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NONVIOLENT AGENCIES IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND STRUGGLE:  
1968-1979\*

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Abstract

The Northern Ireland struggle has enlisted or given birth to a great many social welfare organizations allegedly dedicated to the nonviolent solution of the area's problems. These consist principally of three types: (1) agencies of religious denominations or groups of denominations, (2) voluntary social work, demonstration, and protest societies, and (3) political actionist bodies. Those of the first two types face the pitfalls of the ready middleclass recourse to conscience-soothing rituals and to compromise at the expense of lowerclass and ethnic out-group interests. Those of the third type include ones that are effective, but some tend to fall into lowerclass dependence in frustration upon violence, a counterproductive procedure. The first two types apply "band-aids" to painful symptoms or create a kind of social anesthesia. Despite noble intent, they both leave the exploitative social structure intact. At this time, only such cross-class organizations as the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, the Association for Legal Justice, and Amnesty International appear to have made substantial nonviolent contributions to the movement of Northern Ireland toward a just settlement of differences, a settlement that is still far in the future.

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Insurgent efforts to modify or to seize control of Northern Ireland by violent procedures during the current disorders there have been counterproductive. Ambushes and bombings by the ("nationalist," "Green," "Roman Catholic") Irish Republican Army Provisionals and by the ("British loyalist," "Orange," "Protestant") Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Defense Association justify for the British establishment its further suspension of civil rights and its repressive military and police measures. Insurgent violence has thus strengthened rather than undermined the domination of Northern Ireland by the British government and, in consequence, by multinational corporations.

The continuing violence of the British army and of Ulster police has been similarly counterproductive. Raids, imprisonments, brutal interrogations, woundings, and killings have not achieved the pacification of the province. (Bennett, 1979; O'Hearn, 1979)

On the contrary, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association led an illegal nonviolent march in Derry (called by the English "Londonderry") Sunday, January 30, 1972. British paratroopers massacred thirteen of the unarmed marchers (Widgery, 1972; Dash, 1972) and thus stimulated nonviolent marches, strikes, and days of mourning all over both Northern Ireland (sometimes called "Ulster" or "the six counties") and Ireland as well as some outbreaks of violence. "Bloody Sunday," based on a disciplined nonviolent event, thus did much to stimulate the replacement of the Protestant-controlled Northern Ireland (Stormont) government by direct rule by the British (Westminster) government.

Comments on the Selma, Alabama, "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, apply equally to the Derry "Bloody Sunday" seven years later. Emanuel Celler, chairperson of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, observed: "There are times when the civil-rights movement has no greater friend than its enemy. It is the enemy of civil rights who again and again produces the evidence to convince this nation that we cannot afford to stand still." (New York Times, June 8, 1966: 26) The coercive nonviolence of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, like that of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his associates, thus even by precipitating physical injuries proved itself to be a pragmatic course of action.

In the current phase (since 1968) of the struggle for the control of Northern Ireland, the Green and Orange paramilitaries get most of the attention in the mass media. The conflict has, however, attracted and given birth to many social welfare organizations ostensibly dedicated to the nonviolent mitigation or solution of the area's problems. Of these, only the most aggressive nonviolent groups, as we shall see, rise to the challenge of both the military and the paramilitary. Too many concern themselves with a vagary they call "peace." Too few exert themselves to try realistically to help create social bases for a just and lasting cessation of violence. Like so many mortals, they are absorbed with symptoms rather than with causes, with "band-aids" rather than with social reconstruction. (Mitchell, [1978])

Just how can social workers and other community welfare specialists differentiate between nonviolent and violent efforts? The dividing line--especially in the case of massive confrontations or blockades but also in certain less spectacular social work procedures--is not an easy one to draw. Nonviolence clearly includes traditional pacifism, refusal to fight, willingness to "turn the other cheek." It also comprises many types of nonviolent action that are "used to control, combat and destroy the opponent's power by nonviolent means of wielding power." (Sharp, 1973: 4) These techniques can include the linking of arms to block streets, sit-ins, and other devices that employ physical strength just short of violence. Nonviolent action requires a high degree of dedication, training, and discipline upon the part of its participants for it to be effective.

Before describing and analyzing the variety of nonviolent organizations now or recently involved in the Northern Ireland struggle, let us look (1) at the historical background of nonviolent efforts in Ireland and (2) at the social setting of the present conflict. This background is needed for the subsequent discussion of current nonviolent agencies.

Nonviolent procedures date in Ireland at least from the eighteenth century. The Protestant Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) led joint Protestant and Roman Catholic nonviolent agitation that resulted in the Catholic Relief Act of 1793. This legislation permitted Catholics to bear arms, to become members of corporations, to vote as forty-shilling freeholders in the counties and in the open boroughs, to act as grand jur-



ors, to take degrees in Dublin University [Trinity College], to hold minor offices, and to take commissions in the army below the rank of General." They still could not obtain Parliamentary seats and major governmental positions. (E. Curtis, 1950: 332)

The Roman Catholic politician Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847) is called "the political genius who discovered the modern technique of nonviolent mass demonstration." (Thompson, 1967: 33) He was "The Liberator" and an "uncrowned king of Ireland." His huge rallies brought success in 1829 to his drive for further Roman Catholic (and also for religious dissenter) political emancipation. The Emancipation Act of 1829 raised the financial test for franchise to ten pounds, but it eliminated other tests for office and for Parliament except for the monarch, regent, lord lieutenant, and chancellor of England. The latter remained Protestant. Even though "the law now opened public and municipal posts to Catholics and others, admission to them was controlled by a caste which was reluctant to share them." (E. Curtis, 1950: 361-62) In O'Connell's rallies in 1840 and 1843 favoring the repeal of the Act of Union with England, he involved more than 200,000 at a time. (Lecky, 1912: 83-8, 244-73; Kee, 1972: part 3, chaps. 4-11)

Another "uncrowned king of Ireland," the Protestant Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891), organized in the 1880s the first campaign to be called a "boycott." (Marlow, 1973) Aimed at land reform, this campaign used rent withholding and the social ostracism of landlords and of those who cooperated with landlords. The technique "proved a much more effective protection to the tenants than the more violent methods of the past." In consequence, the number of evictions from land declined sharply. (Beckett, 1966: 389) Parnell's efforts and those of others in this nonviolent "land war" led to the Land Acts of 1881 and 1887 and finally to the Land Purchase Act of 1891. The latter is said to have changed Ireland as a whole into "a land of peasant proprietors" rather than of tenants. (E. Curtis, 1950: 381)

A few more historical examples may suffice to demonstrate the continuing attractiveness of nonviolent confrontations to the Irish and the effective use they make of them.

Curiously enough, Sinn Féin--later to be associated with the Irish Republican Army--came into existence

in 1905 as a passive resistance movement under the leadership of Arthur Griffith. Griffith sought to use non-violent methods such as boycotting the Westminster parliament in order to bring about the re-establishment of the Irish constitution of 1783-1800. That constitution was a compromise providing for a Dublin parliament under the British king. Griffith remained active in Sinn Féin as it became more of a political party, but his interest in a monarchist compromise and his rejection of violent methods alienated from him many who belonged to the organization. At the time of his death in 1922, however, he was president of the Irish parliament, the Dáil Eireann. (Davis, 1974, 1977: 35-36; Macardle, 1965: 65-68; E. Curtis, 1950: 403)

Impressed by the worldwide attention to the hunger strikes of English women suffragists in 1909 and later, Irish women suffragists introduced that procedure into Ireland in 1912. Irish nationalists, both women and men, then "developed and exhibited its most remarkable forms and results" in their struggles against the British and among their own factions in 1913-1923. (Ratcliffe, 1932: 553)

Other nonviolent techniques used in Ireland have included noncooperation with officials, refusal of jurors to indict or convict persons accused of crimes against the British establishment, protest strikes, demonstrative funerals, and the withholding of utility payments. (Macardle, 1965: 134 etc.)

In order to understand the role of nonviolent efforts in the Northern Ireland struggle of 1968 to date, it is first necessary to clarify somewhat who is at odds with whom and over what principal issues. To do this is at least in part to try to undo as briefly as possible the ethnic bias and/or confusion permeating mass media accounts. (Lee, 1972-73, 1975-76, 1979b) It will indicate the setting in which nonviolent agencies try to function.

Mass media mythmaking typically identifies agitation and confrontation with "extremists," with brutal and pathological misfits or guerrillas outside of the law. This permits the reduction of such a struggle as the current one in Northern Ireland to a neat and simple formula: Two small groups of warring irreconcilables there are said to have made violence a way of life. The leaders of those hard cores of the "Protestant" and "Roman Catholic" ethnic groups cannot themselves bring an

end to their internecine violence through signing a formal accord. Such an agreement would merely mark the withdrawal of one or two groups tired of being always on the run and their replacement by one or two others still fresh and still committed to active conflict. One writer even asserts that "the need for violence has been one of the master strains in the struggle for a united free Ireland." (New York Times, December 30, 1973: 2)

This interpretation is that taken by major English and American news reporters and commentators. For all the conviction that it may give to newswriters and editorializers, to policymakers, and to the complacently uninformed, it neglects thorny facts. It not only ignores notable nonviolent accomplishments, but it also fails to take into consideration the suppression of civil rights and the many examples of ordered as well as of spontaneous violence against Irish civilians by British police and soldiers throughout so many years. (N.C. C.L., 1936: 23-37; Kitson, 1971: part 2; Bell, 1972; Provisional I.R.A., 1973; Clutterbuck, 1974: chaps. 5-10; Farrell, 1976: chaps. 11-12; Amnesty International, 1978)

The interpretation destructively caricatures Northern Ireland's ethnic groups. It applies to them all the dehumanizing "stage Irish" stereotype, "that feckless, childish, whimsical, and violent Irishman, who . . . served as a convenient scapegoat . . . of countless Englishmen." (L. Curtis, 1968: 65)

The news fictional (Chibnall, 1977: xi-xii) rationalization for the Northern Ireland struggle neglects the basic inequalities of opportunity, the lack of human rights safeguards, and the artfully maintained ethnic divisions that serve so well the imperialistic "needs" of the plutocratic state, of the multinational corporations, and of the bureaucratized churches. (Bell, 1976) Average earnings of those employed in Northern Ireland are reported by governmental agencies as being only 85 percent of the average for the rest of the United Kingdom. In addition, unemployment at more than 11 percent in 1979 is consistently higher than in Great Britain. (Whitelaw, 1972: 30; N.I.I.S., 1979: 11)

An ecumenical report by church leaders to their members on Violence in Ireland (Daly & Gallagher, 1977: 13) points out: "Britain, like most imperial powers, whether Protestant or Catholic, frequently used religious division as an instrument of imperial policy." It

is that "dependable legacy" that makes the Northern Ireland civil war a three-sided one among groups identified as Irish nationalist (Green, republican, nominally Roman Catholic), British "loyalist" (Orange, nominally Anglican or dissenter in ethno-religious identity), and British (West English, United Kingdom politicians and entrepreneurs, soldiers, managers, and non-British and other hangers-on).

The British "loyalists" differ from the British in being an assimilated Northern Ireland ethnic group typically labeled as being identified with the Church of Ireland (Anglican Catholic or Episcopalian) and with the dissenting religious denominations, especially the Presbyterian and the Methodist. The "loyalists" include a great many of the skilled factory workers; they do what they can to retain control of such employment to the exclusion of Roman Catholics. On the other hand, the West English British who try to maintain their English identity include more of the upper- and upper-middleclasses.

Lowerclass "loyalists" and the underprivileged Green Irish are groups most directly in competition and confrontation with each other and with the police and army units. From these groups come the rank-and-file members and the willing and unwilling social support for illegal paramilitary bodies. Entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom and abroad and especially in Ireland and the United States, who have financial concerns in Northern Ireland, have at times contributed to one or both sets of the paramilitary. Members of some Irish societies in the United States and in British Commonwealth countries have also given to the Green insurgents, especially to the I.R.A. Provisionals. The paramilitaries have in addition discovered that the robbing of banks and other types of looting are useful money-raising endeavors.

Both Labour and Tory British policies have led to what is often characterized as a "stalemate" in the Northern Ireland situation. After interviewing Roy Mason, then British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and David Owen, then British Foreign Secretary, on December 5, 1978, United States Senator Daniel P. Moynihan is reported to have stated: "I came away absolutely dazed; he [Mason] had no intention of doing anything about Northern Ireland except keeping the British there. The question of Northern Ireland never came up at conferences of the two leading British political parties. There is no political will to settle." (Holland, 1979)

The British in 1969 had 2,500 troops in Northern Ireland. These supplemented the local and predominantly Protestant police. They raised this number to 22,500 in 1972 and still had 13,500 there in 1979. Approximately 2,100 people--more than 1,400 civilians and the balance police and soldiers--have died in the struggle since 1968. There are only 1.5 million people in that province. Other damages to people, to intergroup relations, and to property throughout the United Kingdom are vast and can scarcely be estimated. (Sec. of State, N.I., 1974: 1; Fortnight, Dec. 1979/Jan. 1980: 12-13)

Too few of those involved have done as did the lowerclass Protestant leader (quoted by Schmid, 1978: 17) who observes: "We have looked across the fence at the 'Taigs' [Roman Catholics] and have seen that they are living in the same conditions as we are living . . . that our working-class constituency is suffering just as the 'Taigs' suffer." Or as a middleclass Irishman is quoted (by Gilhooley, 1977: 178) as replying when asked whether or not the struggle is one between Protestants and Roman Catholics or one between haves and have-nots: "Neither. It's a fight between the have-nots on both sides. The haves stand above it and laugh all the way to the bank." (Fields, 1980)

These considerations all need to be borne in mind in connection with the following examples of the three principal kinds of nonviolent social welfare organization now operating in Northern Ireland: (1) agencies of religious denominations or groups of denominations, (2) voluntary social work, demonstration, and protest societies, and (3) political actionist bodies. The categories used are not at all mutually exclusive, but they appear to be workable for the purposes of comparison and contrast.

1. Agencies connected with religious denominations: In outlining the nature of these bodies, it is well to bear in mind that the "present uneasy union of interests" among "all Protestant groups to the disadvantage of the Catholics in N. Ireland is a historically recent event." It is not long, for example, since the Presbyterians "suffered under imperial policies and became rebels against the Anglicans." (Wilson, 1977: 41; cf. Beckett, 1976: 90) Cooperation among all principal churches, including the Roman Catholic, is a very recent development, precipitated by the current "troubles." The ecumenical report to the churches (Daly & Gallagher, 1977: 71) cited above admits: "The Irish Churches have until recently been slow to recognise that total religi-



ous segregation is by no means a necessary nor a desirable consequence of legitimate denominational differences; nor is it an acceptable protection for religious beliefs."

These agencies include such interdenominational bodies as the Fellowship of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Assisi Fellowship, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (launched by Quakers), Friends of Corrymeela (started by Presbyterians), Protestant and Catholic Encounter or PACE, Peace Point (an offshoot of the Methodist Council for Social Welfare), and Peace Forum. The Society of Friends (Quakers) and their Friends Service Council have long been active in trying to offset recourses to intergroup violence. Pax Christi, a Roman Catholic body started in France and Germany in 1945, got under way in Ireland in 1967, and the Servite Order's priory at Benburb offers facilities for interdenominational conferences. In early 1969, the Irish Council of [Protestant and dissenting] Churches and the Roman Catholic Church began to sponsor a Joint Group on Social Questions with many Working Parties. Out of its consultations grew, among other things, the Church Leaders' Peace Campaign initiated at Christmas time 1974.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation dates from 1915 in the United States. Beginning in Northern Ireland with a "War on Want" in 1960, its small membership tried to stimulate the concern of the churches in a series of issues, to organize conferences, and from 1969 to sponsor workcamp play-schemes for youth of opposing groups. They even made an effort to put together a "nonviolent third force" to help offset interethnic violence.

Friends of Corrymeela derived from an organizing meeting September 1964 in the Presbyterian Centre at the Queen's University in Belfast. Ray Davey, a clergyman who headed that centre, provided the leadership. By the next June, the group had collected enough money to gain possession on the northeastern coast of a building called "Corrymeela," Gaelic for "The Hill of Harmony." To repair the building, interdenominational groups of willing workers were organized. These working parties not only did physical labor, but they also by doing so got the Corrymeela program of reconciliation into some action. The object of the centre is to build bridges of understanding among the opposing factions in Northern Ireland. The view is stated: "At a workcamp people get to know each other, they get to trust each other, and a sense of comradeship and unity develops." (McCreary, 1976: 31) Through a range of programs, Corrymeela Community "has

brought different groups together, it has tried to create dialogue and, more important, to keep that dialogue going when the delegates from each group have gone back home." (McCreary, 1976: 107) It has a centre in Belfast to help maintain interests nurtured at Corrymeela. It has apparently been especially helpful with children and families who were victims of violence and intimidation.

PACE or Protestant and Catholic Encounter was "formed in 1968 to oppose growing bitterness of the time by showing that people from all communities could live and work harmoniously." A representative, Eddie Gourley (quoted by Bowman, 1978: 3), reports: "All kinds of activities go on in sub-groups: self-development, councils, leisure-time action. We offer support to all reconcilers."

Peace Point, dating from June 1973, is conceived as an agency to serve other peace bodies. In this, it resembles both PACE and Peace Forum. It has tried to project an image of being "nonpolitical," of emphasizing constructive possible recourses, and of offering formal training courses for leaders of like-minded peace groups. Just how a group can work effectively for "peace" and avoid decisions of a political nature is not made clear.

Peace Forum "enables fourteen organizations to meet monthly," according to the Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser (quoted by Bowman, 1978: 3), "for exchange of ideas, mutual support, sorting out who will do what, and reaching out to all engaged in reconciliation work."

The Society of Friends (Quakers) has traditionally consisted in Ireland of artisans and merchants, "part of the economic establishment, but of that benevolent, relatively non-exploitative part. . . . the most acceptable face of Irish capitalism." (Byrne, [1978]: 9) In the current "troubles," Quakers have chiefly worked through the other organizations listed, especially the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Through their Friends Service Council, they have also maintained a canteen and an advice center at the Long Kesh prison, developed vacations for children in Scotland, and furnished minibuses to transport children and adults to meetings outside their areas.

Pax Christi's work for peace is inspired especially by Pope John XXIII's encyclical, Facem in Terris (peace in the lands). Since its governing committee is centered in Dublin, even though the organization has scattered members in the north, it has not been very active in Northern Ireland as yet.

The Church Leaders' Peace Campaign has featured chiefly statements and actions by the top officials of the four principal churches in Northern Ireland: the Church of Ireland (Anglican), the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and the Roman Catholic. These leaders "appeared together on television, placed full page advertisements in the press, met the Secretary of State [for Northern Ireland], the Prime Minister [of the United Kingdom] and the Taoiseach [prime minister of the Republic of Ireland], and were in conference together seventeen times in the course of a few weeks." (Daly & Gallagher, 1977: 68)

Coincident with the launching of the joint campaign of the leaders of the four denominations came an effort by "some Protestant churchmen acting on their own initiative" to arrange a conference with representatives of the Provisional I.R.A. They met at Feakle, County Clare, in the Republic of Ireland, on December 9 to 11, 1974. This conference resulted in a cease-fire agreement, at first to be for the Christmas season but then later extended "indefinitely." In addition, the "provisionals agreed to set up a number of 'Incident Centres' which would investigate and report to the Northern Ireland Office [government] on any alleged breaches" of the cease-fire. (Daly & Gallagher, 1977: 39-40)

The coincidence of the Feakle development and the launching of their own interchurch campaign at first worried the church leaders. Such brash actionism unsettles middleclass thinking. A Working Party of the continuing Joint Group on Social Questions of the churches stated in a subsequent report that at first blush they were afraid the coincidence "would confuse the public and perhaps undermine the Church Leaders' Campaign, but eventually it became clear that this practical step had reinforced in the public mind the appeal of the Church Leaders and had exemplified ways in which individual Christians could respond to the appeal put out by the official leaders." But the lull did not last, and it was not used as constructively as it might have been. (Daly & Gallagher, 1977: 68-69)

2. Voluntary social work, demonstration, and protest societies: The present type of group is difficult to differentiate from the previous one, but their relative autonomy is their distinguishing characteristic. Noteworthy examples from among the many are the International Voluntary Service, Women Together, the Community of the Peace People, and Witness for Peace.

International Voluntary Service organized work-camps beginning in 1955. It is an attempt to combine reconciliation with personal development through such camps and through holidays for Protestant and Roman Catholic children. (Mitchell, [1978]: 23)

Women Together took shape in 1970 with a promise to separate warring street gangs by interposing their own bodies as shields, to help defend neighbors under attack, and to talk to youth gangs. Monica Patterson, an English Roman Catholic, was the principal founder of the group. Both her accent and her organization's lack of goals other than "peace" made her suspect and largely ineffectual. In 1974, she was succeeded by Sadie Patterson. The body's office was destroyed by a bomb in 1976, and it now continues in a nominal manner, largely superseded by the Peace People.

The Community of the Peace People, an initiative similar to Women Together but with more charismatic Irish leadership, better public relations guidance, and apparently more establishment backing, dates from August 10, 1976. That day British soldiers shot and killed the driver of a car they were chasing. Out of control, the automobile killed three small Roman Catholic children and seriously hurt their mother. Their aunt, Mairead Corrigan, and a friend, Betty Williams, emerged as symbols of a renewed pacification movement under the guidance of Ciaran McKeown as director and publicist. "These two women," according to McKeown (1976: 12), "had instinctively, intuitively, called into the light of day the will of a probable majority of the Northern Irish people to seek a new loving, peaceful way forward after the long night of violence."

Corrigan, Williams, and McKeown among them jetted to Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States presumably to raise money for the Peace People's program in Northern Ireland. As part of this international promotion campaign, Corrigan and Williams received recognition from the queen of England, the Nobel Peace Prize, and honorary doctorates from Yale University. Irish Catholics at home correlated these developments with the Peace Women's failure to join in protests at British army violence and with their lack of a cogent peace-development program.

The "Declaration of the Peace People," formally adopted by the organization and proudly read by McKeown in an address on behalf of the International Fellowship

of Reconciliation before the Special Session on Disarmament at the United Nations on June 12, 1978, is far from specific. It sparkles with glittering generalities such as "We want to live and love and build a just and peaceful society. . . . We dedicate ourselves to working with our neighbours, near and far, day in and day out, to building that peaceful society in which the tragedies we have known are a bad memory and a continuing warning." McKeown (1978a) used this Declaration as the conclusion of his address. Early sentences in that speech brashly reassured the multinational corporate interests of his plutocratic soundness when he asserted: "Let us put the entire Special Session on Disarmament into a realistic perspective. Disarmament is highly improbable. . . . To expect that governments can create a disarmed world is like expecting elephants to cultivate a garden. . . . The courage which alone can disarm the world must come from within individuals." (cf. McKeown, 1978b/c)

The Peace People hold ecumenical open-air prayer and song sessions, raise funds, bought a headquarters in Belfast called "Fredheim," contribute money to youth clubs, loan or donate assets to a variety of self-help projects, and publish a fortnightly paper that especially features the thoughts and exploits of Corrigan, Williams, and McKeown. Incidentally, the some £80,000 of the Nobel Peace Prize was retained by Corrigan and Williams.

The Peace People thus ignored or alienated the Northern Irish masses and even middleclass groups at the same time that they captured the attention of the world's mass media and recognition from a great many religious pacifist groups and from the British and other politico-economic establishments. Then, belatedly, Mairead Corrigan fell under a cloud when she appeared at a London conference sponsored by the National Council for Civil Liberties. The media failed to report her remarks there on November 9, 1978, because she criticized the army and the Northern Ireland police and complained of the suppression of free speech and a free press.

Witness for Peace was created by the Rev. Joseph Parker after bombings in Belfast on "Bloody Friday," July 21, 1972, killed his son and eight other people and injured about 130. Some 40,000 signed his declaration of individual Christians to work and witness for peace. He held cross-planting ceremonies in remembrance of those killed in the continuing struggle, maintained a scoreboard on the death toll in the center of Belfast, and gave recognition to individuals and groups working for peace. Par-



ker became frustrated in 1975 and emigrated to Canada, but some of his Witness for Peace activities continue.

A Northern Irish Journalist (Macnee, 1978) sums up the categorical opposition of outgroup members to such mild peace efforts as the foregoing thus: "The violence here stems from an attempt to alter the nature of the existing institutions and constitutional arrangements by force. Against that background an appeal to abandon force means an appeal to abandon the attempts to change the present constitution. In Northern Ireland any peace movement means supporting the status quo." He is equating the notion of a "peace movement" with reconciliation and not with a nonviolent quest for social justice.

3. Political actionist bodies: The organizations to be mentioned in this connection are the Alliance Party, Amnesty International, Association for Legal Justice, Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, and People's Democracy. This is a "mixed bag," but they have in common programs seeking to use available legal and governmental instrumentalities to cope with the conflict situation in Northern Ireland constructively and nonviolently.

The Alliance Party was formed in April 1970 to serve in a non-sectarian manner as a political bridge among the three ethno-religious-economic groups. It had "substantial backing from the new commercial and industrial interests," the multinational corporations. (Farrell, 1976: 300) It gained establishment recognition and some ten percent of the votes. While it is a minority, centrist-type party, its leadership feels that it is making some progress in substituting voting in terms of issues in place of tribal voting patterns.

Previous to the foundation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, middleclass Roman Catholics and especially professionals had in 1964 begun the Campaign for Social Justice. This body devoted itself to fact-gathering and educational work concerning religious discrimination and social injustice more generally. Then, in 1967, the Campaign for Social Justice, the Republicans (the Sinn Féin Party), and other groups opposed to the ethnic Protestant "Orange state's" denial of civil rights and social opportunities to the ethnic Roman Catholics launched the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. They patterned it at the outset on the British National Council for Civil Liberties, a politically eclectic lobbying, litigating, and educating organization.

To understand the development of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, a few notes on changes in Sinn Féin and its coordinate, the Irish Republican Army, are relevant. In 1969-1970, there was a split into Sinn Féin Officials and Provisionals and a simultaneous division into Irish Republican Army Officials and Provisionals. The Officials tended to have a radical and more secular socialist ideology. They favored a current emphasis upon agitation, demonstration, and organization rather than upon violent procedures. On the other hand, the Provisionals included traditional nationalists and both religious and secular radicals, all convinced that the British should and could be driven out by paramilitary methods. Thus the Provisionals have been involved as army targets and as aggressors in a large share of the violence since 1970. The Officials plan for a socialist commonwealth. The Provisionals appear to aim at some form--not too well defined--of island-wide Irish nationalist compromise between capitalism and socialism. (Goulding, 1978; Prov. I. R.A., 1973: 96)

This did not mean at all that the Officials opposed the use of violence at all times and in all places. Cathal Goulding, Official I.R.A. chief of staff, put it this way: "I don't see any establishment . . . handing the wealth over to the ordinary people unless the people have the necessary physical force to support their political ideas." (Foley, 1971: 25) In other words, the current policy of the Officials calls for consciousness-raising and organization preparatory to an eventual seizure of power. Their commitment to nonviolence is strategic, not categorical. Goulding (1978) contends the current use of violence by the Provisionals and others on the nationalist side has been "a total failure and ended only in a tricolour [the Irish flag] on a coffin," that in the current situation "anything in the nature of a military campaign would be reactionary, counter-revolutionary and would play into the hands of the British imperialists."

With aid from what became the I.R.A. Officials, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association in 1968-1972 coordinated many mass demonstrations. In its policies, it gradually moved from a middleclass libertarian viewpoint toward a more radical actionist type of nonviolent operation. (cf. Beach, 1977) Especially from the time of the split in Sinn Féin in 1969-70, the Officials became more influential in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association both as policy-makers and as stewards for nonviolent marches. The latter had become more actionist prior to that. It was especially aroused by the

allotment in June 1968 of a public authority house to a single woman of 19, secretary to a Protestant politician, rather than to one of many Roman Catholic families in need. In consequence, many spontaneous protests were held, and the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association participated in them, especially in one it organized over a four-mile route from Coalisand to Dungannon. That this march was orderly and peaceful and thus effective stirred the Protestant extremists to counter-action. Then both the Civil Rights Association and the Protestant Apprentice Boys (a traditional organization celebrating the siege of Derry in 1688) announced a march in Derry at the same time on October 5, 1968. The Northern Ireland Minister of Home Affairs forbade both marches, but the Association went ahead. Police batons bloodied some 70 civilians in the march, and the current civil war was joined. (Kelleher, 1972: 16; Campaign, 1971)

Helpful in providing enthusiastic nonviolent "muscle" for later demonstrations was the People's Democracy, formed October 9, 1968 by students of The Queen's University in Belfast. This body was said by a governmental commission (Cameron, 1969: 47) to have "reckless bravery" and to engage in "calculated martyrdom." People's Democracy's most impressive event was a four-day, 75-mile march from Belfast to Derry on January 1-4, 1969. It was ambushed by a Protestant mob supported by police and special part-time police at Burntollet bridge near Derry. In spite of that and two lesser ambushes, the remnants of the march finally "arrived to a rapturous welcome from a huge crowd in Guildhall Square," Derry. (Farrell, 1976: 251; see also Egan & McCormack, 1969; Arthur, 1974; Beach, 1977)

On "Bloody Sunday," January 30, 1972, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association staged its most spectacular and possibly its most effective march. In preparation for it, the Association had stated on the front pages of the Derry Journal and Irish News: "Special emphasis will be placed on the absolute necessity for a peaceful, incident-free day on Sunday." On the contrary, the commanders of a resident parachute regiment of the British army decided to "accept a high risk of civilian deaths and injuries." (Dash, 1972: 7) In consequence, the soldiers shot and killed thirteen unarmed civilians, wounded a great many more, one of whom died. That event is usually credited with launching events that terminated the Protestant-dominated provincial parliament at Stormont, Northern Ireland. (Widgery, 1972; N.I.C.R.A., 1978)

Since 1972, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association has devoted itself particularly to fact-gathering for the purposes of litigation and agitation and to the support of related organizations. The National Association for Irish Freedom, its American affiliate, reflects the Irish association's strategy by asserting: "Only through non-violent mass action can democracy be won in Northern Ireland." (NAIF Fact Sheet, 1978: 4)

The other examples of nonviolent organization to be mentioned here are the Association for Legal Justice and Amnesty International.

Extensive internment and interrogation operations in August and September 1971 "had the effect of uniting the Roman Catholic community in opposition to current security policies." With this support, a group of Belfast lawyers undertook to provide the legal basis for this opposition. As the Association for Legal Justice, they "set out to encourage the use of legal processes to deal with allegations against the security forces and thus to help lessen the risk of direct retaliatory action against them." (Hadden & Hillyard, 1973: 30; Boyle et al., 1975: 130)

As the Association for Legal Justice continued its work, Amnesty International brought into the picture its broader prestige and facilities for organizing legal and other social pressures. Amnesty International's official statement of purposes, carried on many of its publications and its letterhead, points out that it is "a worldwide human rights movement which works impartially for the release of prisoners of conscience: men and women detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, religion or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence." The body's opposition to torture and capital punishment "in all cases without reservation" and its advocacy of "fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners" made it a source of hope for the Northern Ireland minority and an encouragement to such nonviolent efforts as the Association for Legal Justice and the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

Amnesty International has investigated the mistreatment of prisoners and their detention without trial both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. The findings of its commissioners in both parts of Ireland have done much to strengthen faith in nonviolent procedures and to bring pressures against United Kingdom and Irish officials in behalf of more humane practices. (Amnesty International, 1975-76, 1977, 1978; cf. O'Hearn, 1979)



The professionals who do the work of the Association for Legal Justice and Amnesty International only involve lowerclass individuals and groups as clients, but this helps to give direction and credibility to organizations with direct lowerclass representation such as the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. The latter channel data and cases to them.

In sum, the first two sorts of nonviolent "peace" organization discussed--(1) agencies connected with religious denominations and (2) voluntary social work, demonstration, and protest societies--are typical middleclass efforts to make the existing social structure at least appear more benign. They provide conscience-soothing exercises in reconciliation. Their ritualistic and band-aid procedures inflict a kind of social anesthesia on those they influence. The Feakle incident of realistic interclass collaboration "turned off" the middleclass groups and had no follow-through other than that provided by the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Few middleclass people even in Northern Ireland can face realistically the implications of Russell Stetler's (1970: xi) statements, in his book about early phases of this civil war in Derry: "Britain's 'civilisation' has rested on centuries of violent racism, colonial conquest and social injustice. The Northern Ireland problem is rooted in these traditions." (See also Lee, 1974, 1977, 1979a/b)

In the foregoing, there is an ethno-religious contrast apparent between out-group concern for "justice" and in-group or establishment-oriented desire for "reconciliation." Concern for "justice" more directly suggests a desire for some degree of social change. It also implies a willingness to struggle for modifications in the control of social power. Change to obtain more "justice" has the drawback, so far as the in-group is concerned, of requiring concessions upon the part of those who are entrenched.

"Reconciliation" could mean something similar to "justice," but too often it is used to suggest striving for a kind of truce, peace with no change in the social structure, no gain to the out-group's members, to the deprived.

In so-called "nonviolent" and "pacifist" circles, this noteworthy contrast is often to be observed between organizations catering to the "haves" and organizations more directly serving the "have-nots," as in the present situation.



Few lowerclass people develop a political capability at all comparable to that of the lowerclass Irish labor leader, James Connolly (1868-1916). Even Connolly got turned aside from a nonviolent approach by his comrades, and in 1916 participated in the aborted "Easter Rising." This cost him his life before a British firing squad. Similarly Bernadette Devlin became a promising potential nonviolent "Joan of Arc" during early stages of the current civil war, but she got distracted to violence and to other moves that destroyed her charisma. (Devlin, 1969; McAliskey, 1978)

Lowerclass people usually depend, as in this situation, upon leaders drawn from the upper classes. Too often they are offered only the opportunity of following middleclass "front people" whose policies fall far short of lowerclass needs and expectations.

At this time, only such organizations as the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, the Association for Legal Justice, and Amnesty International appear to have made substantial contributions to the movement of Northern Ireland toward some just settlement of differences, a settlement that is still far in the future.

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