

THE SCARR

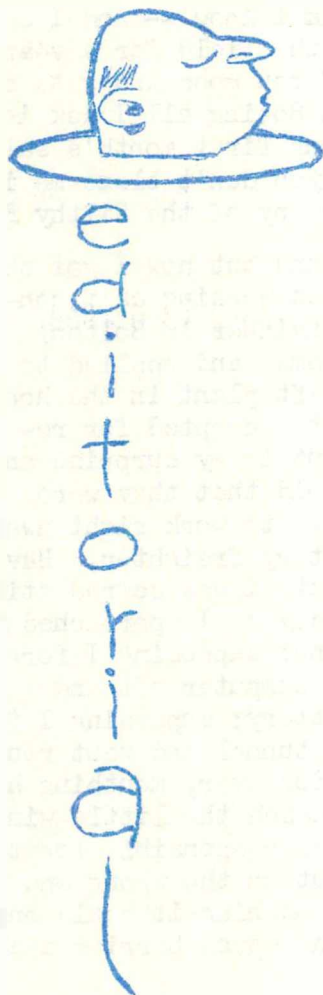
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THE SCARR

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So Beryl Mercer has turned over the AEsShip to Ken Cheslin. After the immense amount of hard work she did, rescuing OMPA from the morass it had got into, she deserves a rest. She also deserves a medal.

Bob Shaw's piece in this issue is reprinted from that sterling fanzine from the dollar area, WARHOON.

My Diary having been burnt in a fire I have to fill it in SOME way....

Our old friend Walter Ryan gives a brief account of Northern Ireland's share of the world's troubles.

At one time Ireland was known as the Island of Saints and Scholars. The front cover shows all that's left of it.

THE SCARR, by the way, is, like all the best things in life, free. However, if you haven't sent me your 'zine or a letter recently I'll assumed you have moved and I'll wait till you let me have your new address.

Slainte,

Geo.

THE MORTAL GAEL BY BOB SHAW

HOW TO DESIGN A MODERN AIRCRAFT

THE TITLE of this little article is, of course, a misnomer. It would take a whole fanzine to turn the average reader into a competent aeronautical engineer, but reading this will teach you as much as I know -- and I earned my living in the field for a year. And if any of you goes and gets a good job with Boeing all I ask is (a) 50% of your first month's salary, and (b) that you don't blame me if you encounter any of the Filthy Five.

I never found out how I got the job. I'd been working as a constructional engineer in Bolton, wanted back home, and applied to the Belfast aircraft plant in the hope that I would be accepted for re-training. But to my surprise and alarm I was told that they were going to put me to work right away on a big military freighter. Having read Nevil Shute I was scared stiff on the first day as I approached the design building: supposing I forgot to switch the computer off and wasted its battery; supposing I fell into the wind tunnel and went round and round it for ever, mouthing helplessly as I passed the little window; supposing I was responsible for the point being put on the wrong end of an aeroplane, meaning it could only get through the sound barrier backwards....

However, I needn't have troubled myself with these abstruse technical considerations, for I was assigned to work with the Filthy Five. This was a select little group of eccentric draughtsmen who had a unique claim to fame in the firm -- they had never designed an aircraft part which was subsequently translated into reality.

The section leader was a wizened little Scot called Scotty, an ardent

spiritualist who saw ghosts every night in life. During the day, when he was supposed to be forcing us to work, he wrote detailed notes of the previous night for a psychic magazine. Not only did he contribute nothing to the project, he actually held it back, because some of the more impressionable draughtsmen were afraid of Scotty and wouldn't work overtime with him on dark nights. Into the bargain, it was well known that he sometimes thought he was an eagle. "I get nightmares," one apprentice told me, "about Scotty flapping up and down the office with me in his talons."

Next in command was Duggie, a watery-eyed bachelor who suffered from tuberculosis, diabetes and a dreadful stutter. His main interest in life was foreign languages. He was fluent in quite a number and loved displaying his proficiency because, strangely, when he was using a foreign tongue his stammer completely vanished. As an example of the sort of thing he did when he was supposed to be working: when he found out that Fitzgerald had not translated all of the Rubaiyat, Duggie taught himself Persian and translated the rest for his own amusement.

Then came Norris Gray, who insisted on calling himself Sirron Yarg to show that nobody, not even his parents, was going to force him into the conformist mould. His wallet and all his drafting gear bore the initials S.Y. He also had a theory that he would betray his individuality by working normal office hours, and was never less than two hours late. True to his principles, he usually stayed on two hours or more after everybody else had gone home, but the firm didn't benefit much by it. As soon as he had the place to himself he would go down into the workshops and steal aircraft components, usually radio parts he had a special fondness for. Sirron worked reasonably hard in the office, but as he did not recognise British Standard Specifications ("supreme example of enforced conformity") his drawings were treated as highly suspect.

Then came Jimmy -- handsome, voluble extrovert who devoured science fiction most of the day and had an ambition to write sf novels. His trouble was that he had a theory that the name of the hero is the most important thing in a book. He would spend week after week working on a hero's name, selecting one which embodied the character, background, attitudes, place in the book's imaginary society, etc. After maybe three months of intensive work he would arrive at a perfect name, but then would realise that to the initiate the name would tell the whole story -- so what was the point of adding 60,000 words of useless embroidery? At that point, Jimmy would get down to work on another book.

Last was Ernie -- tall, dark, buck-toothed, and so fanatical about his motorcycle that he couldn't come to work on it without feeling that it had earned at least a minor overhaul, and sometimes a major strip-down. He spent most of his time nipping up and down between our third-floor office and the yard where his bike was kept. The machine's carburettor was practically a permanent fixture in his hand, and I used to see parties of visiting VIPs staring curiously at it as they went by, probably thinking it was a strange new drafting tool or a jet engine component.

This then was the Filthy Five, my mentors, and I was to spend a dreamlike year in their company. We were supposed to design a small piece of fuselage structure near one of the plane's escape doors. Scotty showed me the door on a general arrangement drawing. I was immediately struck by the fact that somebody jumping out of the escape door would land on a propellor, but being

a greenhorn I kept my mouth shut and got down to work, or as close to it as was possible in the company of Scotty, Duggie, Jimmy, Sirron and Ernie.

Six months later Scotty gathered us around him and told us it had just been discovered that anybody jumping out of our door would land on a propellor, which was hardly compatible with the whole idea of escaping. Every drawing we had done in that six months was therefore scrapped. The Filthy Five took the news stoically enough -- their drawings were always scrapped anyway, and this way at least somebody else could shoulder the blame.

Not being used to the aircraft industry, I was pretty burned up about it, but I started over again, anxious to do my bit in putting one of those big silver birds up in the sky.

Four months later came the news that, with our door in its new position, people jumping out of it would land on people jumping out of another door directly below. Again the door was moved, and all our drawings were scrapped. The Filthy Five accepted this blow with their usual fortitude, even indifference, but I sat down and wrote an application for a job in the firm's publicity department. I got the job, but, the aircraft business being what it is, it took two months to arrange the transfer to an office four hundred yards away. In that two months I didn't put pencil to paper once. I was now a full member of the group.

But although they took the continued transience of their door so coolly its latest migration seemed a kind of death knell for the Filthy Five. Sirron was the first to go. He was caught one night valiantly trying to steal an entire R/T set from a Sunderland flying boat. Our hearts swole with pride when we learned that he would have got away from the enraged security men but for the fact that the set was so heavy that when he throw it onto his pushbike the bike crumpled up in the middle. Sirron resigned next day, and the last we heard he had gone to the US and was in the army.

Ernie was next, but even before he went I sensed disaster. Ominously, he lost interest in his motorcycle and took up underwater swimming, throwing himself into the new pursuit with a fanaticism which led to his downfall. The sea is cold around Ulster so Ernie realised he had to have one of those one-piece rubber suits. He couldn't afford to buy one, but the solution he hit on stamped him as one of the most original thinkers of our time. The firm had just received a contract for cocooning of naval aircraft. Ernie went down to the hangar where the work was being carried out, got into one-piece woollen combinations and paid a worker to spray him with the plastic cocooning material. Unfortunately, the stuff takes rather a long time to set and a manager happened to walk into the hangar and discover a silver-gray Ernie standing in a dark corner -- buck teeth shining -- like an outsize crucifix. He didn't get fired -- I think the management were bemused with thoughts of what a mind like that could do if only its energy could be harnessed -- but he was made to work so hard that he soon left for England.

Duggie made his exit through trying to leap gracefully onto the platform of a fast-moving bus. He got on all right, but broke his leg in the process. Afterwards he told me he was lying there with one leg bent laterally at right angles from his knee when the conductor came along, looked down at him and said. "You're dead lucky -- you could've broken your leg doing a fool thing like that." The TB and diabetes complicated his recovery so much that it took

a year to fix his leg, but while he was at home the firm began sending him all its foreign correspondence to translate. He did it so well that he never had to go back to the drawing board, but I think he missed his old way of life. I visited him at home a few months later and found the stairwell of his three-storey house filled with a gigantic pendulum arrangement which he used for drawing harmonograph patterns by the hundred.

Jimmy went to the States where his charm and blarney, distrusted by his fellow Ulstermen, won him instant success. Scotty left too -- his wife's nerves finally gave way under the strain of the nightly visitations, and they retired to the south of England, although separate bedrooms might have been a more efficient solution.

The aircraft we all worked on is in service with the RAF now, carrying cargo in 5,000-mile hops all over the world. I often think it would have been a nice memorial if even one minor component could have borne the imprint of the Filthy Five.

THE STAIR CASE

There's a tendency for some of writers to bewail the decay of society, the break-down of the old systems of morality, etc. In general the ones who do this seem to come from London or New York or some such place, and no doubt they are simply reporting what they see around them -- but I do wish they wouldn't assume that local conditions are general. Northern Ireland, in my estimation, is far more typical of the world norm in this respect than London or New York, and society here has not decayed, nor have the old systems of morality broken down.

Happily for the world in general I have been able to isolate the factor which has prevented the degeneration of Ulster society, and am about to make the results of my researches known to fandom. Thus armed we will be able to rebuild society in those unfortunate places where it has broken down, and to prevent the rot from spreading elsewhere. And happily for us there is no need to leap up on ramparts or do any of the other hazardous things Phil Farmer has been proposing.

All you have to do is stare at people.

At first sight, or even first stare, this might seem too easy -- but note that it is in precisely those areas where people have given up the practice of staring that everything else has started to come apart at the seams. The biggest mistake any society can make is to adopt the attitude that staring is unsophisticated. A good, prolonged, well-directed stare is, in fact, one of the most powerful weapons the forces of morality have ever possessed. As an obvious example, very few people will gladly commit a murder or a burglary if they think they are being stared at.

See what I mean? When you think about it, the stare is revealed as a form of action-at-a-distance, second only to gravity itself. Consider hypnotism, the lion-tamer's stare, the basilisk, and that perverted form of staring known as the evil eye.

Not only does the practice of staring regulate public morality, but it also casts a beneficent influence over manners and customs. Every time I go to London I'm grateful for the reminder of what staring has averted in Belfast. I see the most extraordinary things being allowed to pass unnoticed; men with

beads and painted faces and flowered overcoats, girls made up like corpses, and so on.

In case anybody gets me wrong, let me say I'm a firm believer that people should be allowed to appear in the streets in any peculiar clothes or condition that they choose. That is their affair. They must not be persecuted or interfered with; but they ought, within reasonable limits, to be stared at. In Belfast we do stare, and this definitely discourages extremes and extravagances. As a result of this general practice of staring we find that people who act in an unusual way in Belfast do so from honest personal conviction.

If a man goes about Belfast wearing a flowered overcoat and carrying a pink umbrella you will generally find that he does so because he believes in it. He does it deliberately and is prepared to be stared at, and to stare back too. He is a man of strong, honest and fearless character. But if you meet a man in London wearing a flowered coat and carrying a pink umbrella, it's a good bet that he does so with no definite conviction. He is merely a weak person drifting with the Carnaby Street current. Knowing that, in a city where people do not stare, he can wear anything anywhere without censure or question, only increases his weakness and eventually destroys his character.

A word of warning to anyone who may be about to throw himself into the science of the pstare without due preparation. Staring is no mere matter of an empty, goggle-eyed gaze — it is an art. It requires a receptive, interested, sympathetic state of mind. The business of the starrer is to know the human heart. Staring, indeed, may be as much a matter of hearing as of seeing — of hearing the still, small voice of humanity. It is a virtue widely and conscientiously practiced by the wise people of Ulster. And evil will be the day when a cold-hearted generation goes on its dull way with glassy eyes that look neither to right nor left, as happens elsewhere.

But let us in fandom make sure that such a day never dawns throughout the world. Let us act as zealous advocates of this virtue till we persuade the whole world to do likewise. Then people of every nation, creed, caste, colour, age and sex will look at each other, not with envy or distrust, but with a friendly, open-hearted, appreciative stare.

A LOAD OF BULLETINS

Herbert Flinge, the world's leading communications satellite designer, has written an article bemoaning the amount of money he lost because in 1947 he thought of, but failed to patent, Arthur C Clarke.

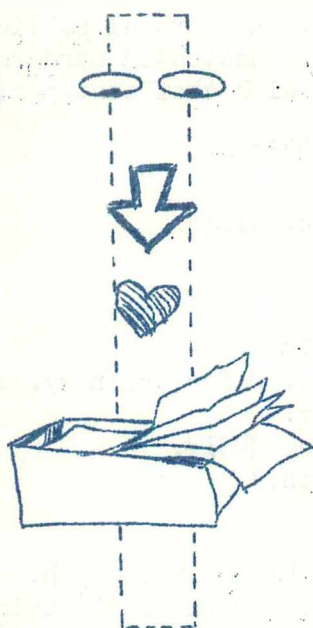
Latest sf books nominated for the Groogh Award are "The Brave Bulls" by Gore Vitals; "Odd John" by R A Lavatory; "The Flying Saucer" by T Disch; "The Mightiest Machine" by Cogswell; "The Square Egg" by Pangborn.

English author K Amis today stated that, Walter Breen's deductions to the contrary, he is not Simak spelt backwards.

This would be as good a place as any
To say that
The SCARR is edited and published
By

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B A N G O R
Northern Ireland

Peeps Into my diary



Mar 1 Long, long ago there lived an Eskimo called Bail Nee and his wife Su. On the night their son Kohrt was born there was a truly tremendous storm, so they knew by this that Kohrt was destined for great things. And so he was. He became known as the best builder of kayaks for miles around, even as far south as Chicago! His own was specially good, and he was justly proud of it. But once, on a long trip, he landed on a floating ice-field, dragged the kayak up on the ice and went off to hunt. Unluckily, he accidentally broke his arm and he had to stay some weeks while it healed. There was but one item of food -- his kayak. And that was when he learned that you can't have your kayak and eat it.

Mar 2 Shortly after Kohrt was married the whole tribe migrated South for six months. Before leaving each kayak-owner dug a hole in the ice, put his kayak therein and filled the hole with water, which froze over-nights. Kohrt did the same with his new boat. Returning, he was surprised to find that someone had dug up his kayak, thawed it out and used it. The culprit was never found, but for many a long Arctic night the chief topic in the igloos was, "Who thawed Kohrt Nee's boat?"

Mar 3 During a drought the river became almost completely dried up, so there was no nightly bath for the two young eels. One day, when Papa eel was at work, Mamma eel took the youngsters upstream till they came to a pool and washed a month's accumulation of mud off them. Then when Papa eel returned that evening she showed him a clean pair of eels.

Mar 4 There is a story about a man who tried to teach fish to play musical instruments. He failed, however, to teach a tuna to play a mouth-organ -- he didn't understand it was a piano tuna.

Mar 5 Two little fish playing happily in the bay were caught by a fisherman and were served up that evening for dinner. They were both eaten by a badly-dressed, bad-mannered, ugly girl. Arrived in her stomach, one remarked to the other, "What's a nice place like you doing in a girl like this?"

Mar 6 Old Lang kept a pawnshop in Glasgow. A rumour began circulating that the three brass balls over the doorway were not brass at all, but gold. An enterprising crook decided to steal them in spite of the protests of his mate. He tried to do so with his friend keeping watch, but slipped and broke his back. His mate rushed up and cried, "Och, Jock, why did ye dae it?" And with his last breath Jock said, "Ah did it for auld Lang's sign."

Mar 7 "As a result of the increase among the general public of knowledge of poisons and police methods the number of undetected murders has doubled in the last twenty years." Anything wrong with that statement?

Mar 8 The stupid maid answered the phone:-

Caller: "Is Mr Smith there, please?"

Maid: "Yes. What name shall I give him, sir?"

"Quoit."

"I beg your pardon, sir!"

"Quoit, Quoit."

"Would you mind spelling it, sir?"

"Q for question, U for umbrella, O for ordinary, I for Ireland...."

"Beg pardon, sir, I for what, sir?"

"I for Ireland, T for telephone, QUOIT."

"Yes, Mr Quoit, I'll call Mr Smith."

Why did I call the maid stupid?

Mar 9 A man drives up a two-mile long hill at 10 m.p.h. At what speed must he drive down again to average 20 m.p.h. for the whole trip?

Mar 10 If I think my watch is two minutes fast when actually it is two minutes slow, what is the correct time when I think it is 2 o'clock?

Mar 11 Five men on a raft. Each has cigarettes but no means of lighting one. Then one man threw a cigarette into the sea and they were all able to light up. How?

Mar 12 If 9 times 7 is 36, $8 \times 4 = 23$, $6 \times 8 = 84$, what is 7 times 6?

Mar 13 "He must go forward or back; there is no other alternative." What is wrong with that sentence?

Mar 15 On which day of the week did 10th September 1572 fall. (Seven guesses allowed.)

Mar 16 Who said, "I remember, I remember the house where I was born"?

Mar 19 Who said, "And the Colonel's daughter smiled on him as well".

Mar 20 Crazy Charlie likes meat but hates vegetables; hates cocoa but likes tea; likes a pen, won't use a pencil; likes green, dislikes yellow. Would he prefer lambs to donkeys? Or books to magazines?

Mar 23 "This is my nephew," said Harry to his sister Harriet. "He may be your nephew but he's not mine," replied Harriet. How come?

Mar 24 A bottle and its cork costs \$1.05, and the bottle costs a dollar more than the cork. How much does the cork cost?

Mar 27 White to play and mate in 292 moves: q5ss/lp2p3/plk1Plpl/6Pp/PKplplP/8/2PlPlPP/3Q4.
(Otto Titus Blathy. 1900)

DARK AND TRUE AND TINDER IS THE NORTH

ONE DAY A GROUP of fellow-travellers marched against the ancient walls of a forbidden city, guarded by fierce giants. If this sounds like the beginning of a fairy story, well, that is how it should be, for in a country which has had so much history as Ireland, and where that history is so long remembered, every place is a symbol and every action takes on the quality of myth.

To most modern reporters, however, the confrontation between the travellers and the giants, and the violence that followed, were the spontaneous revolt of an oppressed people against unjust government. To some others they were a conspiracy of terrorists against democratic institutions.

To some extent both these assessments are correct, and indeed almost every statement made about the recent troubles in Northern Ireland contains some element of truth. Unfortunately, many people assume that the problems of such a small country must be very simple: whereas a small country is subject to the same historical and economic forces as a large one, and the operation of those forces is further complicated by personality conflicts. The struggle between Terence O'Neill and Brian Faulkner for leadership of the Government may, as the New Left ingeniously explain, be essentially a class struggle between the declining aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie; but when in fact those socio-historical trends are personified in two fallible human beings, one wonders at which level true reality lies.

Some reporters merely drag into the open one strand of the truth from the tangled skein of Irish politics and exhibit it proudly to the world as the core of the problem. Each time they pull tighter the knot in Northern Ireland, as those who feel their point of view has been overlooked conclude with some justification that the only way to secure the attention of modern communications media is to do something violent.

The more simple and obvious the explanation, the less likely it is to be correct. For example, the troubles have little to do with religion, the Protestant and Catholic churches being on the best of terms with each other. (The notorious Paisley is neither a Presbyterian nor an Orangeman.) They have even less to do with civil rights for Catholics, who have and have always had in Northern Ireland exactly the same rights as Protestants.

If one had to give a one-sentence explanation for all the bother it is this: an age-old vendetta between two ethnic groups, fomented by unscrupulous

BY

WALTER RYAN

and shortsighted politicians and exacerbated by economic problems, has once again flared into violence.

The two ethnic groups are the descendants of the rebellious Irish of the 17th century, and the descendants of the Protestant Scottish and English settlers who displaced them from their lands. The rebellious Irish were themselves the descendants of successive waves of similar invasions, all of whom were contentedly absorbed in the mainstream of Irish culture, and most of the settlers were of similar racial origins. They would soon have intermingled if it had not been for the fact that the Catholic church had decreed that the children of any marriage between Protestant and Catholic must be brought up as Catholics. This decree, which is still in force, has perpetuated a virtually complete apartheid between the two communities in Northern Ireland, so that it is possible for a Protestant to grow up, live a rich full life and die, without ever meeting a Catholic socially. The two communities live in separate districts, go to separate schools where they learn different versions of history, play different games, join different clubs and dance different dances, read different newspapers, and generally know less about one another than they do about the Red Indians. The Catholics, who are in the minority in Northern Ireland, look for aid and comfort to the Republic of Ireland, which has never recognised the right of the Protestant North to an independent existence. The Protestants, who are in the minority in Ireland as a whole, look with less confidence to England, which doesn't want to be bothered. The situation is one of ghettos within a ghetto, and Northern Ireland is probably the only country in the world where everyone is a member of a persecuted minority.

In rural and working-class Northern Ireland the ethnic boundaries are well defined and generally well respected, the traditional parades of the Orange Order and the Ancient Order of Hibernians avoiding the territory of their traditional opponents. These parades are a form of folk art, full of music and colour, but they serve the basic purpose of re-asserting claim to a particular territory, and when one side attempts to assert a right to "walk" in the territory of another it is regarded as aggressive or provocative, or in a mixed area as an indication that the offending side now believes they have supremacy in that area.

We are now in a position to translate into contemporary terms the fairy story with which we began. It falls naturally into three chapters.

1. The Battle of Duke Street

One day a group of civil rights marchers attempted to march into the traditionally Protestant area of Derry, the old walled city centre, and were barred by the police. The civil rights movement at that time comprised all the enemies the Unionist (Protestant) Government had accumulated during its existence, and no government which has been in power for 48 years is likely to run short of them. Their leaders were liberals genuinely in search of an integrated society, communists, socialists (revolutionary or otherwise) and Catholic nationalists including members of the terrorist IRA, which had now turned its energies into street demonstrations. Their stated aims were such reasonable ones as the abolition of the property qualification for voting in elections for municipal authorities and similar bodies in rural districts. This property qualification was based on the fact that the revenue of those

authorities was raised from taxes on property, but it had been abolished in England some twenty years ago because of the wartime destruction of property and movement of population. The importance of it in the Northern Ireland context was that because of the 17th century settlement Catholics were less likely to own property than Protestants, and some Protestants feared that the introduction of universal franchise would tip the balance in mixed areas. The practical importance of this was that the winning party could use the local authority's powers to build and allocate housing to consolidate its position.

A number of militant Protestants accordingly regarded the civil rights march as an attempt by their traditional opponents to assert their supremacy in Derry, and it was clear there might be trouble. The police advised the Government accordingly and it was decided to divert the march along a less contentious route. A barrier was set up to enforce the diversion. The civil rights marchers however unexpectedly turned along another street leading in the same forbidden direction: another body of police was hastily posted there, without a barrier: the marchers attempted to push their way through: there was some throwing of stones and banner poles: the police made a baton charge: simultaneously the outflanked police arrived behind the marchers, who thought their retreat was being cut off, and the melee was retained in full view of the tv and newsreel cameras which the leaders of the marchers had thoughtfully arranged to be present.

It was at this point that Northern Ireland politics entered the McLuhan era, in which politics is a branch of the entertainment industry. The dramatic pictures of armed policemen clubbing defenceless demonstrators raised a simple question to which the Government had no simple answer. Namely, why should a peaceful procession asking for such an obvious right as "one man, one vote" not be allowed to walk along the street?

The question exposed the basic weakness of the Northern Ireland Government's position, which is that it is trying to operate the machinery of two party government in a one party state. In England the two political parties try to do each other down at every opportunity, but since power swings from one to the other quite frequently no lasting damage results. But in Northern Ireland they play for keeps, since the Opposition party is dedicated to the destruction of the state itself by its absorption in the Republic of Ireland: there is no alternative Government nor any prospect of one. This is a state of affairs which has induced arrogance and complacency in the ruling party, since they have little to fear in elections: and irresponsibility among the Opposition, who can blame everything on the Government and promise Utopia without any likelihood of being asked to deliver it.

2. The Prisoner in the Castle

It will be obvious to you that the only hope of Northern Ireland evolving into an integrated democracy is for the Catholics to reconcile themselves to the existence of the state, and for the Protestants to trust them not to sabotage it. Catholic co-operation in running the country might not materially improve the economic situation (Northern Ireland is a semi-industrialised region with no raw materials and separated from its markets by the sea) but it might stop the Catholic unemployed for blaming the Protestant Government for their plight.

This was Terence O'Neill's policy, and for some years it looked like being

successful. The Catholic Nationalist Party accepted the role of Official Opposition in the Northern Ireland Parliament and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland visited O'Neill at his official residence, Stormont Castle. O'Neill became popular with many Catholics and was even voted Irishman of the Year by the readers of a Southern Irish newspaper. But unfortunately in political terms this popularity was a liability to O'Neill rather than an asset. His power base was the Unionist Party, which existed to preserve the union with Great Britain, and which had the solid support of the Protestant two-thirds of the population. It was obvious to many Unionist voters that the only danger to Northern Ireland's existence was that the Unionist Party would split: if two Unionist candidates ran in the same constituency a Nationalist might be elected, and if there were enough of them they could vote Northern Ireland into the Republic. This was where Paisley became important. His following in the country was negligible, but he commanded the support of some fanatical activists, all vehemently anti-Catholic and therefore anti-O'Neill. Moreover, O'Neill had become personally unpopular in some quarters, and there was an increasing body of opinion within the Party that it would be safer to have another leader.

This then was the situation at the time of the Battle of Duke Street. The press and tv coverage of the incident was so extensive that the British Government intervened, and with their aid O'Neill was able to get the Unionist Party to accept most of the reforms advocated by the Civil Rights Movement. But this did little to reconcile the Catholics, who regarded them as having been forced on the Government, and it further alienated the anti-O'Neill element in the Unionist Party and increased its strength. The Cabinet Minister responsible for law and order during the Duke Street affair resigned, and a Party Meeting was called to consider deposing O'Neill.

Politically speaking, O'Neill's position was impossible, because he was asking his party to destroy itself. The basic aim of the Unionist Party was the maintenance of the union with Great Britain, but every movement eventually becomes institutionalised, and the preservation of the Party as an entity was the first consideration with many: just as the preservation of churches as institutions seems to become more important than the teachings of their founders. O'Neill had the great majority of the country behind him....a public opinion poll showed that nearly 80% of the people preferred him to any other leader....but as long as he had any sizable proportion of the Unionist Party against him his position was untenable. In desperation he appealed directly to the people over the heads of his party bosses. Going on television he appealed to them to put love before fear, trust before suspicion and to indicate their support to him personally.

The response was the most moving and hopeful event in Ireland since Parnell, and the only reason it did not attract world-wide attention was because Northern Ireland is such a small country. About 150,000 people wrote to O'Neill, which is equivalent to 20 million Americans writing to the President. Factories, schools, whole villages organised petitions. Groups of people took full page advertisements in the local papers. Bumper stickers reading "Keep O'Neill at the wheel" were produced overnight. Several organised groups sprang up dedicated to the principles of O'Neillism and were inundated with subscriptions.

This remarkable upsurge of public opinion silenced the traditional politicians, and the Unionist Party voted O'Neill unanimous support. An amnesty was declared for all those involved in the Duke Street battle and

the subsequent riots, and Northern Ireland spent the Christmas of 1968 in a spirit of goodwill which seemed to promise a brighter future for everyone.

3. The Burntollet Ambush

That would have been a fine ending for a fairy story, but in politics nobody ever lives happily ever after. The revolutionary socialists, including one Bernadette Devlin, were disappointed with the apparent success of O'Neill's reformist solution and announced their intention of holding a civil rights march right across Northern Ireland, and the IRA provided them with an escort. The march was described by the judicial commission which investigated the events later as "an act of calculated martyrdom" and, sure enough, it was attacked by extreme Protestant toughs at Burntollet Bridge in the moorlands of County Derry, and some students were beaten with clubs. The Government and police were blamed for affording inadequate protection, and the country immediately split along traditional lines. Catholics saw Bernadette Devlin and the other student marchers as young idealists, brutally attacked by Government supporters. The graphic newspaper accounts of young girls being beaten with nailed clubs had sexual undertones. Protestants despised their own extremists, but regarded the march as a publicity stunt, callously calculated to destroy O'Neillism.

Certainly it had this effect. In an attempt to clear the air O'Neill appointed the judicial commission I mentioned, and was disowned by two members of his own cabinet. He declared a general election, and supported pro-O'Neill candidates against official candidates of his own party. He won the election and was returned to power, but not by a convincing enough majority, though 500 more votes scattered over a few vital constituencies would have made all the difference. The Catholics had been alienated by Burntollet, and many voted for candidates from among the marchers. The Protestants were alienated by the Catholic rioting which had taken place in Derry City after the Battle of Duke Street and the Burntollet Ambush. O'Neill struggled on for a few months, and then gave place to a traditional type of Protestant Government which had little hope of reconciling the Catholics.

The Catholic rioting in Derry continued at intervals, until 800 policemen had been seriously injured, more than a quarter of all the police in the country. At the height of the last and worst riot the Republic of Ireland moved its troops to the Border, and the now extremist-dominated civil rights movement organised demonstrations in other towns to weaken the police further. Catholic extremists in Belfast used the opportunity to attack police stations and Protestant working class areas with rifles and machine-guns. Protestant extremists counterattacked with firearms and petrol bombs, burning many Catholic families out of their homes. British troops were brought in and enforced the uneasy peace which now exists.

It seems to me that there are several lessons of universal application which can be drawn from the events in Northern Ireland.

1. That democracy as we know it can operate only when there is general agreement on fundamentals. The solution which is being tried now in Northern Ireland is to transfer most of the controversial aspects of government to the civil service or to nominated public bodies.

2. That hate is more powerful in politics than love, if only because its effects are more newsworthy and televisual. The influence of the modern news media on the events in Northern Ireland has been consistently pernicious.

3. That the technique of obstructive or violent demonstration as practised by the New Left can destroy a community by creating the opportunities for the violent expression of hatred, and can produce nothing else. After a year of such demonstrations the extreme Catholics in Northern Ireland have destroyed all hope of a peaceful unification of Ireland as a whole, the extreme Protestants have destroyed the basis of the ascendancy they were trying to protect, and the New Left have alienated a whole generation from socialism.

It would not be fair to Northern Ireland to conclude without making it clear that the total number of extremists of all sorts involved in the disturbances number only a few thousand in all, and that more than 90% of the people live in goodwill, without ever having seen an act of violence except on television. This is the fourth and most important lesson Northern Ireland has for the world. That a modern highly organised community is terrifyingly vulnerable.

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