CHAPTER-V

THE IRISH DIMENSION

The process of colonisation and conquest by Britain threatened Ireland's geographical unity; and this process quite often met with resistance, often with force. This had been going on since the sixteenth century, until the independence struggle, which followed the 1916 Rising, culminated in independence for the major part of the island.1

Ever since the Rising of 1916, the idea of national unity remained the plank of the Irish struggle for total independence. The British Government, in a move to deal with the problem, passed the Government of Ireland Act 1920, which came into effect on 22 December 1920. Under the provisions of the Act, the six Counties of Northern Ireland were sundered from the remaining 26 Counties of Southern Ireland.2 When the Parliament of Southern Ireland met for the first time on 28 June 1921, only four out of 128 seats in the Lower Chamber (Dail), and only 15 of the 64 senators in the Upper Chamber (Senad) occupied their seats, so it was adjourned sine die.3 Subsequently, the British Government agreed to negotiate with the de facto Government formed in Southern Ireland to determine the status of the new state. As a result of these negotiations, on 6 December 1921, a five-

2. For details, see Chapter I.
member Irish delegation, led by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which made Southern Ireland an "Irish Free State with dominion status." Though the partition was not the final solution for the people of the South and also for those who signed the Treaty, yet, to begin with, they thought that it would be the best way to find a temporary solution to unite Ireland.

Emon de Valera, who replaced Arthur Griffith as the President of the Sinn Fein on 26 October 1917, and his supporters opposed the Treaty in the Dail (the Southern Parliament). This led to the "Civil War" in 1922 between the opponents and the protagonists of the Treaty. This Civil War lasted till May 1923. It resulted in the formation of two main political parties in Southern Ireland --- Cumann na nGaedhael, led by William T. Cosgrave (Pro-Treaty), is now known as Fine Gael and is led by Garret FitzGerald; and Fianna Fail (Warriors of Destiny), led by Emon de Valera (Anti-Treaty), is now led by Charles J. Haughey.

The opposition to the Treaty was mainly on three grounds:

1. The opponents were unhappy with partition, even

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in the short term; (2) they disliked the fact that the Treaty was couched in the language of royalty and Empire; and (3) they were opposed to the Irish ports being leased out to the Royal Navy.8

The idea of a "Council of Ireland", which was mooted to smoothen the relations and to keep the link between the South and the North, in the Ireland Act of 1920, was also quickly abandoned. This Act attempted a compromise solution to the Irish question by granting a large measure of Home Rule to the "South" while making the six northeastern Counties of Ulster a separate state of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. A Northern Ireland parliament would sit in Belfast and a parliament of Southern Ireland would meet and legislate for the South. In 1937, a new constitution was enacted by referendum and, in 1949, Southern Ireland withdrew from the Commonwealth and became a Republic. The neutral stand of Irish Government during the World War-II and a series of assaults by the IRA terrorists, often operating from Southern Ireland, caused a serious strain on the relations between the two governments.9

It was much later, i.e., in 1963, when Terence O'Neill became the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, that a new era in the relationship between the North and the South was heralded. His efforts to promote harmony between the communities in Northern Ireland also influenced the attitude of the Irish Government. As a result, Sean Lemass (Fianna Fail Party), who had succeeded Eamon de Valera in 1959 as the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic, accepted an invitation from O'Neill and paid a visit to Northern Ireland on 14 January 1965. Later, on 9 February the same ---

year, O'Neill paid a return visit to the Irish Republic.\footnote{Liam de Paor, *Divided Ulster* (Middlesex, England, 1970), pp.146-7.}

It is significant to recall that the last meeting of its kind was held in 1925, when W.T. Cosgrave, the then President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, met James Craig, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, in London.\footnote{Arthur, n.8, p.68.}

The "historic" meeting of the two Prime Ministers (Sean Lemass and Terence O'Neill) in January 1965 was followed by a Joint Communique, which said:

> We have today discussed matters in which there may prove to be a degree of common interest, and have agreed to explore further what specific measures may be possible or desirable by way of practical consultation and co-operation. Our talks -- which did not touch upon constitutional or political questions -- have been conducted in a most amicable way, and we look forward to a further discussion in Dublin.\footnote{Bulletin of the Department of External Affairs, (Dublin), no.688, 19 January 1965, p.4.}

On his return to Dublin, Sean Lemass, the Irish Prime Minister, stated that his meeting with O'Neill, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, was quite significant, as it had opened up ways for consultation and cooperation in matters of economic importance.\footnote{Ibid.}

Though the public reaction to this meeting was largely favourable, yet major opposition came from J. Edmund Warnock (Attorney General of Northern Ireland), Desmond Boal (Unionist MP) and O'Neill's Cabinet colleagues, who were unhappy over the secrecy of the meeting. On 3 February 1965, Warnock argued that it had always been the Unionist policy...
not to cooperate with the Dublin Government until they recognised the North. He stated: "It is an unwarrantable assumption of personal dictatorship by the Prime Minister to reverse that policy without the consent of the people who support his government."¹⁴ "O'Neill must go" demand was intensified thereafter and in April 1965 Robert Nixon, MP, called upon O'Neill to resign as Prime Minister, to be replaced by Brian Faulkner.¹⁵

Whether it was Warnock, Boal or Nixon, the fact remained that they all belonged to the extreme right wing of the Party. Moreover, O'Neill could not trust his Cabinet colleagues. It is significant that it was O'Neill's bridge-building effort, which paved the way for the Nationalists in 1965 to take up the position of Official Opposition. The Nationalists took, that position, on the advice of Leamass for the first time in the Parliament of Northern Ireland with Eddie McAteer as their leader. Nevertheless, the backlash against O'Neill on his policy of bridge-building and North-South relations was gathering momentum. And outside the Party, Ian Paisley became his most vociferous critic.

The North-South rapprochement policy also could not sustain for long and the "Irish Question" always remained the central issue in the politics of the Irish Republic. By 1967, the urge for reform became irresistible in the Province, culminating in the formation of the Civil Rights Association to air the Catholic grievances in Northern Ireland. The sporadic violence in Northern Ireland also influenced the Nationalists to withdraw from the position of the Official Opposition in Stormont on 15


October 1968.\(^{16}\) For John Lynch (Fianna Fail Party), the new Premier of the Irish Republic, who succeeded Lemass in November 1966 after his resignation, it was by no means just a question of 'North-South relations'.\(^{17}\) After the Derry incident of 5 October 1968, he lodged a strong protest on 25 October, when he met the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in London.\(^{18}\)

The rapprochement policy of both the Governments weakened further, when, in August and October 1968, the Civil Rights Movement organised massive marches for the first time in the history of Northern Ireland. Though O'Neill, under the pressure of the British Government, announced reformation on 22 November 1968, yet many Catholics felt that it was "too little, too late".

The year 1969 witnessed yet more riots, because the programme of reforms had slowed down due to the growing opposition within the Unionist Party. The People's Democracy went ahead with its plan to march up to Derry from 1-4 January 1969. On 28 January 1969, John Lynch, the Irish Prime Minister, emphasised in a speech on Civil Rights and Irish Unity at the Ard-Fheis (Annual Convention) of Fianna Fail, the need for granting basic human rights to the people of Northern Ireland without any discrimination. He also called for good neighbourliness between the North and the South, and reaffirmed the just claim for unity in the island.\(^{19}\)

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17. It may be pointed out that Fianna Fail's approach to Northern Ireland has always been pragmatic. Since its inception in 1920s, Fianna Fail has been pledging itself to reunification through peaceful means, but has always been particularly distrusted by Protestant Ulstermen. \textit{The Times} (London), 1 February 1974.
On 19-20 April 1969, there were further demonstrations in Derry City against discrimination and the denial of civil rights. The Irish Government, after an emergency meeting of the Cabinet, held on 21 April, issued a statement that the Irish Prime Minister, John Lynch, would like to meet the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. The statement also said that the Minister for External Affairs of Ireland would seek an immediate meeting with U. Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, to apprise him of the situation.\(^{20}\) Two days later, i.e., on 23 April 1969, the Irish Foreign Minister, Patrik Hillery, met U. Thant and asked him to intervene in the "Irish Problem" so that the "civil rights" could be restored in Northern Ireland.\(^{21}\)

The growing opposition and continuing violence forced O'Neill to resign from the Prime Ministership on 28 April. John Lynch found O'Neill's resignation a tragic event and hoped that this would not mean a "turning back" of the policies of the latter.\(^{22}\)

The process of normalisation between the two governments was arrested, when renewed violence in Northern Ireland touched a new high in July and August 1969. Lynch went on television on 13 August and lamented the inability of successive Stormont Governments to quell violence and opined that in such a no-control situation the Irish Government could no longer be a silent spectator.\(^{23}\)

Lynch also announced that the Irish Army would establish field hospitals along the border for the people.

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20. Ibid., no. 803, 5 May 1969, p.4.
23. Ibid., no.810, 9 September 1969, p.7.
injured in the North, and proposed the stationing of a UN peacekeeping force in Northern Ireland. He also called for negotiations with Britain on the future of the North, "recognising that the re-unification of the national territory can provide the only permanent solution for the problem." But the whole issue was sidetracked by the British Government, when it proclaimed that Northern Ireland was a part of the United Kingdom and the problem there was an "internal matter" of the United Kingdom.

Enunciating the policy of the Irish Government, John Lynch stated on 28 August 1969, that his Government and people had no intention to use force in restoring the Irish national unity. He also clarified that in these unification efforts their desire was not to seek domination of Dublin.

The split in Sinn Fein in the later part of 1969 not only increased the incident of violence in Northern Ireland but also severe implications for Southern Ireland. Most of the people in the South denounced the violent tactics of the IRA to unite Ireland and wanted instead a peaceful settlement. John Lynch correctly interpreted these attitudes by his constant "repudiation of violence," while firmly rejecting the claim of the Northern Ireland Unionists that the affairs of the Province were none of his business.

Lynch's Northern Ireland policy also brought him at once into collision with his Party members. This was

explicit in the attitude adopted by his three senior Cabinet colleagues—Charles J. Haughey, Minister for Finance, Neil Blaney, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, and Kevin Boland, Minister for Local Government. They were trying to put pressure on the Irish Government that the Irish Army should invade the North and seize Derry and other predominantly Catholic areas west of the Bann. But the Irish Government did not accept such a suggestion for the simple reason that it never wanted to confront Britain directly, as it would have had disastrous economic consequences for it. According to Farrell, "the economic forces which had led to the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area and the Lemass-O'Neill talks were still in operation." However, in April 1970, Lynch charged Haughey and Blaney with attempting to ship arms across the border to the IRA in Northern Ireland. Subsequently, on 6 May 1970, they were dismissed by him from the Government. In protest, two other Ministers resigned. Among them was Kevin Boland, who formed his own party, "Aontacht Eireann". The Government failed, however, to prove the charges against the accused, so, on 23 October 1970, all charges against them were dismissed. The learned judges also made the significant observation that someone had been lying.

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28. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
By the end of 1970, the Lynch Government changed its policy towards Northern Ireland, which had been based on "functional co-operation" followed by Sean Lemass. On 20 February 1971, Lynch proposed an extension of "preferential tariffs for Northern Ireland goods", and cooperation in "cross-border regional development". The idea behind this proposal was that "economic and social cooperation" would help reduce political tension.34

On his return from a ten-day visit to the United States of America on 21 March 1971, Lynch emphasised in an interview at the Dublin airport the early implementation of the reformation programme in Northern Ireland. He said:

We expect the Downing Street declaration of August 1969, guaranteeing equal rights to all people in the Six Counties, irrespective of religion or politics, will be fully implemented. I am satisfied, whoever will be there, that the British Government are determined to have the reform programme carried out.(35)

At the same time, Liam Cosgrave, leader of Fine Gael, the Opposition Party, blamed the British Government for the delay in the implementation of the reform programme by the Unionist Government and the fall of Chichester Clark's Government in Northern Ireland. He stated further: "The Government of Ireland Act 1920 had been intended as of transient administration. It looked to the eventual establishment of a parliament for all Ireland. 'This may be postponed but it cannot be averted.'"36

The introduction of "internment" in Northern Ireland on 9 August 1971 brought the British and Irish Governments face

34. The Times, 22 February 1971.
35. Ibid., 22 March 1971.
36. Ibid.

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to face. On that very day Lynch deplored it. He also explicitly stated that the British policy of internment without trial would not bring the necessary long-term solution to Northern Ireland problem.  

The introduction of "internment" resulted in shelving the policy of "functional cooperation." The Irish Government stated: "We have no intention of using our defence forces to intervene in the affairs of Northern Ireland." It also said: "The Irish Government cannot and will not support any armed activity which will inevitably cause further suffering and deaths."  

At a Cabinet meeting held in Dublin on 10 August 1971, the Irish Government reviewed the situation in the North and found that one-sided internment was a last desperate attempt to sustain the Stormont regime, which was considered to be futile. In its opinion, the main object was to bring to an end "the appalling carnage and violence in the North", which was crucially important for both the people of 26 Counties and the people of the North.  

In a telegram sent to Edward Heath, the British Prime Minister, on 19 August 1971, John Lynch stressed that the policy of internment without trial and military operations were all an exercise in futility as regards the solution to the problems of Northern Ireland. He also emphasized the importance of political means as a key to the

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40. Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, n.37, p.4.
solution of the Northern Ireland problem. He added that he would be most willing to cooperate in the event of an agreement on a policy of finding solutions by political means.41

The British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, firmly rejected the views of Lynch. He said: "Your telegram... is unjustifiable in its contents, unacceptable in its attempts to interfere in the affairs of the United Kingdom and can in no way contribute to the solution of the problems of Northern Ireland."42

It is thus obvious that the "internment" policy of the Government of Northern Ireland was a bitter pill for the Irish Government to swallow. Lynch did not delay the opening of the refugee camps and giving assistance to the refugees from Northern Ireland. Besides, he instructed the Army authorities to "make accommodation available at Army camps to any dependents of internees, who seek such accommodation."43

On 11 August 1971, Lynch sent his Foreign Minister, Patrick Hillery, to London to protest against "internment"44 and met personally the elected leaders of the non-Unionist community in Northern Ireland.45 Apart from this in 1971 itself, the Irish Government took up the matter to the European Court.46 Thus, the tenor of the approach of the Irish Government was to internationalise the "Irish

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., p.4.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., no.840, 1 October 1971, p.4.
46. Arthur, n.8, p.113.
Question', which put the British Government in an embarrassing position. This marked a serious departure from the conciliatory policy between Belfast and Dublin, followed earlier.

On 6-7 September 1971, Lynch met the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, at Chequers, the latter's official country residence. No statement was issued after the talks, but at a press conference in London, Lynch "rejected military solution" to the problem of Northern Ireland, which, according to him, could be solved only through political means and reunification of the country. He also welcomed the Labour Party leader Harold Wilson's 12-point plan for dealing with the situation in Northern Ireland, outlined by him on 8 September 1971. On 27-28 September, John Lynch and Edward Heath met for the second time at Chequers. The Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner, was also present in this meeting. After the meeting, they issued an agreed statement, which said:

We are at one in condemning any form of violence as an instrument of political pressure, and it is our common purpose to seek to bring violence and internment and all other emergency measures to an end without delay. We also recognise that to bring violence quickly to an end and to resume economic, social and cultural progress means must be found to establish harmony and co-operation between the two communities in Northern Ireland.(49)

Speaking at a luncheon given by the Foreign Press Association in London, the Irish Foreign Minister, Patrick Hillery, maintained: "The Irish issue could be solved only by Irishmen, without interference from Britain... (and) the

47. Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, n.44, p.5.
48. Ibid., pp.7-8.
49. Ibid., p.8.
only lasting settlement... is the reunification of our country." 50

The event of "Bloody Sunday", 30 January 1972, in which 13 NICRA marchers lost their lives by firing, aroused intense anger and indignation in the Irish Republic. The anti-British sentiment rose in Dublin to such a high pitch, that Ireland recalled Donald O'Sullivan, its Ambassador, from London and the British Embassy in Dublin was in flames. 51 Lynch was forced to declare 2 February, the day of the victims' funerals, as a day of national mourning. 52 Soon, the Irish Government abandoned its hitherto pursued policy, based on mutual trust and economic cooperation, and the "quiet diplomacy" pursued by Lynch was replaced by "diplomacy of protest". 53 This reached its culmination following the imposition of "Direct Rule" in Northern Ireland from Westminster on 26 March 1972 and marked the beginning of a new era in the Anglo-Irish relations. According to Lynch, the introduction of Direct Rule "was a positive step, because it meant a recognition that it was not possible to work through the existing structure. But that step was presented only as a necessary preliminary to a solution and not as itself a solution." 54 The Direct Rule in Northern Ireland, he added, had reopened the Irish Question as a whole, but the only solution was an "Ireland united by agreement, in independence; an Ireland in a friendly relationship with Britain; an Ireland which will be a member with Britain of the enlarged European

51. Ibid., 1 February 1972.
52. Ibid.
Irish unity should be the aim, and a commitment should be made by the British Government to its achievement...[however] a united Ireland will not be an Ireland in which the present state in the "South" takes over the "North" and assimilates it into its existing structures. There should be negotiation, but it should be about a new Ireland.(56).

In effect, the Irish Republic's claim to be a party vitally interested in any settlement in Northern Ireland was recognised. It strengthened Lynch's position at home (in Ireland) as well. As a result, the conflict of Northern Ireland became a matter of friendly consultations between the Irish and British governments. Meanwhile, the Irish Prime Minister, John Lynch, took a tougher stand against the IRA, by setting up, on 26 May 1972, a special criminal court, and arresting, on 19 November 1972, Sean McStiofain, a leading IRA member. On 24 November, the Government dismissed the entire Governing Body of the Radio Telefis Eireann for broadcasting an interview with McStiofain, contrary to a Government directive. On 3 December 1972, the Irish Government also amended the Offences Against the State Act, under which the evidence of a Garda (Police) Superintendent, that he believed someone to be a member of the IRA, would be sufficient for conviction.57

In October 1972, the British Government published a Green Paper on The Future of Northern Ireland: A Paper for Discussion. In that Paper, William Whitelaw, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, affirmed that "no United Kingdom Government for many years has had any wish to impede

55. Ibid., p.613.
57. Moody, n.27, p.92 and also see, Farrell, n.15, p.301.

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the realisation of Irish unity, if it were to come about by genuine and freely given mutual agreement." To quote Whitelaw further:

Whatever arrangements are made for the future administration of Northern Ireland [they] must take account of the province's relationship with the Republic of Ireland: and to the extent that this is done, there is an obligation upon the Republic to reciprocate.... It is therefore clearly desirable that any new arrangements for Northern Ireland should, whilst meeting the wishes of Northern Ireland and Great Britain, be so far as possible acceptable to and accepted by the Republic of Ireland...(58)

The Green Paper, which was also committed to a "border poll", was generally welcomed by political leaders in the Republic of Ireland. Prime Minister John Lynch, expressed the view that it was "a useful contribution in the development of political thinking on this matter."59 He added further that "as a paper for discussion, it deserved very careful consideration."60 The leader of the Fine Gael, the main opposition party, Liam Cosgrave, said: "The British Government's acceptance that any settlement must recognise Northern Ireland's position within Ireland as a whole is an advance."61 Prior to the general election of March 1973 in Ireland, an opinion poll conducted by Dublin's Sunday Independent (Sunday edition of the pro-Fine Gael newspaper, Irish Independent) held that only 29 per cent of the combined population of Ireland and Northern Ireland considered Irish unification as the best solution to the

60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
Northern Ireland crisis, and in the Irish Republic alone only 37 per cent of those polled thought that unity was the best solution to end the fighting in the North.62

The defeat of the Fianna Fail Party by the alliance of the Fine Gael and the Labour Party in the general election of 14 March 1973 did not indicate any change in John Lynch's policy towards Northern Ireland.63 The co-alition Government of Liam Cosgrave (Fine Gael) and Brendan Corish (Labour), Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively, brought out a 14-point policy statement on a peaceful solution to the Northern Ireland problem, so that there is no further recourse to bloodshed, injustice and sectarian tendencies. The emphasis of this statement was more on "reconciliation rather than unity".64

The British Government brought out a White Paper on "Constitutional Proposals" on 20 March 1973, which contained the programme for the future administration of Northern Ireland. The programme included a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, the total integration of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, and the role of the "Council of Ireland". Thus, for the first time, an "Irish Dimension" emerged with the concept of the Council of Ireland in the "Sunningdale Agreement" of December 1973.65

The Assembly elections in Northern Ireland for a power-sharing government were held on 28 June 1973. This was

64. Ibid. As early as in September 1969 Fine Gael had accepted that reunification should depend on a majority vote in Northern Ireland.
followed by tripartite talks between the Irish and British governments and the parties involved in the Northern Ireland Executive (designate), led by Liam Cosgrave, Edward Heath and Brian Faulkner respectively, at Sunningdale from 6 to 9 December 1973. The "Council of Ireland", composed of 30 members each from the Dail and the Northern Ireland Assembly (meant to form a Council of Ministers and a Consultative Assembly to improve relations between the North and the South, especially on economic aspects), was one of the major issues, which was widely discussed at the "Sunningdale Conference". It was also finally resolved by the Irish Government that, "there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in the status." But the Irish Government failed to discuss any amendment to Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution, which says:

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

Article 3: Pending the re-integration 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 Saorstat Eireann and the like extra-territorial effect.


67. Northern Ireland: Agreed communique issued following the conference between the Irish and British Governments and the parties involved in the Northern Ireland Executive (designate) on 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th December 1973 (Dublin, 1973), pp.4-5.


69. See, The constitution of Ireland (Dublin, 1980), reprinted, p.4.
The Heath Government hailed the Sunningdale Agreement as a positive achievement. In the same vein, Cosgrave hoped that it would go a long way in meeting the contingencies of the situation.

On 16 January 1974, the Chief Executive of Northern Ireland, Brian Faulkner, met the Irish Prime Minister, Liam Cosgrave. Cosgrave impressed upon Faulkner that Dublin accepted Ulster's constitutional status, so it would not seek the "unification of Ireland" without the consent of the majority in Northern Ireland. Later, on 13 March 1974, he told the Dail, that his Government considered Northern Ireland to be a part of the United Kingdom and that it accepted this "as a fact".

It is significant to note that the "Sunningdale Agreement" was never ratified and Clause 5 of the Agreement -- the declaration of status -- caused Kevin Boland (a dissident member of Lynch administration, who left Fianna Fail to found a party of his own -- (without much electoral success) to challenge its constitutionality in the High Court in Dublin. This forced the Irish Government to interpret the Agreement in just the manner Cosgrave was deprecating. The verdict of the High Court vindicated the stand of the Government, maintaining inter alia that it did not frustrate the Republic's goal of a united Ireland. Commenting on Cosgrave, Ruairi O'Bradaigh, head of the Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, said that in "each statement Cosgrave makes, he goes nearer to subverting the


At the Fianna Fail Annual Convention—held in Dublin on 17 February 1974, the party leader, John Lynch, asserted his authority on "the issue crucial to the preservation of the Dail’s bipartisan policy on Northern Ireland."\(^7\) A resolution affirming that "the sovereignty status of the state", as laid down in the Irish Constitution, "will not be bartered or altered except by the consent of the people in a referendum", was also carried by acclamation.\(^7\) In Britain, the Conservative Party lost the general election held on 28 February 1974 and Edward Heath was replaced by Harold Wilson as the Prime Minister. In April 1974 Harold Wilson visited Belfast to boost up the morale of the Executive. He then also took the opportunity to warn that "there could be no alternative to the Sunningdale package."\(^7\) A few days later, i.e., on 25 April 1974, the Anglo-Irish Law Commission submitted its report, recommending strongly that people wanted for offences in the North could be tried and sentenced in the South.\(^6\)

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72. After a meeting with Cosgrave in Northern Ireland on 1 February 1974, Faulkner said that the requirements for the establishment of the Council of Ireland were: recognition that Dublin accepted Ulster's status as a part of the United Kingdom; improvement of security across their border; and report from a working party set up at their meeting that day to examine matters that would be administered by a council of Ireland.

73. The Times, 18 February 1974.

74. Ibid.

75. Farrell, n.15, p.316.

76. Ibid. On 1 February 1974, the Northern Ireland Executive members met the members of the Dublin Government at Hillsborough, Country Down, to discuss arrangements for formal ratification of the Sunningdale Agreement and establishment of the Council of Ireland. An Anglo-Irish Legal Commission was set up to study the question of fugitive offenders, and there were meetings between the Commissioner of the Gardai (Police) and the Chief Constable of the RUC.
The strike of the Ulster Workers' Council in May 1974 led to the collapse of the power-sharing Executive in Northern Ireland. Liam Cosgrave, the Irish Prime Minister, expressed his disappointment over the failure of this experiment. Addressing the Dail on 28 May 1974, he said:

This great experiment in co-operation had been wrecked by deliberate misrepresentation of its purpose on the one hand and by the continuance of violence on the other. As we warned it would, the campaign of violence by the IRA provoked a massive sectarian backlash.(77)

The collapse of the power-sharing Executive in Northern Ireland came to Garret FitzGerald, Foreign Minister of the Irish Republic, as "a tragedy".78

After the collapse of the power-sharing Executive, the British Government brought out on 4 July 1974 a White Paper, providing for a Constitutional Convention, so that the people of the North could work out their own solution. Commenting on the White Paper, Liam Cosgrave, the Irish Prime Minister, said the very next day: "it has outlined some realities, which had to be taken into account in considering the next Government of Northern Ireland." He added: "It is my earnest wish and the wish of the Government that the process of discussion and consultation envisaged in the White Paper will be attended with success."79 Referring to the White paper, John Lynch, the leader of the opposition party, Fianna Fail, said that he was "satisfied to find out that power-sharing and the Irish dimension were mentioned and that it would be unacceptable to the British Government, if any large section of the population were to be excluded from a settlement."80

77. The Times, 29 May 1974.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 6 July 1974.
80. Ibid., 5 July 1974.
Anglo-Irish relations were further smoothened on 11 September 1974 after a meeting between the Irish delegation, led by the Irish Prime Minister, Liam Cosgrave, his Foreign Minister, Garret FitzGerald, and James Tully, Minister for Local Government representing the leader of the Labour Party in the Republic, on the one side, and the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, on the other. The British Prime Minister assured the Irish delegation in this meeting that "power-sharing would have to be an integral part of any new government institutions in Northern Ireland." This gave a new hope to the Irish Government; "it had achieved its immediate political ambition so far as its Ulster’s policy (was) concerned: the shoring up, at least for the present, of the ideas embodied in now defunct Sunningdale Agreement." Speaking at a press conference at the Irish Embassy in London on 12 September 1974, Cosgrave emphasised: "Mr. Wilson made it clear that if the Constitutional Convention came up with any form of solution without power-sharing in government, it would not be ratified by the British Government or the House of Commons." Obviously, Cosgrave was convinced that the British Government would insist upon some form of power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. On 23 October 1974, he spoke in the Dail:

...the Ulster United Unionists had to face the reality that they were a small minority in Ireland...(and) as far as the British and Irish Governments were concerned... power-sharing and an Irish dimension in any future executive were non-negotiable, because no other system of regional government for Northern Ireland was conceivable. (84)

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81. Ibid., 12 September 1974.
82. Ibid., 13 September 1974.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid., 24 October 1974.
The failure of the Constitutional Convention provoked stepped-up violence on the part of the IRA. Both the British and the Irish Governments proceeded with anti-terrorism legislations, agreed to in the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973. And the quest for a political solution to the problems of Northern Ireland remained alive. Though the coalition Government's aim was to encourage power-sharing, which could lead to a "suitable recognition of the Irish Dimension" of the Northern Ireland problem, yet the institutionalised "Irish Dimension" was abandoned for the fear of provoking a loyalist coup. Despite the fact that the Fine Gael-Labour Government stood by the Sunningdale position, it was reluctant to take the risk of a referendum, which was a presequisite for any amendment to the constitution.

In October 1975, the Fianna Fail put forth the demand that Britain should effect "an ordered withdrawal from her involvement in the six Counties", and promised that this demand would be supported by diplomatic and political endeavour at the United Nations, European institutions and appropriate international bodies.

In a policy statement issued in November 1975, the Party called upon the British Government to:

1. Encourage the unity of Ireland by agreement in independence and in a harmonious relationship between the two islands and to this end to declare Britain's commitment to implement an ordered withdrawal from her involvement in the six Counties of Northern Ireland.

87. Ibid., 30 October 1975. But after the Party's return to power in June 1977, this policy was not adhered to.
2. Enter into an agreement guaranteeing appropriate financial support for a specified period to enable the transition to take place smoothly in stable, economic conditions. (88)

Charles Haughey fully supported this policy line, which was proposed by the Party Foreign Affairs spokesman, Michael O'Kennedy. (89) On 26 May 1977, Lynch, the Opposition leader, also made it clear that if his party was elected, then the Government would repeal the Emergency Act, which was promulgated following the assassination by the IRA of Christopher Ewart Bigg, the British Ambassador to Ireland. (90) This Emergency Act contained harsh anti-terrorist measures, which were used against the IRA.

On 16 June 1977, the coalition Government of Liam Cosgrave was replaced in the general elections by the Fianna Fail Party and John Lynch once again became the Prime Minister. The 1977 election manifesto of the Fianna Fail affirmed that "a central aim of Fianna Fail policy is to secure, by peaceful means, the unity and independence of Ireland as a Democratic Republic," and that it totally rejected "the use of force as a means of achieving this aim." (91) It contradicted the earlier policy of John Lynch to repeal the Emergency Act. The Fine Gael-Labour alliance had criticised the Fianna Fail on the ground that it had many members, who supported the IRA, and that the Party would


89. Ibid., p.208.


involve the Irish Republic in the problems of Northern Ireland.92

After assuming power, Lynch urged the British Government to take the initiative for a devolved form of government in Northern Ireland, where power could be shared by both the communities -- Protestants and the Catholics. At a meeting of two Prime Ministers, John Lynch and James Callaghan, on 28 September 1977, Lynch insisted that Callaghan should set a date for an early British withdrawal from Northern Ireland.93

Although the call for eventual reunification was a departure from the previous Government's stance on the issue, John Lynch departed from his party's 1975 policy, which had called on Britain to declare that it would withdraw from the Province. However, David Andrews, Parliamentary Secretary to the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared on 7 November 1977 that the settlement of 1921 had failed to solve the "Irish problem". He stressed that the recognition of separate political identity for majority of Irish inhabitants was a question that could not be resisted by Great Britain, especially when the mandate of the electorate had overwhelmingly proved it so often.94

Speaking on the extradition laws at a meeting of the Fianna Fail Committee on Northern Ireland on 27 April 1978, John Lynch, said:


It is important to remember that many States guard the right to decide whether or not they will extradite their own nationals, irrespective of the offence of which they are accused....In this respect, our extradition laws are more liberal than those of many European countries....What is our position? I doubt if any country in Europe has taken as strong a stand against those who would use terror for political ends. The vast majority of the Irish people, North and South, totally repudiate the campaign of violence being waged by a small minority; and the judicial and security institutions of the State fully reflect these feelings.(95)

On 8 January 1978, Lynch said in a radio interview that "Britain should actively encourage Irish unity, and that the Dublin Government might consider an amnesty for terrorists once the Ulster violence ended". This evoked a sharp reaction from the British Ministers.96 This statement of Lynch was enough to scuttle the initiative Roy Mason, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, had taken towards effecting an 'interim' return to a devolved administration in Ulster. It also led to the growing pressure from the Irish opposition politicians like FitzGerald of the Fine Gael and Frank Cluskey of the Irish Labour Party, to "remove ambiguities in his [Lynch's] remarks about a possible amnesty for Provisional IRA prisoners."97

The situation deteriorated further when, on 30 March 1979, Airey Neave, Tory spokesman on Ulster, was murdered at Westminster and on 27 August 1979, Earl Mountbatten and his 14 year-old grandson were murdered in Sligo, and 18 soldiers were also blown up near Warrenpoint, County Down.98 Following these developments, both Britain and Ireland

95. The Times, 29 September 1977.
97. Ibid., 10 January 1978.
pledged to adopt tough security measures that could counter the growing violence. Though Britain felt that Ireland condemned the IRA terrorism, yet it was convinced that Ireland was not doing enough to combat it.99

Following the victory of the Conservative Party in the May 1979 election, Margaret Thatcher assumed power in Britain on 3 May 1979. In order to curb terrorist activities, she came out with the following four proposals.

(a) Permission to the Royal Ulster Constabulary detectives to interview the suspects held in the Irish Republic (the extradition of the suspects to Northern Ireland was considered a political impossibility for the Irish Government);

(b) Reorganisation of the Irish police, including a special mobile force along the border;

(c) Greater Irish attention to the IRA activities in other areas, such as training, bomb-making and especially bank robberies; and

(d) Provision of better protection to well-known Britons in the Republic.100

The Irish Government felt that the anti-terrorist measures did not deal with the root of the trouble in Northern Ireland. Addressing a news conference on 5 September 1979, Lynch said: "One must get at the cause first. I believe that it will not be possible to make progress in these matters until we see some political initiative" coming from the British Government.101 Speaking

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100. Ibid.
at the Annual Conference of Fianna Fáil, Lynch, as the Party President, criticised the British administration in Northern Ireland, saying: "We do not wish to dictat. We wish to discuss solution with a feeling of sensitivity and respect for the identity and culture of all Irishmen, in particular our Northern friends of Unionist traditions." The Deputy Prime Minister, George Colley, also called upon the Conservative Government to indicate its interest in seeing Ireland united, while Prime Minister Lynch reminded Britain that 'it was costing £1,000 million a year to maintain the link with Ulster.'

Lynch came under heavy attack within his own ruling Fianna Fáil Party over his Northern Ireland policies. A leading member of the Parliamentary Party, Sheila de Valera, granddaughter of the former Irish President and statesman, Eamonn de Valera, demanded that Lynch should 'demonstrate his republicanism' and stop succumbing to the British pressure. She also rejected the idea of 'a Council of Ireland' or 'devolved government' in Ulster. She thought that they were only "half-measures; they can only serve to exacerbate and fester the problem."

On 5 December 1979, the backbenchers also rebelled against his the leadership of Lynch. That was the last straw on the camel's back, so Lynch resigned from the Premiership. The disenchantment of the backbenchers emanated mainly from Lynch's poor handling of the economy. The Party now turned to Charles Haughey for the new leadership.

103. Ibid.
104. Ibid., 10 September 1979.
105. O'Malley, n.21, pp.22-3.
Before assuming the office of the Prime Minister, Haughey addressed a press conference on 7 December 1979, in which he declared:

The Fianna Fail policy on Northern Ireland has been quite clearly enunciated in the 1975 declaration by the Party and that will remain our policy. There may be perhaps differences of emphasis on particular aspects... the thrust of our policy will be the same: the reunification of our country by peaceful means...(106)

Haughey stated clearly that his primary political priority, after taking over the administration, would be "the peaceful unification of the people of Ireland."(107) On 'power-sharing' and the 'Irish Dimension', he said:

... the '75 Fianna Fail policy document clearly indicates this pending the withdrawal or disengagement of Britain from Irish affairs that we should pursue the peaceful coming together of the communities by means of interim institution. Any such interim institution would be welcome.(108)

Haughey was elected Prime Minister on 11 December 1979. It was a miraculous comeback for him, for he had spent the better part of the previous decade in political wilderness, after having been dismissed from the government in 1970, arrested and tried for conspiracy to import arms illegally for shipment to Northern Ireland. Thus, he became one of the most controversial figures in Ireland. It is notable that Haughey was able to oust Lynch from the Premiership because of his soft policy, whereas he could project himself as a man who could 'put Republican muscle into the Irish Government's Northern policy'.


107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.
It took Haughey just two months to let all and sundry know where he stood on the Northern issue. He declared at the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis on 16 February 1980, that Northern Ireland, his country and Great Britain should "face the reality that Northern Ireland, as a political entity, has failed and a new beginning is needed," and that "the solution can come through political action." He reiterated that only British declaration towards unification of Ireland by agreement and in peace would open the way towards a new attainable solution.109

Haughey's idea of a peaceful unification of Ireland provoked a sharp reaction from the Loyalist Ian Paisley in Northern Ireland. Paisley warned Haughey that they would die rather than 'permit' the IRA to attain 'their' shared goal of an all Ireland Republic "so long as there is a Unionist and Protestant majority in Northern Ireland."110 Three months later, Haughey, as Prime Minister, met the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, for the first time. They agreed to have regular meetings on a continuing basis in order to develop "new and closer political cooperation between our two countries."111 Haughey reaffirmed the wish of the Irish people 'to secure the unity of Ireland by agreement and in peace", whereas the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, reiterated that "any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland".112

111. The joint communique dated 21 May 1980 was issued after the meeting between Haughey and Thatcher. See, Irish Times, 22 May 1980.
112. Ibid.
In July 1980, Haughey elaborated the Anglo-Irish framework that he envisaged. According to him, settlement should take into account "relations between North and South in Ireland, between Ireland and Britain, and between both parts of the community in Northern Ireland". The British Government should take the first step by declaring "their interest in Irish unity by consent and in peace, and their readiness to participate in the process for achieving it."\(^{113}\)

This peace plan made little progress. Though Haughey extended his hand of compromise and conciliation to the Unionists of Northern Ireland, he did emphasise that the "minority community would never again accept second class status in their own country."\(^{114}\) The reconciliation approach of Haughey was thwarted by the hunger strike in Maze prison in Northern Ireland. The Provisional IRA prisoners demanded 'political status' for all the political detainees besides calling for the unification of Ireland. On 27 October 1980, some prisoners, then participating in the hunger strike at the Maze prison, intensified their efforts to force the authorities to grant them "special category status".\(^{115}\)

A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP

Although the British Government continued to adhere to the constitutional guarantee of the Ireland Act 1949, Section I, which says that "in no event will Northern Ireland or any part thereof cease to be part of the United

\(^{113}\) Address by the Taoiseach, Mr. Charles J. Haughey, to members of the Fianna Fail organisation in the Metropole Hotel, Cork, Sunday, 27 July 1980.

\(^{114}\) The Times, 6 October 1980.

\(^{115}\) See, Chapter IV for details under the headings "Sinn Fein and the IRA".
Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland", relations between the two countries remained cordial. Following the summit meeting in London on 21 May 1980 between the two Prime Ministers, the next meeting was held in Dublin on 8 December 1980. The Taoiseach was accompanied by Brain Lenihan, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Michael O'Kennedy, Minister for Finance. The British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, was accompanied by Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Geoffrey Howe, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.116 The discussion, ranged over a number of issues, was devoted mainly to the 'Anglo-Irish dimension'. A Joint Communique issued after the meeting said:

The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister noted with satisfaction the useful exchanges at Ministerial and official level since their last meeting, leading to new and closer co-operation in energy, transport, communications, cross-border economic development and security. They agreed that further improvements in these and other fields should be pursued.

The Taoiseach and the Prime Minister agreed that the economic, social and political interests of the peoples of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic are inextricably linked, but that the full development of these links has been put under strain by division and dissent in Northern Ireland. In that context, they accepted the need to bring forward policies and proposals to achieve peace, reconciliation and stability; and to improve relations between the peoples of the two countries.

They considered that the best prospect of attaining these objectives was the further development of the unique relationship between the two countries.

They accordingly decided to devote their next meeting in London during the coming year to special consideration of the totality of relationships within these islands. For this purpose they have commissioned joint studies, covering a range of issues including possible new institutional structures, citizenship rights, security matters, economic co-operation and measures to encourage mutual understanding. (117)

The Opposition leader, Garret FitzGerald (Fine Gael), expressed his discomfiture at an observation made by Thatcher during the meeting that "there was no possibility of a confederation between Ulster and the rest of Ireland following from the Dublin talks." (118) Issues like "totality of relationships" and "new institutional structures" inevitably aroused Loyalist fears. (119) On 9 February 1981, Paisley launched a new covenant, pledging its signatories to use "all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy hatched at the Thatcher-Haughey Dublin summit to edge Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom and to establish an on-going process of All-Ireland integration." (120) However, Thatcher did not make any statement in the House of Commons on the Dublin talks, treating them as no more important than bilateral talks with Britain's other partners in the European Community. As observed by Martin Wallace: "Haughey clearly hoped that the Northern Ireland problem would be raised to 'a new plane, in which the old questions can be looked at fresh and new solutions tried'." (121) But in reality, that was not the case, as both the leaders seem to have used the summit to satisfy their short-term political ends. (122) As a result, the

117. Ibid., pp.2-3.
118. The Times, 12 December 1980.
119. Ibid., 13 December 1980.
120. Wallace, n.3, p.155.
121. Ibid., pp.155-6.
122. O'Malley, n.21, p.29.
IRA hunger strikers, who had abandoned their protest, began their second round of hunger strike on 9 March 1981 to achieve their goal of political status. Meanwhile, the joint Anglo-Irish study group not only created differences between Unionists and the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, but it also created confusion and suspicion between the Irish Government and the main Opposition Party, Fine Gael, in the Irish Republic. When Garret FitzGerald, leader of Fine Gael, the main Opposition Party, said in Londonderry that there was a "temporary hiatus" in the joint approach, this stung Brian Lenihan, the Irish Republic's Foreign Minister and one of the architects of the joint studies, to accuse him of being unscrupulous and irresponsible. These developments impaired the Irish Republic's bipartisan approach to Northern Ireland.

The death of Bobby Sands on 5 May 1981 in Maze prison in Northern Ireland triggered off demonstrations in both the parts of Ireland in support of hunger-strikers. Sands' death, and the deaths that followed showed that Haughey's claim to a 'special relationship with Thatcher' had no content. The deteriorating condition of the hunger strikers in Maze prison forced John Kelly, acting Irish Foreign Minister, to appeal to the British Government to settle the Maze hunger strike crisis, failing which relations between the two countries could be affected. He also accompanied James Dooge, Irish Foreign Minister designate, to meet Sir Ian Gilmour, the British Deputy Foreign Secretary, in London.

In the Irish general election of 11 June 1981, Fianna Fail party was defeated and Haughey's Government was

123. The Times, 10 March 1981.
124. Ibid., 16 March 1981.
125. O'Malley, n.21, p.30.
replaced by a Fine Gael-Labour coalition Government, with Garret FitzGerald as the Prime Minister and Michael O'Leary as the Deputy Prime Minister. The coming to power of the coalition signalled a change in the Irish policy towards Northern Ireland. The coalition partners were of the view that the Northern Ireland problem could be solved only through a step-by-step process, so they urged the British Government to implement, without delay, the proposed reforms in the Maze prison. But this proposal was rejected by the British Government on 7 August 1981.127

In September, FitzGerald proposed a referendum to change the Constitution of the Republic, so that it would become acceptable to the Protestants in Northern Ireland. The Republic, he said, had become a state that was "not a non-sectarian state".128 One of the specific changes he wanted to effect in the Constitution was the deletion of Articles 2 and 3. When asked the Deputy Leader of Fine Gael, Alan Dukes, and Peter Barry said:

My party does not wish to see Articles 2 and 3 of our Constitution deleted or changed but we do believe that the Constitution should be looked at with the idea of bringing in a Constitution more in keeping with the 21st Century than the early part of the 20th Century. (129)

127. Ibid., 8 August 1981: The proposed reforms were put forth to the British Government by the Provisionals, who were on hunger strike. Their proposals contained:
   (1) The right to wear their own clothing at all times;
   (2) Exemption from all forms of penal labour;
   (3) Free association with one another at all hours;
   (4) The right to organise their own recreational and educational programmes; and
   (5) Full restoration of remission.

128. FitzGerald's observations in this paragraph taken from the interview with Gerald Barry, 27 September 1981, for Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE) programme, This Week.

129. See the author's interview with Alan Dukes, Deputy Leader of the Fine Gael, and Peter Barry T.D., Blackrock, Country Cork, in Dublin on 26 October 1987.
In the words of FitzGerald:

...it is this explicit claim of a right of this Twentysix-County Parliament and Government to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland, including Northern Ireland, that represents such a stumbling block to progress towards Irish unity - because it sticks in the throat of every Northern Unionist and gives power to their more extreme leaders to compete in demagoguery as they rant against this claim.(130)

He further said:

I would like to see us able to reach agreement on a new form of Articles 2 and 3, which would remove what Unionists find offensive and, at the same time provide not an obstacle but a positive mechanism for moving towards all-Ireland activities--if and when we can secure agreement from a majority in Northern Ireland for their establishment, even if at first on a limited and piecemeal basis.(131)

The second Anglo-Irish summit took place at 10 Downing Street on 6 November 1981. The Joint Communique issued after the summit reiterated the goal of successive Irish Governments "to secure the unity of Ireland by agreement and in peace."132 And, at the same time, it reiterated the British guarantee that "any change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland would require the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland."133 Thus, both the British and the Irish Governments agreed to form an Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council in order to give expression to what they called their two countries' "unique


131. Ibid.

132. Meeting between Garret FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher, Joint Communique, 6 November 1981.

133. Ibid.
relationship*. They also left it to their two respective parliaments to consider, at an appropriate time, whether there would also be a joint body at the parliamentary level, which would involve politicians from both countries, including Northern Ireland.134

Though the formation of Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council was seen by the Irish Prime Minister FitzGerald as a movement towards a new step-by-step relationship, yet he could not save himself from the vituperative attacks, of the Opposition in the Dail on 10 November 1981.135 The Fianna Fail leader, Charles Haughey, derided the proposed Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council and warned of further frustration and continuing violence.136

Following the general elections in February 1982, the Fianna Fail once again came to power. Though on the Anglo-Irish talk a general agreement remained, yet Prime Minister Haughey was much keener for the "parliamentary level" rather than just the "ministerial and civil services level" talks on the Northern Ireland issue.137 Speaking in the Dail on 14 March 1982, he stated that a settlement in Northern Ireland lay in a British withdrawal and that he would canvass support for that view.138

In yet another initiative to resolve the crisis in Northern Ireland, the British Government published a new White Paper in April 1982, which emphasised a devolved form

134. The Times, 7 November 1981.
136. Ibid.
of Government for Northern Ireland. The Irish Government held the view that this 'White Paper' ignored the 'broader dimensions of the problem'. It said:

It is the Government's view that only policies designed to promote peace, stability and reconciliation between the two major Irish traditions, and to develop the totality of relations within these islands, can contribute to a true solution of Northern Ireland's difficulties. Such policies should be brought forward through the operation of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council and, in particular, through the role of an Anglo-Irish Parliamentary institution in which Northern Ireland representatives participate. The fundamental objective of Government policy remains the achievement of a united Ireland by peaceful political means. (139)

In the absence of majority support in the Dail, Haughey had to seek re-election after a no-confidence motion was passed against him in November 1982. There was also a general feeling in Ireland that Haughey's tough stance could only worsen the situation and further damage the relations between the North and the South. This led to Haughey's defeat in the election. He could win only 80 seats out of total 166 seats in the Dail (Fianna Fail, 75; Workers Party, 2; and Independents, 3). Therefore, FitzGerald and Dick Spring from the Fine Gael and the Labour respectively formed a coalition government with the support of 86 Dail members.

The Anglo-Irish relations and the Ulster problem remain to date important election issues in Ireland. But in a real sense the economic problem take precedence over them. According to John Whyte, the politico-economic scenario is as below:

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The people of the Republic are not particularly involved in the Northern Ireland problem, (they are) not particularly interested. They have probably discovered already. People in Dublin do not talk about Northern Ireland. They hardly care about it more than the people in London... It's (Northern Ireland) not a major problem. No. Well, what people here are concerned about is the economic problems of this state, which are critical at the moment, and what they want is a government who will solve their economic problems. Northern Ireland is way down on the list of problems. (140)

It is interesting to note that during the election campaign in 1982, leaders of both the major parties -- Haughey and FitzGerald -- accused each other of playing into the hands of Britain. In this context, Haughey referred to the 'famous lunch between Garret FitzGerald and the Duke of Norfolk'141 where FitzGerald had said that James Prior's proposals were a "wonderful step forward".142 On the other hand, FitzGerald accused Haughey of "adopting the tactics of the big lie" and of mounting a campaign of "personal vilification" against him.143 He also said that the matter discussed between him and the Duke was 'the disqualification of Seamus Mallon, Deputy Leader of the SDLP, from taking his seat in the Assembly' because of his membership of the Republic's Senate.144 However, the main points of dispute between the two leaders pertained to an "all Ireland anti-

140. See the author's interview in Dublin with Professor John Whyte, Head of the Department of Politics and Ethics at University College of Dublin, on 17 August 1987.

141. Duke of Norfolk (the seventeenth Duke) had been the Head of the British Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence in 1965-67.


143. Ibid.

144. Ibid., 22 November 1982.
terrorist police force", and "an all Ireland Court", which were proposed by FitzGerald but rejected by Haughey.

The new Government of Garret FitzGerald, with the Labour Party's support, assumed office on 14 December 1982. The coalition Government enunciated its Northern Ireland policy thus: "The aspiration to the unity of the people and territory of the island must be achieved only in peace and with the consent of a majority in both parts of the island." The new Government also believed that the "establishment of effective devolved political institutions in Northern Ireland", with the participation of both communities there, and "full recognition of the Irish identity of the Nationalist section" of the population there, on a par with the existing recognition of the "British-Irish identity of the Unionist section of the population" was an urgent need. In the background of this, it is to be seen whether FitzGerald would like to launch his second 'crusade', as he did at the end of 1981, to make the country a 'genuine republic'.

It is quite clear that the Ulster problem remained a thorny one in the Anglo-Irish relations ever since Ireland's partition. From the very beginning, the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 6 December 1921 was opposed tooth and nail by the Fianna Fail, as it was considered a step that would result in the sundering of Ireland, it was opposed to. The dominance of the Unionist Party for nearly fifty years in Northern Ireland had considerably alienated the Catholic community in the Province. Protestants in the Province also seem to have liked to preserve that situation and maintain its dominance over the minority community. This approach had a weakening effect on the relationship between the North and the South. Though certain conciliatory moves had been made

146. Ibid.
by Terence O'Neill, a liberal Unionist Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, through exchange of visits with Sean Lemass, the Irish Prime Minister, the positive outcome of those moves got evaporated following the 'Civil Rights' march in 1968-69.

Soon after, the Irish Government took the matter to the United Nations, and thus the problem received international attention. Indeed, after the riots of 1969, the Northern Ireland problem was transformed into a triangular one involving the two parts of Ireland and Britain. Though John Lynch's Fianna Fail Party was in favour of sending the Irish Army across the border, which would have been viewed as an act of aggression on Britain, the end of 1970 witnessed social and economic cooperation between the North and the South through 'functional co-operation' which, basically, was Sean Lemass's policy. The idea behind the functional cooperation was to reduce the growing tension between the North and the South.

The introduction of 'internment', in Ulster was, a setback to the growth of amiability in the North-South relations, in general, and the Anglo-Irish relations, in particular. It also marked the end of the conciliatory policy between Dublin and Belfast. The idea of functional cooperation was also shelved. The efforts of the Irish Government to internationalise this problem seem to be partly responsible for the introduction of 'Direct Rule' in Northern Ireland in March 1972. Although the imposition of Direct Rule was welcomed by Fianna Fail, yet it continued to press for a united Ireland.

The year 1973 saw a perceptible change in the attitude of Ireland towards the problem of Northern Ireland. This change was wrought mainly by the ideas of creating a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and forming a 'Council of Ireland', as per the Sunningdale Agreement of
December 1973. The power-sharing 'Executive' marked the end of the one-party rule in Northern Ireland. The 'Council of Ireland', which was to include thirty members each from the Dail and Northern Ireland Assembly, was basically meant to improve relations between the North and the South, especially in the economic sphere. But it remained stillborn. In 1973, the Irish Government's emphasis was on 'reconciliation' rather than on 'unity', as it realised that the process of unity could only be a gradual one and needed a step by step approach. The Irish Government also made it abundantly explicit that there would be no change in the status of Northern Ireland, unless it was desired by the majority of Northern Ireland. A setback to the thawing process was, however, caused by the non-ratification of the Sunningdale Agreement by both the Irish Government and the Government of Northern Ireland. In the meantime, the Opposition Party in Ireland also started mounting pressure for withdrawal of the British forces from Northern Ireland.

This attitude was again discernible in June 1977, when John Lynch put forth the demand for the British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and for the termination of internment in the Province. However, his Government too advocated the 'unification of Ireland through peaceful means'. But he had to step down from the Prime Ministership due to heavy criticism for making cross-border agreements with Britain in July 1979. His successor, Charles Haughey, was a hard core nationalist, whose policy generated sharp reaction from the Loyalists. The Irish Government held the view that any issue, which was discussed unilaterally, was doomed to failure. Fianna Fail did condemn the Provisionals' violence, but it could not disown the cause they advanced--unification of Ireland. The simple reason behind this was the fact that Fianna Fail was the political heir of Eamon de Valera and those, who had opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.
The Fine Gael and Labour coalition Government, which had opposed the idea of an independent Northern Ireland, once again came to power. The coalition Government under FitzGerald believed that launching a 'crusade' would lead to a new Ireland\textsuperscript{147}. They did realise, however, that unity could only be achieved gradually by peaceful means. Before the crusade was launched, Haughey was back to power in February 1982. During his tenure, the Anglo-Irish relations deteriorated—especially during the Falkland War and when James Prior proposed an Assembly Election in October 1982 in a White Paper issued in April 1982, which disregarded the 'Irish Dimension'.

The Anglo-Irish relations suffered another setback, when Ireland opposed EEC's economic sanctions against Argentina during the Falkland War in 1982. But this was not the only cause of a further decline in relations. The real and more potent issues concerning the creation of the Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council were not even discussed at the inter-parliamentary level. This Council, which was to be created by Britain and Ireland in November 1981, was designed to be a permanent body with three tiers. However, of these three tiers, only the lower two were brought into existence. Logically speaking, this Council should have become the vanguard of reconciliation. The Opposition Leader, FitzGerald, had said that he would press for a Council to be given its political tier, when the Irish Parliament would return in October 1982. The action taken by the coalition Government of FitzGerald and Dick Spring, which came to power in the election of November 1982, in this regard is outside the scope of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{147} When Garret FitzGerald took office as Taoiseach after the June 1981 general election, he immediately announced a 'crusade' to make the Republic's constitution more attractive to Northern Ireland Protestants. However, his 'crusade' was not successful, because his coalition government itself did not last long.