

Finally, English language readers are fortunate to have available three such valuable works on revolutionary terrorism in Italy as have been reviewed above. They were a pleasure to read.

Leonard Weinberg
University of Nevada, Reno

Conflict in Northern Ireland

Arthur, Paul, and Keith Jeffery. *Northern Ireland Since 1968*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

Bell, J. Bowyer. *The Gun in Politics: An Analysis of Irish Conflict, 1916-1986*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1987.

Bishop, Patrick, and Eamonn Mallie. *The Provisional IRA*. London: Transworld, 1987.

Holland, Jack. *The American Connection: U.S. Guns, Money and Influence in Northern Ireland*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987.

McVeigh, Joseph. *A Wounded Church: Religion, Politics and Justice in Ireland*. Cork, Ireland: Mercier, 1989.

Nelson, Sarah. *Ulster's Uncertain Defenders: Loyalists and the Northern Ireland Conflict*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984.

The six books to be discussed in this review essay are all well worth reading. Specifically, not only do they examine the ongoing problem of Northern Ireland, but they also offer insights into the more general problem of violent political conflict. In this essay I will discuss four issues dealt with by these works that are relevant both to the Northern Ireland crisis and to the broader problem of violent political conflict in the modern world.

First, some of the books provide a good discussion of religion and its impact on political conflict. It is interesting to recall that in the 1960s, when the Northern Ireland crisis was beginning, the consensus among political scientists was that religion was, as people used to say back then, "irrelevant." Put differently, the "conventional wisdom" of political scientists at the time was that religion was becoming less and less important in political affairs; that increasingly, religion was a matter of concern only to individual believers, not to the political system as a whole.

This belief in the lack of relevance of religion to politics meant that most political scientists were poorly prepared initially to understand many of the political upheavals of the past several decades, from the emergence of

Jewish fundamentalism in Israel to the phenomenon of the New Christian Right in American politics and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. In the specific case of Northern Ireland political scientists were slow to accept the idea that religion played a major role in the clash between Catholics and Protestants. Fortunately, two of the books help correct this lack of understanding. Sarah Nelson's book is an excellent study of the attitudes of the Northern Ireland Protestants towards the ongoing conflict, while Fr. Joseph McVeigh's book is a good overview of the historic attitudes of the Irish Catholic Church towards the Irish Republican Movement.

Second, conflict in the North vividly illustrates that political violence and terrorism can have corrosive effects on democratic societies. (Terrorism has been well-called the "cancer of democracy.") In the past two decades the world has witnessed many examples of the mortal danger posed to democratic governments by terrorism. For example, the collapse of a number of democratic regimes in Latin America in the 1970s (Chile in 1973, Uruguay in 1973, and Argentina in 1976) were in large part due to the fact that these democratic governments could not cope with the problem of terrorism.

In the case of Northern Ireland the incompatibility of terrorism and democracy is illustrated by several of the books under examination. For example, Nelson's book describes how the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a *quite* extreme Protestant paramilitary group, made an effort to "go political" in the 1970s; i.e., to transform itself from a terrorist organization to a political movement. The effort failed and the UVF went back to its former role as a paramilitary group. Similarly, in the 1980s the Provisional Irish Republican Army launched an effort to "go political" under the leadership of Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams. In Northern Ireland Provisional IRA members began running for office with the slogan: "With an Armalite in this hand and a ballot paper in this hand, we shall take power in Ireland." In the Irish Republic the Provisional Sinn Fein abandoned absententionism and began running candidates in local and national elections.

As Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie show in their book, the results of the Provisional IRA "going political" have been mixed at best. In Northern Ireland the Provisionals have polled up to some 40% of the Catholic vote during their best showings; but they have consistently failed to overtake the non-violent, reformist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in voting results in the Catholic community. In the Republic the only electoral success the Provisionals have enjoyed was in the 1981 parliamentary elections, which took place at the height of the hunger strike crisis, where two prisoners nominated by the Provisionals won seats in the Irish Parliament. In the more recent elections in Ireland the Provisionals' share of the national vote has been about 2%.

Perhaps the best indication that democratic publics see terrorist movements as incompatible with democracy is the limited but nevertheless real success of the former Official Sinn Fein and Official IRA. In the years since the 1969 split in the IRA the Officials have acted less and less like a revolutionary movement, and more and more like a radical, but non-violent party.

For example, the Officials' political party is now called simply the "Workers' Party" instead of "Sinn Fein: The Workers' Party." As a result of this transformation of the Officials away from being a terrorist organization, the "Workers' Party" has elected some members to the Irish Parliament in recent Irish elections by making inroads into the traditional support base of the Irish Labour Party.

Even though voters have shown marked reluctance to vote for violent revolutionary movements, terrorism has become a "cancer of democracy" as is seen by the human rights and civil liberties issue. As is shown by J. Bowyer Bell's book and the volume by Paul Arthur and Keith Jeffery, the Northern Ireland "troubles" have resulted in a serious erosion of human rights and civil liberties in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. Specifically, jury trials have been abolished for suspected terrorists in Northern Ireland; people have been interned without trial; and prisoners have been mistreated and in some cases tortured. Now, to be sure, given the difficult situation that the authorities find themselves in in trying to defend the innocent against violence, and given the fact that the proper extent of civil liberties in a democratic society cannot be defined in absolute terms but instead must be "balanced" against the demands for public order, a strong case can be made in favor of restricting civil liberties in a situation of violent domestic disorder. (After all, even in a strongly pro-civil liberties country like the US, the Constitution provides for the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* in times of "invasion or insurrection." During the American Civil War President Abraham Lincoln did so suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*.) Nevertheless, however necessary much of the emergency provisions currently in force in Northern Ireland and the Republic may be, it is still most unfortunate anytime that a democratic society has to severely curtail the rights of its citizens.

The third issue discussed in these books is the problem of using the military in a domestic policing and conflict control role. For any society, democratic or non-democratic, such a domestic use of the military can cause serious problems. For example, the military is often prone to using excessive force when put into a domestic policing role; as has been repeatedly shown not only in Northern Ireland since the introduction of British troops in 1969 but also in Israel during the Palestinian uprising since 1987 and in the experience of the United States with the use of troops to control race riots in the 1960s. The excessive use of force by militaries (such as the "Bloody Sunday" incident in January 1972 in Northern Ireland) can result in a situation where misconduct polarizes relations between the ethnic groups involved. In the books under review authors Bowyer Bell, Arthur and Jeffery, Bishop and Mallie all argue that instances of excess by the British Army in Northern Ireland have contributed to the extreme polarization between the Catholic and Protestant communities of Northern Ireland.

Fourth, several of these books make the point that in a world of modern communications ethnic conflicts in one country will quickly become "internationalized" to involve other countries, international organizations, international political movements, etc. For example, the Palestinian/Israeli

dispute has become a major international issue due to American support for Israel (in part due to the lobbying of the US Jewish community); the backing given to the Palestinian cause by the Islamic world; and to the worries of practically every other nation in the world over the impact of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict on the reliability of oil supplies.

As some of these books show, the Northern Ireland problem is clearly an "international" problem. Jack Holland's excellent study of the "American Connection" in the Northern Ireland crisis demonstrates that the US has long been involved in Irish politics and therefore has a definite role to play in any future resolution of the Northern Ireland crisis. Arthur and Jeffery discuss succinctly how the Northern Ireland problem has become an issue in Anglo-Irish diplomacy; most recently manifested by the 1985 Hillsborough agreement between the Republic and Great Britain. (This 1985 agreement provided for regular involvement by the Republic of Ireland in the day-to-day management of public policy in Northern Ireland in exchange for a commitment by the Irish Republic to agree to respect the wishes of the majority of the population of Northern Ireland with respect to the issue of reunification with the Republic of Ireland.)

In conclusion, the six books reviewed here offer valuable insights both into the specific problem of Northern Ireland as well as the more general question of violent political conflict. For anyone interested in either or both of these topics reading some or all of these books would be a worthwhile investment of time and energy.

Ernest Evans
Washington, DC