

A Detailed Look at *The New York Times*
and
The War in Ireland

*A DECADE
OF
DECEIT*

Maurice Burke SMA

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to

Bobby Sands MP

and to all

Irish Prisoners of War

A Detailed Look at *The New York Times*
and
The War in Ireland

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A DECADE OF DECEIT

Maurice Burke SMA

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INTRODUCTION

Since February 1971, Freedom Fighters of the Irish Republican Army have been fighting a War of Liberation in British-occupied Ireland. They have been subjected to a smear campaign and labelled terrorists by a regime that has committed more violations of human rights every year in Ireland since 1971, making allowances for relative population size, than have been committed in any other country in the world. Britain pleaded guilty to torture before the European Commission of Human Rights in 1977, hoping that the case would not go into court and the details of brutality committed by security personnel would not have to be made public. Although the British Attorney General promised that the torture would cease, Irish nationals are still being tortured. On March 18, 1981, the International League for Human Rights asked Britain to revise the emergency laws for interrogation of prisoners and to indict the police officers who extracted confessions by torture.

We would like to express our gratitude to *The New York Times* for unwittingly giving us the opportunity to explain one aspect of the Irish situation that has not been told in America.

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Illustrations by
Brjan Mor O'Baoigill
Staff artist, The Irish People Newspaper

THE BIRTH OF THE PROVISIONALS

The magazine section of *The New York Times* of Sunday, March 1st, contained an article on terrorism. Its basic theme was that there is an international network of terrorist organizations trained directly or indirectly by the Soviet Union for the "destabilization of Western democratic society." One organization singled out for particular attention was the Provisional Irish Republican Army. References to the situation in Ireland were clearly designed for anti-Irish propaganda in America: the errors and untruths would be too obvious to Irish readers. Throughout the article there was a deliberate effort to assign to the non-Marxist Provisional IRA the views and activities of the pro-Marxist "Officials". Before dealing with specific items it is necessary to give a brief account of the origins of the Provisionals.

BIRTH OF THE PROVISIONALS

"The Provisional IRA was formed in 1969-70 following a split between the more nationalist and militarist Provisionals and the Marxist-inclined Officials." (*Report by Two Members of the Committee of the Judiciary*, 1978, page 106.) The origin of the split goes back to 1963 when Cathal Goulding became Chief of Staff. Under his direction the IRA became less militant and moved to the political left. A policy statement, "*Ireland Today*", drawn up in 1968, advocated recognition of both Stormont and Dublin Parliaments and a link up with the Communist Party of Ireland. At a secret Sinn Féin meeting in December 1969, a majority of those present (39 - 12) voted in favor of the new policy. The Ard Fheis or convention was held on January 11, 1970, and the vote was 153 for adoption and 104 against. The two factions separated and the non-Marxists became the Provisional IRA.

WHY THEY ARE SUPPORTED

Although a minority at the convention, the Provisionals gained the allegiance of the majority of nationalists in north-east Ireland; not only were they prepared to use arms to defend nationalist areas but as Conor Cruise O'Brien has written: "There was no taint of communism

about them." Moscow gave public support to the Officials and denounced the Provisionals. *Pravda* in 1972 published an interview with Cathal Goulding, the Officials' Chief of Staff, in which Provisional IRA activities were described as "inhuman acts in moral terms and provocative in political terms." (*Northern Ireland: A Political Directory*, page 64.) The non-militant-political-only Moscow line was also seen in Ireland. Betty Sinclair of the Communist Party resigned from the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association following the election of an Executive favoring a more militant approach to the situation in north-east Ireland. (Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State*, page 254.)

LIE #1

"During 1972", according to the article in *The New York Times*, "the Habash-Haddad front held a series of secret meetings in Dublin organizing the multinational terrorist team that would operate under Carlos the Jackal." In all the millions of words that have been written about the situation in Ireland, the only reference to 1972 coordination between "extremist groups in Ireland and in other trouble areas around the world" is to be found in the introduction to Gary MacEoin's *Northern Ireland: Captive of History*. His authority is rather interesting: a *New York Times* article published in August 1972! He didn't mention anything about any meetings in Dublin, however. Perhaps Claire Sterling was thinking of a series of meetings in Ireland from July 22 through August 3, 1974, which was attended by 140 delegates from revolutionary organizations in over 20 countries. That was an Anti-Imperialist Festival sponsored by the Marxist Officials. The Provisionals were not represented. (*RECON*, January, 1975.)

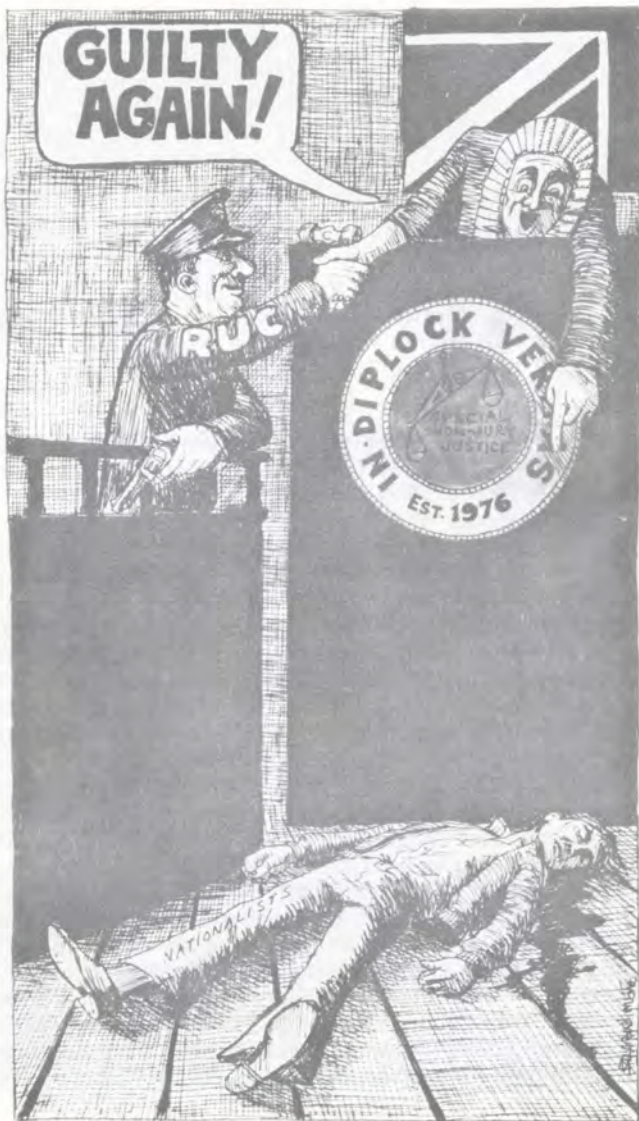
LIE #2

"The first IRA contingents were dispatched to Jordanian guerrilla camps in 1969", according to Claire Sterling in *The New York Times*. The Provisional IRA didn't even exist then. They were formed in January 1970. She went on to refer to a meeting in October 1971, in which "delegates from 14 countries agreed to coordinate international terrorist plans." She claims, "Provo Leaders" were present, and she names Seamus Costello as one of the speakers.

Costello was never a member of the Provisional IRA. He belonged to the Irish National Liberation Army, a militant faction which had developed within the Marxist Officials. The Provisionals had actually refused as a matter of policy to cooperate with international groups: "Irish freedom will not be won by involvement with an international movement of socialists." (Quoted by Farrell, *op. cit.* page 270.) A photo of Costello and one Peter McMullan was included in a group of 9 terrorists named in *The New York Times* article as "among the most deadly in the world." McMullan is a former British paratrooper currently living in the United States who has the distinction of being "wanted" both by the British and the Provisional IRA.

LIE #3

The Provisionals, according to Claire Sterling, got the lion's share of a million dollars worth of weapons allotted at the "1972" meeting. Moscow in 1972 was denouncing the Provisionals. "Within a year", according to Claire, "the cargo vessel *Claudia* steamed out of Tripoli toward the coast of Ireland bearing 250 Kalashnikov rifles and other weapons - five tons of the very best Soviet-bloc hardware." Actually she could with equal truth have written: "five tons of the very best United States hardware", for an objective account of the *Claudia* incident (McEoin, *op. cit.* p. 8) states: "In March 1973, the Irish navy intercepted off the Irish coast a German-owned coaster carrying five tons of arms, ammunition and explosives, with a top IRA leader on board. The armaments, believed to have been taken aboard in Libya, had originated in Russia, East Europe, Belgium, Britain and the United States." Why state that all the arms had come from the Soviet bloc when in fact they had not? The truth is that the IRA like any insurgent organization needs arms and has to get them wherever it can. Using the armaments of any particular nation doesn't mean that the organization espouses the political philosophy dominant in the country of origin. The March 1st article, however, was a change for readers of *The New York Times*. They are usually told that IRA arms come from America and are paid for by Irish Americans.



BRITISH PROPAGANDA

Claire Sterling in her *New York Times* March 1st article claims that she "spent the last two and a half years" doing research for her forthcoming book *The Terror Network*. It would seem that she needs help in remedial reading if the *New York Times* adaptation of her work is a representative sample of her masterpiece. She makes allegations completely contrary to verifiable facts and raises issues that many British officials would prefer to forget about.

IRA fundraising she claims "is mostly done at home nowadays, by means of protection rackets, brothels, massage parlors and bank stickups." Nationalists in occupied Ireland will really enjoy reading that sentence as it is bound to recall for them a Provisional IRA counter-intelligence victory. To quote from page 151 of Kennedy Lindsay's *Ambush at Tully-West*: "British Intelligence has been able to secure numerous local informers and agents through blackmail, bribery and straight payments. Blackmail has always loomed large in intelligence work, but never more so than today.... A minor episode gives a glimpse of the ethics.... D 15 in conjunction with army intelligence and the Special Branch set up two brothels and a 'massage parlour' in Malone Road and Antrim Road districts of Belfast to obtain material with which to blackmail clients into becoming informers or agents. A London vice king was brought in to make the arrangements. The girls were required to take the Official Secrets oath. They were young and presentable and paid 500 pounds per week. Conversations with clients were tape-recorded, and remote-controlled 35-millimetre Olympus cameras took photographs in the bedrooms. In August 1972, the Provisional IRA discovered what was happening and fired shots into one of the buildings. The establishments were closed immediately and some time later the main details appeared in the Dublin press."

It is easy of course to make allegations, especially when sources are not given. Unlike Claire Sterling, Kennedy Lindsay doesn't make vague generalizations in his exposure of terrorist acts committed by British security

forces: he gives specific examples. *The New York Times* or Claire Sterling might follow his lead by letting us know, for example, where the "brothels" and "massage parlors" mentioned in the article 'Terrorism' were or are located. Until they do so we are justified in concluding that they, like many other such stories, are propaganda products of the British Army Press Office.

The British Army Press Office, aided by writers like Claire Sterling, has tried on many occasions to link the Provisional IRA with sex and other scandals. John McGuffin on pages 188/9 of his book *Internment* gives two typical examples: "The black propaganda squad, as recommended by Brigadier Kitson, continued to be active. Independent Television Network's second item on 23 August 1972 was a story about three tiny girls, aged eight, who had been used by the 'unscrupulous IRA' to push a pram containing a huge bomb towards a military post at the back of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. The 'chivalrous soldiers were shocked and refused to fire, even at the risk of their own lives'. The entire story was subsequently admitted by the British Army Press Office to be totally untrue. But ITN carried no denial. Similarly, the same week saw the *London Evening News* and *The Sun*, both unobtainable in Ireland, carrying lead stories about IRA gunmen bestially raping young girls at gunpoint in the Markets area of Belfast. Gruesome details were given to titillate jaded English palates." Having made the mistake of naming the area in which the alleged incident was supposed to have taken place, the army, when Irish newspapers took up the story, had the RUC issue a statement admitting that the story was completely false.

The claims that IRA fundraising activities include "bank stickups" should be of interest to many groups. Members of major political parties in Dublin's Parliament, for example, will be reminded by it that the founders of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael used that particular fundraising technique when they were active in the War of Independence. British Government officials, especially the Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, won't be grateful to Claire for

mentioning unauthorized removal of money from banking institutions. For them it will revive memories of Kenneth and Keith Littlejohn. Both were criminals. Kenneth made the "Wanted List" in Britain's *Police Gazette* after one robbery and eluded capture by taking up residence in Ireland. There, posing as a wealthy industrialist, he established links with the Official IRA. While Kenneth was hobnobbing with Marxists, brother Keith was socializing with a Lady Pamela Onslow. They had first met when Pamela was a volunteer prison visitor and Keith was enjoying an enforced stay in a Borstal institution. They kept in touch after his release. When Kenneth decided to try and get his name removed from the wanted list by exploiting his link with the Officials, brother Keith, through Lady Pamela, was able to put him in touch with the proper authorities. Both were signed up with the British Secret Service by Lord Carrington, then Defense Minister, and Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, Cabinet aide to Prime Minister Heath.

The Littlejohn brothers, besides supplying information about the Official IRA, were ordered to carry out bank robberies and other illegal activities, including murder in the south of Ireland, to discredit the Republican movement. Their mission was a self-financing one, the proceeds of their activities going into their own pockets. Kenneth, in a British Broadcasting Corporation interview after their masters had disowned them following their capture, revealed that he knew of 16 bank robberies arranged by British Intelligence. He also claimed credit for the petrol bombing of Police Stations in the south of Ireland and threatened to reveal the names of those responsible for the 1972 bombings in Dublin which killed two persons and injured more than 100 others. Details showing British involvement in the Dublin bombings may be found in Michael Cunningham's *Monaghan: County of Intrigue*. G. O'Danachair devotes Appendix D of his *Provos: Patriots or Terrorists*, 1974 revised edition, to the Littlejohn brothers.

BALLOT

SANDS ☒

WEST ☐



WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS?

"The terrorist," Claire Sterling writes, "uses violence not to punish the victim but to intimidate the audience, to impose his political will by force when he cannot achieve it by democratic means." A review of the history of north-east Ireland in the light of that definition shows that terrorist tactics were used by Unionist governments there and indeed are still being used by units of the British army.

THE STORMONT YEARS

Northern Ireland was from its beginnings an undemocratically constituted statelet. "Whatever Ulster's right may be," Winston Churchill wrote, "she cannot stand in the way of the whole of the rest of Ireland. Half a province cannot impose a permanent veto on the nation." Fifty years of Stormont legislation, according to the June 1969 *Review of the International Commission of Jurists*, had but one purpose: "Discrimination in housing and in employment has been utilised in order to weaken economically the Catholic minority and thus to preclude Catholics from acquiring property rights, and to induce emigration." The National Council on Civil Liberties reported in 1935: "The Northern Irish Government have used Special Powers (internment without trial) towards securing the domination of one particular political faction and at the same time towards curtailing the lawful activities of its opponents." Assaults by Orange mobs led by the police on the minority ghettos in Belfast and Derry, in August 1969, were the decisive factor leading to the sending in of British army units to restore order.

THE BRITISH ARMY

British troops were welcomed at first by the nationalist minority. The 'honeymoon period', which lasted until June 1970, is seen now as corresponding to what Britain's Brigadier Frank Kitson described in *Low Intensity Operations* as the non-violent phase of a counter-insurgency operation when the army mixes socially with the enemy and gathers information about the community and its leaders. Kitson used a Mao Tse Tung analogy to describe insurgents

when he compared them to fish. The general population he compared to the water in which the fish swim. "It might be necessary" he wrote, "to kill the fish by polluting the water." One method used to 'pollute the water' is the house search: "Soldiers, trained as shock troops or commandoes, seal off a Nationalist area in the early morning hours; doors of homes are then broken down, men, women and children are dragged from their beds at gunpoint; floor boards are ripped up, plumbing fixtures smashed (including toilets), furniture ripped open, and for good measure, crucifixes and other religious articles are smashed." (*Focus: The Irish Question*, p. 16) The following table, taken from T. P. Coogan's *The IRA*, gives the number of house searches from 1971 to 1978:

1971	17,262	1975	30,092
1972	36,617	1976	34,939
1973	74,556	1977	20,724
1974	71,914	1978	15,462

Making allowances for the larger population here, it would take 10,288,728 army house searches in the United States to equal the number in north-east Ireland in 1973.

BRITISH ARMY ASSASSINATIONS

Dillon and Lehane reviewing Kitson's *Low Intensity Operations in Political Murder in Northern Ireland*, write: "The spirit of Kitson's book would seem to countenance under certain circumstances a campaign of assassination by the British Army undertaken by plain-clothes troops. There are few, if any, courses of action that Kitson would not have his special forces take if they seemed likely to achieve the ultimate aim. But the crucial point is that these actions would have to be sanctioned at government level, not at military level." Both Loyalists and Republicans have long charged that many of the so called "sectarian assassinations" were the work of British troops. It is now certain that British units did indeed carry out many such assassinations and Kennedy Lindsay's *Ambush at Tully West* deals with that type of operation attributable to British Intelligence Services.

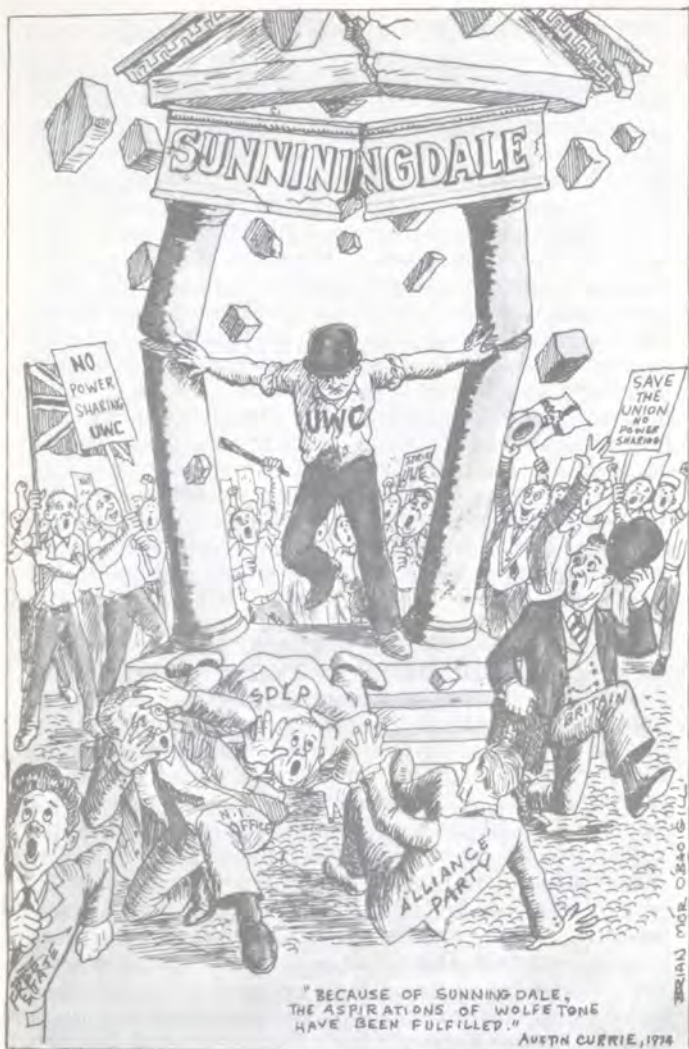
Loyalist paramilitary organizations have also been used for the same purpose. Jack Holland, on page 91 of *Too Long A Sacrifice* writes: "Between 1972 and 1977, the UDA murdered approximately four hundred forty people, it wounded and seriously injured thousands more. It has been directly responsible for a massive intimidation campaign in Belfast, where about sixty thousand people have been forced to leave their homes largely because of its activities. Hardly a week goes by without its death squads striking somewhere in Northern Ireland." A recent development shows direct British involvement with Ulster Defence Association (UDA) assassinations. The Derry branch of the UDA, in a statement published in *The Irish Times* of 2/24/81, claimed that one of its former leading members is an officer in British Military Intelligence. For years, according to the statement, he passed on a steady stream of information, including details of Republicans as possible assassination targets.

The figures given by Jack Holland account for 72% of civilian "sectarian" deaths for the period mentioned and almost 25% of total violent deaths in north-east Ireland since 1969. The number of assassinations has always peaked to new highs during IRA cease fires, suggesting a deliberate effort to sabotage peace efforts. The British government refused to declare the UDA an illegal organization even after it publicly accepted responsibility for assassinations.

THE PROVISIONAL IRA

Since assuming an offensive role in February 1971, the IRA has consistently given advance warnings whenever bombs were placed which could endanger civilians. At times, as attested to by The Public Protection Agency and The Samaritans, such warnings have been deliberately ignored by the British army for propaganda purposes. On occasion, bombs have exploded prematurely. Radio-controlled IRA bombs have been deliberately "triggered" in civilian areas by the British army using electronic equipment. In a few cases IRA members have been subjected to harsh discipline for operations carried out

contrary to advance warning policy. The IRA has maintained credibility with nationalists, however, by admitting the truth even when it was distasteful. Its consistency in adhering to the advance warning policy was recently admitted by Kennedy Lindsay, no friend of the IRA, when he wrote, page 118, op. cit., "The public had also come to accept a rule of thumb that the Provisional IRA gave a warning when they placed a bomb, and loyalists rarely gave one."



"BECAUSE OF SUNNINGDALE,
THE ASPIRATIONS OF WOLFETONE
HAVE BEEN FULFILLED."

AUSTIN CURRIE, 1974

PROPOSALS FOR PEACE

"In 1973", according to Claire Sterling, the Provisional IRA "helped kill off a power-sharing plan in a new Northern Ireland Assembly by planting 48,000 pounds of explosives. Later in 1973, they helped consign the promising Sunningdale agreement to oblivion by breaking their own ceasefire - the last they would ever agree to - after just three weeks." Here we have a series of allegations every one of which is untrue as is easily shown by checking either newspaper files or reference work on the period. Irish-Americans, however, should not have been surprised that *The New York Times* would publish allegations so blatantly contrary to the facts. The anti-Irish bias of the editors prompted an editorial in the *Irish Echo* of June 7, 1980, headed 'Distorting the Facts': "It is difficult to comprehend that a newspaper of stature, which the *New York Times* is, could stoop to disparage the Irish-American community the way it did in an editorial last week. It was callous, petty and most of all unjust. It also showed once again the evil influence of the British lobby in America." *The New York Times*, through writers like Claire Sterling, continues to distort the facts.

POWER SHARING AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Stormont, the Parliament of north-east Ireland, was suspended on March 24, 1972, and Westminster, the seat of government in Britain, assumed responsibility for direct rule of the area. Following a series of talks in Darlington, England, at which other political parties but not the Republican movement were represented, the British Parliament in March 1973 passed a Constitution Act providing for the return of self-government by transferring certain legislative functions to what was called a 'Northern Ireland Assembly' and executive functions to a 'Northern Ireland Executive'. The Act recognized an 'Irish Dimension' and recommended formal links between Dublin, Belfast and Westminster governments. The Executive mentioned involved 'power sharing' - both Protestant and Catholic

communities would have to be represented. The Assembly was to consist of seventy-eight delegates elected by proportional representation with single transferable vote.

The election for the Assembly was held on June 28, 1973, with the following results: Loyalists or Unionists opposed to the Assembly won 27 seats with 35.4% of the vote. Pro-Assembly Loyalists won 23 seats with 26.5% of the vote. The Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP) won 19 seats and the Alliance Party won 8 seats with a combined 31.3% of the vote. The Republican Clubs, representing the Marxist Official IRA and the Independents did not win any seats. Sinn Fein, the Republican political party, was not allowed to contest the election. A Republican statement issued after the March 1973 White Paper was made public stated: "If the British Government were serious in securing a political solution then it would remove all restrictions forthwith on the Sinn Fein political organization."

In late November 1973, Secretary of State Whitelaw announced that Unionists headed by Brian Faulkner, the SDLP, and the Alliance Party had agreed to form a power-sharing Executive. This had involved concessions from the SDLP and the Unionists. The SDLP had accepted internment without trial, a major Catholic grievance and "Unionists were forced to sit in the cabinet with Catholics who still hoped for a peacefully united thirty-two county Ireland." (Source: Richard Rose's *Northern Ireland: Time of Choice*, page 29 - 30)

SUNNINGDALE

Although Claire Sterling writes as if the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Sunningdale agreement were two separate entities, the two are intimately connected. The three parties involved in the coalition formed in November 1973, met at Sunningdale with representatives of the British and Irish (southern) governments in a series of conferences from December 6 to December 9, 1973. The conference was called not only to discuss the 'Irish Dimension' mentioned in the Constitution Act of March

1973, but also to establish the political framework within which the newly formed Northern Ireland Executive would operate. Agreement was reached and another conference was scheduled for its formal signing.

The power-sharing Executive began to function on January 1, 1974. According to Claire Sterling, it was consigned 'to oblivion' because the IRA broke their own cease fire. As can be verified by checking the Chronology for 1973 and 1974 in *Northern Ireland: A Political Directory*, there was no IRA cease-fire between January 1, 1973 and December 21, 1974. Richard Rose (op. cit.) and all other reference works blame the Unionist Party for the failure of the power-sharing plan. On January 4th, four days after the Executive was launched, the Unionists rejected the plan. Faulkner resigned as leader of the party but stayed on in his post as chief minister in the Executive. In a United Kingdom general election held in February, 1974, candidates opposed to the Sunningdale agreement won 51% of the vote in north-east Ireland. The end came for the Executive in May 1974. To quote from Richard Rose's work referred to above: "Four months after it had been created, the power-sharing Executive fell, following a fourteen-day general strike organized by the protestant Ulster Workers' Council to protest Britain's attempt to govern Northern Ireland through an Executive that excluded representatives of the ultra-loyalists, who claimed to represent a majority of the Protestant community. The strike, supported by various Protestant paramilitary groups was nonviolent but extremely serious: it paralysed Ulster by gradually withdrawing electrical power.... The collapse of the Executive once more left government in British hands by default. However, the collapse of British policy in the face of the Ulster Workers' Council strike left many Ulster Protestants contemptuous of Britain's claims to influence events in the Province. The failure of the British government to use the British army against the strikers led Catholics to distrust Britain's commitment to their interests."

THE FITZGERALD PLAN



FITZGERALD AND IRA PEACE PLANS

"In the summer of 1979," Claire Sterling asserts, the Provisional IRA "killed off the best proposition yet for a federated Ireland, 'the Fitzgerald plan', by blowing up Lord Mountbatten on his fishing boat." Before quoting again from a reference work showing that there is absolutely no basis for that assertion, some background information is necessary to put the Fitzgerald plan in its proper context and to explain the popularity of certain politicians from the south of Ireland with a section of the news media in America that has been foremost in promulgating a pro-British view on Irish affairs.

Garrett Fitzgerald is the current leader of Fine Gael, a political party that had its origin in a merger between the pro-treaty party which formed the first Free State government, the National Center Party, and the Blueshirts. The Blueshirts were a semi-fascist group that used the fascist salute and modelled its uniforms on Mussolini's Blackshirts. Following the resignation of the leader of the Blueshirts, Fine Gael "settled down to become an orthodox conservative party, pro-British and anti-Republican."

Fitzgerald, like Conor Cruise O'Brien, had strong family ties with Ulster. "I am," he wrote in his book *Towards A New Ireland*, "of mixed ancestry - half Ulster Scot and half Southerner. Apart from some immediate relatives, almost all my relations in Ireland are Northern Protestants, with whom throughout my childhood and ever since I have had close ties." Fitzgerald never subscribed to the "two nations" theory advocated by Conor Cruise O'Brien and the Communist parties of Ireland and Britain. He seems to have favored a resolution of the Irish question by some arrangements of dual citizenship between a united Ireland and Great Britain. Irish Republicans find much with which they can agree in his *Towards A New Ireland*. His public utterances, however, show him to be bitterly opposed to all shades of republicanism. His attacks on Charles Haughey, leader of the Republican faction in Fianna Fail, were such that he received an editorial rebuke in the *Irish Times*. During the first Long Kesh hunger strike, he

publicly called on the British government not to yield to any of the demands of the hunger strikers. In 1974, he himself disclosed four years later, while a member of the southern government, he secretly told loyalist leaders in north-east Ireland that they would be 'bloody fools' to join the Republic under the existing constitution. Had he been trying to further peaceful unification, he should have told them that leaders of political parties in the south were willing to sit with their counterparts in the north to draft a new constitution for a United Ireland.

The confederation plan mentioned by Claire Sterling was produced in 1979 when Fitzgerald's party was out of office in the south. The Provisional IRA did not "kill" it. It fizzled out! To quote from *Northern Ireland: A Political Directory*: "In 1979, the party published a scheme for an Irish confederation, but it failed to attract any serious attention from among Unionists."

Claire Sterling claims that the "Provos show no signs of wanting to reach a political settlement." They can in fact claim to have put forward "the best proposition yet" to resolve the situation in Ireland and one which, unlike the Fitzgerald plan, received a favorable reaction within Unionist ranks. In 1972, they proposed a plan which called for a Federal Ireland with four provincial parliaments. The Ulster envisioned was the historic nine county Province in which Northern Protestants would still have a controlling majority. Following the publication of the March 1973 White Paper, they again drew attention to the Eire Nua (New-Ireland) plan and addressed the Northern Unionists: "A united Ulster is a feasible, meaningful objective for Loyalists and Republicans alike. Through it we can establish a new society which will respect the positive aspects of our traditions and ensure a way of life where our children can be reared without the threat of violence and sectarianism." The response was favorable. In January 1974, Desmond Boal, co-founder with the Rev. Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party, stated that a Federal solution was the only way to peace. Spokespersons for the Ulster Volunteer

Force and the Ulster Defence Association, loyalist paramilitary organizations, welcomed the idea as a "talking point". The Rev. Ian Paisley spoke of an independent Ulster with special and friendly relations with the south of Ireland "without which an independent Ulster would not be viable." While he was not himself in favor of unification, he did not reject it. (Source: *Focus: The Irish Question*, 1975, revised edition, 31 ff.) The opportunity was lost, however. For reasons best known to the British and Irish governments, they persisted in efforts to enforce the Sunningdale agreement, which had been rejected by the majority of both Loyalists and Republicans.

Throughout the war in Ireland, the Provisional IRA has shown a willingness to discuss a peaceful settlement. Their role was purely a defensive one until war was declared on them in February 1971. In September 1971, they submitted interim proposals for a cease fire but their offer was rejected. They declared a unilateral cease fire after publishing their *New Ireland* in March 1972, but the British army did not reciprocate. They made the first move which led to a bilateral cease fire on July 2, 1972. That truce was broken when the British army stood "shoulder to shoulder" with the Ulster Defence Association to prevent Catholics entering houses that had been allocated to them. There was no cease fire in 1973 but, contrary to Claire Sterling's assertion, there was a later one. Protestant clergymen met with leaders of the Republican movement in Feakle, Co. Clare, in December 1974 and their initiative resulted in an uneasy truce beginning February 1975. In talks between British officials and the IRA, Britain held out the promise of a declaration of intent to withdraw and released some of those interned without trial. The talks and cease fire ended in February 1976 with the announcement that special category status was to be denied all convicted after March 1st 1976. Internment was to continue under the legal guise of the "Diplock Court" system. There was no other alternative except to continue fighting.



Y'URE A BLEEDIN'
TERR'RIST....

IRA

SOMETHINGS NEVER
CHANGE WITH THE Times

BRIAN MEEHAN

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Readers of *The New York Times* do not have to be told of its anti-Irish prejudice. It is reflected in editorials which at times appear to be dictated by personnel of British Information Services. It is seen in 'Specials' which report on Irish affairs from a British standpoint. Even the letters to the editor page betrays bias: only rarely is one deviating from the general anti-Irish stance deemed fit to print.

One contributor, Liam Hourican, who misrepresented Church-State relations in Ireland in a *New York Times* article of 4/11/76, has been exposed as a British propaganda agent. "The success of the British propaganda on the 'Here and Now' show prompted the British and their allies in RTE - many of whom were members of the British trade union known as the 'National' Union of Journalists - to get a man for RTE in Belfast who would do a similar job on Northern news and politics. The man chosen was Liam Hourican, a native of Roscommon, in the South of Ireland." (Cunningham, *Monaghan: County of Intrigue*, p. 112.) Bernard Weinraub, former *New York Times* Irish 'Specials' writer, was so in tune with British government thinking that in a 12/16/75 *New York Times* article on Irish Northern Aid, he anticipated by one day Prime Minister Wilson's press conference on the same subject. William Borders, current writer of Irish 'Specials' for *The New York Times*, consistently portrays Irish Republicans as terrorists and the War of Liberation in Ireland as a sectarian struggle between Catholics and Protestants.

Editorial bias was displayed in the December 20th headline, "London Says It Made No Concession to End Fast in Ulster", given to William Borders' account of the matter then being disputed. An editorial on January 26th, *The Irish Dance of Death*, was a vintage *Times* effort. Four people, it noted, who were "leaders in a sympathy campaign for imprisoned IRA hunger-strikers" had been killed. Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, target of an unsuccessful assassination attempt, was described as "the fiery Catholic leader". The other four victims of the same paramilitary

group were alluded to as "nationalists". While this was an accurate description, the usual policy of *The New York Times* was not followed. No mention was made of their religious affiliations. Was it not significant that two of the four nationalists were Protestants? Would readers of *The New York Times* have concluded that the war in Ireland is not a sectarian struggle had they been so informed? Given the record of *The New York Times*, are we not justified in assuming that that was precisely the reason why the *Times* refrained on this occasion from mentioning the religious affiliations of the victims?

The Ulster Defense Association, as stated in the editorial, claimed responsibility for the assassinations. The Secretary of State for occupied Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, refused to outlaw this organization even after its leader, Andy Tyrie, publicly announced that they would carry out illegal forays into the south of Ireland. The reluctance of Mr. Atkins to ruffle Orange feathers was not deemed worthy of editorial comment by *The New York Times*. His announcement declining to "proscribe the UDA at present" did not even make the news section.

The opening paragraph of the "Dance of Death" editorial referred to the killing of "Sir Norman Stronge and his son, James, both leading Protestants in Ulster." Would it not have been more accurate to describe them as leaders of the Orange community? Both were high ranking members of the Orange Order and the Royal Black Institution. The Royal Blacks, according to *The London Sunday Times* 'Insight' team, are the "creme de la creme of Orangemen". When Prime Minister Brian Faulkner in June 1971 startled Unionists by proposing non-unionists as salaried chairmen for two sub-committees of the existing Public Accounts Committee, he quickly reassured them by making a pilgrimage to Brownlow House, a Royal Black shrine. Sir Norman was one of five trustees of Unionist Party funds and Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant in Armagh. James Stronge was noted as a politician associated with extreme unionist views. He ran against a pro-O'Neill candidate in the 'crossroads' election of 1969. He opposed the Sunning-

dale agreement which he described as "a great act of political appeasement". He withdrew his support from Brian Faulkner and aligned himself with Harry West who had strongly criticised proposed reforms in north-east Ireland, rejected power-sharing, and backed the Ulster Workers Council strike which led to the fall of the Coalition Executive.

The writer of the editorial linked the Stronge killings with that of Lord Mountbatten. There is no doubt that all who thought of Mountbatten as a hero condemned the IRA for his assassination. To others, he was a member of the Royal Family circle in whose name Irish citizens have been and are being tortured and murdered. He represented British fighting forces and, although retired, was used to boost morale. At the time of his death, he was vacationing in the south of Ireland. Americans might ask themselves how they would react if the Ayatollah Khomeini had come on a pleasure trip to the United States while their fellow citizens were being tortured in Iran.

It is indeed significant that the editorial writer had to go back a year in time to focus on an incident calculated to discredit the Irish Republican Army. Even William Borders had to acknowledge that the IRA concentrates on those "actively in the service of the government". A recent example of the care taken by IRA volunteers to prevent injury was the February 7th sinking of a British coal ship. The seven crew members were first put in a dinghy. When they said that the tide would carry them out to sea, those who had blown up the ship risked capture by towing them ashore before making a getaway.

There is no such thing as a nice war. No one wants to see anyone, Protestant or Catholic, Orangeman or Nationalist, killed. It is, however, hypocritical of *The New York Times* to promote British propaganda under the guise of moral outrage. Americans are guaranteed a free press as part of their national heritage. They are also entitled to editors who will use the freedom they enjoy with responsibility.

POSTSCRIPT

The publishers of Claire Sterling's *The Terror Network* sent me, c/o The Irish People, a copy of her book. Permit me to avail of your Letters to the Editor page to add some final comments to the six articles I have already devoted to The New York Times adaption of that work.

Claire Sterling, when referring to an October 1971 conference in Florence at which the decision was made 'to coordinate international terrorist plans', stated that 'A full day was given over to the Official IRA's Seamus Costello.' The New York Times version omitted the word 'Official'. The New York Times also failed to quote Claire Sterling when she wrote, 'The Provisionals had actually split away in 1969 because they considered the Officials a bunch of Communists.' Claire Sterling describes the alleged political philosophy of the Provisional IRA in a paragraph consisting of brief quotations joined together and attributed to an interview given by Ruairi O'Bradiagh to *Il Giornale Nuovo*. While the disjointed paragraph is suspect by its very nature, it is significant that The New York Times omitted the sentence, 'The Stalinist model of democratic socialism was not desirable.'

Claire Sterling would have us believe that in 1971, Malachy McGurran, a member of the Officials, made arrangements at the Florence meeting for a supply of arms to the Provisionals! She begins to trace the alleged leftward drift of the Provisionals by quoting Bernadette Devlin, who was associated, not with the Provos, but with the Official offshoot, the Irish Republican Socialist Party. Her statements claiming Moscow/ Czechoslovakia as the source of Provisional IRA arms and the alleged training received by PIRA members in Lebanon and elsewhere are disproved by recent revelations. The latest edition of Kennedy Lindsay's *Ambush at Tully West* contains a new chapter entitled 'The Grand Design'. In it, he shows that it was the British government that conspired with Moscow to send Claire Sterling's 'Mr. Freeman' to the Provisionals offering to sell arms. 'As D 16 had calculated,

the Provisional IRA fund raisers were hard pressed to find the money quickly and contacted (sometimes by telephone) an ever-widening circle of sympathizers. As they did so, a picture was built up whom the Provisionals themselves believed to be their friends.' The arms, as intended, never reached their destination. Britain repaid Moscow by persuading the United States and West Germany 'to join in a joint mellowing of broadcasts' aimed at Warsaw Pact populations in a common 'anti-subversion' interest. References to IRA being trained in Lebanon and elsewhere were mentioned recently in a series of exchanges between the governments of the south of Ireland and Israel. 'Exhaustive inquiries by the Irish Special Branch and by the Irish embassy in Beirut have failed to produce any evidence to support recent allegations that members of the IRA have trained in PLO camps in Lebanon.' The Irish Ambassador in the area 'made this clear to Israeli Foreign Ministry officials this week and said that if the Israeli authorities had evidence to the contrary they should put it on the table.' This also is the view of Britain's Brigadier Glover, who stated in his secret 1978 intelligence assessment of the northeast Ireland position for British officials: 'We doubt whether the PIRA receives financial aid from Libya or any other overseas government' and 'There are no indications of any substantial link with the Soviet Union and either wing of the IRA, nor do we expect any links developing in the next five years.'

I was amused rather than suprised to find Claire Sterling on page 167 reproducing the story about the PIRA getting two teen-aged girls to smuggle a bomb under a baby in a pram. As I have already pointed out, the British Army Press Office had been forced to admit the story was untrue. I was surprised, however, to read Claire Sterling's explanation of the current situation in Ireland: 'Perhaps it could all have been avoided if British troops had defended an unarmed Catholic minority from the start, as they were supposed to do. Bogside Catholics cheered their arrival on that assumption. More than a year would pass before the first British soldier was shot by a Catholic sniper in

Belfast; another went by before Catholic trust was thoroughly shaken. That happened on January 30, 1972 - Bloody Sunday - when, after siding repeatedly with homicidal Protestant vigilantes, British paratroopers shot thirteen Catholics dead in a Londonderry civil rights demonstration.' Seemingly, the New York Times found this unfit to print. Isn't it about time that the appropriate authorities requested the publishers of The New York Times to register as agents of a foreign government?

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