CAUSES OF IRISH TERRORISM

The backward pull of religion, caste and the "divide and rule" game of the English colonialism, complicated the domestic situation in Ireland. However, the emerging frustration, resentment, distrust, irrational retribution led to the lust for "hatred and destruction" among Irish nationalist. The nationalists continued to demand the recognition of their rights and self rule. Such demands were reflected in the natural urge to break away from the domination of the relatively better placed community and this resulted in social conflicts, tensions and the problems of terrorism. The Irish nationalists were beset with a gamut of anti-social feelings and a firm seed of hatred was sown for the new generation. Though, the violent activities of Irish nationalists were the manifestation of their desire for reforms, yet they were declared illogical and irrelevant.

The vicious circle of nationalist's economic,
political and social inadequacies were further accentuated in the rejection of British rule and the demand for proper facilities and self rule on many occasions, the Irish nationalist's various attempts to shake off the domination of the Protestant and English led to tremendous violence, but subsequently, resulted in national aspiration. Hence, the awareness was manifested in the form of nationalist movements, agitations and violent activities.

On the other hand, the repression of Catholic aggression led to the introduction of collective measures against the nationalists by the Protestants and the British Government.

The problem of Northern Ireland is not a recent phenomenon, it is interwoven in the British colonial rule in Ireland. It pervaded much deeper in the recorded history, when the conflict in Ulster, between the Catholics minority (31 per cent) and Protestant majority (61 per cent) became endemic due to English and Scotish occupation of Irish agricultural land.
Since the 15th century the Catholic community began to gather the awful memories of an oppressed country and the pride of a Catholic past. At the roots of the present crisis lie a long experience of distrust and violence between Catholic and Protestant community.

Throughout the history of Irish crisis the English authorities deliberately raised a number of ruthless sanctions to aggravate general dissatisfaction and created unnecessary background for the Irish protest.

The spectrum of social and religious groupings and divisions which at one time or another, under specific historical conditions resorted to strategies of violence and reflected in politics are also seen in the social structure of Ireland. The increased volume of violence in Ireland does not alone represent all dimensions of the change from old patterns. Even a small look at the socio-political structure of Ireland shows that such patterns were interwoven deeply into socio-political and economic conditions of Ireland.
The social relations between the Protestants and Catholics show that despite inter-marriages and conversions, the differences of national origin between the two communities could not be obliterated. The racial differences to differ led to the emergence of different presumptions among Catholics and Protestants. Catholics are of the view that the Irish name belongs to only Catholics, a Scots name to a Presbyterian, and the English name to Protestants.¹ This kind of feeling gave rise to a suspicious atmosphere.

On the other hand, the Protestants and catholics lived separately in Towns and there was much resistance to any kind of exchange. The English and Scots lived around the market areas of plantation towns whereas, Irish Catholics lived on the outskirts or beyond the gates.² The rift between the two communities was


2. ibid., p.53.
widened by giving separate names to the streets, and quarters, like "Irish Street", "English Street", "Scotch Street".3

Secondly, there is a wide difference of opinion between the Protestants and Catholics in the economic field. The Protestants were in favour of providing business to professional classes, the larger farmers and the skilled labourers. On the other hand the Catholics were in favour of providing business to the small and unskilled farmers.4

Consequently, more Catholic workers became unemployed. The reasons for the difference of economic status lie in the society which was imposed by Plantation and by the era of Protestant ascendancy.5

Thirdly, the educational system of the two communities is entirely different and separated. According to 1960 data there were 41 per cent of Catholic

3. ibid.,
4. ibid., p.54.
5. ibid.,
population going to School, whereas, Protestant's were given better opportunities and at least 59 per cent of the total school population was Protestant. 6

Generally, the Protestant's schools teach English history. Irish history is therefore, not paid much heed. Catholics schools teach Irish history and they consider it as the story of heroism to ensure nationalist feeling under foreign reign. Consequently, this kind of educational system impressed on the youth about the separate religious feelings and simultaneously closed all the avenues to have an alternative thinking or view.

It is also observed that in general, Protestants feel themselves superior to Catholics. Similarly, the most obvious cases of poverty are generally found in Catholic families. The Protestant working class feels itself more decent and skilled than the Catholics, and

6. ibid., p.77
the Protestant professionals or businessman feel themselves superior because of a more established status than Catholics. The segregation in almost all fields is so acute that the two communities could not be brought together.\textsuperscript{7}

Equally, significant, as a main sequel of the union, was the transformation of Irish society and the machinery of government through the introduction of British administrative solutions to Irish conditions. The new transformation of Irish society was totally centralized, as Engels described after visit in 1856 "The Government meddles with everything, Nor was centralization always unpopular. 'There is a disposition in Ireland'.\textsuperscript{8} Most of the Catholic were opposed to centralization.

\textsuperscript{7} ibid., p.57.

THE GRIEVANCES OF REPUBLICANS

The Catholic inhabitants of Belfast were descendants of rural migrants of the nineteenth century who arrived in Belfast after many of the Protestants. They think that they are permanent natives and rightful owners of the land the Protestant are only immigrants.

The British government declared the Roman Catholicism as illegal in England, Scotland and some areas of Ireland. Similarly, the non-conformism became the main source of dissent in England and Wales after 1662. As Watt points out "The emergence of Catholicism from its heritage of illegality and subversion in the nineteenth century coincided with parallel emergence of non-conformism."


10. ibid., p.56.

11. ibid.,
Ireland had undergone most dreadful predicament created by the famine of 1845-50 and the thirty years war. Besides, the British government dissolved the Irish parliament, hampered the progress of Irish industry and forced the Irish Catholics off the good land and left them to starve. 12 Consequently, millions Irish left Ireland and went to England and Scotland. Nearly three million Irish left Ireland after the famine.

Secondly, English tried all tactics to destroy the Irish culture. English compelled the Irish to speak English and almost all manifestations of Irish origin were taken away from Irish. But this trend was promptly reversed by the cultural revival, led by Douglas Hyde and Patrick Pears. The process of the revival was helped by the Church through its educational institutions. 13

The aim of English colonial policy in Ireland was more than economic gain. The establishment of pro-English regime in Ireland was accompanied by plantation

12. ibid.,
13. ibid, p.57.
of settlers as a means of establishing loyal and politically stable base. The process of plantation led to discrimination. While the settlers from Scotland and England enjoyed myriad privileges and became economically strong. The Irish peasants and workers merely became marginal tenants, manual labourers or even beggars.\textsuperscript{14}

Native Irish were Catholics and were always apprehensive about Protestants. Similarly, Protestant viewed Catholics as enemy. During past few decades or so Catholics viewed Protestants as religious unfortunates who could not get the true faith, while “Protestants considered Catholics simple minded for accepting

such notion as papal infallibility." Hence, suspicion became, regular feature of Irish political life since 1920 and it lasted throughout the 1970s.

Intermittent struggle between Catholic and Protestant has continued and both groups followed the fragmented urban guerrilla tactics to reinforce the solidarity of each. While the Protestants consider the defeat of Catholic James II by Protestant William of Orange in 1960 a matter of pride. On the other hand, Daniel O'connel, the great liberator of Catholics made use of legal opening to build mass organization of Catholics in the nineteenth century. The Quest for Home Rule in the nineteenth century created much hostility between the two communities. Hundreds of Catholics and Protestants lost their lives in the skirmishes of 1893 riots in Belfast. The position of Catholics in the North was severely weakened by the repressive measures of Protestants.

15. ibid.,
Dozens of security policemen and many Protestants were killed in the conflict between the two communities. On the other hand, the idea of creation of an all Ireland parliament, (in which Protestants would be heavily outnumbered by Catholics) threatened Protestant's position.16

Hence, throughout the twentieth century, the Catholics were regarded as a threat to the existing social, political and religious order. Nationalists however, had begun as major force to threaten the existence of Protestants and English in Ireland. It merely became an unparalleled social and political movement of the dispossessed and the under privileged Catholics. The nationalist were therefore, the product of the mobilization of Catholic leadership of frustration and anger of the discontented into an extreme nationalist ideology and an organisation exemplary in its cohesion, discipline and purposive violence. But they failed to capture power ever since the beginning.

-----------------------------
16. ibid., p.230.
The implementation of 1912, Home Rule through the United Kingdom parliament threatened Protestants to the extent that at least five thousand Protestants men and women pledged that they would use "all means necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule parliament in Ireland".  

Consequently, in 1913, the Irish volunteers were founded in response to Ulster volunteers. Their strategy was defensive and they did not intend to suppress the Protestants.

The Irish volunteers tried to capture some key areas in Dublin, and challenged the English in all fields. The 1916, uprising led to severe conflict and British found the task of dislodging the Irish volunteers onerous and dangerous. But the war 1919-21 was

not a war of terrorism since there was no concerted plan among the volunteers save that of "treat ing the armed forces of the enemy whether soldiers or policemen, exactly as a National army would treat the members of an invading army." 18

The emergence of the military wing of Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Army posted two major challenges before the British Government. Firstly, the British Government had to suppress Irish violence in such a way that its actions could become legitimate.

Secondly, the British had to win over the Irish public opinion. Hence, it was decided that a "police war" lodged by Royal Irish constabulary (RIC) bearing the main responsibility for defeating the Irish Republican Army would be considered legal and just. 19


Due to the complex series of events leading to violence, the British Government Act of 1920 formed a new political system. It was mainly dominated by the Protestants and Catholics were left at the mercy of the Protestants.

On the other hand, a treaty was concluded which finally established Irish Free State in the South. It was made politically independent of United Kingdom. But the discrimination process of the Northern Ireland filled the hearts of Catholics with grievances against the English and the Protestants.

Similarly, from the patching up of the Irish parliamentary party in 1900 to the decomposition of Sinn Fein in 1922, Irish nationalism presented a remarkably united front to the world.

In the consecutive six elections during the first two decades of the Twentieth century, the orthodox nationalist won 81, 81, 73, 73 and 124 seats whereas, Heritical nationalist could get only one seat in 1906. One of the other hand. the Unionist could manage to get 21, 20, 21, 19, 26 and 4 seats respectively. It showed
the emerging popularity of nationalist and people's grievances against Protestants and English.

CONTROVERSIAL ELECTION PROCESS

The Parliament of Northern Ireland i.e. Stormont, had two houses, the Senate and the House of Commons. The functions of Stormont was very similar to the English Parliament. There were fifty two members in the House of Commons which were elected through the Proportional Representation system with a single transferable vote for a period of five years, according to the Act of 1920.

The system of proportional representation was considered important to safeguard the interest of Catholics. The senate had twenty six members who did not have much influence in the government of the provinces. Out of 26 members, two were ex-officio members, the Lord mayor of Belfast and the Mayor of Londonderry. The other twenty four members were elected by the lower house through a process of proportional representation for a period of eight years. The Senate
was a permanent house. Twelve elected members from Northern Ireland were sent to Westminster to represent the provinces in the British parliament. 20

The system of proportional representation was opposed by the Protestants. They considered it a threat to their existence in political participation. Finally, in 1929, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, James Craig abolished the proportional representation system.

He commented:

--- people do not really understand what result the Proportional Representation may cause when it comes to third, fourth, fifth or sixth provinces. By an actual mistake, they might wake up to find Northern Ireland in the perilous position of being submerged in a Dublin Parliament. What I hold is, if the

Ulster people are ever going - and I pray they may not into a Dublin Parliament, they should understand they are voting a electoral system such as Proportional Representation.\textsuperscript{21}

James Craig introduced the British electoral system of single member constituencies in Northern Ireland. The abolition of Proportional Representation was opposed by Catholics because through gerrymandering constituencies the unionist became very powerful in the provinces and did not allow any opportunity for opposition to capture any seat. Consequently, the unionist remained in power till 1972. Because the unionists were elected unopposed. On the other hand, the Catholics felt discriminated and insecure.

The pattern of single member constituency system gave almost a free hand to the Unionist majority. According to this system, the electoral areas were

determined by the government, and, as set out in the first schedule of the 1920 Act, were made permanent.

On the other hand, the right to vote was linked with property status. This system was known as business premises qualification system. According to this system, a person having business premises of not less than £10 annual valuation was also allowed to cast his vote other than the constituency in which he resides. Hence, the electoral system in Northern Ireland created controversy between the Unionists and Nationalists. It was favourable to Unionist Party because the professional and business class was predominantly Protestant.


A UNITARY POLITICAL SYSTEM

The British government's Ireland Act of 1920 led to the partition of Ireland which provided an important element in the ethnic identities of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The Catholics in North had a political support in the South with which they tried to carry on their nationalist struggle against the state of Northern Ireland. On the other hand, the existence of a viable Catholic nation in Southern Ireland terrified and further solidified Protestants.

Most of the Irish Catholics of North and South, considered partition as the most cruel act of British policy. Some Irishmen understood why Britain was so enthusiastic by the prospect of a united Ireland containing a Protestant minority of 26 per cent and so happy with the creation of Northern Ireland containing a Catholic minority of 33.5 percent. Although Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army were weak in the North and did not play a major role in the Anglo-Irish war. But gradually a number of young men were turned into IRA's ranks.
During the second and third decade of the Twentieth century IRA's role was a very defensive one, i.e. protecting the Catholic minority against the Protestant majority. But the half of the century in Ireland was marked by a series of violent incidents caused by the Irish Republican Army.

In the 1930s, the more drastic steps were taken when Sean Russell took over the leadership of the organisation. He was in favour of attacking Britain. He was of the opinion that attacking Britain would both intimidate the British public into abandoning Northern Ireland and unite Irishmen behind the Irish Republican Army.24

While describing Sean Russell's strategy and attitude, De Valera Commented that "He would not dare interfere with the IRA men going out to take part in the campaign or their return for shelter. The British would blame him for such a policy and very soon he would be forced to take his stand with us and the 1920-25 position would be restored. Alternatively, he would interfere with us. The people would rise in anger against him and rally round us." \(^{25}\)

Sean Russell did not pay any attention to his opponents, and continued with the same strategy and plan. The bombing campaign of 1940 was one the successful strategy of IRA under Russell's leadership. But due to the inadequate training, finance and lack of complete unity, it ended in failure. Though IRA started its bombing campaign on electrical lines, power

\(^{25}\) ibid.
stations, left luggage offices, the London underground, lineman public places, and banks, etc. But in the course of 127 attacks only one person was killed and 35 injured. 26

To encounter this situation, the British Government introduced emergency. Many Irishmen were deported, similarly, checking of travellers between Britain and Ireland was made very strict.

The declaration of the Second World War brought new tedious situation for Irish Republican Army. De Valera tried his best to preserve the neutrality of Irish and regarded the bombing campaign in England and the IRA's links with Germany as a grave embarrassment. 27

In December, 1939, a million rounds of ammunition were seized when the Phoenix Park in Dublin was raided by the police. Since then, the Army and police were

26. ibid.,

27. ibid.,
ruthless and very prompt in their attack on the Irish Republican Army. The Irish Republican Army’s leaders had a vagrant life and were running around from one place to another until they were rounded up and imprisoned. By the end of the year 1945, five hundred were interned and six hundred were convicted under the offences against the state. Similarly, around six IRA men were executed, three of them died due to hunger strike. 28

A new party was formed by Sean Mac Bride in 1946 and ten years later it joined in coalition with the survivors and successors of the 1920s Government. Similarly, during the 1950s and 1960s, a series of new attacks were launched against the British army in Ulster. But the position of Catholics in Northern Ireland was very weak due to the continuous sectarian conflicts. But a ray of hope came from the South Ireland which again generated a new enthusiasm with in

28. ibid.,
Irish Republican Army as their protector and as the main driving force to improve the life style of the Catholics in Northern Ireland. But this too was not long lasting. It hardly lasted for five years and at least eighteen people were killed.

The Irish Republican Army gave importance to the Civil rights movements, but due to the emergency and Communal problems by the end of 1960s, it proved to be an abortive effort. Similarly, the old grievances of Catholics were revived due to the continuous attacks by the Protestants mobs on their ghettos resulting at least 3000 Catholics as homeless. Consequently, the Provisional Irish Republic Army was formed in 1969 with an aim of driving the British out and reunifying Ireland. Other issues of social welfare were kept aside unless the prime objectives were fulfilled.

29. ibid., p.171.
DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTIONS

The terrorist movement in Northern Ireland is composed not of one group but of two - the Catholics (Republicans) and Orangemen (Protestants). Both groups consider themselves nationalists and both of them consider each other as rivals. The terrorist movement of Ireland had its roots on streets. Orangemen and Republicans have very strong working class membership which includes the youth from their respective communities. For example, out of the total 56 per cent loyalists and 70 percent Republicans who were arrested in 1975 most of them were below the age of twenty one years. But Irish Terrorism is not a simple outcome of violence. At its root lie different motives of Republican, Orangemen and British. The diverse ideology, criminal gain and revolutionary notions changed the Irish nationalist movement into a terrorist order.

Though the main target of the Irish Republican Army has been the creation of a United Ireland, the situation was deteriorated with the creation of a communal ideological base.\textsuperscript{31}

The survey carried out by Richard Rose in 1968 reveals that around one third of the Catholics were in favour of approving the constitution of Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{32} Similarly, around 83 per cent were also in favour of separate Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{33}

This does not concede that Catholics were happy by the way they were treated but it reveals that there were a number of other causes of grievances beside sovereignty. On the other hand, the identification of Catholic as Irish did not pose any threat to the integrity of English rule. Similarly, in the civil rights

\textsuperscript{31} ibid., p.33.  
\textsuperscript{33} ibid.,
movements, the major emphasis was laid upon economic issues, civil rights and discriminatory practices.\textsuperscript{34} Though the IRA emphasised upon the Marxist ideology wherein sovereignty was not considered the prime issue. But slowly the situation changed and by 1985, the nationalist movement did not only generate national struggle but created a state of extreme fear and anxiety among the Protestants and English masses. Ireland but much wider. The ideology of Irish Republic Army (provisional) is described as "non ideological" by A.O. Day in his article, "Northern Ireland, Terrorism and British state".\textsuperscript{35} The provisional IRA emerged as a result of the failure and rejection of the official IRA's Marxist

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{34} Kenneth G. Robertson, n. 32, p.33.
\end{flushleft}
\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}
policy of giving greater priority to the social revolution. 36

The provisional IRA members are ready to lay down their lives to defend the Catholics from Protestant aggression. Though the major demand of the IRA (Provisional) was to withdraw the British troops from Ireland but the demand also added a concern with local grievances in order to gain political recognition and support. Hence, they tried to exploit the grievances, to win maximum support. 37

Similarly, the Provisional Irish Republican Army was successful in penetrating the local community at the cultural, economic and criminal levels. To gain economic support the IRA carried out bank raids, robberies, kidnappings and also taxed several businesses. 38

On the other hand the Protestant terrorists made murder as the most important tactic of their strategy. Protestant terrorists tried to justify their acts of

36 Robertson, n.32, p.34.

37. ibid., p.35,

38. ibid.,
murder and violence by calling it as a retaliation against Nationalist (Catholic) terrorism. Although Protestants used the same argument to justify their acts as were used by the Catholics yet they largely avoided their attacks on the army and police personnel. The major act of Protestant terrorism took place in May, 1973 when they planted bombs in Dublin which caused the deaths of 33 people. Protestant terrorists were also involved in armed robberies and criminal activities. Gradually, conflict between Protestant and I.R.A. continued and provided new background to the present crisis.

Therefore, a divided education system and a divided political and social life developed general feeling of cynicism among Catholics. Catholics were discriminated and were considered inferior to Protestants. Discrimination also included improper or selfish exercise of power and Protestant influence attached to public offices due to their special position in public life. Hence, Catholics viewed the problem in relation to economic structure of society. Discrimination and
differences between Protestant and Catholic community led to frustration and insecurity, which subsequently affected political, economic, and social system of Northern Ireland and consequently terrorism and violence became way of achieving some kind of solution.