

Irish looking for New World Order

Britain stands in way of Irish Unification

by Tim Hanna

Every few months we learn from the North American press that Irish "master criminals" and "terrorists" have bombed some innocent victims again. The press tells us it is a religious war of fanatics, Protestant and Catholic — a situation beyond our understanding.

Why is there no solution? Why is it supposedly a situation we cannot understand? In our first-world egocentrism, things like this only happen in quaint third world countries, or to impoverished communists — not in democratic Europe.

The fact is that Northern Ireland is not a complicated problem. It is a classic case of colonialism. Though the colonial days are over, and recently we have seen most of the colonies created by the Second World War dissolve, Northern Ireland is not a religious war but an archetypal story of native versus invader.

Religion is a factor only in that it is a clear way of distinguishing the two communities. Britain has attempted to rule Ireland for 800 years — long before the Reformation. Even then, England oppressed and the Irish rebelled.

The roots of the current Irish situation are not in religion, but in the British conquest of Northern Ireland. Religion was used as an important weapon in Britain's divide-and-conquer plan. In order to suppress the strong Celtic culture, England was forced to destroy it. As in any imperialist situation, the way to truly conquer is to colonize. The English did this in a brutal slaughter, driving the Irish from their land and replacing them with loyal settlers.

Today's conflict is between these two groups — the native Gaelic Irish and the descendants of loyal (mostly Scottish) settlers. Northern Ireland was settled last, as it was the last of Ireland to totally surrender to the English. By this time the Reformation had occurred, and the British used this difference of religion to their advantage.

Today in Northern Ireland the Nationalists are still fighting for self-determination and civil rights, while the loyalists are still fighting to retain their culture and union with Britain. The nationalist communities' fight for independence is a struggle closely tied to their culture. They maintain that they are Irish, and strive to keep their traditions, including language and music, alive.

Within the Loyalist-run province, any interest in Irish culture is looked upon as subversive. The Gaelic language, and even an innocent symbol like the harp, are thought criminal. In Northern Ireland such an expression of culture is a sign of nationalism, which in the eyes of the government is a sign of republicanism. There is virtually no Irish language or history education available in Ulster schools.

Not all nationalists, or even republicans, support the current tactics of the I.R.A. The I.R.A. is only a symptom of the alienation felt by the nationalist communities. For nationalists their inequality, and the presence of the British army on their streets, is a constant reminder of their oppression.

Britain is involved in a war with the nationalist community, keeping Northern Ireland in a constant state of emergency. In their attempts to solve the conflict they target people with nationalist leanings, causing even more alienation and resistance to British rule.

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The British government is commonly known as the "I.R.A.'s greatest recruiters." Policy after policy drives young nationalists towards the gun.

The recent British censorship laws outlaw even the legal nationalist party Sinn Fein in any representation by the media. Elected Sinn Fein councillors are not allowed to appear on television, radio, or even to be quoted in the press. When young Irish nationalists realize their elected local politicians have no say, and their votes are therefore useless, it is not hard for them to realize their only way of being heard is through armed resistance to British rule.

Even Sinn Fein, the hardline nationalist party that supports the I.R.A., has drafted a six-year plan for British withdrawal. They want only for England to issue a statement of intent to withdraw so that nationalists can conduct talks with the loyalists on their place in a free Ireland. But although parties like Sinn Fein are legal, Britain refuses to deal with them.

In 1990 the I.R.A. offered to enter peace talks with Britain in the spirit of the changes taking place throughout Europe. Britain refused unless the I.R.A. denounced violence. Despite the need for an end to violence this is a very unrealistic approach.

England's plan is fight the I.R.A. in a war they cannot win and prolong the bloodshed. If Britain were to deliver a statement of intent to withdraw they would instantly take away the I.R.A.'s reason to exist.

The British talk of a loyalist backlash would probably not be the "bloodbath" they say, as not all loyalists follow the fanatical views of Rev. Ian Paisley, and would probably, with diplomacy, go fairly easily into a united Ireland.

By dialogue and education the loyalists would learn their fears of religious persecution are unfounded. In the southern Irish republic Protestants and Catholics exist in peace. It is very rare for a group to fight to bring back a colonial power.

The only group with the power to end the bloodshed is Britain, yet they refuse to look for solutions, despite the "New World Order."

Say it in the Bearpit!

All student submissions considered. Please keep length under 600 words.

December 6 declared as Women's Remembrance Day at York University

An open letter to all members of the York Community



UNIVERSITE YORK UNIVERSITY
4700 KEELE STREET • NORTH YORK • ONTARIO • CANADA • M3J 1P3

November 19, 1991

To All Members of the York Community:

The President has authorized me to declare December 6 as Women's Remembrance Day at York University. Each year, special ceremonies and activities will mark this day in memory of the fourteen women students who lost their lives at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal on this date in 1989. Women's Remembrance Day is intended to focus the awareness of the York community on discrimination, violence, and other issues of particular concern to women.

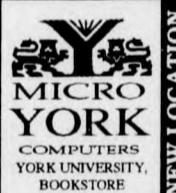
I would ask all teachers to mention the day in classes held on December 6 and to consider taking a few moments to discuss issues of concern to women. To this end, preparatory workshops, open to all interested faculty, instructors and teaching assistants, under the auspices of the Centre for the Support of Teaching, are being offered on Monday, December 2 and Tuesday, December 3, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Student Centre, Third Floor, Common Room. (Light refreshments will be served.)

For those wishing to attend, a vigil will be held at 12 noon, December 6, in the area at the east end of the Third Floor of the Student Centre.

Sincerely,

Selma Zimmerman

Selma Zimmerman
Advisor to the University on
the Status of Women



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