

The Ulster Nation: Troops Out - Market In

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Is Mrs Thatcher really a "traitor"? The answer must be "yes" because the Anglo-Irish Agreement surrenders some UK sovereignty, which is a treacherous act. But such treachery is not wrong in itself. The nation state must eventually be dismantled if people perceive the superiority of market anarchy. What is wrong with this agreement is that Mrs Thatcher has taken steps to allow some relatively enlightened and free thinking people in the UK to come under the control of a relatively barbarous, intolerant, theocratic state. The religious nature of the state is only objectionable because religions should be voluntary affairs. That it is an alien state is not relevant (except in so far as this reduces Republican Nationalists' claims to absurdity), for if it were a more liberal alien state then this Agreement might be desirable.

That the Anglo-Irish Agreement must be viewed as an illiberal move is incontrovertibly illustrated by the nature and constitution of the foreign power that Parliament (for Mrs Thatcher is not alone in her treachery) has allowed to have a say in the governing of Ulster.

Expansionist Republican Theocracy

The state in the south of Ireland was established largely by staunch Roman Catholics. As a result it has developed into a theocracy, with comprehensive Catholicisation beginning in 1923 by common consent. The 1937 constitution had written into it that legislation must be grounded in Catholic theology. Political leaders in Eire must defer to the Church of Rome on all important social issues. When in doubt on any such issue the government calls on the bishops for their advice. As a result we find abortion is unconstitutional as well as illegal. Contraception is limited. There is no right to divorce. The supreme court has declared that a man's wife is his chattel. Homosexuals are gaoled.

The second and third articles of Eire's constitution spell out their position on the North unambiguously:

2) *The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas.*

3) *Pending the reintegration of the national territory, and without prejudice to the right of the Parliament and Government established by this Constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of that territory, the laws enacted by that Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of Saorstal Eireann [Irish Free State] and the like extra-territorial effect.*

Republican Foothold

So the Southern Irish Government's "recognition" of Ulster as part of the UK is bogus. In the Agreement they were allowed to strike out the reference to Northern Ireland "as part of the United Kingdom", and were therefore happy to acknowledge merely "no change in the status of Northern Ireland"! The constitution invalidates any concessionary interpretation of the Agreement as the Republic's government and population are very well aware. With their right to criticise the North and a guarantee of British attempts to meet these criticisms they have a foot-hold. The price, the Republic's "guarantee" to co-operate over terrorists, existed before this Agreement so it costs them nothing. Their press has written about this Agreement as meaning virtual joint sovereignty with long-term leverage to swallow Ulster. They are jubilant.

The Two Irish Nations in Context

In 1800 Ireland had the makings of a single Protestant, Whig nation. In that year the Act of Union ended a rebellion that in France and America had set up new regimes bent on becoming modern states. Ireland got linked to the 1689 modern British state (that was born of the Glorious Revolution of 1688) and so Whigs in Ireland, as in England, ceased to be revolutionary and became mere

reformers. The Act of Union ended the Anglo-Irish as rulers. (Their chamber was as old as the one at Westminster but it was corrupt and so opposed by the Whigs.) Yet between 1800 and 1830 a new and second nation arose on the island of Ireland. In Britain there were three nations: Wales, Scotland and England; in Ireland where there had been only one, there now emerged a second: Eire. Eire was a new nation, being a new separate society in the southern part of the island of Ireland. (That the two nations of Ireland do not officially have different names, and that people use "Ireland" to cover both, is part of the problem. "Ireland" covers two nations, like "Britain" covers three. "Eire" is an ancient name, for the whole island of Ireland, that was appropriated by the new nation in the south who then claimed to represent the whole of Ireland. But calling the new southern nation "Eire" and the old northern nation "Ulster", as we do in this article, makes more sense.)

How Eire was Born

Daniel O'Connell more than most men deserves the title of "father of his country". He was called to the Irish Bar in 1797 and later took up, as a Whig, the liberal cause of Catholic Emancipation (to free Catholic entry into Parliament and university posts). O'Connell held Monster Meetings attended by many thousands of Gaels. His Catholic Association was strongly supported by priests and collected over £1,000 weekly. On being elected for County Clare in 1828, the House of Commons reformed the law to let him take his place in 1829. This cause had enjoyed the full support of the Whigs in the north, who did not yet see themselves as a separate nation. It was only when O'Connell went for the repeal of the Union that they, began to see that Home Rule would mean Rome Rule.

At the Monster Meetings a remarkable sea change had occurred. The Gaels who went to the meetings had picked up English from translators of O'Connell's speeches. The Church had long since been keen to spread the use of English, but it failed until this new movement for Catholic Emancipation. The Gaels of the 18th century and beforehand were only nominal Catholics. Now they became very enthusiastic. Catholic Ireland

was to become a source of Catholic missionaries for what they ironically held to be their old religion. They were to go all over the world, from South America to China, to spread the "old" faith (this shows the sort of energy the new nation commanded). In fact their Catholicism was as fresh as their English.

Sir Robert Peel became Prime Minister in 1841 and, as a former secretary of Ireland, set out to counter O'Connell's attempt to repeal the Union. He had O'Connell arrested and made him cancel a Grand Monster Meeting at Clontarf in 1843. O'Connell was never quite the same force again and he died in 1847. But he left behind a new nation, and the modern Irish question. (And Whiggism, the ancestor of libertarianism, was left with a bad name in the South which it retains today.)

The Irish Question

What is the Irish Question? It is: "Can the new Irish nation, Eire, rule the whole island of Ireland?" The answer to it is: "No, because it does not have the power to conquer the older nation in Ulster, any more than Wales has the power to conquer Scotland."

The present "troubles" are in considerable part the result of the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. Here Lloyd George deliberately set up a devolved Ulster to distance Ulster from the rest of the UK, in the hope that it would eventually leave and join the South. This gave the Irish Nationalists encouragement. The Protestants opposed this special treatment. It was, after all, the Home Rule that they had opposed (though now it no longer meant Rome Rule). The pristine Unionist aim in 1920 was to continue direct rule from Westminster. They expressed no wish to dominate the Catholics and predicted trouble; trouble that they wished to avoid by full UK membership. In Ulster they rubber-stamped Westminster legislation in a deliberate attempt to minimise the distancing which Lloyd George had created. The process of keeping Ulster at a distance has continued, though it has more recently taken the form of the refusal of the major political parties to organise in Ulster. Consequently normal politics is impossible, and each

election is effectively a referendum on the Union.

The IRA-Sinn Fein

The Provisional IRA is not officially connected to or supported by the government of the Irish Republic, although the IRA shares their ambitions as regards the North. (This reminds us of the policy of Elizabeth the First towards Catholic Spain. Privately she encouraged Drake, Hawkins and co to plunder for the British crown and in the Protestant cause. But openly she denounced them as buccaneers and outlaws. She imprisoned and even executed many of them, declaring that her aim was to round up the rest.) Sinn Fein is the political wing of the IRA that operates with them in the North to establish, by the ballot box and the gun, Roman Catholic Nationalism on the whole of the island of Ireland. Sinn Fein made socialist noises in the 1930s and 1960s, and have done so again since 1982, but this seems to have been to gull socialists, their main supporters, on the British mainland. They intrigued with Nazi Germany in the early 1940s; in the 1950s and 1970s they championed a Catholic corporate state and Cold War struggle against atheistic communism. Sinn Fein-IRA's primary aim is theocratic Irish nationalism.

It is hard to see how, as Enoch Powell suggested ' American influence upon Mrs Thatcher can have suddenly caused her to do another of her famous U-turns; this time on her "forever British" stance on Ulster (her rigid rhetoric but plastic policies are more generally evidenced by her increased spending on state welfare and warfare combined with increased taxation). It seems more likely that it was the IRA who saw sense at last when they realised that bombing innocent people did not greatly worry politicians, who are used to treating other citizens as cannon fodder. The IRA sensibly killed Airey Neave (Thatcher's aide and mentor) before he could implement his policies for getting Ulster into normal UK politics. The Brighton bombing, seen from the IRA's point of view, was also very sensible for it must have left Mrs Thatcher badly shaken and fearing for her own life.

Who are the Imperialists?

But having been bombed into submission did Mrs Thatcher really need to try to throw Ulster to the South? Would it not have been better simply to give the terrorists what they say they want - "troops out". (What they really mean is "UK troops out", emasculating Ulster's indigenous defences in the process, and then Republican troops in.) With British troops gone the nationalists would lose their most important "anti-imperialist" argument and stand revealed as the would-be imperialists that they really are.

Imperialism need not be a disaster. It depends on the options. Free trade (i.e. anarchy) is better, but that's not on offer owing to lack of public demand. But different nationalist movements go in for different degrees of state control. And very often they are reactionary rather than progressive, leading to a decline in living standards for the people in return for mere nominal freedoms. In contrast, through the cultural exchange and free trade that went with the Roman Empire, relative enlightenment and stability was brought to many areas over hundreds of years. Britain has no such liberalising effect on Ulster. Ulster people are at least as civilised as people on the mainland. But nor is Ulster imposed on and plundered by Britain - in fact Ulster receives massive subsidies from the people in Britain. Ireland was not conquered by England 700 years ago, as Eire's propaganda holds, and far from wanting to hang on to Ulster, the British policy has been to pull out of it as soon as possible. Britain only remains there owing to the majority's demands and actions. Thatcher is not the first to try to sell out.

Yet the Republic of Ireland, on the other hand, would clearly be both an endarkening and a plundering imperialist power in Ulster. In addition to high taxation at the expense of the poor, and the religious impositions, Eire's police and courts are notorious for rough justice.

A One-Year Ultimatum

People in the UK have been taken in by Catholic propaganda and desire to be rid of

Ulster. They would probably vote to kick it out in a referendum. Would this be bad? Not necessarily: a one-year ultimatum that Ulster was going to be cut from Mother Britain's apron strings would give the Ulster people time to marshal their defences. (The IRA was only allowed to grow by the natural defences of Ulster being banned in 1969 when the troops were called in to protect the Catholics.) A small border war, killing mainly volunteer soldiers, might then ensue between Ulster and the South. The Irish war would not last long. Ulster's borders would be redefined. The South would slowly come to terms with the fact that they are not going to be allowed to rule (by majoritarian democracy) over the North (where countless opinion polls show that less than half of even the Catholic minority currently support joining the Republic). The Republic would save some face and be considerably consoled by Britain's absence from Ulster (and that they would probably gain more Catholic-inhabited land than they would lose).

The majority of people on the mainland see Ireland as one nation and a thorn in Britain's side to be got rid of somehow; the Unionists want to remain connected to Britain and see an independent Ulster as a poor second best, but being controlled by Eire as absolutely out of the question: an independent Ulster is eventually inevitable. A one-year ultimatum would minimise bloodshed by both avoiding the type of sudden withdrawal that caused massacres in India and Pakistan, and avoiding a futile attempt to force Ulster into Eire's control.

Hanging Now ...

Only gratuitous violence is barbaric. Mrs Thatcher is wrong to think that these Eire terrorists need merely to be "deprived of the oxygen of publicity". They do not aim at publicity; they aim at the conquest of Northern Ireland. Literally depriving them of oxygen would help in the short run. Ulster alone is far better able to take care of terrorism. Terrorism will be crushed in double quick time as soon as the Ulster people accept the need to defend themselves. Terrorism survives largely because politicians succumb to the still fashionable prejudice against capital punishment. But if you raise the price of terror then less will be

bought. (The IRA's self-imposed deaths, by suicide in 1981, did dramatically cut recruiting figures.) Politicians on the front line, as in Ulster, will not risk so-called humane policies against bombers and gunmen.

... Enlightenment Later

But the remedy of capital punishment deals only with the symptoms of the violence. Most problems are those of ignorance, and enlightenment is the cure. This is the case with the Republic of Ireland. The long-term solution to terrorism in this case is for Eire to realise that its activities are futile and illegitimate - and so abandon them. (People never try to do what they fully realise to be futile, by definition.) The South has to see that it cannot take Ulster, for Ulster is too strong: the Ulster people are fighting for their survival on home ground whilst the Republic has few imperialists as fanatical as the IRA. The South also has to see that they have no right to Ulster, even by their own nationalist standards: the Protestants are not the remnants of an imposed Ascendancy, as Eire likes to think, but form a separate and older nation. (The Anglo-Irish Ascendancy was made up of the ruling classes of Britain in Ireland. It ruled southern Gaels and Northern Presbyterians alike. It was substantially withdrawn at the turn of the century, leaving a new nation in the south and a strong Irish, but Unionist, society in the north.)

A Deregulated Ulster

Separate from the UK, Ulster could expand its economy to a position of completely unassailable affluence by declaring itself a tax haven say with taxes at a maximum of 20%. Lower VAT in Ulster currently attracts many Southern Irish shoppers. It seems likely that lower taxes overall would attract businesses generally. Abolishing the rent acts would bring more property onto the market to cope with the new people coming to Ulster. All further steps towards deregulating the economy would encourage further investment, and they would probably end up with a goodly number of British immigrants if they tried this. They would attract even more Eire immigrants. Ulster could become as big a success as Hong

Kong, or Singapore, or Iceland, if they would only do some of the things that Mrs Thatcher merely talks about. Having so few people is not a problem: Iceland with less than 250,000 people has the highest standard of living in Europe. (They also have a thriving libertarian movement.)

This vision might appear improbable to many. Northern Ireland seems as sold on the welfare-warfare state as is Britain. But the Reverend Ian Paisley, the next prime minister of Ulster, has made some favourable noises about liberalising the economy in the past. He might see this as the only way forward without British handouts. The people of Ulster might be forced to liberalise initially if they are to survive. They might then see the benefits of this liberalisation and want to keep it. This is happening with free trade zones in China and the Philippines.

State Welfare-Warfare "Insurance"

But isn't Ulster insured with Britain for protection purposes just like the Falklands? And shouldn't we treat welfare payments in Ulster just like high welfare payments in Liverpool? No: they are not insured for welfare nor for warfare purposes.

The idea of "national insurance contributions" through taxation is quite foolish. Taxation is coercively taken money none of which is invested. That money is squandered by the government. When you want health care and other state services the state taxes you (and other people) again to pay for it. This is not insurance. There is no reason why the people of Ulster couldn't insure themselves properly, and at less cost, for private health care, defence, and other services at present provided by the British state. The prices for these things would fall dramatically in a deregulated and temporarily poorer Ulster.

It would have been wrong for the British government suddenly to refuse to help the Falkland Islanders when they were invaded, because the government had, over the years, taught them to rely on the British state (though Thatcher was preparing to give the Falklands to Argentina in slow stages, when Galtieri got impatient). But it would be right

and proper to slowly withdraw support now, so that they can gradually take up economic, private insurance (if they can afford it). It would be equally unwise suddenly to withdraw from Ulster without fair notice - a one-year ultimatum.

Liverpool is on a par with Ulster in terms of being an unwarranted parasite upon other people in the UK. (Though Ulster cost 1.4 billion pounds last year and Liverpool only a small fraction of this.) It is irrelevant that people in these formerly prosperous areas once subsidised, through taxation, other British backwaters. That was a complete waste as well. The people of Ulster and of Liverpool should have no legitimate claim to the earnings of others. And they lose much more by state regulations that destroy competition, than they gain in handouts.

Nationalism is the Problem

The long-term problem in Ireland has been competing nationalisms. The long-term solution to nationalism in Ireland, like everywhere else, is complete free market anarchy: where each person's home is their castle and no one tries to impose their values on other groups; where people pay for competing private protection agencies to protect themselves and their personal property from force and fraud. This solution is a long way off. Much more free market propaganda is necessary first (this article is not intended to put the general case for market anarchy). In the meantime an Ulster nation of people generally providing for themselves - not imposing on or being imposed on by other nations - is a more liberal solution all round than would be rule from either Westminster or Dublin.

Free Life