republican movement seeks is the abolition of both partitioned states in Ireland. It is inevitable

> that when the North goes out of existence, Southern Ireland will also go.[33]

Fianna Fail is not convinced by these assertions. It has shrugged off the negative aspects of unification and continues to assert, in accordance with de Valera's constitution, that the reintegration of the national territory can be accomplished under the present political and social institutions of the Irish Republic. Charles Haughey has been so sure of this that he has often ignored Unionist input and has stated that together Dublin and London can come to an agreement over unification. This lack of concern for the potential needs of an integrated Protestant minority has only served to stiffen Unionist resistance to unity. Yet the unitary state solution has remained an unwavering aspect of Fianna Fail ideology. It is, in fact, Fianna Fail's reason for existence and its continual reaffirmation reinforces the party's sense of identity and community. In a country like Ireland where tradition and patronage are so strong, it is the party's rallying call, its 'green card' that maintains the wide base of support it draws across Irish society.

Still many see a Machiavellian twist to Fianna Fail's rhetoric about unification. With the issue of Irish unity central to Fianna Fail strategy, its achievement would take away the party's raison d'être. One Fianna Fail party member candidly remarked: "If Haughey threw away the green card by agreeing to a common approach on the North, what else do we have?"[34] Thus Fianna Fail needs, if not Irish unity, at least the issue of Irish unity. Other critics have been more direct. Kevin Boland claims

that Fianna Fail balked at the final step which would have achieved the national objective but which might eventually lose them the political preeminence to which they have been accustomed.[35] To achieve a united Ireland would be to work themselves out of a very comfortable job. This point underscores the potential for radical political change that unification could bring to Ireland. Another Fianna Fail deputy captured this dilemma when he discussed the impact of the influx of Unionists into the Dail:

> Fianna Fail would never be able to get an overall majority. It would be the end of a lot of jobs and Mercedes for the boys. The Unionists would permanently hold the balance of power.[36]

This allegation of perpetuating partition has plagued Fianna Fail. The party's recent emphasis on the economic and social aspects of Irish life has helped deflect some of this criticism and shows that the party has been solidifying its grass roots support for the prospect of 'life after reunion.'

Nevertheless the challenge of unification poses many potential problems for the Irish state. There is a distinct possibility that many aspects of Irish life as they are currently known would be drastically altered. And although a majority of the electorate in the Republic endorse some sort of united Irish state,[37] the strength of their commitment has cooled as the economic, social and political realities of uniting the island make them aware that the process will probably be slow, costly, difficult and uncertain.

D. Is There a Solution?

> Let the men of violence take note of this unambiguous message from the nationalist people of Ireland: the future of the island will be built by the ballot box and the ballot box alone.
>
> -Garret Fitzgerald, 1983

What then is left to be said about the IRA, Fianna Fail and the hopes for a united Ireland? Irish political scientist Tom Garvin once noted that "partition in Ireland is something which resembles death and taxes, something one wants very much to be without, but something which one has little idea how to avoid."[38] History has proved him right, as after almost seventy years partition appears no closer to being erased then it was when Lloyd George oversaw its construction in 1921. And though this work has shown how the historic traditions of Fianna Fail and the IRA have hindered their efforts to find a solution, it is also necessary to briefly look at the other major players in this protracted drama and analyze their contributions towards solving this dilemma.

Of course Great Britain has played a central role in the affair. Even de Valera, as far back as in 1938, admitted that it would be difficult to develop a workable solution without help from London.[39] Garret Fitzgerald seconded this claim in the New Ireland Forum and called on Britain to respond positively to the Republic's initiatives. Yet Britain has preferred to view the crisis as an internal affair and a security issue. The main problem that the British face in regard to a united Ireland is the

near impossibility of expelling a million citizens from the United Kingdom-especially in response to a campaign of terrorism and also when 800,000 of those citizens unequivocally wish to remain British.[40] But Britain has attempted to develop feasible alternatives to the Ulster crisis. In addition to their involvement in Sunningdale and Hillsborough, the British government has pursued political initiatives within Ulster as well. Frustrated by the continued failures of these overtures, many British politicians have begun to despair and wonder if anything can be done to ever bring peace to the island. So Britain has continued to maintain the status quo, albeit with more direct control from London, and steadfastly assures the Unionist population there that they will remain British citizens as long as the majority so desire. This has been reinforced by the intransigent assurances that Mrs. Thatcher has regularly made to the Unionists. Thus by ignoring the peaceful protests and underpinning Protestant hegemony Britain elicits the violence it deplores.[41] The British try to overlook the Ulster question and remain there not because they want to but because they cannot figure out how to leave. By ignoring the issue, many in Britain simply hope it will go away.

The Protestants of Ulster have no such illusions and have played an extremely vigorous role in maintaining their link to the United Kingdom. In many ways the ideology and historic traditions of these Protestants have been responsible for their rejection of any overtures from the South. They want to remain British and

despite their Irish heritage want no part of the Republic. Unionist extremists were instrumental in subverting the Sunningdale Agreement and they have vehemently denounced Hillsborough as a sellout to the Northern Catholics and the South. They have a history of paramilitary violence that parallels that of the IRA, and although these groups have not gained the same notoriety as the republicans, they have been just as murderous and continue to promote the same sectarianism of which the IRA is accused. With the same militance and fanaticism as the IRA, these Unionist extremists are as equally responsible for the proliferation of violence in Ulster and for the failure of any attempted political solution.

The last major players outside the Republic are the Northern Catholics. Though Fianna Fail and the IRA ostensibly proclaim to champion their cause in the quest for unity, many in the North only seek basic equality. A survey published in London in 1985 showed that 'marked differences' still exist between the Catholic and Protestants communities in such areas as educational background, employment, occupation and housing.[42] To many of these Catholics unity has become a peripheral issue as they struggle to obtain equal treatment, basic human rights, respect and, of course, jobs. Over and over again, ordinary Catholics say that only if human equality were given them, the IRA would be out of business in a couple of years.[43]

How then do the inflexible positions of the IRA and Fianna Fail fit into the prospects for a solution? The IRA has adjusted

its strategy in several ways. Over the past two years IRA military activity has been primarily carried out in Britain and against British targets in Western Europe. Though critics say this is only because of improved security measures in Ulster, there is a general feeling that the IRA is trying to avoid violence in Northern Ireland in order to improve the potential for dialogue with the Unionists. Even Gerry Adams, in his 1989 Presidential address to Sinn Fein, sounded remarkably conciliatory towards the Ulster Protestants. Admitting that the IRA needed to look at themselves from the Protestant point of view, Adams stressed that the movement must work hard to understand the Unionists and overcome the "gulf of pain and hate and the years of separation" that have prevented the realization of the nonsectarian Irish state promoted in the teachings of Wolfe Tone.[44] Despite these entreaties, the IRA has steadfastly maintained that it will not waver in its continuation of the armed struggle. In its own way it sees these developments as a foundation for nonsectarian cooperation once the British are driven from the island. Yet it seems to overlook the strength of the bond between Ulster and Great Britain and its military action against the latter only serves to undermine any nonsectarian overtures it has made towards the former. In short, the IRA has become a prisoner of its own past and militant obsessions, for its activities have created conditions in which moderate Protestants remain suspicious and prejudiced against any contacts with the South while the militant Protestants grow more entrenched in their

bigotry and hatred of the Republic.[45] The dominance of the gun over the party continues to cripple any serious efforts by the movement towards reconciliation with the North.

Thus the Republic remains the key to any feasible solution. The novel efforts of the Fine Gael-Labour coalitions at Sunningdale in 1973 and Hillsborough in 1985 both promoted conciliatory, flexible frameworks that offered the most potential for bringing peace to the island. The intransigence of the Unionist and republican extremists, coupled by a lukewarm reaction from Fianna Fail and Britain, however, doomed Sunningdale to a quick end. Fianna Fail's continued reluctance to really pursue cooperation through Hillsborough also limits its chances for survival. And it appears unlikely in the future that Fine Gael, Labour or the Progressive Democrats will be able to unseat Fianna Fail as the largest party in the Republic. Additionally, the opposing economic views of Fine Gael and Labour make the possibility of a future coalition between them remote. Therefore, no matter how committed these parties may be towards a compromise settlement with Ulster, there is little chance that any of their proposals will be realized without the full support of Fianna Fail. In short, the size and support base of Fianna Fail make its influence essential to any solution emerging from the Republic. Yet Fianna Fail suffers from the same ideological inflexibility as the IRA. The nonnegotiable status of the Constitution and the unitary state solution have only strengthened the 'seige mentality' of the Ulster Protestants. Haughey's pro-republican

past, his hesitancy to really suppress the IRA threat and his determination that Ulster return to the Republic before any negotiating is conducted over the necessary changes required to protect the traditions of the North, simply harden the Unionist resistance against any mediation with the South. Some have even hinted that Fianna Fail has established a covert, symbiotic alliance with the IRA to promote their mutual ends. Padraig O'Malley puts it this way:

> The aim of Fianna Fail is to induce consent; the aim of the IRA is to make Northern Ireland ungovernable. The more successful the IRA is at the latter, the more susceptible Northern Protestants are to the former. The IRA therefore complements Fianna Fail...The IRA ensures that Northern Ireland continues to be unstable, thereby justifying Mr. Haughey's claim that it is a failed political entity and increasing the possibility that Britain will suffer a change of political will.[46]

Of course, Fianna Fail has rejected this allegation, but even should it be true it will not succeed in its ending the dilemma. The continuation of violence has made Britain and the Unionists, if anything, only more determined to resist the IRA's demands and succumb to any type of forced agreement. Thus irrespective of any alliance it might or might not have with the IRA, the ideological straightjacket worn by Fianna Fail prevents the formulation of any acceptable alternative and reinforces the continued partition of the island.

What then of a solution? What must be understood by all parties in their efforts to end the crisis is the need for compromise. The hard-liners North and South must accept some

diminution of their goals in order to achieve any part of them and bring lasting peace to Ireland. In order to secure a united Irish state, Fianna Fail, with its preeminence in the Republic, should take the first step. By amending de Valera's constitution and accepting that a unitary state is not the only acceptable solution, Fianna Fail could make the first genuine overture towards reconciliation. Though traditionalists would reject this move as heresy to the legacy of de Valera, the party leadership must show the same courage that de Valera himself displayed. To draw the proper lesson from its history, Fianna Fail should not look to de Valera's unyielding stance over unification, but to his acceptance of contemporary realities in rejecting the republican tradition of violence in forming his new party. The strength of character he showed in deviating from the traditions of the past then should be displayed again in accepting the realities of the present.

The amending and/or removal of Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution, which maintains the irrendentist claims to Ulster, would ease a great deal of mistrust amongst the Northern Protestants and send a signal to Britain that the Republic is sincere in its efforts to settle the issue. The British would then be moved to reciprocate and push for compromise in the North. With these intiatives, true dialogue could be established to secure reform for the Northern Catholics and move towards an acceptable political framework for the island. The return of Ulster to the South could then be promoted through an atmosphere

of cooperation and trust with firm guarantees to the Protestant minority.

This action would also destroy the pretensions of the IRA. By admitting that a unitary state is not the only immediate solution and promoting reform in the North, Fianna Fail can deny the IRA its raison d'être. With its broad support base in the Republic, a concerted effort by Fianna Fail towards a negotiated settlement can promote the end of the public's ambivalence toward the republican movement. This is especially crucial in the North where the equality so desired by the Northern Catholics would be the first step in putting the IRA 'out of business.'

There are many uncertainties in this proposal, prominent among them the historic resistance of the Unionist and IRA extremists to accepting any compromise whatsoever. It can only be hoped that more moderate voices will surface within those groups that can persuade them that only through mediation can there ever be peace on the island. Thus it remains imperative that all players, especially Fianna Fail and the IRA, find the strength and determination to put the ghosts of their sacred past to rest and accept that in the present realities their inflexible ideologies are no longer relevant. Unless these organizations have the courage to break away from the impedimenta of their predecessors, the future for peace and unity in Ireland will remain in the shadow of this uncompromising past.

Endnotes

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7. Michael MacDonald, Children of Wrath: Political Violence in Northern Ireland (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), pp. xi, 151.

8. Jim Smyth, "A Discredited Cause? The IRA and Support for Political Violence," in Ireland's Terrorist Trauma: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, ed. Yonah Alexander and Alan O'Day, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 119.

9. Michael Gallagher, "Politics in Ireland After the 1989 General Elections," Parliamentary Affairs 43 (July 1990), p. 358.

10. Gerry Adams, The Politics of Irish Freedom (Kerry: Brandon Books, 1986), p. 38.

11. Sinn Fein, The Presidential Address by Gerry Adams, MP (Dublin: Sinn Fein Publicity Dept., 1989), pp. 9, 12.

12. Tim Pat Coogan, Disillusioned Decades: Ireland 1966-1987 (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987), p. 22.

13. Adams, p. 48.

14. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (New York Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 203.

15. J. Bowyer Bell, The Gun in Politics: Analysis of Irish Political Conflict, 1916-1986 (Oxford: Transaction Books, 1987), p. 231.

16. "Lonely But Deadly," The Economist, 4 February 1989, p. 51.

17. Brian Farrell and David M. Farrell, "The General Election of 1987," in Ireland at the Polls, 1981, 1982 and 1987, ed. H.R. Penniman and Brian Farrell (Duke University Press, 1987), p. 237.

18. "Brimstone is Good for You," The Economist, 22 October 1988, p. 56.

19. Gallagher, p. 358. Another factor in the party's poor performance was Haughey's physical condition. Having suffered a serious lung ailment that kept him in intensive care for awhile in late 1988, he was not at full strength for the campaign.

20. Kevin Boland, The Rise and Decline of Fianna Fail (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1982), p. 68.

21. Ibid., p. 115.

22. A June 1983 poll taken by the Market Research Bureau of Ireland showed that 60-65 per cent of the people in the Republic favor unification in principle. For more detailed statistics over this issue see W. Harvey Cox, "Who Wants a United Ireland?," Government and Opposition 20 (Winter 1988), pp. 29-47.

23. John Bowman, De Valera and the Ulster Question, 1917-1973 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 338.

24. Ibid., pp. 299-300.

25. Bell, p. 232.

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29. Republic of Ireland, New Ireland Forum: A Comparative Description of the Economic Structure and Situation, North and South (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1983), pp. 41-48.

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34. Cox, "The Politics of Irish Unification in the Irish Republic," p. 450.

35. Boland, p. 69.

36. John M. Feehan, Bobby Sands and the Tragedy of Northern Ireland (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1983), p. 51.

37. Cox, "Who Wants a United Ireland?," p. 35.

38. Tom Garvin, "The North and the Rest: The Politics of the Republic of Ireland," in Consensus in Ireland: Approaches and Recessions, ed. Charles Townshend (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 109.

39. Bowman, p. 314.

40. Bew and Patterson, p. 142.

41. MacDonald, p. 151.

42. Coogan, p. 237.

43. "Brotherly Hate," The Economist, 25 June 1988, p. 22.

44. Sinn Fein, p. 10. For a good thumbnail sketch of IRA activity over the past two years see The Chicago Tribune, 31 July 1990, pp. 1-2.

45. Paul Wilkinson, "The PIRA: An Assessment in the Wake of the 1981 Hunger Strike," Government and Opposition, 17 (Spring 1982), p. 145.

46. O'Malley, pp. 307, 310.

Appendix 1

Patterns of Government Formation and Fianna Fail Party Support, 1932-1989

Year	Total # of Seats	Government	Seats Won Fianna Fail	% of Popular Vote Fianna Fail
1932	153	Fianna Fail majority single party	72	44.5
1933	153	Fianna Fail majority single party	77	49.7
1937	138	Fianna Fail majority single party	69	45.2
1938	138	Fianna Fail majority single party	77	51.9
1943	138	Fianna Fail majority single party	67	41.9
1944	138	Fianna Fail majority single party	76	48.9
1948	147	Fine Gael-Labour minority coalition	68	41.9
1951	147	Fianna Fail majority single party	69	46.3
1954	147	Fine Gael-Labour majority coalition	65	43.4
1957	147	Fianna Fail majority single party	78	48.3
1961	144	Fianna Fail minority single party	70	43.8
1965	144	Fianna Fail majority single party	72	47.7
1969	144	Fianna Fail majority single party	75	45.7
1973	144	Fine Gael-Labour majority coalition	69	46.2
1977	148	Fianna Fail majority single party	84	50.6
1981	156	Fine Gael-Labour minority coalition	78	45.3
1982(Feb.)	166	Fianna Fail minority single party	81	47.3
1982(Nov.)	166	Fine Gael-Labour majority coalition	75	45.2
1987	166	Fianna Fail minority single party	81	44.2
1989	166	Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrats minority coalition	77	44.1

Statistics compiled from:

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